

THE CONQUEST OF THE CARIBS OF THE ORINOCO BASIN: 1498-1771

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This thesis is concerned with the Spanish conquest of those Carib groups who, at the time of the first contact, occupied the eastern llanos of Venezuela, the north and south banks of the lower Orinoco and the region between the Sierra Imataca and Essequibo River.

An historical analysis of Carib resistance to the Conquistadors and missionaries, during the years 1498-1771 is presented. Alongside this general theme certain specific issues in Carib history and ethnography are also discussed, as follows:

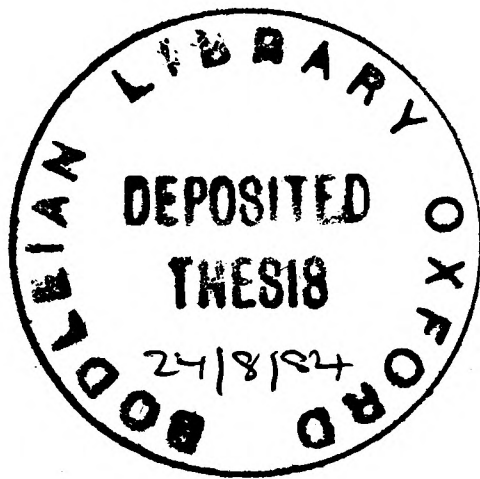
- 1) Carib Demography and Population: problems of historical demography are discussed and an estimate of Carib population levels at the time of contact presented: subsistence practices, trading and warfare, leadership, the village and kin group are also discussed: detailed archival evidence is offered to demonstrate the effect of European diseases among Carib groups during the eighteenth century.
- 2) Carib Cannibalism: the evidence for this practice is examined in detail and the role that accusations concerning this practice played in the Spanish conquest explained.
- 3) Carib Slaving: the role of the Europeans in encouraging this practice is examined with a view to showing that, while it was indeed widespread in its effects, it was not as exclusively a Carib practice, as was suggested by the Spanish chroniclers.
- 4) The Carib/Dutch Alliance: the origin, operation and effect of this alliance in the success of the Dutch colony of Essequibo, in enhancing Carib influence among other Indian groups and in aiding Carib resistance to the Spanish, is examined in detail. It is argued that this alliance proved to be of greater significance than that of Carib and French, English or Swedish and that the importance of the Amerindians, to all colonial projects in this area, has been systematically underrated.

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[HT 1984]

Neil Whitehead



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## INTRODUCTION

The starting point of this thesis is the evident contrast between the historical reports of the Carib populations of Guayana<sup>1</sup> as numerous and vigorous groups, crucial to the nascent colonial enterprises of this area and the small, socially marginal groups who are their descendants. Thus, as late as the 18th century, the Spanish were still chronicling the appearance of Carib armadas, involving perhaps over 200 warriors, on the Orinoco. Similarly, the Dutch, in an era when a handful of men might decide the fate of a colony, were fully convinced that the Caribs had a vital strategic role to play in the defense of their enclave against Spanish encroachment.

Yet such a situation seems scarcely credible in view of the current plight of the Amerindian in Guayana. Accordingly it is appropriate that a systematic and critical examination of the historical record should be made in order to provide a historical narrative and analysis of the fate of Carib populations during the period of this dramatic transition, which was virtually completed in Spanish territories by the end of the 18th century. In this manner the variety of social pressures exerted on Carib groups of the Orinoco Basin can be uncovered and the origins of their current plight made clearer. As Kloos has written:

The evolution of Carib society has ... seen three stages: (1) villages as part of political alliances, (2) isolated villages, (3) villages as part of a national state. This study is largely about the transition from (2) to (3). Our understanding of stage (1) is still very shallow. (1971:p.262)

It is intended that this thesis should deepen our understanding of the transition from stage (1) to stage (2).

Alongside this general aim of recovering a portion of Carib history this thesis also addresses itself to a number of specific historical issues commonly associated with the Caribs, (i.e.) cannibalism, slave-taking and the

operation of an anti-Spanish, pro-Dutch alliance. Drummond has written of this association:

... the historical process that so thoroughly "deculturated" the Carib in the Guianas and the Caribbean also created a vivid image or ethnic stereotype that has had considerable appeal to the popular imagination. (1977:p.78)

This stereotype, well expressed by Brett when he describes the Caribs as:

... the cannibal Vikings of the West, [who] were found, by the companions and successors of Columbus, spreading terror and desolation over very distant shores. (1868:p.456)

has remained a potent enough image to be of sociological significance today, and, on occasion, has even appealed to professional anthropologists. For example, Rouse, Gillin and Steward, in their articles for the Handbook of South American Indians on the, so-called- Island Carib<sup>2</sup> and the Caribs of the Guayana area, all appear content to accept at face value the lurid Spanish reports, starting with Columbus, which portray these groups as bloodthirsty, savage and cruel eaters of human flesh in contrast to the allegedly peaceful, humane and, even, noble Arawaks.

Accordingly it was felt that the historical basis of this stereotype should be examined with the aim of showing, firstly, that there has been a tendency to accept uncritically Spanish allegations of Carib cannibalism and that such allegations must also be understood as a form of imperial propaganda, since such accusations were made against many independent Amerindian groups, at least until their reduction had been achieved. Similarly many such accusations must be judged as simply self-serving since the legal position of any Amerindians considered to be cannibals was such that they were liable to arbitrary enslavement. However, it is also argued that not all such allegations can be dismissed out of hand as there is also the evidence from non-Spanish sources as to the taking of human trophies and the ritual cannibalism of war captives among both Carib and other Amerindian groups.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, it is argued that the significance of Carib slaving in the

Guayana area has to be judged in the context of the involvement of many other Amerindian groups, for the European presence itself changed the nature of inter-tribal relations by intensifying Amerindian raiding for economic and political gain. Moreover, Carib groups were themselves destabilised by this process since there were very great differences between indigenous and European notions of slavery. Thus the Amerindians ultimately integrated their captives, as wives or poitos (see Chapter I p.83 and Chapter V, note 29, p.346, p.329), into the kinship network, while the Europeans treated their slaves little better than animals, exploiting and discarding them as their economic usefulness dictated.

Thirdly, it is argued that the Dutch alliance with the Caribs, born out of the strategic importance of Carib populations to the Dutch in this area, was the central factor in sustaining and increasing Carib influence in the Orinoco Basin, and by proxy that of the Dutch themselves. This being achieved through the trading of European manufactures, especially metal tools, among the Amerindians of the interior. However, it is also shown that this alliance ultimately only really benefited the Dutch since it was found to be politically expedient to limit its operation, once the economic importance of the trade in forest products had declined, and at a point in time when the Spanish missionaries were advancing into the heartland of traditional Carib territories.

More generally speaking it is shown that all the European colonising projects in this area were heavily dependent on Amerindian aid, their success or failure often being directly related to the disposition of the indigenous population.

In this manner it is intended that our knowledge should be extended beyond the crude Carib stereotype, mentioned above, and the actual relation between the historic and the modern Carib populations be explained.

Finally this thesis also addresses itself to the demography and

settlement patterns of the Caribs during the period 1498-1771. Demographic analysis focuses on three features in particular:

- 1) an estimate of Carib population at contact, using both documentary and ethnographic evidence;
- 2) an analysis of population decline in the pre-mission era (c.1498-1700);
- 3) the demographic effects of mission work amongst the Caribs (c.1700-1816).

It is argued that aboriginal Carib population was in the region of 100,000 persons, in the area under study, declining, by 1816, to around 10,000 persons. The main cause of this decline is identified as the introduction of Old World diseases. Smallpox, measles and various respiratory infections being the predominant cause of death in the first two centuries of contact, after which time the tropical fevers, introduced largely as a result of the mass transportation of African blacks to Guayana, also appear in the historical record. The contrasting death rates of periods 2) and 3) are explained by reference to the increasing contact with the Europeans in the 18th century, often as a result of the concentration of the Amerindian population at mission sites.

In conjunction with this analysis Carib settlement patterns are also discussed since the European intrusion, intermittently as traders and slavers, more permanently as missionaries, planters and ranchers, had a traceable impact on the distribution of Carib groups.

However, as Colson has pointed out (1971:p.62, quoted p.103 below), not all groups would have experienced such contacts simultaneously and it is shown that, in just this manner, different Carib groups, from the Orinoco llanos and Guarapiche, the forests of the Orinoco south bank and the region between the Sierra Imataca and Essequibo were subjected to a variety of social

pressures throughout this period and reacted in different ways. The inference here being that present levels of deculturation and patterns of settlement express the net effect of the historical processes described in this thesis.

Yet some ethnographers appear to have been unaware of such factors.

For example, Gillin writes of the Barama River Caribs that:

... some European cultural influence has trickled through. However, continued and intensive contact must be present to affect radically the lives of these people who live in the depths of the forest. (1936:p.108)

It is a pervasive theme of this thesis that such radical contact had indeed already taken place, which is precisely why Gillin found this group isolated '... in the depths of the forest'.

#### Who were the Caribs?

Having outlined the arguments that this thesis will advance there remains the question as to the exact identity of the people it concerns. Thus a central question that emerges in the consideration of the historical material is whether or not the people mentioned as 'Caribs' were in fact a socially and linguistically discrete group, who may be considered direct ancestors of the modern Caribs (or Karinya), or whether the word 'Carib' was simply a European category, used to describe a wide variety of Amerindian groups related only by the uniformly bad treatment that they received at the hands of the Spanish and the evil image given to them by the Spanish chroniclers.

These alternatives do not completely exclude one another and there are important factors to be considered in each case. Thus there are a number of reasons for doubting that 'Carib' history can simply be equated with the history of the modern Karinya:

- i) ethnographically speaking, there may have been few criteria by which the first Europeans would have been able to

distinguish between various Carib-speaking groups, or, indeed, between Carib speakers and those of a different linguistic affiliation. Drummond (1977) has shown that just such a situation pertains in the Pomeroon River today.

- ii) there is little evidence to show that the 'Caribs' were united by any form of inter-village organisation or wide-spread social institution. Thus allegations of cannibalism and anti-Spanish attitudes were often sufficient grounds for a group to be designated as 'Caribe'.
- iii) given the above consideration, it is undeniable that Spanish actions and attitudes were themselves largely responsible for the creation of a Carib stereotype (see above). Thus in the course of conquest a 'Carib' identity was created and reinforced by the special treatment meted out by the Spaniards to certain Amerindian groups.
- iv) 'Carib' society was, demonstrably, not contiguous with a given language. The 'Caribs' of the Lesser Antilles are well known to have had Arawak-speaking wives (see Note 2), while the Jesuit, Bernard Rotella, records (BGB:BC:APII: p.165) that reduced Amerindians, regardless of linguistic affiliation, were encouraged to become 'Caribs', via contact with Carib groups. Thus it was Rotella's belief that such Amerindians once they intermarried and/or traded with Carib groups, tended to adopt also their social attitudes which, in his view meant that they became anti-Spanish and pro-Dutch. Clearly then, there was a tendency, on the part of the Spanish, to brand some recalcitrant Indians as 'Caribs', regardless of the language they spoke.

However, there are also good reasons for thinking that the 'Caribs' were a more homogeneous group than such considerations imply. Thus:

- i) there is good evidence for the linguistic identity of the populations with whose history this thesis is concerned. Civrieux (1976:p.876) argues that a comparison of 'Carib' grammars and vocabularies from the Orinoco (Ximenez: in Goeje, 1909), Guarapiche (Pelleprat: 1655) and Yuruari River valley (Taradell: 1755) shows that the language is similar, very widespread in the era of the conquest and offering few differences from modern Karinya. Similarly Hoff (1968:p.12) writes concerning Humboldt's estimates of the number of 'Caribes' in Spanish missions at the end of the 18th century:

One wonders if the missionaries who supplied Von Humboldt with this information may have regarded as 'Caribes' not only Caribs (kari'na) but also speakers of related languages, or even anti-Spanish Indians in general. Von Humboldt, however, reports that these Indians spoke one language, that they did not want people who spoke other languages in the missions inhabited by themselves, and that their language was one and the same from Cumana' to the Rio Branco. From the quality of writings on Carib by Ximenez and De Taradell it may safely be inferred that the missionaries of that period were capable of distinguishing Carib from related languages or from mission jargon.

- ii) from the 16th century onwards all historical sources are consistent in their identification of 'Carib' populations in the areas of the Guarapiche, Orinoco north and south banks and east of the Sierra Imataca, and in distinguishing these groups from surrounding peoples, often members of the same language family. The 'Carib' groups of these areas were the source of the mission populations among whom

Pelleprat, Ximenez and Taradell wrote their grammars. For Civrieux the distinctiveness of these groups and their missions is reflected in the fact that:

The criollos of the Alto Llano and Orinoco tributaries apply exclusively the name 'Carib' to the Kariña, as did the Spaniards at the time of conquest. (1976:p.876)

- iii) these groups were the source of organised, effective and enduring opposition to the Spanish and can be distinguished in this role from the other Amerindian groups of this region.<sup>4</sup>

These indications of linguistic identity among the 'Carib' groups and their distinctiveness from neighbouring Amerindians are further supported by recent historical and ethnographic research on the other Carib-speakers of Guayana. Thus Colson (1983) has shown that much of the confusion over group identity has arisen because European commentators have conflated three distinct systems of naming used by the Amerindians, (i.e.) autodenominations, attributed names or nicknames and names with an ecological derivation. These naming systems also correspond to different structural segments of the Amerindian population.

At the level of autodenominations, or the ethnic unit, Colson identifies five existing in western Guayana today; the Karinya, Kapon, Pemon, Soto (Ye'cuana) and E'Nyepé (Panare). Within these maximal designations groups are identified by mutual nicknaming, Colson writes:

Nicknames are attributed names which express stereotypes and are a distinctive way of differentiation of groups of people considered to be different from one's own. When referring to their neighbours, when referring to each other and also when specifying internal divisions Pemon and Kapon do not use autodenominations but apply nicknames instead. (Ibid)

Colson cites the example of the name Pawana (pl. Pawanaton) attributed to the Soto by the Pemon and Kapon, meaning 'traders', a role for which the Soto are

well known in the trade systems of the Guayana Highlands (see also Colson: 1973). However, because this is a general nickname it may also be applied to other groups or, indeed, any given trade partner. Thus there is evidence that the Piaroa, an independent language group of the mid-Orinoco with whom the Pemon and Kapon have no direct contact, are also referred to by this name, although '... the real Pawanaton' are undoubtedly the Soto.

One further level of group distinction is the locality. Ecological in their derivation, Colson has identified four that are currently in use among the Kapon and Pemon, (viz.) Teikok, meaning savanna or rock people, Remonokok, meaning people of the plains, Inkarikok, meaning people of the highlands or forest and Ikenkok, meaning people of the river confluence (i.e. trading place). It is possible that confusion over the identity of the Pariagotos and Guayanos (see above, note 4) might relate to this type of naming since Pariagoto literally means 'people of Paria'.

As far as the Caribs are concerned Colson notes that:

In the Guianas at least, it may prove that the Kariña (Caribs) are unique in that their autodenomination as a people, (or variants of it), seems to have been in general use, and this despite their dispersal into farflung groups even at the time of first contact with the Europeans on the mainland. (1983).

Nonetheless that fluidity of group boundaries that Colson highlights among the Kapon and Pemon certainly occurred in the past (e.g. see above, discussion of the views of the Jesuit Bernard Rotella) and social practices, such as raiding for women and inter-marriage with trading partners, would have meant that Carib groups were far from sealed off from other Amerindian groups.

In short, while bearing in mind the possible ambiguity of some early identifications of 'Carib' groups, as well as the lack of any hard and fast boundaries between Amerindian groups, there are nonetheless good reasons for remaining confident that this designation was used to refer to a distinct

element in the Amerindian population.

If then a case can be made for the linguistic identity and distinctiveness of the 'Caribs' in history and as ancestors of the modern Karinya, it is also true that, while the Karinya developed from these historical 'Carib' populations, when one considers the conquest and demographic collapse of these people, there is probably little genetic and sociological continuity between the historical and modern Carib. Equally the sociological distinctiveness of the 'Caribs' in the era of the conquest, in so far as it existed at all, was a direct result of the European presence.

Thus we know from modern ethnography that the types of social structure found in the Guianas are limited (see, Colson: 1971) and there seems no reason to assume that there would have been greater variance in historical times, but, as Drummond writes:

The absence of sharp distinctions in the language and social organisation of the Arawak and Carib groups makes it tempting to speculate that it is precisely the lack of differentiation on the sociological level that encourages the Arawak and Carib to maintain an ideology of tribal identity. (1977:p.79)

As has been explained above, a major part of this thesis is directed towards an investigation of the historical events which formed such an ideology among the Caribs, with the aim of elucidating its material conditions, i.e. Spanish repression and access, over and above most other groups, to European goods, especially those of the Dutch.

In sum, the 'Caribs' may be considered to have been distinctive not in virtue of their social structure or material culture, nor solely in virtue of an emergent ideology but also on account of their shared language and history.

## Thesis Structure

In Chapter I the full evidence for Carib distinctiveness and identity is discussed in detail. Starting with the first reports of Columbus and the Spanish Crown's attempts to produce an official classification of the Amerindian population the early identifications of caribes are discussed in conjunction with the more detailed reports of the 17th century, which emerged as European penetration of the Orinoco region increased. Having established the historic distribution of the Caribs, the early demography of these populations is examined in order to provide the context in which their society is to be understood. Modern ethnography, archaeological evidence and the documentary sources are then used to reconstruct the economic, political and social life of these Caribs.

Chapters II and III then provide a narrative and analysis of the major events in the contact between the Caribs and the Europeans, from the arrival of Columbus, in 1498, until the date of the founding of the last Carib mission, in 1771, which effectively signals the end of Carib autonomy in this region. In addition, Chapter III also examines the fate of those Caribs that were taken into the missions, since this institution was such a crucial factor in the Spanish colonial occupation of the Orinoco and the demographic decline that occurred amongst the Caribs in this period is such a crucial factor in understanding the nature of the changes that their society has undergone in its transition to the modern era.

In Chapters II and III reference is continually made to the role of the Dutch and, accordingly, this is fully explored in Chapter IV, which also examines some of the more important features of the Dutch-Carib alliance within Essequibo itself. Thus, as will have become clear in Chapters II and

III, Carib opposition to the Spanish occupation of the Orinoco cannot properly be understood without examining the origins and development of this alliance, nor, indeed, can the reasons for the final Spanish defeat of that opposition be explained without reference to the changing conditions of Dutch-Carib relations in the 18th century.

Finally, in Chapter V two of the key elements in the formation of the Carib stereotype - cannibalism and slave-taking - are discussed in order to place them in their proper context, as will have been elucidated in the foregoing chapters. However, the relative weight given to these issues in this thesis is as much the result of European pre-occupations and misconceptions about these practices as it is a reflection of the importance such customs had in traditional Carib society. Nonetheless these customs are no longer observable today and as such merit consideration since they provide a particularly strong point of contrast between historic and modern Carib populations.

NOTES

1. It will become apparent from the text that the term 'Guayana' has a variety of renderings and designations. The Spanish term Guayana, which has been adopted here, is used to refer to the geographical unit between the Amazon and Orinoco, some authors, however, prefer the term 'Guiana' or 'the Guianas'.

'Guyana', where it appears, refers to the political unit which was formerly British Guiana and before that the Dutch enclaves of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice.

2. There has often been confusion as to the identity of the 'Island Caribs', or Kalinago, and their relation to the Caribs of the mainland, or Karinya. However, recent commentators (Dreyfus:1982, Hoff:1968) make it clear that while the language spoken by the 'Island Caribs', and still used today in Central America, had many lexical borrowings from Karinya, its syntax is Arawakan, Taino being the dialect of the Island Arawak and Lokono that of their mainland cousins.

Thus although this Arawakan Kalinago was the language spoken by everyone in the 'Carib Antilles', the men also made use of Karinya words in private meetings and councils. Dreyfus (Ibid:p.5) even mentions a third, probably archaic, language that was spoken by men who were formerly war-chiefs during their gatherings. Women were not supposed to understand or participate in these "men's affairs" and this exclusive "men's speech" was also the language used during trade expeditions to the mainland. Fock (1963:p.221) has pointed out that, even today, such ceremonial dialogue is practised by many tropical forest peoples. Called the oho chant among the Wai-Wai there are also many examples from the historical record (see Fock, N., "Wai Wai - Religion and Society of an Amazonian Tribe", Copenhagen, 1963, p.226; and p.110, note 55 below).

3. Recent historical research on the Tupi peoples of Brazil (Forsyth:1983), who had many demonstrable cultural links with their Carib neighbours to the north (Hoff:1968:p.13), confirms this analysis. Forsyth writes:

... anthropophagy was an integral part of Tupian cultural practice. (1983:p.147)

4. See Map 1 for identification of the principal Amerindian groups of the region. The map was based on the following sources: Carrocera:1979; Civrieux:1976, 1980; Colson:1983; Gillin:1948; Kirchhoff:1948(b); Migliazza:1980; Thomas:1982.

The terms Akawaio (which also sometimes appears as Waika or Guaica in the historical record) and Patamona refer to those groups who employ the autodenomination Kapon and the terms Arecuna, Macushi, Kamarkoto and Taurepan to those groups who employ the autodenomination Pemon (after Colson:1983).

The Paria or Pariagotos (the suffix '-goto' simply meaning 'people' in the Carib language) are sometimes identified with the Guayanos, since they appear to have shared the same language (Carrocera:1979:p.xiv). These and other groups that appear on this map are further discussed in the text as appropriate.

## CHAPTER I

### CARIB POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHY - 1500 to 1700

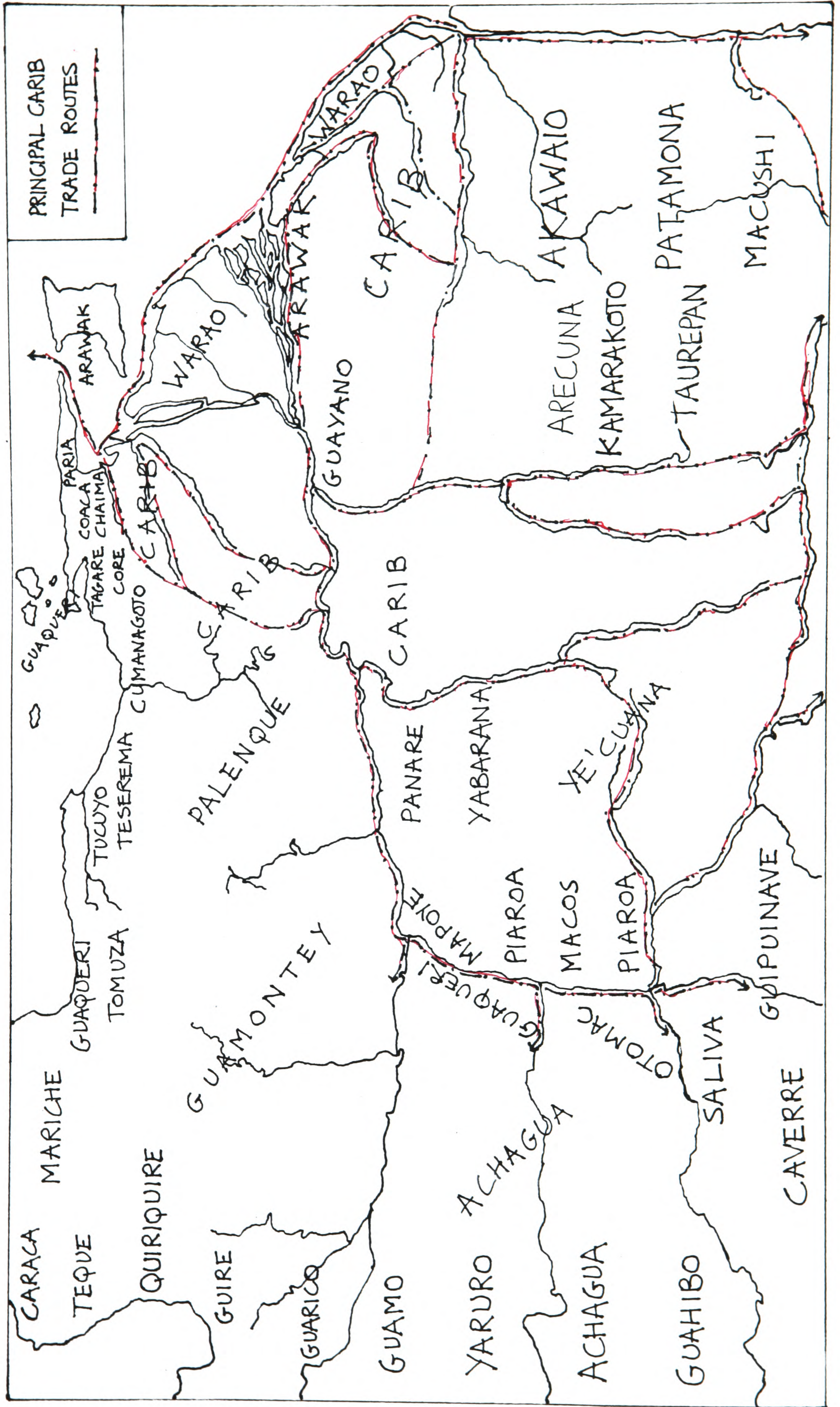
#### i) First Reports on the Extent of Carib Settlement

Some indication of the probable spread of Carib settlement and that of other groups of the Orinoco basin, at the time of first contact, is given in the relevant map (see below). The documentary evidence supporting this map, and the growth of European knowledge concerning this Amerindian distribution, will now be discussed.

The earliest reports of Carib populations, outside of the Antilles, come from the Paria Gulf, mid-Orinoco and Guayana in the early 16th century, although it is not until nearly a century later that substantial confirmation of Carib settlement in these areas is provided, by the explorations of Antonio de Berrio and Walter Raleigh. Thereafter our picture of Carib settlement becomes steadily more detailed as the penetration of the Orinoco basin by other colonial powers increases, culminating with the advance of the missionary orders in the late 17th century and early 18th century, from whose records some of the most precise information on Carib populations is derived. However, as the concern here is to describe Carib populations before permanent European intrusion into the region, the records of the missions, and the demographic effect of their presence, will be discussed later (see Chap.III).

Most early Spanish descriptions of this area are concerned more with the location of gold or, to a lesser extent the agricultural potential of the land, than with detailed ethnographic accounts of the inhabitants. Columbus, who was the first European to land in this area<sup>1</sup>, noted the presence of gold and pearls but gave no other clue as to the identity of the inhabitants. Nonetheless, the lure of the pearl encouraged various expeditions, from Hispaniola and Spain, to the north coast of Venezuela and beyond, over the next few decades. It is from these early expeditionaries that the first indications of the culture and identity of the Amerindians are received.

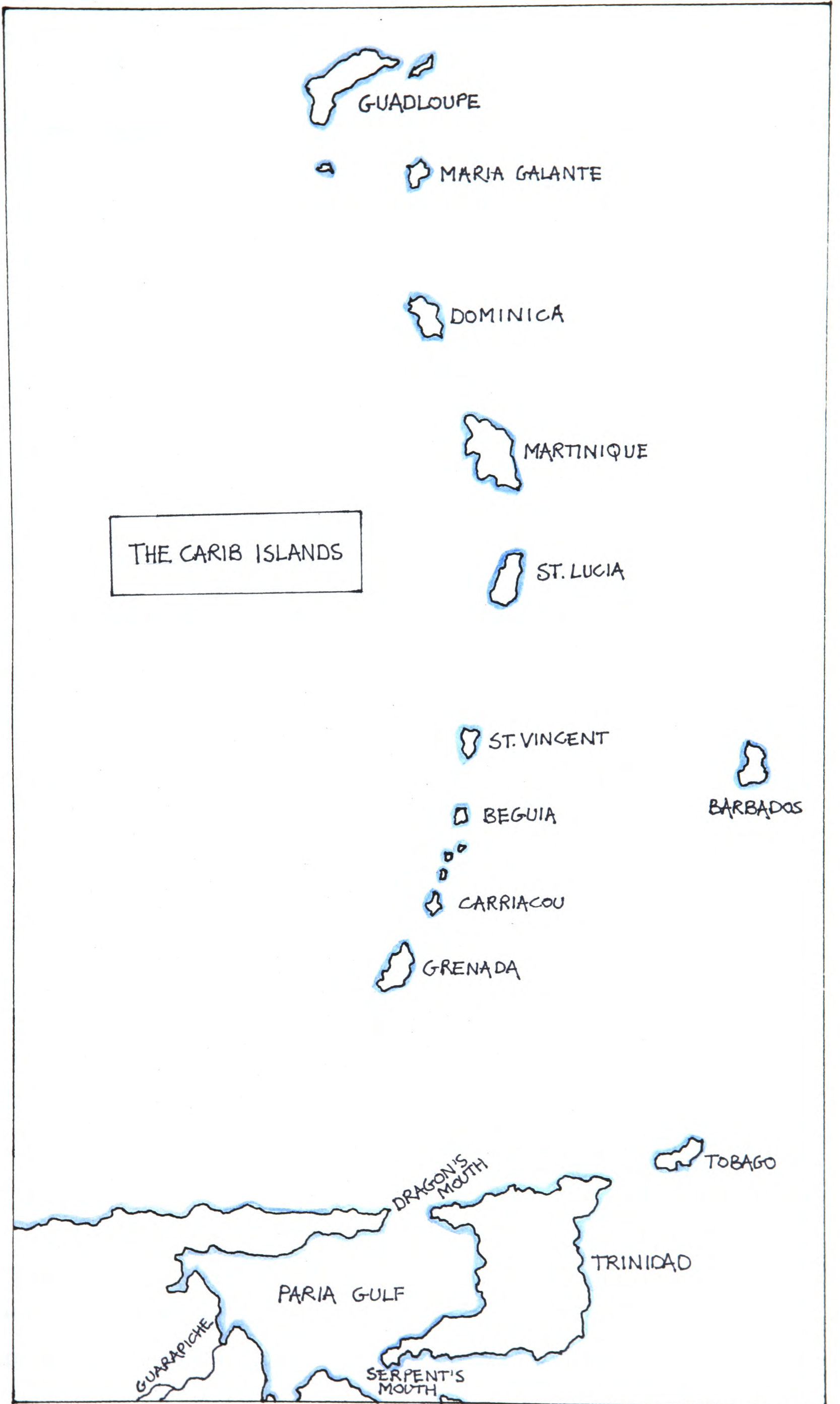
MAP I



However, as has already been indicated<sup>2</sup>, Columbus also initiated a controversy as to the identification of Amerindians as caribes or canibals, making the interpretation of early reports of carib populations highly problematic. Indeed, during the reforms of Cardinal Cisneros in Spain, the distinction between carib and non-carib populations became a serious concern for the Spanish Crown and, in 1518, Rodrigo de Figueroa was appointed a judge, with plenary powers, to produce a definitive classification of Amerindian cultures, throughout those territories known to the Spanish (Sauer: 1966:p.195).

The concern of the Crown in this matter arose from the desire to regulate the use of Amerindian labour by the colonists, who, due to Queen Isabella's decree of 1503, were able to take into slavery any Amerindian considered to be a 'carib'. In this context Figueroa collected a series of declarations and testimonies, from various witnesses, as to the sodomy, cannibalism and general barbarity of 'carib' groups (AGI:J:47:f.I-59) and within two years produced his report (AGI:DI:Vol.I:p.380).

However, the potential value of the classification, for the purposes of identifying Carib groups, is seriously undermined by a consideration of the wider context of Spanish priorities in this region and the way in which these affected Figueroa's classification. For example, Trinidad was first declared to be 'carib' in 1511, by a Real Cedula of the 23rd December, under pressure from the colonists of Santo Domingo for an increased labour force. Then, following the intervention of the cleric, Las Casas, Trinidad was excluded from Figueroa's classification of 1518 (Las Casas, 1875:Vol.III:p.390), though it has been pointed out that, as in the meantime, gold had been reported from the island, the change in the status of Trinidad's Amerindians might be seen as reflecting a desire to preserve a native labour force, in situ, for use in future mining operations (Sued-Badillo, 1978:p.80). Such a conjecture certainly seems plausible in light of the fact that, when the gold failed to materialise and Antonio Sedeño was given permission to colonise the island in 1530, Trinidad was, once again, declared 'carib', by a Real Cedula of the 13th of September of



THE CARIB ISLANDS

GUADLOUPE

MARIA GALANTE

DOMINICA

MARTINIQUE

ST. LUCIA

ST. VINCENT

BEGUIA

CARRIACOU

GRENADA

BARBADOS

TOBAGO

DRAGON'S MOUTH

TRINIDAD

PARIA GULF

GUARAPICHE

SERPENT'S MOUTH

MAP 2

that year. Equally, the strategic value of Trinidad was increased in this period by Spanish attempts to penetrate along the Orinoco, in search of the fabulous land of Meta, making an unhindered occupation of the island highly desirable.

Similar problems of classification occurred with the Pearl Islands of Coche, Cubagua and Margarita. Thus the pearl beds were not discovered until 1512, after which the population was declared 'non-carib' and therefore free from the depredations of slavers and transportation to the mines of the Antilles, as they had been previously. However, under pressure from the mine owners of Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo, Figueroa declared the coast 'carib' once again (Sued-Badillo:Ibid:p.81, Otte:1977:p.356).

Clearly then, early reports of 'carib' populations have to be treated and interpreted carefully. Though Figueroa seems to have adjudicated properly in other areas, notably the Lesser Antilles, in the case of Venezuela and Trinidad, he did not.

Other early indications of Carib populations are very sparse and most descriptions classify the Amerindian population only according to their hostility (or otherwise) to the Spanish presence, in the tradition of Columbus. Since most Spanish activity in the early 16th century was confined to the immediate coast and lower reaches of the Orinoco<sup>3</sup>, it is probable that they were largely unaware of Carib populations on the llanos and throughout Guayana. Similarly, in view of Spanish treatment of Amerindians wherever there was contact, it is unlikely that the Caribs were solely responsible for the attacks on shipping and settlements for which they were continuously blamed. However, early chroniclers do not contradict the pattern of Carib occupation which later sources more clearly describe.

Fray Pedro de Aguado (1951:Book 4:p.376ff, written 1581), describing Antonio de Sedeño's occupation of Trinidad, in the 1530's, refers to the constant attacks that were suffered from the Amerindians of the mainland as well as Carib villages on Dominica (Ibid:p.460-2) and Trinidad itself (Ibid:p.480).

Similarly, Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes (1959:Vol.I:p.34,59, written 16th century) records the presence of Caribs in the region of the Paria Gulf and in communication with their 'brothers' on Dominica. Pedro Mártir de Angleria, based on interviews he held with travellers recently returned from the New World, also records the presence of Carib populations inland. He says that the gold necklaces the Spaniards traded for on Margarita were reputed to have come from the sierras to the south, "where the cannibals lived" (1912:I:Book 8: pp.76-7), while 'cannibal' fleets were often to be encountered in the Paria Gulf (Ibid:p.78).

A slightly later compilation of travellers reports, made by Vazquez de Espinosa in 1620, reflects the advance in geographic and ethnographic knowledge that resulted from the spate of expeditions to this area between 1580 and 1617. He locates Carib groups on the Orinoco mouth (1620:p.96) and Tobago (Ibid:p.149), though he also says that Arawak groups were in a majority here, as well as on the sea board as far as the Essequibo River, interspersed with Warao (Ibid:p.170). On the Orinoco itself, Guayano Indians were reported as living in the area of Santo Tomé and Carib groups as being settled from the Caroni to the Caura (Ibid:pp.172-3).

Carib populations were also to be found on the Guarapiche, Amacuro, and Barima Rivers, while, bordering Cumanagoto and Palenque Indians on the Guere and Unare Rivers, further Carib settlements were located, stretching across the llanos to the south (Ibid:pp.201-4,245-7).

Accounts of the expeditions of early voyagers<sup>4</sup> to these parts contain only a few hints as to the distribution of Carib populations but nonetheless provide some indication of other Amerindian groups in the area.

Close on the heels of Columbus an expedition under Alonso de Hojeda left Spain, in May 1499, reaching the New World some three weeks later. Exploring from the equator to the Paria Gulf, they passed along the coast of Guayana, observed the Essequibo River and made landfall on Trinidad and near the mouth of the Guarapiche River. They claimed to have encountered Carib<sup>5</sup>

populations in both places, with whom they had peaceful trade. Hojeda then continued eastwards as far as the island of Curaçao (Fernandez de Navarrette: 1829:Book III:pp.4-6, Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.71).

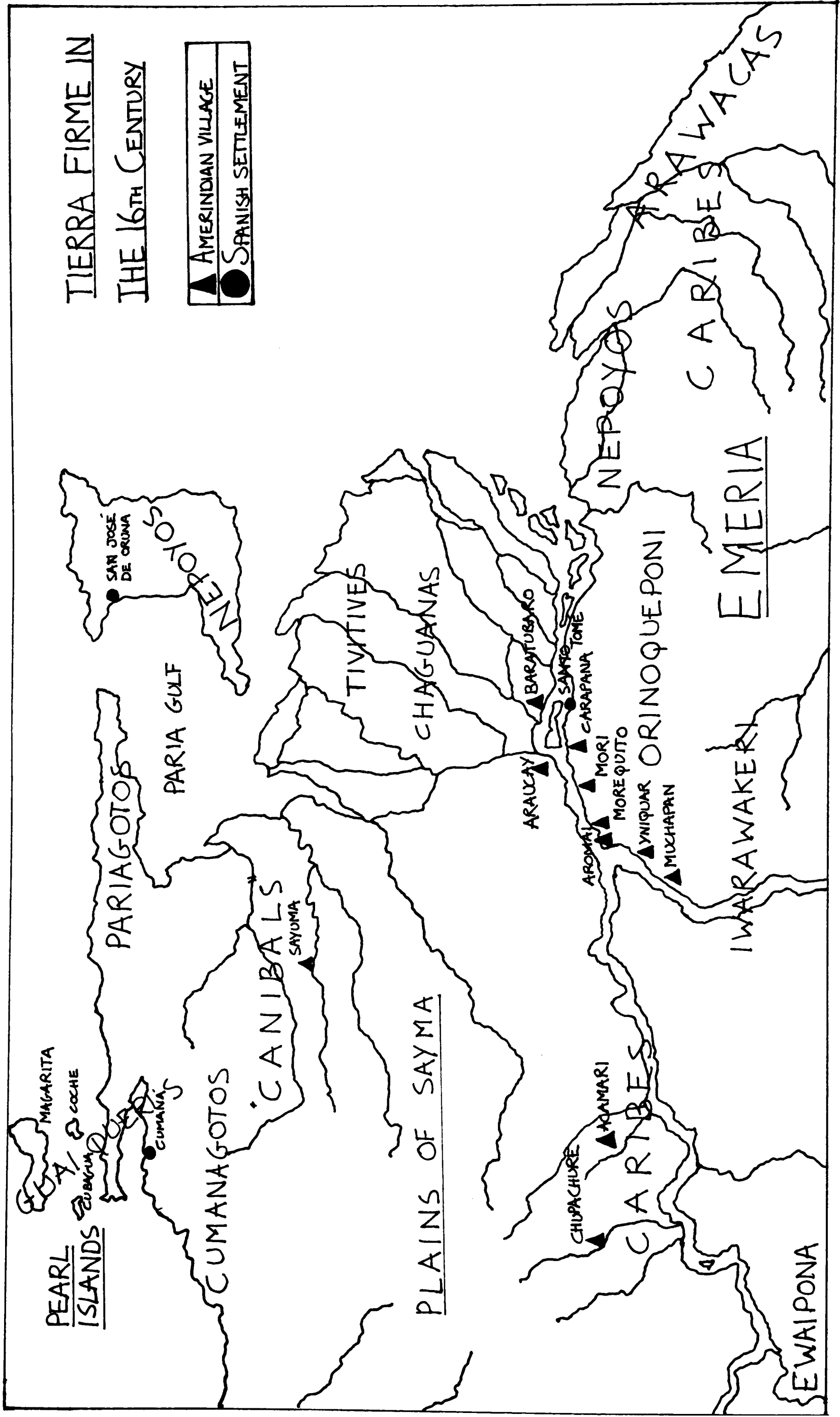
In the same year another expedition, under Cristobal Guerra, made landfall just south of the Paria peninsula after passing through the channel to the west of Trinidad, the 'Dragon's Mouth'. Here they encountered an Amerindian raiding party with freshly taken prisoners; the latter, having been freed by the Spanish, informed Guerra that the coasts were 'infested' with Caribs, who would have eaten them, as had already happened to some of those captured with them (Navarrette:Ibid:pp.11-33).

Both Guerra and Hojeda made return voyages within the following year but concentrated on an exploration of the northern coast of Venezuela, since the presence of pearls and gold ornaments promised more profit in this direction.

Accompanying Alonso de Hojeda on his first voyage was Americo Vesputio<sup>6</sup>, who recorded that the language of the Amerindians with whom they had traded was Caraibi. He also said that their villages contained up to 600 people and were moved every seven or eight years<sup>7</sup>. He also mentions an Amerindian village built on stilts above the water, '... como Venecia.', from which observation the name 'Venezuela' has been derived (Navarrette:Ibid:pp.200-33)<sup>8</sup>.

With the discovery of pearl beds off Margarita, in 1512, Spanish activity, for the next three decades, centred on the north coast of Venezuela and it was not until 1531 that any major expedition attempted to explore the lower reaches of the Orinoco or the delta. Undoubtedly Spanish shipping must have used the Paria Gulf but no record of what encounters they had with the indigenous population have survived, though, in view of the Amerindian rebellions in the Cumaná area, in 1516 and 1519 (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book XIX, Las Casas:1971:Book II), they were unlikely to have been entirely pacific.

The efforts of Antonio de Sedeño to colonise Trinidad in the 1530s have already been referred to and, in this context, statements that the population of Trinidad were;



TIERRA FIRME IN  
THE 16TH CENTURY

▲	AMERINDIAN VILLAGE
●	SPANISH SETTLEMENT

PEARL ISLANDS

MAGARITA

COCHE

CUMANAGOS

CUMANAGOTOS

CANIBALS

SAYUMA

PARIAGOTOS

PARIA GULF

NEPOYOS

TIVITIVES

CHAGUANAS

ARAUCA

BARATUSAKO

SANTO TOME

CARAPANA

AROMAI

MORI

MOREQUITO

YNIQUAR

MUCHAPAN

CHUPACHURE

ARAMARI

CARTIBES

IWARAWAKERI

EMERIA

NEPOYOS

CARTIBES

APALWACAS

EWAIPONA

PLAINS OF SAYMA

... carib archers ... very warlike people, naked idolators who eat human flesh. (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book I:p.387)

must be treated with the same caution as those of Rodrigo de Figueroa's classification.

In the same year, 1531, that Sedeño initiated his conquest of Trinidad, Diego de Ordás, leading a rival expedition, penetrated along the Orinoco, after a fruitless search for anchorage along the Guayana coast. He came upon a large Arawak village called Araucay (see map), containing some 200 houses, under nine chiefs and led by a 'chief-priest' (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.391). The chroniclers also refer to a Warao village, some four leagues (12 miles approx.) distant, called Baratubaro and another, whose inhabitants are not identified, called Uriaparia (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.393, Aguado:Ibid:Book 4:Chap.15, Simon:1963:Book I:Ch.XXI:p.180), containing over 400 large houses. Ordás also sent scouts into the Guayana foothills, but nothing is reported of the Amerindians they encountered there (Aguado:Ibid, Castellanos:1950:Elegia 9:Canto 2:Verse 2).

As Ordás penetrated further along the Orinoco he captured some Caribs on the river who informed him that the 'province of Meta'<sup>9</sup> was only just ahead and that there was a large Carib settlement, called Cabrutu, some two leagues inland (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Vol.I:Book 24:ch.III:p.394, Embid:1950:pp.80-8, Aguado:Ibid:Ch.2:p.421, Hemming:1978b:p.16). Unable to pass beyond the Atures and Maipures Rapids, Ordás returned, fighting a fierce battle with a Carib raiding party during his descent of the Orinoco. He never returned, dying at sea on his way back to Spain.

However, Ordás's treasurer, Jéronimo Dortal, did organise another attempt to reach the 'province of Meta', in 1534. His lieutenant, another ex-officer of Ordás, Alonso de Herrera, was sent ahead of the main party and died in a skirmish with Carib warriors (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book 24:p.411ff) and no additional information on the distribution of Amerindian settlements was gained. Similarly, the records of Dortal's subsequent attempt to discover the legendary province give no further information other than of those settlements

of the Orinoco mouth, already described and of a Carib settlement on the Pao River, under a cacique called Chupachure (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book 19:ch.XI:p.421, Aguado:Ibid:Book 5:ch.3-5, Ruiz:1959:pp.33-45).

Two later expeditions, under Diego Fernandez de Serpa and Pedro Maraver de Silva, also in search of 'Meta', both ended in disaster in 1568, due to hostility from the Amerindians and desertions among the Spanish (Hemming: 1978b:p.149, Ruiz:1959:p.42). Serpa and 74 of his men were killed in an ambush near Cabrutu, where Herrera had also died, on the 10th of May 1570. Silva though managed to return alive to Margarita, in the same year.

Another journey, rarely mentioned by modern historians, made by Jorge Griego, from Margarita to the Orinoco, foreshadows subsequent, and better known accounts by Antonio de Berrio and Walter Raleigh. Griego (AGI:SD:14:24/II/1583, to the Governor of Margarita) names two caciques of the Orinoco mouth, Carapan and Morequito. The former had a village, located inland, comprising 2000 persons and was said to rule over 'many more', while the latter ruled over a village of 4000 persons, called Chucopare. Griego also refers to another village, called Mori, of 1000 persons. These chiefs were apparently at war with the Caribs of the Orinoco, who raided them every year, sending flotillas of over forty pirogues.

Along the Orinoco proper Griego names various villages and their leaders; Paraguaqui, who led a village of 500, Yniquar, who led a Caroni village renowned for its gold trade, and Muchapan, leader of a village some two leagues further along the same river. These last two settlements may well have been Carib but no precise indications are given.

In the same year that Jorge Griego left Margarita, the famous conquistador, Antonio de Berrio, set out from Bogotá, intent on discovering the land of El Dorado, which he believed lay south of the Orinoco, and reached the Meta River by February 1584 (Ojer:1960:p.40ff). All along this river, as far as the junction with the Orinoco, he encountered Achagua Indians, with whom he traded peacefully at first. However, in April, they were attacked by

the Achagua and crossed to the southern side of the Orinoco, as soon as they reached it. Here they camped for some months, without locating El Dorado, and returned to Bogotá by the end of 1585.

Berrío's second expedition also faltered as fruitless months were spent in searching the savannas south of the Orinoco for guidance as to the location of El Dorado. The expedition was often attacked by the Amerindians but no indication is given as to their identity (Ojer:Ibid:pp.60-3, Hemming:1978b:pp.154-5).

The third time Berrío left Bogotá, in March 1590, he travelled to the Orinoco without incident and spent the rainy season on the lower Cuchivero River among Amaigoto Indians. A letter from Berrío to the King of Spain (BGB:BC:API:p.2,1593) describing his subsequent descent of the Orinoco, gives some further detail on Amerindian settlements and, in part, confirms the earlier information of Jorge Griego. Berrío tells of the activity of Carib warriors along the Orinoco and says he was informed that;

... in descending the Orinoco I should find great settlements of Caribs, and lower still I should find a great river, which is called Caroni ... where there is a chief called Morquita. (Ibid:p.2)

He also relates that he travelled some distance in the company of Caribs from the Barima River and made contact with a chief called Carapana.

A report made by Captain Philip de Santiago, one of Berrío's companions, to the Treasurer of Cumaná, in 1595 (BGB:BC:API:p.10), gives further details. Caribs and Arawaks are reported as inhabiting the Orinoco in numerous, large settlements. In particular, beyond the Orinoco mouth;

... the Province of Guayana is reached, and one of them that is entered is the province of Morequito. Having passed this province one arrives at the large Indian town of the natives of Guayana, of the extent and riches of which so much is heard, and of so favourable a character, that great hopes are entertained of it. (Ibid:p.9)

Further up river the 'Province of Caura' was reported as being;

... very fertile and inhabited by a great number of natives. Although Caribs, they are friendly towards the Spaniards, and disposed to serve them<sup>10</sup>, on which account it appears to be a

good site for the second settlement of the Spanish<sup>11</sup>. (Ibid:p.10)

Another of Berrio's officers, Domingo de Vera y Iburguen, after Berrio had founded San José de Oruña on Trinidad, was sent to trade with Morequito and Carapana and then investigate the lower Caroni. He reported that the river was very populous, the villages increasing in size as the expedition ascended, but gave no clear indication of who these Amerindians were (BGB:BC:API:p.15).

Walter Raleigh, who later seized Antonio de Berrio and his town of San José de Oruña, made, perhaps, the most detailed description of the Orinoco at this time. On Trinidad itself, he identified Arawak settlements in the vicinity of San José de Oruña, as well as Carinepagotos (1868:p.4), probably a Carib group. On the Guanipa River he said there were 'canibal' settlements, closely linked with those of Dominica (Ibid:pp.27,44). He named the province of Carapana, already identified by both Jorge Griego and Antonio de Berrio, as Emeria. Raleigh further wrote;

... In his youth he was sent by his father into the land of Trinidad, by reason of civil war among themselves, and was bred at a village, in that land, called Parico ... he also held peace with the Caribes or Canibals, his neighbours, and had free trade with all nations whosoever else had war ... (Ibid:p.35)<sup>12</sup>

Raleigh also informs us of the cacique Morequito of whom he says that;

... no man could deliver so much of Guiana as Morequito could. (Ibid:36)

and that Morequito had even been feasted, for this reason, by the Spanish on Margarita. Morequito's people are referred to as the Orinoqueponi.

According to Raleigh, the Spanish were also on close terms with Carib groups on the Barima, Pomeroon and Essequibo Rivers, where they traded for slaves and provisions (Ibid:p.39) and he describes the people that he traded with on the 'River of the Red Cross' (Cano Manamo) as follows;

Those people which dwell in these broken lands and drowned lands are generally called Tivitives<sup>13</sup>, there are of them two sorts, the one called Crawani, and the other Waraweete. (Ibid:p.48)

Of the Orinoco itself Raleigh says;

Those nations which are called Arwacas which dwell on the south side of Orenoque ... are dispersed in many other places. (Ibid:p.52)

in particular he mentions the village of Arowaci, on the north bank, seen by Berrio and Griego as being inhabited by Nepoyos<sup>14</sup> who were '... followers of Carapana'.

To the north of the Orinoco Raleigh identified, along with the 'canibals of Guanipa', a large Carib settlement between the Cari and Limon Rivers, which he calls Acamari<sup>15</sup>, and which was an important trade centre, especially for Arawak groups, who came here to buy slaves for re-sale in the Antilles, and another large Carib settlement on the Amana River called Sayuma. In fact he called the entire northern llanos the Plains of Sayma, possibly reflecting the importance of Carib settlement in this area (Ibid:pp.107,87).

To the south of the Orinoco, in the region of Morequito's village, Raleigh informs us that it was some 14 miles to the village of Aromai, where the cacique, Topiawari, was Morequito's uncle (Ibid:p.73). Topiawari was engaged in a struggle with the Epuremei, said to be the rulers of El Dorado, and he complained to Raleigh that;

... whereas they were wont to have ten or twelve wives, they were now forced to content themselves with three or four, and that the lords of Epuremei had fifty or a hundred. And, in truth, they war more for women than gold or dominion. For the lords of countries desire many children of their own bodies, to increase their races and kindreds, for in those consist their greatest trust and strength. (Ibid:pp.73-4)

Beyond the settlements of the Arawacas, mentioned above, Raleigh simply states that there were canibals, the Iwarawakeri living on the Caroni left bank and the fearsome Ewaipona dominating the Caura River (Ibid:pp.84-5), with the Cassepagotos, Eparegotos and Arawgotos inhabiting the higher reaches.

In general, says Raleigh, Arawak and Carib groups were to be found from the Orinoco to the Amazon (Ibid:p.104).

Contemporary with Walter Raleigh's exploration of the Orinoco region, another Englishman, Lawrence Keymis, was leading an expedition along the Guayana

coast. During this voyage he enumerated the rivers from the Orinoco to the Amazon, indicating also those Amerindian groups that he found in their lower reaches. According to this list, later confirmed in a similar compilation made by Robert Harcourt while attempting to found a colony on the Oyapock River, in 1609, the Mazaruni, Cuyuni, Waini, Barima, Amacura, Arature, Epanamoo(?), Imataca, Guanipa and Guarapiche Rivers were said to be inhabited by Caribs, while the Essequibo, Pomeroon, Moruca and Orinoco Rivers were said to be dominated by Arawak groups (Keymis:1904;Harcourt:1928:pp.184-5).

By the middle of the 17th century this pattern of occupation still existed, but with two apparent changes. Firstly, though perhaps merely reflecting better intelligence on the part of the Spanish, the distribution of the Orinoco Caribs extended further along the south bank and, secondly, due to French activity, immigrant Carib groups from the Lesser Antilles had settled among their mainland kin. Thus, following the information of the Dominican cleric, Jacinto de Caravajal (1648), the Caribs had settlements dotted along the whole length of the Orinoco, from the Atures Rapids to the sea, including some islands of the Delta. Specifically he mentions Carib groups living at the Atures, at Carichama (near the mouth of the Meta) and confirms Carib settlement on the lower Caura, Pao and Caris Rivers.

To the north, on the Mesa de Guanipa, he mentions groups as being settled on the Guarapiche, Tigre and Amana Rivers. East of the Sierra Imataca, he says the Caribs were settled on the Essequibo, Amacuro, Aguirre, Cuyuni and Barima Rivers.

Among the Carib groups fleeing the Antilles he identified the Galeras, who had invaded the Punta de Galera on Trinidad, the Dragos, who had settled islands in the Paria Gulf and Orinoco delta, and the Tobagos, Caribs from Dominica and Grenada living on Tobago.

Thus it can be seen that by the early 17th century a fairly clear idea of the pattern of Carib settlement was emerging, albeit over a century after the first visit of Columbus to this area<sup>16</sup>. In this context the picture of

Carib settlement that we have by this time cannot be simply equated with the situation before the arrival of the Europeans. Indeed, the European presence itself had an important impact on Amerindian settlement patterns, primarily through trading and the introduction of Old World diseases. The biological effect of this European intrusion will be discussed in the next section, when the size of Amerindian populations is also examined, but something first needs to be said on the sociological effects of this presence.

### The Sociological Effects of European Intrusion

In the sources reviewed above and the numerous routine reports on the Amerindians being made to the Spanish authorities throughout this period (e.g. see, AGI:SD:179:14/1/1603;SD:187:29/3/1605) there are undoubted inconsistencies. For example, the descriptions of Harcourt and Keymis do not entirely tally with, either, the accounts of Berrio and Raleigh, or, with later documents, particularly of Dutch origin. Similarly, while many Spanish documents casually refer to Caribs 'infesting' the coasts of Tierra Firme, there is no actual evidence of Carib settlements being located on the Caribbean littoral. This may be explained, in part, by the fact that, while the Caribs were settled on the Orinoco, eastern llanos and foothills of the Sierra Imataca, Carib pirogues were, nonetheless, highly active throughout the whole of this area, undoubtedly giving the impression that Carib settlement was far more extensive than was, in fact, the case and, perhaps, encouraging the inference that such a maritime people must, perforce, have also been coastal dwellers.

Equally, it must be remembered that the description caribe was applied, initially, to many anti-Spanish Amerindian groups, though with greater and greater discernment as Spanish penetration of this region increased. Thus, by the 1620s, the Spanish were no longer referring to caribe groups on the northern coast of Venezuela at all but, more correctly, to Cumanagotos, Parias and Guaiqueris<sup>17</sup>.

The documentary evidence from the period before stable and continuous European occupation suggests, if anything, that the Caribs tended to settle the middle reaches of rivers, with the Arawak or Warao tending to occupy the mouth and immediate sea-board. Such a pattern of settlement would also explain the apparent inconsistencies between the enumerations of Harcourt and Keymis and other contemporary accounts, as well as later, more detailed descriptions. Indeed, Harcourt himself informs us that the Caribs had only recently driven out other Amerindian groups from parts of Trinidad and '... the borders of Orenoque', causing others along the Guyanese coast to seek military alliances, but that;

...with the Charibus inhabiting the inland parts upon the mountains they have, as yet, no peace at all: for they does often times come down upon them in great numbers, spoil and burn their houses, kill the men and carry away the women, which is the greatest cause of war and hatred amongst them. (Ibid:p.86)

Similarly, although the Essequibo River was reported, by both Harcourt and Keymis, to be dominated by the Arawaks, a report made to the Dutch West India Company, in 1624, states that;

It /the Essequibo River/ is inhabited by Caribs and Arawaks. The Caribs inhabit the upper part of the river and the Arawaks the lower part. (BGB:BC:API:p.60)

So too, the description of the Orinoco supplied by Raleigh makes it clear that, although dubbed 'Arawak' by Keymis and Harcourt, the Caribs were an important group settled on this river. Although the large Arawak settlements they all refer to had disappeared by the mid-17th century.

However, the sources are neither consistent nor numerous enough to suggest that this was an invariable settlement pattern and the European presence itself affected the situation considerably.

The most significant result, in terms of the present discussion, was the way in which some Amerindian groups, particularly the Arawak, proved anxious to locate semi-permanent villages within a stone's throw of the European colonists, while the Caribs, even when close relations proved to be

of advantage, tended to maintain a higher degree of autonomy, by keeping their settlements at some distance. As Drummond writes;

The demographic scheme in which a colonial settlement has attached to it an Arawak village, with a few Carib households at a further remove is a feature of Guyanese social structure that has persisted for centuries. (1977:p.78)

It would seem that part of the motivation for this type of village re-location by Arawak groups was security from Carib raiding (Kloos:1971:p.11).

For example, Adriaan van Berkel noted the following in Surinam;

There was also at Naby /Arawak village just as in Ouden Amen village, an arsenal, but it was falling down, the reason being that as the area was so densely populated with whites the Indians trusted themselves to their care and vigilance. (1695:p.32)

Similarly, Spanish missionaries in the 18th century often referred to the protection of 'peaceful' Amerindians from Carib enslavement as their most pressing motive for occupation of their communities. However, such close proximity to the Europeans had its drawbacks for the Arawaks;

... some of whom reside on almost every plantation, and are employed in various services ... These Indians, however, are debauched by luxury and intemperance, and their manners but ill agree with those of the Indians who have preserved their natural innocence and simplicity; and they are encouraged in their propensity to intemperance by the Whites, who freely supply them with Rum, thereby to attach them more firmly to their service; a practice which considerably impairs their health and diminishes their numbers. (Bancroft:1769:p.374)

To say nothing of the risks of being infected with Old World diseases, to which, as we will see, the Amerindians had no resistance. The increasing dominance of Carib groups, over the whole of this area, until the 19th century, may, in part, relate to these factors.

As Bancroft indicates, as well as considerations of defence, the lure of European trade items would have been another important motive for closer settlement to the colonists. Thus, for the Spanish, the mission station, and in the case of the Dutch, the trading post, were important colonial institutions for initiating contact with Amerindian communities. However,

there were also important differences in the way these institutions operated and, thus, affected Amerindian settlement.

The Dutch system of trading posts (see Chap.IV) was designed, primarily, to encourage a free trade for the forest products of the Amerindians (dyes, woods, hammocks, etc.) in return for various manufactured goods of European origin. In so far as Amerindian communities re-located themselves in order to take advantage of this situation, then the effects of these trading posts could be said to have been, essentially, long term and embraced voluntarily.

In contrast the Spanish mission system (see Chap.III), as an agent of the conquest in this region, was explicitly designed to secure Amerindian obedience to the priorities of the colonial state. Thus, while the voluntary re-location of Amerindian communities, encouraged by peaceful trade, under the aegis of Spanish settlements, was one aspect of the mission system, all too often the same end was achieved through violent coercion, such was the urgency with which the Spanish, in the 18th century, acted to stem the influence of other European powers in this area. In this sense the advance of the missionary orders into independent Amerindian territories, often had a sudden and violent effect on their communities, resulting in an involuntary re-location of the village at a site chosen by the Spanish, and suited to their needs alone.

Though European knowledge of the geography and demography of Guayana and the Orinoco basin was still quite limited when Walter Raleigh made his description of the area, over the following fifty years it increased considerably. The conquest of the Amerindians of the Caribbean littoral, continuous, if limited occupation of the Orinoco and Essequibo Rivers and the advent of missionary work on the llanos of Venezuela and Colombia, all permitted clearer identification of the extent of Carib settlement, if not control over those communities.

As the Spanish missionaries advanced from Cumaná, in the 1720s, many Caribs were forced to abandon their traditional zones of occupation and re-locate further south, rather than enter the missions (see Chap.III). In the following decades the Spaniards pushed steadily towards the Orinoco, bringing the north bank under their control by the 1740's and, in the next two decades, sealing off Carib communities to the east of the Sierra Imataca and eliminating resistance from settlements on the Orinoco south bank.

Though it is difficult to estimate the precise scale of these re-locations, both the small size of the first llanos missions and Dutch documents on the arrival of Carib fugitives in Essequibo (see Chap.IV), suggest that it was not insignificant, as independent Carib groups first fled to the Orinoco and then out of Venezuela altogether.

In sum, taking together the indications from the earliest sources and the pattern of later Spanish conquest and evangelism among the Caribs, it may be concluded that their traditional zones of occupation were as indicated in Map 1, such a conclusion being further supported by modern research on Amerindian ethno-linguistic distribution (see Durbin:1977<sup>18</sup>) and ethno-history (see Civrieux:1976).

NOTESCHAPTER I Section (i)

1. ... in the Paria Gulf, on his third voyage in 1498.
2. see Introduction p.(ii)
3. ... though various expeditions did travel as far as the Meta River, see below.
4. These expeditions will be described fully in the following chapter.
5. They were described as '... de gentil disposicion y estatura, de gran esfuerzo y muy diestros en el manejo de los arcos, flechas y rodela, que eran sus armas propias'. (Navarrette:1829:III:p.5)
6. Credited with giving his name to the New World.
7. Vespuccio was, at this point, off the Paria peninsula, but the latitudes he quotes are incorrect, being those for the coast of Guayana instead (see Navarrette:Ibid:p.233)
8. Possibly these were Warao dwellings as this distinctive form of house construction is still employed by them today.
9. This was thought to be the location of El Dorado, and its discovery was the chief aim of Ordás's expedition.
10. It is noteworthy that the Caribs were not initially hostile to the Spanish.
11. The first settlement being Santo Tomé, founded by Antonio de Berrio.
12. I have modernised spelling in all such quotations.
13. An archaic name for the Warao, derived from the name of a sub-group.
14. An archaic name for Arawaks.
15. This is possibly the same place as Cabrutu, mentioned to earlier travellers.
16. Subsequent documentation, which is presented as it becomes relevant, in the following chapters, refines our knowledge of, but does not suggest that Raleigh, or his predecessors, were seriously mistaken about, the major zones of Carib settlement.
17. In fact, this last group had been correctly identified as early as 1530.
18. Durbin (1979), working from Loukotka's earlier research (1968:The Classification of South American Indian Languages, Los Angeles, U.C.L.A. Reference Series No.7) in his map of Carib languages of the Guayana land mass (Ibid:p.33) shows a similar distribution for the group Galibi, to that shown in the Map here.

ii) The Size of Carib Populations

How many Indians were there? No one will ever know, but can't we at least agree on whether they were many or few? Apparently not yet, for on few questions of history do so many authorities continue to differ so greatly. The reasons for attempting to know are numerous and important. It would not be an overstatement to hold that almost every major investigation of pre-Columbian cultural evolution and ecology, of the European conquest, and of colonial and social history must ultimately raise the question of Indian numbers. (Denevan:1976:p.1)

There have, in recent years, been numerous general discussions as to the size of the Amerindian population at the time of first contact with the Europeans and the current trend seems to be towards the acceptance of higher population levels than had previously been thought.

Dobyns (1966), in a comprehensive review of this topic and its literature, gives particular attention to the low estimates of Kroeber (1934), Rosenblat (1954) and Steward (1949) - (see table).

Some estimates of Amerindian population, ca.1492 (in millions)  
from Dobyns (1966) and Denevan (1976)

	<u>Kroeber</u>	<u>Rosenblat</u>	<u>Steward</u>	<u>Dobyns*</u>	<u>Denevan</u>
N.America	0.90	1.00	1.00	12.20	4.40
Mexico	3.20	4.50	4.50	33.30	21.40
C.America	0.10	0.80	0.74	13.00	5.65
Caribbean	0.20	0.30	0.22	4.00	5.85
Andes	3.00	4.75	6.13	15.00	11.50
Lowland S.America	1.00	2.03	2.90	11.00	8.50
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>8.40</b>	<b>13.38</b>	<b>15.49</b>	<b>88.50</b>	<b>57.30</b>

\*(The maximum estimates of Dobyns are shown.)

Dobyns concludes that the main reason for the low estimates of Kroeber, Rosenblat and Steward, other than a general distrust of early documentation, is the failure of these authors to take into account massive depopulation

among Amerindians, as a result of introduced diseases, from the time of the first contact with the Europeans. From his own calculation of depopulation ratios for tribes or small regions, for which there is reasonably good information, Dobyns has supplied his own estimate of an average depopulation ratio, from the time of first contact to the low point of population level, of 20 : 1, or a population decline of 95% over this period<sup>1</sup>.

That contact with the Europeans, and a little later their African slaves, could produce such a dramatic effect on Amerindian populations, is confirmed by modern day experience. Dobyns (1966:p.413) cites the following example of contact between the Amerindians and the Europeans.

Missionaries first contacted the Brazilian Kayapo in 1903 and estimated their population at 6,000-8,000 people. Despite their attempts to maintain the subsequent isolation of these people they were reduced to only 500 by 1918, 27 by 1929 and a mere 2-3 by the middle of this century. These figures represent depopulation ratios of 12:1 in 1918, rising to 221:1 in 1929.

It will be argued here, as far as Carib populations are concerned, that available evidence suggests, in line with Dobyns estimate, a population decline of around 90% from first contact to the point of population nadir, which was around the turn of the 18th century in Venezuela and slightly later in Guayana.

The evidence relating to this conclusion will be presented in two parts, that concerning the period ca.1500-ca.1700, in this chapter, while the more detailed evidence, contained in mission records, from which depopulation ratios can be calculated, will be discussed later when the history of missionary work among the Caribs is described.

The evidence itself falls into three categories:

- i) Documentary evidence in the form of early European estimates of Carib numbers and mission records. Clearly such evidence is subject to controversy, since its significance is always a matter of judgement. As Denevan notes;

The low figures arrived at by Kroeber, Mooney<sup>2</sup>, Rosenblat and Steward can be attributed, not to their basic sources, but to their assumptions that early estimates were invariably exaggerated and must therefore be shaved ... . (Ibid:p.8)

- ii) Depopulation ratios based on (i). Thus, given reliable counts for parts of a region at one point in time and reliable counts for some parts at an earlier date, a rate of depopulation can be derived (by dividing the estimate of original population by the estimate from a later date) and, theoretically, be applied to all sections of the population. However, such a procedure assumes a degree of uniformity in population density, within areas of similar culture and environment, so that such a method can only be applied to Carib populations once the differences between their environments have been allowed for.

As Denevan cautions;

The resulting figures are usually very high, and these methods are as much, or more, subject to criticism as are other methods. (Ibid:p.9)

- iii) Corroborative evidence in the form of archaeological remains and hypotheses concerning agriculture, food production and the carrying capacity of the land. Denevan (1978) and Roosevelt (1980) have supplied evidence of agricultural practices along the Orinoco and in the eastern llanos which, it will be argued, support the population estimates derived from (i) and (ii). Modern ethnography, Gillin (1936) and Adams (1972), may be of use in evaluating Carib population estimates outside the Orinoco area.

#### The European Intrusion; ca.1500 - ca.1700

Before considering such evidence, however, it is desirable that the general biological effects of the European presence should be described, as

this directly affects our interpretation of the data.

In the preceding section some of the sociological results of the European occupation were described but, equally important to the fate of Amerindian cultures, was the devastation of the Old World diseases introduced by the Europeans and their African slaves and the more subtle ramifications of the spread of Old World fauna and flora. Concerning the former, McNeill (1976:p.99) writes:

... in view of what happened after the Spaniards inaugurated free exchange of infections between the Old World and the New ... it seems certain that Amerindian encounters with disease, before Columbus, had been unimportant from an epidemiological view. The inhabitants of the New World were bearers of no serious new infection transferable to the European and African that intruded upon their territory ... whereas the abrupt confrontation with the long array of infections that European and African populations had encountered piecemeal across some 4,000 years of civilised history provoked massive demographic disaster among Amerindians.

while Crosby (1972:p.64) reminds us of a parallel pressure on the animal and plant life of the Americas;

... the successful exploitation of the New World by these people /the Europeans/ depended on their ability to 'Europeanize'<sup>3</sup> the flora and fauna of the New World. That transformation was well under way by 1500, and it was irrevocable, in both North and South America, by 1550. In this matter, as in that of diseases, the impact of the Old World on the New was so great that we of the 20th century can only imagine what pre-Columbian America must have been like.

It is not difficult to find reasons for these imbalances. The New World, by comparison with the mass and ecological complexity of the Old, was no more than an enormous island. Forms of life were, in general, more highly evolved in Eurasia and Africa, having responded to a wider range of variability arising in the larger land mass. Consequently, not just micro-organisms and viruses, but also plants and animals from the Old World often displaced native American species and disturbed pre-existing ecological balances in explosive and, at least initially, highly unstable ways.

Despite the fact that human populations of sufficient density to maintain human infection chains indefinitely, existed on the Andes, in Central America and along the Amazon and Orinoco floodplains, no such infection seems to have established itself in pre-Columbian times. This may partly be explained by the absence of domestic animals which could carry herd infections, able to transfer their parasitism to human populations, when those populations became sufficiently large<sup>4</sup>, and partly by the fact that the human hunting bands that initially penetrated the Americas were incapable of supporting infectious chains of the sort that characterised Old World diseases. No wonder, then, that a German missionary wrote, in 1699:

The Indians die so easily that the bare look and smell of a Spaniard causes them to give up the ghost.  
(quoted in Stearns & Stearns;1945:p.17)

Moreover, in tropical regions of the New World climatic conditions were suitable for the establishment of at least some of the African infections, most importantly malaria<sup>5</sup> and yellow fever. It seems likely, however, that neither of these diseases established themselves before the mid-17th century, the late date of this transfer being attributable to the length of time necessary for the relevant mosquitoes to adjust to Old World malarial plasmodiums and the fact that the mass transportation of African slaves did not really begin until the 17th century, along the Amazon and in Guayana. Thus, tropical fevers were probably not of great significance in these areas until the 18th century.<sup>6</sup>

However, difficult though it would be to overstate the disaster that befell Amerindian cultures on contact with the Europeans, such contact did not involve a complete disappearance of the indigenous peoples. Crosby (1972:p.39) has written:

The record shows that several generations of Indian contact with Europeans and Africans seemed to lead not to the total destruction of the Indians, but only to a sharp diminution of numbers, which was then followed by renewed population

growth ... when those Indians with the weakest resistance ... had died, interbreeding among the hardy survivors and, to some unmeasured extent, with the immigrants, led to the beginning of population recovery.

Most deadly of the early epidemics were those of the eruptive fevers<sup>7</sup>, such as smallpox, measles and typhus; though first to arrive, and deadliest of all according to contemporary observers, was smallpox.

However, there are difficulties in interpreting early reports of disease since, even today, smallpox is occasionally diagnosed incorrectly as influenza, pneumonia, measles, scarlet fever, syphilis or chicken-pox (Dixon:p.68:1962). Four hundred years ago, with less interest in diagnosis, such mistakes would have been even more common.

Similarly, the Spanish word viruelas, commonly taken to mean smallpox, actually refers to the pustules which are the most obvious symptom of the disease, but also of measles, chicken-pox or typhus. Measles, however, were sometimes distinguished by the word sarampion.

Notwithstanding these difficulties in identifying precisely the early European diseases that struck down the Amerindian population, it is generally accepted that smallpox represented the most widespread and continuous threat to the indigenous peoples, in the first two centuries of contact. Accordingly, its particular characteristics will be examined more closely since, dramatic though the effects of European contact may have been for the Amerindian, it is too simplistic a conclusion to infer that any contact between these two groups would automatically result in widespread death or immediate population losses, of the order of 95% (see above), though such consequences might well follow, over a longer period of time.

Such considerations are particularly important as far as Carib population history is concerned since, as will be shown below, there is an apparent contradiction between the fact that Carib groups were widely dispersed, from the Paria Gulf to the Amazon, maintained close links between these communities and often co-operated closely with the Europeans and, yet,

preserved quite high population levels into the 18th century. Something one would not expect if the effects of European contact were immediate, widespread and fatal.

Nevertheless, smallpox is a highly contagious disease. It is usually communicated through the air by means of droplets or dust particles and its virus usually enters the host by means of the respiratory tract. Where smallpox has been widespread it has been a steady, dependable killer, taking 3% - 10% annually of those who die. Where it has struck isolated groups the death rate can be awesome:

Analysis of figures for some twenty outbreaks shows that the case mortality among an unvaccinated population is about 30%. ... When, in 1707, smallpox appeared for the first time in Iceland, in two years 18,000 out of the island's 50,000 inhabitants died of it. (Crosby: Ibid:p.44)

Although the Amerindians of the Greater Antilles were the first to encounter the Europeans, it is interesting to note that there is no record of any massive smallpox epidemic among them until a quarter of a century after the first voyage of Columbus. How can this be explained if the Amerindians were so susceptible and shipping was constantly arriving at Santo Domingo?

The answer lies in the nature of the disease and the fact that it only lasts briefly in each victim.

After an incubation period of 12 days or so, the patient suffers from high fever and vomiting followed, 3 or 4 days later, by the characteristic skin eruptions. For those who do not die these pustules dry up in a week or 10 days and form scabs which soon fall off, leaving the disfiguring pocks that give the disease its name. The whole process takes a month or less, and, after that time, the patient is either dead or immune, at least for a period of years. Also there is no non-human carrier of smallpox, as, for instance, with typhoid or syphilis ... . (Crosby: Ibid:p.46)

Except for their children, most Europeans and their slaves would have been at least, partially, immune, as the chances are they would have had already contracted the disease. Also, given that the voyage to the New World

was one of several weeks, if an immigrant or sailor contracted smallpox on the day of embarkation he would, most likely, be dead or rid of its virus before he arrived<sup>8</sup>. In addition, the moist heat and strong sunlight, characteristic of a tropical sea voyage, are particularly deadly to the smallpox virus (Dixon:1962:p.146). The lack of any rapid means of crossing the Atlantic would, thus, have certainly delayed the arrival of this virus in the New World.

If we now consider the particular case of the Caribs of Tierra Firme, the lack of evidence of widespread disease among their populations, until the 18th century, is a strong, albeit negative, indication that the arrival of smallpox was delayed by just such factors as outlined above. The first outbreaks of viruelas, sarampion and peste (meaning just 'a plague', rather than the Black Death), are not reported until the 1660's, having spread from the Caracas/Trujillo/Maracaibo area where the first epidemics are reported in 1630s and 1640s. From then on the occurrence of epidemics increased all over Venezuela, throughout the 18th century, reaching the Guayana missions by the 1730's<sup>9</sup>.

However, it is known from the historical record (see below p.28) that epidemic disease might have spread in advance of European occupation but it is notable that this seems to have occurred only among the most densely settled Amerindian populations. In this case the density and dispersion of Amerindian settlements must be counted as at least as an important factor as those outlined above in delaying the arrival of Old World diseases on an epidemic scale.

In the case of the Caribs, as we will see, although their populations in the Orinoco basin achieved a density higher than those generally found in the tropical forests, they were still well below those of the Andean and western Venezuelan regions. This suggests that just such factors were at work in permitting their populations to remain relatively intact, until the

late 17th century, when missionary penetration of the northern llanos of the Orinoco began.

The first outbreak of viruelas y peste was in the city of Caracas at the end of 1638 (SD:201:12/12/1638, Ciudad de Caracas to King of Spain). From here disease seems to have spread, westwards, no doubt reflecting the advance of permanent Spanish occupation in this area<sup>10</sup>, devastating the encomiendas of this region (SD:209:3/10/1641, letter of Capitain Miguel Méndez Cabruta to Governor of Caracas).

It is not until 1660 that the first epidemic is reported from the Cumaná region. (Carabantes: in Carrocera:1964:p.66) Then not until 1692 is there another epidemic when the Governor of Cumaná, Gaspar del Hajo, reported that out of the 6 Indian pueblos founded by his predecessor, 4 had suffered an outbreak of sarampion in this year, followed by an epidemic of viruelas in 1695 (SD:189:19/9/1695, letter to His Majesty). Between these dates further epidemics of viruelas, sarampion and peste spread from the Caracas to the Cumaná region in 1693 and 1694, with such virulence that the Alcades of San Balthasar de les Arias, on the Prespuntal River, was forced to seal off the entire town (SD:189:10/7/1694, letter of Governor of Cumaná to the Crown; 19/9/1695, letter of the Governor of Cumaná to the Crown; 24/9/1695: Idem.). In Caracas itself the Bishop went into retreat following the enormous number of deaths due to these epidemics (SD:200:30/4/1696: Governor of Caracas to the Crown).

It seems likely that the spread of these epidemics, at this point in time, was, partly, due to fleeing Tomuza Indians, from the west, whose reduction was initiated in the early 1690's and whose villages, as a consequence, were said to have been devastated by disease introduced by the missionaries (AGI:219:1/8/1695:letter of Governor of Caracas to the Crown) and partly as a result of the growth of permanent Spanish populations in this area, following the reduction of the Cumanagoto Indians in the 1630's.

Although there is no indication of these type of epidemics being present among Carib populations before these dates, it seems likely that they would have experienced some local or sporadic population losses. The lack of documentation on this subject might be explained by the fact that the Spanish were rarely in a position to make any close observations of Carib society, at this time, and so would have been unaware of the effects of any epidemic disease in their communities. Moreover, in view of the hostility the Spaniards invariably expressed towards the Caribs, it is unlikely to have greatly concerned them.

Accounts of expeditions along the Orinoco in the 16th century contain various references to outbreaks of illness among the Spanish and it is clear that, coupled with a lack of food, European travellers in these regions were highly susceptible to fevers and 'ill-air'<sup>11</sup>. In 1531 Diego de Ordás's expedition along the Orinoco suffered terribly:

This region was so terrible and the vapours that congeal on this river are so corrupt and heavy, that if someone ... was bitten by a vampire or got a small cut ... he immediately became cancerous. There were men who, from one day to the next, had their entire feet consumed by cancer, from the ankle to the sole. Men were dying one by one from such diseases and from hunger; for the land was very flooded and covered by the river, and there was nowhere for the brigs to seek food. (Aguado:1951:Bk.4:pp.420-1, see also Simon:I:1963:pp.179-80)

Soldiers stationed on the Paria peninsula by Antonio de Sedeño, in the 1530's, also died in the unfamiliar climate and terrain (Aguado:Ibid:p.455) and the expeditions led by Antonio de Berrio, at the end of the 16th century, were similarly beset by illness.

His first expedition lost most of its men, as they waited to cross, from February to April 1584, an Orinoco swollen by the rains. Again, on his return to the Orinoco in 1587, his encampment, on the south side of the river, was 'very stricken by a disease of fevers' (quoted in Ojer:Ibid:p.63), while Berrio's third expedition, which left Bogotá in 1590, was similarly ill-fated.

Camped on the lower Cuchivero River, an illness, described by Berrio as '... como peste' (BGB:BC:API:p.2), afflicted the party:

The starving expedition was struck by a terrible illness, a form of madness that affected the men, dogs and horses alike. One by one 30 soldiers and 200 serving Indians died there. Men died raving with hunger, even when they had enough to eat; dogs and horses set upon one another. (Hemming:1978b:p.156)

Eventually, reaching the Caroni River, Berrio made contact with the cacique Morequito and had to leave more of his men there, before arriving on Trinidad, in September 1591:

I had no more than forty-five soldiers remaining, who were most of them blind from a disease that affected the eyes, and others were very ill with other maladies. (BGB:BC:API:p.2)

Amerindian populations might also have experienced epidemic disease in advance of any direct contact with the Europeans. Perhaps the most famous example of this process was the affliction and death of the Inca Huayna-Capac, and his royal court, in Quito, before Gonzalo Pizarro's eventual arrival. This event undoubtedly facilitated Pizarro's subsequent conquest of the Inca's people (Hemming:1978b:p.23)<sup>12</sup>.

Similarly, when the German conquistador, Nicolas Federmann, first encountered the Ayoman Indians of north-western Venezuela, they told him that a large part of the tribe had already been killed in a terrible epidemic a few years before, ca.1529, and that the remnant population had started to intermarry with neighbouring peoples in order to recover its numbers (Federmann:1916:p.84).

It is possible that Carib, and other Amerindian settlements, further to the east were also affected in this manner but, if so, there appears to be no record of it, though by the very nature of the event, this might be expected. However, there is some evidence as to the disappearance of some of the large population centres of the Orinoco mouth. The large villages of Carapana and Morequito, the Carib 'trade centre' of Acamari, the large Warao

village of Baratubaro, and the settlements of 500 - 1000, mentioned by Berrio (AGI:SD:179:1590) as extending for some 2 - 3 leagues from the Orinoco mouth, had vanished by the 1650's, if not before.

Although there are many difficulties in interpreting early descriptions and estimates of Amerindian population<sup>13</sup>, it is nonetheless clear that important changes occurred in Amerindian demography during the first two centuries of contact with the Europeans but there are a number of reasons to think that these were not simply caused by epidemic disease.

As can be seen from the descriptions of expeditions through this area, cited above, although the expeditionaries themselves were subject to terrible illnesses they were not described as either viruelas, sarampion or peste, which they certainly would have been able to recognise. Indeed, hunger, as much as disease, looms large as a cause of death on such journeys.

Moreover, although they were cared for, moved freely among and made repeated visits to the Amerindian settlements, mentioned above, no contemporary witnesses refer to any epidemics among their populations. Thus, although some of these settlements had 'disappeared' during this period, it is also the case that other large settlements, which might be considered to have been equally 'at risk', survived to the end of the 17th century, or even longer. Thus Araucay was still a notable feature of the Orinoco in 1638 (BGB:BC:API:p.119) as were the large Warao and Arawak populations of the mouth and delta of this river. Moreover, Guayano Indians, whose caciques Morequito and Carapana had worked closely with the first Europeans in this area, and among whom the Spanish made their first settlement, Santo Tomé, appear to have maintained a healthy population level until the end of the 18th century<sup>14</sup>, despite this close contact with the Europeans.

Evidence from Trinidad and the Carib islands of the Antilles also tends to confirm the notion that epidemic disease was not the pre-eminent factor in the decline of the Amerindian population up until the end of the

17th century<sup>15</sup>. Thus, Newson (1976:p.77) cites the effect of slaving raids and the economic disruption of Spanish occupation as the main causes of population decline on Trinidad up to 1680, not epidemic diseases. Also, Pelleprat, writing in the 1650's, records large populations of Caribs on the Lesser Antilles and Guarapiche (1966:II:pp.37-45,48) and notes that some Carib groups had never before had intercourse with Europeans.

How then is the persistence of Amerindian populations of the Orinoco to be explained, if contact with Europeans in other areas of the New World led to an almost immediate and devastating population loss? Biological factors concerning the establishment of Old World diseases have already been discussed, to these we must add sociological factors concerning the nature of European and Amerindian settlement. Thus European settlement of the Orinoco and its environs, was, by comparison with, say, the Greater Antilles and Central America, negligible.

Throughout the 17th century Santo Tomé was the only European settlement on the Orinoco (Letter of Suarez de Anaya, Governor of Cumaná to the King, BGB:B.A.:p.10:1609) and a brief consideration of its history in this period will serve to illustrate how tenuous and unstable Spanish colonisation was in this area generally.

First founded in 1596 by Antonio de Berrio, in 1609 it contained only 60 men and was easily overrun by Walter Raleigh's son, Wat, in 1618 (BGB:BC API:p.49) and in 1619 was reported to be in such a neglected state that 'a single ship could rob and ruin it' (BGB:BC:API:p.52). In 1629 it was again sacked, this time by the Dutch (BGB:BC:API:p.70) and, by 1634, had received no visit from a Spanish supply ship for two years (BGB:BC:API:p.10). Three years later it was again sacked by the Dutch (BGB:BC:API:pp.88,91,110,115,124) and, by 1638, it was reported that no Spanish supply ship had stopped at Santo Tomé for over seven years (BGB:BC:API:pp.15-6). In 1640 it was said to have been burnt by the Spanish themselves to keep it from falling into Dutch hands

(BGB:BC:API:p.15) and, by 1662, the Governor, Pedro de Viedma, reported that no supply ship had come from Spain for thirty years, also expressing:

... great anxieties in fearing a ruin, for this Government /at Santo Tomé/ has such a very small number of people that in this city and the island of Trinidad they do not reach 140 residents (emphasis in original) between young and old, and 100 capable of bearing arms. (BGB:BC:API:p.152)

By 1671 the situation had become so serious that the Governor, Diego Jiménez de Aldana, reported only ten inhabitants left (BGB:BC:API:p.44) and it was easily overrun by the French and Caribs in 1684 (BGB:BC:API:p.187). Despite the fact that it was retaken by the Spanish in 1685 (BGB:BC:API:p.188) it remained, according to Spanish testimony, in a 'wretched and isolated condition', until the reforming Governorship of Carlos Sucre, in the 1730's (BGB:BC:APIIII:pp.10-11).

It ought to be emphasised that, coupled with this tenuous European presence, the density of Amerindian populations was<sup>16</sup>, unlike those of the Andes and Central America, too low to be favourable to the indefinite establishment of epidemic diseases, such as smallpox. Rather, as will be argued throughout this thesis, it was the concentration of Amerindian populations, under missionary control, that created the conditions favourable to the establishment of persistent and widespread epidemic disease<sup>17</sup>.

The historical demographers, S.F. Cook and W.W. Borah have, from studies of contact in Mexico and California, reached the following conclusion; rejecting the notion of uniform population decline 'proceeding at a relatively uniform rate from an instantaneous origin at the moment of Spanish entry'. they argue that:

... the more probable pattern is one in which there is for a short initial period rather little effect of the new factor or factors, and then a steadily increasing violence of effect (my emphasis) until the population is either destroyed or there is a slowing down in the rate of decrease and eventually the beginning of recovery. (1963:p.4)

In relation to the Caribs, and other Amerindians of the Orinoco region, it appears that the 'violence of effect' of the European arrival was, certainly,

'steadily increasing' from the moment of its inception, but due both to the instability of European occupation and the low density of Amerindian settlement, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the rate of that increase was slow and, hence, did not provoke the dramatic pandemics recorded from other areas, such as coastal Brazil, the Greater Antilles and Central America.

Evidence, presented later, on Carib populations during the 18th century confirms such a conclusion since the advent of permanent contact between the Europeans and the Amerindians, along the Orinoco and in Guayana, did produce the kind of dramatic population losses associated with previously relatively isolated groups. As Cook and Borah note:

Spanish penetration was not a uniform and massive thrust that reached all regions simultaneously. Vast areas were, at most, barely touched in the first years, though they were undoubtedly affected by such factors as introduced diseases. (Ibid:p.4)

Equally, the historical evidence (see Chaps.II,III, below) certainly suggests that there were vigorous Carib populations throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, capable of mounting an effective challenge to Spanish intrusion, until the 1730's, when the missionary orders started having real successes in 'reducing' the Amerindian population, and Carib population levels dropped dramatically.

Nonetheless, as has already been referred to, there is evidence of the disappearance of Carib, and other Amerindian, populations in the wake of European intrusion and there seems to be no reason to suppose that locally disastrous population losses<sup>18</sup> were not a recurrent phenomena in the 16th and 18th centuries and, indeed, such mortalities would have been more likely to occur among those groups, such as the Caribs, who had repeated contact with the Europeans.

In addition to localised epidemics, European slaving seems likely to have been another, perhaps equally important, factor, during the first centuries of contact, in causing the disappearance or re-location of some

Amerindian groups. However, the evidence does not suggest that the effect on overall population levels was as dramatic as Newson has suggested for Trinidad, i.e. a decline to between 17% and 20% of the aboriginal population by 1680 (1976:p.77). This may be explained, partly, by the fact that Trinidad, because of its proximity to the Pearl Coast, was a more likely source of slaves and, partly, by the fact that, as Trinidad is an island, there was little opportunity for Amerindian groups to re-locate themselves away from areas easily accessible to the slavers, unlike their relatives on the mainland. However, as the indigenous population of Trinidad declined, so the colonists turned to the Orinoco as a source of slaves.

European slaving for the pearl fisheries of Margarita and for the mines and plantations of Hispaniola started within two years of the discovery of the Pearl Coast, by Columbus. Indeed, it was one of the officers of Columbus, Cristobal Guerra, who, with his brother Jacinto, received the first licence to slave on the shores of Tierra Firme, closely followed by Alonso de Hojeda, who had made landfall in Guayana in 1499. Sauer has written:

... from the end of 1500 into 1502, the shores of Tierra Firme were ravaged by Guerra and Hojeda, thereafter raids ran into more resistance and attention turned west; little of profit was to be found amongst the forest Indians of Guayana and Brazil and no establishment was made. (1966:p.114)

Once the native store of pearls declined and became exhausted, the slaving declined also, until the pearl beds themselves were discovered in 1512 and slaving began afresh, as divers were sought to exploit them.

Though Borde (cited in Newson:1976:p.77) suggests that up to 40,000 Amerindians were taken to the pearl fisheries between 1505 and 1527, following Otte (1977:pp.206-9), there are few indications in the archival sources as to the numbers of Amerindians seized or where they had come from. What few indications there are suggest that it was the immediate coastal area, near the pearl fisheries themselves<sup>19</sup>, that suffered the most, though groups as far west as Cartagena and Santa Marta did not escape (Otte:Ibid:pp.209,219)

nor did those of the Paria Gulf and Trinidad or the interior of Venezuela (Otte: *Ibid*:p.224), among which were, possibly, Carib captives<sup>20</sup>.

The pearl fisheries were not the only destination for slaves and raiders from, for example, Hispaniola might have found the Orinoco and its environs a good hunting ground, especially since the coast of Tierra Firme was, intermittently, closed to their activities by the Crown. Certainly Trinidad suffered in this way. Antonio de Berrio, as Governor of Trinidad, wrote in December 1594:

... this island of Trinidad, which I settled three years ago for depot and entrance to these great provinces /of Orinoco/, is being depopulated, and they are doing it /Governors of neighbouring provinces/ with so much diligence that part of the natives have rebelled and the Caribs of the island of Dominica and Grenada and other neighbouring places, harass and injure me... (BGB:BC:API:p.8)

Similarly, Aguado (1956:Book IV:p.545) informs us that slavers from Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands regularly came to the coast of Tierra Firme to buy captives at ten pesos each.

There is also some evidence that, as the indigenous population of Trinidad declined, so the pressure on Orinoco populations increased. Documents from the end of the 17th century, when all the slaves on Trinidad were released as a result of the Spanish Crown ordering a cessation of the 'armed conquest' and the holding of personal slaves, show that some 2,000 Caribs, mainly from the Caura and Cuchivero Rivers, were given their freedom at this time (AGI:SD:179:18/7/1688, 12/9/1688, 18/4/1690, 21/10/1696, 16/8/1693), although the legal provisions for the slavery of 'rebel' Caribs remained in force until 1756 (Arcila-Farias:1957:p.38).

The full extent of European slaving may well have been greater for, although Carib captives formed a high proportion of the number of slaves released at this time, due to the fierce conflicts with the Spanish colonists of the Orinoco during and after the 1640's, most documents indicate that other Amerindian groups were the more usual target of the slavers (AGI:SD:179;

18/7/1688 - Report on the Indian captives of Trinidad).

Either way it is clear that the effects of European slaving, and occasional Amerindian involvement in the trade<sup>21</sup>, were at least as important as the possible consequences of the introduction of Old World diseases in the dislocation and population decline of the Amerindians of the Orinoco and Guayana. Unfortunately, as was the case in considering the effects of European and African diseases, it is almost impossible, in the absence of adequate documentation, to give a numerical estimate of the scale of such population losses. The limited evidence there is, as to the overall size of Carib populations at this time, will be presented once one further aspect of the European intrusion has been outlined; the introduction of Old World flora and fauna.

The Europeans vastly enhanced their own ability to live in ever increasing numbers by distributing Amerindian plants and seeds to areas where they had been unknown in pre-Columbian times; the spread of the potato being a good example<sup>22</sup>, of this historical process. So successful were the Europeans in introducing Old World plants and adapting New World ones, by, for example, the plantation cultivation of cacao, tobacco and cotton, that, in the view of one commentator they accomplished:

... the greatest biological revolution in the Americas since the end of the Pleistocene era ... (Crosby:1972:p.66)

As early as 1493 Columbus returned to the New World with a great variety of seeds and cuttings, including wheat, chick-peas, melons, onions, radishes, salad greens, vines, sugar cane and citrus fruits, although they did not immediately prosper. An exception to this was the banana, of which Oviedo y Valdes wrote, in the 1520's:

... these banana trees have multiplied so greatly that it is marvellous to see the great abundance of them on the Islands and Tierra Firme, where the Christians have settled. (Oviedo y Valdes:1959:II:p.102)

Indeed, the spread of this plant outpaced the advance of European settlement,

at least along the Orinoco. Nearly a decade prior to the first Spanish establishment here, a traveller from Margarita, Jorge Griego (see above), noted in the village of the cacique Carapana many different plants, including maize, pineapples and bananas (platanos) (AGI:SD:14:24/11/1583).

In the tropical and semi-tropical zones the economic base of the most important European settlements was the raising of a few crops, on large plantations, for export to Europe. In Venezuela and Guayana sugar, cacao and, to a lesser extent, tobacco were extensively raised in this way from the 17th century onwards. In fact cacao became Venezuela's chief product and export commodity, the principal market being Mexico, where returns were quick and secure, being paid for in bullion<sup>23</sup>.

In the Dutch colony of Essequibo, declining profit from the trade with the Amerindians for forest products, encouraged new investment in sugar planting, though development was less spectacular than in Venezuela, due to a shortage of labour and the hostility of other colonial powers<sup>24</sup>.

The creation of these plantations would have affected the Amerindians in a number of ways. Directly, through the seizure of land, the clearance of Amerindian settlements and the enslavement of their peoples and, indirectly and with less immediacy, through the establishment of a stable economic base for further European occupation. Although, as Crosby points out:

Unless the standard European food plants could be grown in quantity in America, the growth of European settlement would have been very slow. (Ibid:p.70)

As, indeed, it was in Venezuela and Guayana, for no farmer was able to grow the staples of an Iberian diet at sea level in tropical latitudes. The climate of Peru and Central America were, thus, much more conducive to initial colonial settlement.

Parallel to, and, perhaps, more dramatic than such changes in the flora, was the explosion of Old World fauna in the relatively benign New World environment. Free from many of the parasites and predators of the Old World,

the domestic and working animals of the Europeans reproduced rapidly:

... so rapidly, in fact, that doubtlessly they had much to do with the extinction of certain plants, animals and even the Indians themselves, whose gardens they encroached upon. (Crosby:Ibid:p.75)

As well as plant cuttings Columbus brought the first contingent of horses, dogs, pigs, cattle, chickens, sheep and goats on his second voyage, in 1493, and contemporary testimony emphasises the spectacular multiplication of these animals, the pigs and cattle in particular. In 1514 Diego de Velasquez de Cuellar wrote to the King of Spain that the handful of pigs that he had brought to Cuba had increased to some 30,000 (i.e. 'very many') (quoted in Sauer:1966:p.189), while 'buccaneers' were said to be able to live off wild cattle with ease, throughout the Caribbean, hence their name<sup>25</sup> (Burns:1954:p.292).

Horses were slower to adapt as, apparently, were other domestic animals, but in general there could be no doubt that the New World was an exceptionally favourable environment for Old World fauna<sup>26</sup>. Pigs were consciously introduced all over the Caribbean by the Spanish and formed a very important food source for early 17th century settlers on the Lesser Antilles (Burns:Ibid:p.115, Hakulyt:1972VIII:p.63) thriving where, say, cattle could not. They also were taken along, with cattle, as a mobile food source, by the conquistadors.

Antonio de Berrío, for example, left Bogotá, in 1583, with only 80 men but with 500 horses and 'a great quantity' of cattle and pigs. On his second expedition, which left Bogotá in 1587, he re-entered the llanos of the Orinoco with 97 Spaniards and over 1,000 cattle, pigs and horses and on his third, and final, assault on Eldorado, which left Bogotá in 1590, a flotilla of 44 rafts carrying 70 men navigated the rivers, while Berrío's lieutenant, Alvaro Jorge, followed overland with 42 horsemen driving a vast herd of cattle (BGB:BC:API:p.1ff:Letter of Berrío to the King).

Indeed, cattle were of special significance in the Spanish colonisation of the Venezuelan llanos and Orinoco south bank. Spreading, initially, from Hispaniola to Margarita (Hakulyt: Ibid: II: p. 238, Vazquez de Espinosa: 1948 - written ca. 1620: p. 119) from where, in 1548, a Spanish stockman passed through the Venezuelan llanos, with a small herd of cattle, bound for Bogotá, probably introducing the first steers and cows into the llanos (Arcila-Farias: 1946: p. 77). However, the hot climate and annual flooding then drought, seems to have kept numbers of all livestock down, at first (Herrera y Tordesillas: 1725: p. 42ff). Nonetheless, within forty years the number of cattle on the llanos was already noteworthy (AGI: SD: 14: 24/11/1583, letter of Jorge Griego) and the expeditions of Antonio de Berrio can only have encouraged this trend.

By 1600 as many as 45 ranches had been established on the Venezuelan llanos and half a century later something like 140,000 head of cattle grazed here. During the period 1620 - 1665 hides accounted for 75%, or more, of the total value of Venezuela's exports to Spain, though this proportion fell as cacao production and export rose and trading with Spain declined, but cattle ranching still retained a prominent place in the colonial economy into the 18th century (Arcila-Farias: Ibid: pp. 77-8).

As far as Carib populations were concerned cattle ranching played a crucial role in their fate in the 18th century, since it formed the economic underpinning to the Capuchin occupation south of the Orinoco and the missionaries' success in establishing outposts amongst the Caribs and the other Amerindians of this area (see Chap. III).

Although the horse was, perhaps, of less significance during the period of conquest in Venezuela than elsewhere, it was an indispensable accompaniment to the cattle industry, since the vaquero, unlike, say, the swineherd, must operate on horseback. Horses also formed an item of illicit trade, between the Dutch and Spanish, in Guayana, the Caribs often being

involved as middlemen (see Chap.IV).

In summary, the European intrusion into the New World had many complex ramifications, usually unfavourable and often disastrous, for the Amerindians and their environment. Some of these effects can be traced in the historical record, with varying degrees of accuracy, some cannot. The arrival of European and African diseases and the introduction of new plants and animals had, demonstrably, important repercussions for the New World; including the near total destruction of the indigenous population and the eventual spread of European domestic animals the whole length and breadth of the Americas. What is altogether more difficult to ascertain, in the case of the Caribs, is the scale and chronology of these events among their populations, and the ecological effects on the indigenous flora and fauna of the Orinoco and Guayana.

As far as the latter are concerned, one can note that early descriptions of the region emphasise, continually, the marvellous abundance and variety of the plant and animal life. Certainly some of this enthusiasm would have been engendered by a natural wonder at what was, quite literally, a 'new world' and also, no doubt, by a desire to paint the best possible picture of these new discoveries, in order to attract interest and resources.

A good example of this latter motive was Walter Raleigh's publication of 'The Discovery of the Large and Beautiful Empire of Guayana ...', which aimed, in part, to justify, what had otherwise been, an unprofitable investment<sup>27</sup>. This book was also particularly appreciated by Cardinal Richelieu, a strong advocate of French settlement in the Antilles and Guayana (see Chap.II:p.160).

Nonetheless, the pressure from Old World immigrants, especially the cow and the pig, must have been considerable, particularly for the deer and bird life of the llanos. Moreover it must be remembered that the coastal waters of Guayana, as well as the major rivers of the area, in particular the

Orinoco, were important for European commercial fishing, both as a food source for the black slave populations of the region and for export direct to Europe (see below p.78). Clearly the intensity of such activities threatened the ecological balance of these aquatic resources in a way that Amerindian subsistence activities did not. The resultant extinction, or near extinction, of the sea and freshwater turtle and the manatee (or sea-cow) meant the loss of important, protein-rich, items of Amerindian diet. Such economic disruption would also further compound the effects of exposure to Old World diseases<sup>28</sup>.

As far as the effects on human populations are concerned, the historical record does contain some indications as to Carib population levels between ca.1500 and ca.1700 and, having outlined the context in which they must be interpreted, this documentary evidence will now be examined.

#### Documentary Evidence on Carib Population Levels ca.1500 - ca.1700

Although there are no specific estimates of Carib numbers until the 17th century, evidence from the 16th century suggests a density of Amerindian settlement, along the Orinoco and in Guayana, that is consistent with later reports of large Carib populations in these areas.

In general all 16th century sources agree that the Orinoco, as far as it was known, was densely settled. For example, Pedro de Aguado, writing in 1581, noted that:

... the river of Uriaparia /Orinoco/ ... has a great quantity of Indians who possess much gold and other riches.  
(1951:Book 4:p.400)

and also mentions one village, between the Caroni River and Orinoco mouth, of over 400 houses.

During his voyage along the Guayana coast, Alonso de Hojeda saw

villages that he estimated housed over 600 persons. Oviedo y Valdes, a 16th century chronicler, continually refers to the great number of Amerindians to be found on the Orinoco and says that Diego de Ordás had a village of 800 Amerindians, in the mouth of the Orinoco, baptized (1959:Book 24:III:p.392). He estimated that the village of Araucay, described above, contained over 200 large houses (Ibid:p.396).

Another contemporary chronicler, Pedro de Simon, describing the Orinoco in the 1530's, says that the village of Carapana consisted of more than 400 houses, '... so large that each one houses an entire kin-group'<sup>29</sup> (Simon:1963:I:Chap.XXI:p.180) while, following the information of Jorge Griego, in the 1580's, this village is alternatively described as containing 2,000 people. Griego also says that the Warao, of the Cotopito River in the delta region numbered 3,000, that the settlement of the cacique Morequito had 4,000 persons living there, that the village of the cacique Mori comprised 1,000 and that most Orinoco villages, that he had seen, numbered between 500 and 1,000 persons (AGI:SD:14:24/11/1583).

Antonio de Berrio confirms that the villages along the Orinoco were of this size and was also given to understand, by his Amerindian informants, that there were over 2,000,000 more people in the interior of Guayana<sup>30</sup> (AGI:SD:179:1590 - 'Relacion del descubrimiento de la Guayana'), though his lieutenant, Domingo Ibarquen y Vera, cites the lower figure of 500,000 for the same region. However, since Amerindian languages do not have the ability to express such numbers it seems likely that both Berrio and Vera y Ibarquen were simply giving their own numerical interpretation to reports that there were 'many' Amerindians in this area.

Whatever the effects of the first century of contact between the Europeans and the Amerindians, general descriptions of the Orinoco and Guayana, from the 17th century, continue to emphasise the large number of Amerindians to be found in these regions.

Vazquez de Espinosa, writing at the beginning of the 17th century, says there were 600,000 people living along the banks of the Orinoco and suggests that the total Carib population of the Orinoco and Guayana may have reached 400,000. Governor of the Orinoco, Diego de Maldonado, reported, in the late 1630's, large villages of Warao (Chaguana, Tivitives) and Guayano Amerindians and the continued existence of the large Arawak town of Araucay, all in the immediate area of Santo Tomé (BGB:BC:API:p.119 - quoted page 148 below).

Clearly then, the Orinoco and Guayana was a very populous region, if we are to accept the testimony of contemporary witnesses. However, before considering specific estimates made of the Carib population of this area, some assessment must be made of the reliance that can be put on such evidence. For, as has been suggested above, this will fundamentally effect all our interpretations of Carib culture and history.

#### Documentary Evidence on Carib Populations ca.1500 - ca.1700

Early estimates of Carib population may be considered unreliable for a number of reasons. Firstly, such estimates were, in fact, only guesses, for in no sense were modern type statistical surveys carried out by early travellers. Secondly, it may be said that there were pressing political and economic reasons for distorting Amerindian numbers. Thus, for example, early colonists, in Santo Tomé or Trinidad, might have exaggerated Amerindian numbers both as a means of gaining greater support from the Crown and as a way of inflating their achievements in settling this area. Thirdly, there is the possibility that, in the context of Spanish/Amerindian relations in general, Amerindian groups who did not fall in line with the colonial scheme might be simply dubbed 'caribe' (i.e. 'rebel'), and so no confidence can be attached to a report that, say, 10,000 Caribs inhabited the Orinoco.

The first source of unreliability is unavoidable. However, this does not mean that the attempt to estimate aboriginal populations should be abandoned, rather, using evidence from archaeology and modern ethnography, one can supply a range of possible population levels, for Carib groups of the Orinoco and Guayana, against which these historical reports can be evaluated. After all it should not be forgotten that these witnesses actually saw the Amerindians and their settlements, which gives them an authority the historian can never match.

Of the second difficulty in estimating aboriginal populations Sauer has said:

There was neither reason of vanity nor of practical ends to inflate the native numbers. (1966:p.12)

While it is true to say that such estimates would have been subjective, dependent upon the availability of information and the purposes for which it was recorded, as Sauer recognises, this is not the same thing as saying that such estimates were wilfully doctored, for some undefined Machiavellian end. However, that many of these population estimates were derived from Amerindian sources, often hostile to the Caribs, indicates that they must be treated with caution.

Equally, there seems little practical difference between saying there were, for example, 20,000 Amerindians or 50,000 Amerindians, since, whatever the Amerindian population was, they were clearly beyond the control of the handful of colonists present on Tierra Firme in this period. A situation that would have been little affected by any immediate practical aid the imperial authorities might, or could, offer. This notion is borne out by the fact that it was the Amerindians susceptibility to Old World diseases, rather than a vast commitment of resources, which allowed the Europeans to establish themselves as masters in this area (see below - Chaps.II,III).

So also, while the political authority of Europe, over its

colonists, was certainly tenuous, due largely to the great distances involved, this is not the same as saying that these colonists were in a position continuously to deceive their governments on matters of such importance as this.

Taken together, these facts of colonial political life suggest that the information recorded in the archives, even if not statistically sound, nonetheless reflects an important feature of early contact between the Amerindians and the Europeans, i.e. the Amerindians were very numerous, the Europeans were not<sup>31</sup>.

More specifically there is the possibility, mentioned above, that as far as Carib populations are concerned, there is an additional element of unreliability because of the way in which the word 'carib' may have been used to designate any and all anti-Spanish Amerindians. While this is, indeed, a problem, as was acknowledged in the introduction, suffice it to say here that not all the relevant material is of Spanish origin and that insofar as different sources confirm each other, there is a greater probability of accuracy for them all.

In summary, while the kind of material available may not allow mathematically and statistically watertight conclusions to be drawn about the size of Carib populations, in the early years of contact, with the provisos outlined above in mind, a working hypothesis may be established, using additional ethnographic and archaeological evidence.

The earliest Spanish estimate, specifically of Carib populations, in 1605, gives the figure of 4,000 for those Caribs living in the area of the Guarapiche and Guanipa Rivers. This survey was made for the Governor of Cumaná, just after the conquest of the neighbouring Cumanagotos, for the purpose of attempting a peaceful reduction of these Caribs. This suggests that the Spanish were attempting to estimate Carib populations only and that it was a genuine attempt to provide an empirical basis for policy making. In

view of the Spanish attitudes to the Caribs it would seem unlikely that they would attempt such a negotiation if force of arms would have succeeded just as well. Indeed, this is just such a case where reasons of 'vanity or practical ends' would not justify inflating Amerindian numbers.

Another estimate of Carib populations was made some thirteen years later, again in a policy document on the reduction of the Caribs (AGI:SD:179:1618 - 'Sobre Castigal de los Caribes'). This report estimates the Carib population of the Orinoco llanos at 30,000 persons. Again there seems to be no reason, aside from statistical error, to discount this figure.

In 1637 it was reported by the Corporation of Santo Tomé to the Royal Council of Justice that:

... the river Amacuro, which is at the mouth of this river Orinoco, ... is a province of 4,000 Indians of the Carib nation, who are pirates and eaters of human flesh ... .  
(BGB:BC:API:p.109)

The isolation and danger, in which the colonists of Santo Tomé found themselves at this time, shows clearly in this letter, but their estimate of 4,000 Caribs does not seem hysterical in the context of other reports.

In 1665, an Englishman, John Byam, wrote an account of his travels in Guayana (BL:Sloane:3662) in which he states that there were 20,000 Carib families living between the Waini and Orinoco Rivers. The following year, another Englishman, Major John Scott, is believed to have written an account of Guayana in which he states that there were:

From Wina /Waini/ to the utmost part of Awarabish /Guarapiche/ on the west side of Orenoque and the rivers Orenoque, Poraema and Amacora ... there are about 28,000 Careebs families.  
(BGB:BC:API:p.168)

There is, of course, an obvious difficulty in the interpretation of these population estimates as we are given no idea as to how many people comprise a 'family'. However, following the contemporary Spanish notion of five people per family (see note 30), Byam's estimate gives us some 100,000 Caribs living between the Waini and Orinoco, while Scott's, which includes

the area north of the Orinoco, gives us a population of 140,000 in this region. The difference between these two estimates roughly coincides with the Spanish estimate of 30,000 Caribs living on the llanos to the north of the Orinoco.

The historian Rodway also searched the archives for material relevant to Carib populations and has suggested the figure of 140,000 Caribs living between the Corentyn and Guarapiche Rivers, 35,000 of these living between the Corentyn and Essequibo, the remainder in Venezuela and north west Guyana. His figures do not wildly contradict any of these sources, his estimate being 115,000, as opposed to 140,000, for the same area, i.e. between the Waini and Guarapiche Rivers.

Against the background of general estimates of Amerindian numbers in these regions, reviewed above, such population levels for the Caribs do not seem extravagant. Indeed, they are further confirmed by other less specific documentation, from a slightly later period. For example, the information of Jacinto de Caravajal, related above (p.11), certainly suggests large Carib populations, being swelled by refugees from the Lesser Antilles, still existed on the Orinoco in the mid-17th century. Similarly, Pierre Pelleprat, a French Jesuit who lived with the Guarapiche Caribs in the 1650's, says that some Carib villages in this region had had no contact whatsoever with Europeans (1965:II:p.48). He also testifies to the 'large and numerous nations' (Ibid:p.68) that were neighbours to the Caribs of this area, as did the first Spanish missionaries, who wrote of the 'copious numbers' of Caribs settled here (e.g. Letter of Agustin de Frias, in Carrocera:1964:p.152).

Nevertheless, the internal coherence of the documentary evidence does not amount to a complete proof that Carib populations were of the magnitude suggested by these eye-witnesses, but further confidence may be established in these estimates if it can be shown, through the use of comparative cultural evidence and modern ethnography, that populations of

such a size, or even larger, could have existed, in the relevant environments.

Such a procedure will also permit a partial resolution of the problem of the lack of any estimate of Carib population at the time of first contact, without which the calculation of a depopulation ratio for the first two centuries of contact would be impossible. Thus, given an estimate of potential population, for those areas known to have been settled by Carib groups, and the documentary evidence as to the actual population of the Caribs in the 16th and 17th centuries, it should be possible to give a rough idea of the demographic effect of the European intrusion in this period, though it must be accepted that such a procedure is purely a speculative exercise<sup>32</sup>.

#### Ethnographic and Cultural Evidence on Carib Populations

The general debate, as to the size of the Amerindian population before extensive contact with the Europeans, and its central controversies, have already been alluded to. Its relevance to the region of Venezuela and Guayana and, in particular, the Caribs, will now be examined.

One of the first modern estimates of the number of Amerindians that lived in this region was supplied by Angel Rosenblat (1954:I). From her search of the archives she estimates the aboriginal population of Venezuela<sup>33</sup> at 350,000 and for the Guianas at 100,000. From these levels Rosenblat estimates that the Amerindian population declined to about 307,000 in Venezuela (population loss = 12.3%) but remained unaffected in the Guianas, by around 1570. The Amerindians, in both regions, then declined to 280,000 and 70,000, respectively, by 1650 (population losses = 8.8%. 30%) and reached a population low of 120,000 and 27,000, respectively, by 1810-25 (population losses = 57.2%, 61.5%).

Dobyns (1966:p.398) has written of the method employed by Rosenblat,

and the earlier work of Kroeber (1934, 1939) that:

Their characteristic methodology has induced deprecation of all historical population figures. They deprecate the departure of historical witnesses from the 'truth' for motives they intuitively impute, but which uniformly led said witnesses to overestimate, in their opinion, aboriginal populations. They ignore the fact that eye witnesses, whatever their biases, at least observed population trends which the modern analyst can never witness.

Certainly Dobyn's criticism seems valid in the light of evidence already presented here, as to Amerindian numbers. Moreover, depopulation ratios, calculated from her figures for Venezuela and the Guianas (3:1 and 4:1, respectively, between 1492 and 1810-25) are well out of step with the estimates of more recent commentators. They suggest ratios of, at least, 3.5:1 to 10:1 (depending on the intensity of contact), during the first century of contact (Borah:1964:p.382, Denevan:1976:p.212) rising to an average of 20:1, across the whole hemisphere (Dobyns:1966:p.414, McNeill:1976:p.215), but with particular cases where depopulation ratios might have been as high as 35:1 (Denevan:Ibid:p.212) or even 50:1 (Dobyns:1966:pp.413-4), between first contact and the population nadir, i.e. date of recovery.

Clearly, such low depopulation ratios, as are suggested by Rosenblat's figures, are an artefact of her initial underestimation of the size of the aboriginal Amerindian population and general suspicion of the veracity of historical sources.

Steward (1949:V:pp.655-68), working directly from the earlier research of Kroeber (Ibid), proposes even lower population levels. For Venezuela, north of the Orinoco only, he suggests the figure of 144,000 at a density of 0.45 persons/km<sup>2</sup> over an area of 320,000 km<sup>2</sup>. For the area he designates 'Guianas', i.e. south of the Orinoco and north of the Amazon, Steward suggests a figure of 213,750<sup>34</sup>, at a density of 0.15 persons/km<sup>2</sup> over an area of 1,425,000 km<sup>2</sup>.

Since Rosenblat was only estimating Amerindian population within the political units of Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana, rather than the

geographical/cultural entity of 'Guianas', proposed by Steward, for purposes of comparison, Steward's figure must be adjusted to 68,000 persons (i.e. area of Guyana, Surinam, French Guiana =  $451,663 \text{ km}^2$ , multiplied by Steward's hypothetical population density for these regions -  $0.15 \text{ persons/km}^2 = 68,000$  persons). Again, the resulting population estimate is well below that of Rosenblat.

Accordingly, as Steward was basing his calculations on the work of Kroeber, and as his estimates fall below even those of Rosenblat, those same criticisms, applied to Rosenblat and Kroeber above, may be levelled at Steward. As Denevan points out (Ibid:p.207), Steward used late historical data (post-1650), from an incomplete search of the available sources and, like his mentor, had an unjustified mistrust of early estimates.

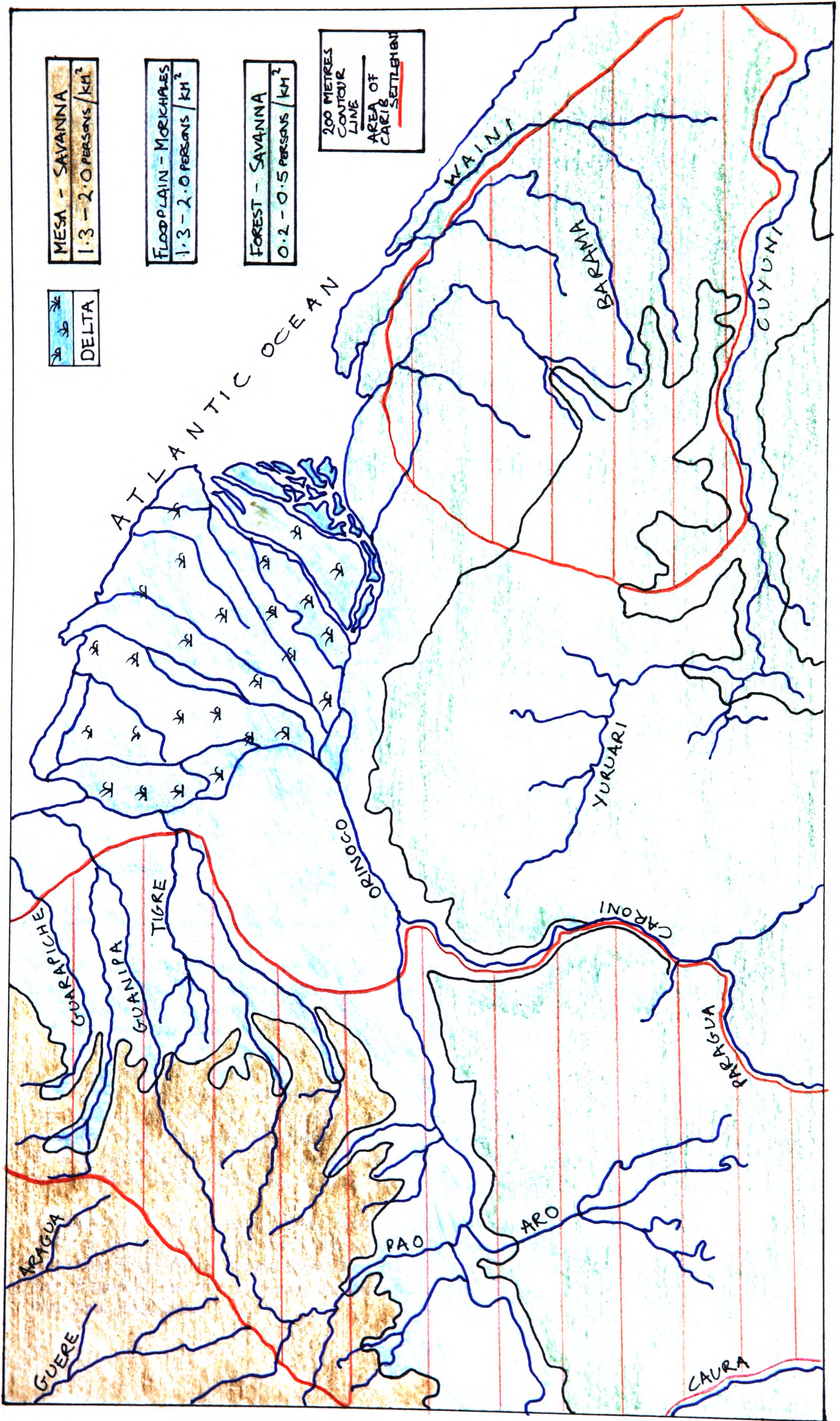
In line with more recent trends in the study of Amerindian demography, Denevan (Ibid:p.226) has supplied a range of population densities relating to the different habitats of the South American continent, which suggest much larger populations in these areas. For the Venezuelan llanos Denevan suggests a density of  $1.3 \text{ persons/km}^2$ , giving an alternative population estimate of 416,000 persons. Although Rosenblat's estimate for all Venezuela is close to this figure, it is at least three times greater than Steward's.

For the Guayana area, Denevan calculates his population figures on the basis of a density of  $0.2 \text{ persons/km}^2$ , a figure originally derived for lowland tropical areas, but recognises that his data, for both the llanos and Guayana:

... do not take into consideration the probably higher than indicated population densities for ... the Atlantic coast north of the Amazon, ... the upland forest of the Guiana highlands and the possibly higher than indicated densities of the ... Venezuelan and Colombian llanos.  
(Ibid:p.231)

Since he has suggested a density of  $0.5 \text{ persons/km}^2$  for upland forest and savanna habitats, found extensively throughout Guayana (Ibid:pp.219-23), then

# MAP 4



a compromise between the alternative densities of 0.2 persons/km<sup>2</sup> and 0.5 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, i.e. 0.35 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, would seem reasonable, even overly conservative. On this basis an alternative estimate for Rosenblat's 'Guianas' may be derived of 158,000 persons and for Steward's 'Guianas' culture area, 498,750 persons.

Estimates of Amerindian Population, ca.1492 -  
after Steward(1949), Rosenblat(1954) and Denevan(1976): (in 1,000's)

	<u>Steward</u>	<u>Rosenblat</u>	<u>Denevan</u>
<u>Venezuela</u>			
llanos	144 (0.45) <sup>a</sup>	350	416 (1.3)
Guayana	90 (0.15)	-	208 (0.35)
<hr/>			
Total	234	350 <sup>b</sup>	624
<hr/>			
<u>Guayana</u>			
political	68 (0.15)	100	158 (0.35)
n.of Amazon (excl. Venezuela)	56 (0.15)	-	132 (0.35)
Venezuelan	90 (0.15)	-	208 (0.35)
<hr/>			
Total	214	100	498
<hr/>			

- (a) the hypothetical densities, from which the estimates have been calculated, are shown in brackets: the areas of the various regions have been calculated as follows - Venezuelan llanos = 320,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Steward:1949), Venezuelan Guayana = 595,460 km<sup>2</sup> (i.e. total area of Venezuela = 915,460 km<sup>2</sup> less 320,000 km<sup>2</sup> = 594,460 km<sup>2</sup>).  
- total area of political units of Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana = 451,663 km<sup>2</sup>, thus Guayana, "north of the Amazon", but excluding these units and the Venezuelan territory = 1,425,000 km<sup>2</sup> (Steward:1949) less 595,460 km<sup>2</sup> (Venezuelan territory) less 451,663 km<sup>2</sup> (Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana) = 377,877 km<sup>2</sup>. Combined with the stated densities of population totals may be extrapolated from these figures.
- (b) As has been explained, (see note 33), Rosenblat is in fact estimating only a portion of the Amerindian population of Venezuela and, as she was working from historical sources only, it is impossible to extrapolate her figures in the absence of an estimate for population density of the various regions.

Turning now to a consideration of Carib populations in particular, it is clear that they did not occupy an homogenous ecological zone (see Map 4). However, following Denevan (1976), it is possible to calculate Carib population, according to habitat and thus supply a range of population estimates for the different zones of Carib settlement, which can then be compared to the documentary evidence already presented.

For the llanos and floodplain regions of the Orinoco, a minimum density of 1.3 persons/km<sup>2</sup> is used, with a maximum of 2.0 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, the latter figure being derived from Denevan's estimate of the Llanos de Mojos (Bolivia) density of settlement. He writes:

The availability of unusually good game resources apparently encouraged large, local populations which were ultimately forced to cultivate the poor savanna land... Seasonally flooded lowland savannas seem to have sustained relatively large populations elsewhere, compared with the lowland forest habitat, even without cultivation, as in eastern Marajo Island and parts of the Orinoco llanos. (Ibid:p.210)

Although Denevan feels that populations of the eastern llanos were unlikely to have reached the density of those of the Llanos de Mojos, as he himself has indicated, this is in part because of the lack of knowledge about this area.

Subsequent work by Denevan and Schwerin (1978), plus the evidence of the historical record<sup>35</sup>, suggests that a density of 2.0 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in this region, would have been possible. A density of 1.65 persons/km<sup>2</sup> represents a compromise between these upper and lower limits, suggested by Denevan.

For those Carib groups living outside these habitats a density of 0.2 persons/km<sup>2</sup> has been taken as a minimum figure, as this represents Denevan's calculation for the tropical forest lowlands. However, since much of the Carib habitat included upland forest and savanna, as well as access to the aquatic resources of the Orinoco and coast, a maximum density of 0.5 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, Denevan's calculation for the Guayana area as a whole, is included. A density of 0.35 persons/km<sup>2</sup> represents a compromise between these extremes.

Estimates of Carib Populations According to Habitat - after Denevan 1976

<u>Region</u>	<u>Habitat</u>	<u>Area</u>
Guarapiche	llanos	23,359 km <sup>2</sup>
Orinoco - north bank	llanos-floodplain	15,156 km <sup>2</sup>
	floodplain	4,218 km <sup>2</sup>
	forest	20,000 km <sup>2</sup>
Imataca/Essequibo	savanna-forest	42,500 km <sup>2</sup>

<u>Population (nearest 1,000)</u>	<u>Densities (persons/km<sup>2</sup>)</u>		
<u>Llanos-Floodplain</u>	<u>1.30</u>	<u>1.65</u>	<u>2.00</u>
Guarapiche	30,000	39,000	47,000
Orinoco - north bank	20,000	25,000	30,000
- south bank	6,000	7,000	8,000
<u>Sub-Total</u>	<u>56,000</u>	<u>71,000</u>	<u>85,000</u>
<u>Savanna-Forest</u>	<u>0.20</u>	<u>0.35</u>	<u>0.50</u>
Imataca-Essequibo	9,000	15,000	21,000
Orinoco - south bank	4,000	7,000	10,000
<u>Sub-Total</u>	<u>13,000</u>	<u>22,000</u>	<u>31,000</u>
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>69,000</u>	<u>93,000</u>	<u>116,000</u>

The areas of Carib zones of occupation have been calculated from the extensions shown on Map 5. These territories should be taken to represent the probable minimum extension of Carib settlement and reflect the heartland of their communities in this region, as is demonstrated in the history of their conquest (see Chaps. II, III). However, there is no reason to suppose that these areas were solely a Carib domain, so that estimates of population, by this

method, should be taken, possibly, to include some non-Carib interlopers as well.

Comparing the above table with the documentary evidence, there is a striking degree of convergence in the estimates. Thus the Spanish estimate, of 1618, that there were 30,000 Caribs settled on the llanos of the Guarapiche/Guanipa area, matches the minimum estimate, for the same region, presented here.

Similarly, the Spanish estimates of 1605 and 1637 for the Guarapiche and Amacuro 'provinces' of 4,000 persons each, seem, if anything, conservative; possibly reflecting the extent to which the exact disposition of the less accessible Amerindian groups was little known.

The estimates of Carib 'families', made by Byam and Scott, are also very close to those suggested here. Byam's estimate of 100,000 Caribs, settled from the Waini River to the Orinoco, with Scott estimating a further 30,000 settled north of the Orinoco, are highly plausible in the context of both the contemporary Spanish estimates and the calculations made here<sup>36</sup>.

Finally, Rodway's estimate of 115,000 Caribs, for all the regions under discussion, almost exactly coincides with the maximum figure of 117,000 suggested above.

Taken together then, the documentary and cultural evidence strongly indicates that the Carib populations of the llanos, Orinoco and the area between the Essequibo and Sierra Imataca, numbered around 100,000 persons, before the full effects of European intrusion were felt<sup>37</sup>.

What assessment can be made of Carib population decline before the date of extensive documentary evidence, i.e. in the 16th century? Certainly the documentary and cultural evidence, when compared, suggest that it was negligible, since estimates of potential population levels match those recorded in the historical record, but the agreement of these sources may, still, be considered purely fortuitous.

Nonetheless, on the evidence already presented here, it would seem that pandemic disease was not a feature of early contact between the Europeans and the Caribs of this region, emerging only in the era of the missions. Accordingly, while it is extremely unlikely that Carib populations did not experience some decline in this period, its scale may well have been so small as to be hidden in the variation between the different estimates presented here.

Moreover, from the accounts and descriptions of the Orinoco and Guayana region in the 16th century, it is clear that the Caribs were not in the front line of contact with the European expeditionaries, at least in the areas of their settlement. Certainly the expeditions of Ordás and Herrera penetrated as far as the Meta confluence and Carib pirogues were frequently sighted throughout this area, but not until the 1590's, with the expeditions of Antonio de Berrio, did there begin a persistent European presence in this area. The reality of the pearls of the Cumaná region and the gold of the Aztec and Inca were far more enticing than the possibility of finding Eldorado among the 'cannibals' of the Orinoco.

It is for this same reason that specific information concerning Carib populations only begins to emerge in the 17th century. The possibility that disease preceded Spanish settlement has already been discussed and it was concluded that, if so, it would have been of a local and sporadic nature. In the context of a population numbering tens of thousands, even the loss of many thousands of Caribs, in this manner, would be virtually undetectable in the historical record.

Denevan, confronting the same problems of interpretation of the historical and cultural data for the Amerindian population of the Llanos de Mojos in Bolivia, writes:

... for most of the first 100 years contact was sporadic, and the same was true in most of tropical South America. In western Amazonia, missionary activity, which was most responsible for the introduction of epidemic disease, did not become significant until between the end of the 16th century and the middle of the 17th century<sup>38</sup>, and it is for this period that the first fairly reliable population estimates are available. (Ibid:p.212)

Similarly, for the Orinoco-Guayana area, despite some early exploration in the 1530's, no permanent establishment was made, by the Spanish, Dutch, French or English, until the 1590's, when Antonio de Berrio founded Santo Tomé on the Orinoco. Even then, as can be seen from the evidence presented here, the level of colonial activity was extremely low, throughout the 17th century. It was the extensive and permanent nature of missionary activity which made them the harbingers of death for the Amerindians.

In sum, since the estimates of Carib population by contemporary witnesses exceed even the theoretical population estimates, derived from comparative cultural data, it is concluded that the early effects of the European intrusion, along the Orinoco and in Guayana, were minimal for Carib populations. However, limited though the immediate consequences may have been, this is to be understood in the context of initially large populations and would be consistent with occasionally and locally disastrous<sup>39</sup> population losses.

It now remains to examine the economic system which supported such populations and the political and social means by which they were organized.

NOTESCHAPTER I, Section (ii)

1. McNeill (1976:p.215) also writes:  
Ratios of 20:1 or 25:1 between pre-Columbian populations and the bottoming out point in Amerindian population curves seems more or less correct, despite local variations.  
See below for an explanation of the calculation and difficulties associated with depopulation ratios.
2. Mooney's estimates are excluded from this discussion as they relate to the Amerindian population north of Mexico only - see Mooney, J. 'The aboriginal population of America, north of Mexico'. Smithsonian Institute, Miscellaneous Collections, Vol.80, No.7, 1928.
3. Though, as Crosby himself points out, the Europeans also had to accept many items of Amerindian diet, particularly maize and manioc.
4. Such was the case with the spread of human smallpox - see Dixon, C.W. 'Smallpox', London, 1962.
5. Malaria was also a significant, if localised, problem for the Europeans as well. For example, malarial fevers were a common complaint in the Cambridge fens until the 19th century, see - Berridge and Edwards:1981: p.67.
6. See also Cook and Borah, 1963.
7. It should also be remembered that the actual cause of death may have been due to several infections. Crosby writes:  
... conditions which facilitate the spread of one disease will usually encourage others ... pneumonia and pleurisy, for instance, often follow smallpox, smothering those who it has weakened! (Ibid.p.43)
8. Such was the case during Raleigh's last crossing of the Atlantic in 1617 and for John Stedman before his journey to Surinam in 1772. Stedman wrote:  
Our departure was not however immediately consequent on our embarkation. We lay windbound in the Texel /River/ for many days, during which time one of our young officers, a Mr. Heffeling, was unfortunately seized with the smallpox: this gentleman, in order to prevent his infecting the ship's company, was ordered on shore to a town on the land's end, called Helder, where I conducted him in a pinnace, and where we left him behind us; but on my return, the surgeon saw the symptoms of the same disorder on myself, I was also immediately ordered to the island of Texel. Having passed a most anxious quarantine in this place, I had however the good fortune to escape the loathsome malady, and to the Doctor's surprise, appeared once more on board perfectly well, just before the signal gun was fired for the fleet to weigh anchor. The circumstance cannot but induce me to wish that those in particular who are destined for a military or a naval life would avail themselves of the art of inoculation, in order to avoid a painful anxiety to themselves, and a most dangerous infection to their fellow creatures. (1796:p.6)

9. Evidence as to the spread of disease in the 18th century will be examined fully in Chap.III.
10. It should be emphasised that the other Spanish enclave in this area, Cumaná, was still isolated from the Caracas region. The reduction of the Tomuza Amerindians, to the east of Caracas, was not initiated until the 1690's (AGI:SD:219:1/8/1695, Information of the Governor of Caracas, Francisco de Berroterán). Moreover, the conquest of the Cumanagotos, who dominated the Cumaná area itself, had only just been completed the previous decade (e.g. AGI:SD:187, Cartas y expedientes de los Gobenadores de la provincia de Cumaná, vistos en el Consejo, desde el ano 1600 á 1681 and AGI:SD:191, Cartas y expedientes de la provincia de Cumaná. Annos 1578 á 1693) by Juan de Orpin.
11. Newson calculates that of the 2,200 people to take part in expeditions to the Orinoco in the 16th century, only 60 survived (1976:p.121).
12. This first great epidemic of smallpox spread through Central America, Mexico and Peru, from the Greater Antilles, in 1519. Other widespread, and well documented, smallpox epidemics occurred among the Tupinamba of Brazil in the early 1550's (incidentally saving Hans Staden, a Dutch adventurer, from being eaten by the Tupi!), round Pernambuco in 1552, Rio de Janeiro in 1558, Rio de Plata in 1560 and northern Brazil in 1562 and 1563 (Hemming:1978a).
13. These will be discussed below when the documentary evidence as to Carib population levels are examined in detail.
14. Records of the Capuchin missions on the lower Orinoco show that in 1788 there were approximately 4,000 Guayano Amerindians under their control, making them the largest single group, after the Caribs who were numbered at around 4,5000 at this time (BGB:BC:APV:p.69). Though this period was one of drastic decline in their populations, to have maintained even this population level until this date implies, as it does in the case of the Caribs, that it was the missions which were largely responsible for the introduction of disease and that pre-mission populations were many times bigger than those found by this date.
15. Of the Guayqueri Amerindians of the Pearl Islands Alexander (1958:p.114) writes:  

The Indians of Margarita, alone among the Indians of eastern coastal Venezuela survived the early Spanish contact without serious loss of numbers.

The 'serious loss' of numbers among the other peoples of this region being attributed more to the effects of slaving in this region than epidemic disease.
16. This will be fully discussed below, in conjunction with a consideration of Carib subsistence techniques.
17. Sausse (1950:pp.73-85) similarly shows that the establishment of Jesuit missions in French Guiana, between 1720 and 1763, was contemporary with dramatic population losses among the Amerindians of the littoral, principally Caribs and Arawaks. He estimates that their numbers fell from 20,000 to just over 1,000 in this period, having shown little, if any, decline in the preceding century of sporadic contact with the Europeans.

18. The absence of any reference, subsequent to the last expedition of Raleigh, in 1617, to the 'towns' of Acamari and Baratubaro might be explained in this manner, although, as will be further argued, European slaving and/or the re-location of Amerindian settlements, due to such intrusive activity, might also account for apparent population loss.
19. The effects of Spanish slaving for the Cumana pearl fisheries will be outlined fully in Chap.II.
20. Certainly Palenque Amerindians, a group located just west of the Caribs of the Orinoco llanos, were raided. Between November 1542 and February 1543, Capitan Pedro de Cadiz registered 124 Palenques and 126 indios de guerra, likely to have included some Caribs, before the Alcaldes of Cubagua (Otte:1977:p.235) and Simon (1963:I:p.310) records that Geronimo Ortal sent Guayano slaves to Cubagua, after a fierce encounter on the Orinoco in 1534.
21. The role of the Amerindians, and the Caribs in particular, in acting as slavers and a bush-police for the Europeans, is discussed in Chaps.IV and V.
22. Indeed, this situation led to some ironic consequences. For example, it was the Irish who introduced the potato to North America (New England) via Europe in 1718 (Bidwell & Falconer:1925:pp.97-8).
23. In the course of the 17th century, as the resistance of the Amerindians of the Caribbean littoral was smashed, production of cacao in the Governorship of Caracas expanded strongly, rising from some 60 fanegas exported to Mexico in 1622, to a regular exportable surplus of 13,000 fanegas in the 1690's. One other consequence of this development was a fall in direct trade with Spain. In 1630 Mexican purchases stood at 112,560 reales, as compared to Spanish purchases of 136,777 reales, by 1640 they were 572,720 reales and 61,650 reales (Arcila-Farias:1946: pp.87-98). This decline in direct trade with Spain is also reflected in the almost total neglect, by the metropolis, of Santo Tomé throughout the 17th century - see p. 30.
24. See Chap. IV, p.272 ff.
25. An Amerindian word for dried fish or meat was boucane. The fish or meat was dried on a framework of sticks over a slow fire and this was popularly held to be the way in which scavenging buccanneers also prepared their food (Grillet:1698:p.57).
26. It should not be forgotten that, outside of the Andean area there appear to have been no domestic animals in the whole of South America.
27. Such factors must have also been in the mind of Columbus since, in his letters written during the return to Spain in 1492, the Caribs entered into his calculations as a potential source of profit as slaves. Sauer writes:  
 From the beginning Columbus had the slave trade in mind.  
 At the journey's end he proposed that these should be taken from among the idolators ... By this he meant the Caribs ...  
 (1966:p.35)

28. Robinson (1967:p.21) writes:

In the morichales of the plains and their fringing woodland were to be found a host of wild animals such as deer, peccaries and fowl. With the introduction of livestock many of these were reduced in number or even completely removed from the scene.

The Capuchin missionary, Mateo de Anguiano, reported in 1702 that those parts of the llanos where there were many head of cattle and horses had become totally devoid of people (quoted in Carrocera:1964:p.467). In the light of this the raiding of ranches and killing of cattle by the Caribs assumes a different significance once it is realised that, according to the Spanish missionaries, they refused to eat beef, preferring deer (P. de Carabantes, 6/11/1666 and A. de Frias, 21/7/1660 quoted in Carrocera:1964:pp.85,151). Also, according to Alexander (1958:p.109) the vegetation of Margarita was fundamentally altered in the 16th century due to the introduction of cattle to the island, which early voyagers found lush and enticing. He writes:

The dramatic change in the vegetation was initiated by the persistent browsing on the young flower-bearing shoots by the livestock so that eventually many young plants failed to produce a new generation.

29. The text reads '... tan grande qu en cado uno habia una parentela entera ...', because Fray Simon has used the word parantela (parentage, kinsfolk) instead of the more usual familia (family, household) I have taken this to imply that such dwellings contained an extended, as opposed to nuclear, family.

30. Although Berrio supplies no specific estimate for the Orinoco region as a whole, he did for Trinidad, estimating the total population at some 35,000 persons (BGB:BC:API:p.3 - see also Newson:1976:p.30). Berrio wrote:

... having overrun the island /Trinidad/ and made the description of all the natives there, there are found some 7,000 souls, and so many Indians married that they would exceed 35,000 souls.

This distinction he draws between 'Indians' and 'souls' is useful to us since it reveals something of the contemporary notion of an average 'family' or 'house' size, i.e. 5 persons, presumably a man, woman, and three children (see also Anguiano, quoted p. 76 below). Contrasting this with the parentela long house described by Simon (see note 27) we may infer a population loss at Carapana's village between the 1530's and 1580's, since, although the 400 houses could contain 2,000 people, at the level of 5 per household, Simon is quite specific that they contained a more extensive kin group than the familia. Unfortunately, since he does not tell us how many people might constitute the parentela, the scale of any population loss is impossible to estimate accurately. However, modern ethnography has demonstrated that an extended family is likely to have been a man, woman, daughters and their associated husbands and children, perhaps to the total of between 20-70 persons. For example, in Ye'cuana long-house villages, or atta, which are comprised of such an extended family, Schomburgk (1841:X pp.248-67) found households numbering 19,23,32,50 and 64 persons, while Koch-Grüneberg (1923:III:p.322) refers to such long-houses as containing between 20 and 70 persons, at an incipient stage of village life, to perhaps 70 persons in a mature village.

Taking the average of Arvelo-Jimenez's figures, i.e. 39 persons,

this would imply a population loss of some 88% in only 50 years, a death rate, as we have seen, often experienced by Amerindians in areas where contact with the Europeans is better documented. However, this is only one possible explanation of these different estimates, re-location of part of the population being another possibility. Moreover we cannot be sure of how significant Simon's use of the word parentela is.

31. The population of Santo Tomé never exceeded 500 persons until 1762, under the reforming Governorship of Jose Diguja - see Chap.III.
32. This procedure can be applied more satisfactorily to the evidence from the late 18th century to give depopulation ratios for the era of missionary activity.
33. In fact her estimates are for the Captaincy General of Caracas only, which did not include eastern Venezuela and the region south of the Orinoco.
34. Steward also offers the figure of 6,300 persons for the Warao of the Orinoco delta, calculating a density of 0.12 persons/km<sup>2</sup> over an area of 52,500km<sup>2</sup>. However, the late date of his source, the Jesuit Gumilla writing at the end of the 18th century, makes this a highly unsatisfactory estimate of the aboriginal population.
35. Discussed, with an examination of Carib subsistence techniques in the following section.
36. Since it is only an assumption that the 17th century notion of a family was as consisting usually of 5 people, an alternative, and perhaps equally plausible alternative would be 4 persons per family. This is the number of people shown in the illustration 'A Caribee Family', which accompanies Stedman's book (1796). On this alternative assumption Byam's and Scott's estimates are even closer to those calculated from the comparative cultural evidence, giving 80,000 Caribs inhabiting the area between the Waini and Orinoco and 112,000 if the Orinoco populations are included.
37. The evidence from the era of missionary activity also supports this conclusion, since the death rates of this period imply an aboriginal population of at least 100,000.
38. The dates were even later in the Orinoco-Guayana area, the first Carib mission not being founded until the 1680's, on the llanos just south of Cumaná - see Chap.III.
39. Certainly such losses occurred within a few years of missionary penetration of the northern llanos. The capuchin P. Carabantes relates that Carib resistance to their evangelism was in part based on a fear of contact with diseases and that of the 11,000 converted in 1665, 1,000 had died within a year, though not all of these unfortunate converts were Caribs (in Carrocera:1964:p.102). Similarly, Agustin de Frias indicates that disease had spread quickly among Carib settlements in the Areo-Amana River area, as a result of Capuchin intrusion in the 1660's (Carrocera:Ibid:p.152).

(iii) Carib Society ca.1500 - ca.1700

The consequences of European intrusion into South America were not limited, as we have seen, to the introduction of Old World diseases; new plants and animals also arrived, and prospered, in the new environment. Apart from the possibly adverse effects of the introduction of the cow and the pig, the Amerindians were quick to adapt to those items of European origin from which some advantage might accrue. For example, the cultivation of the banana plantain<sup>1</sup> and the use of the dog for hunting, now so common a feature of modern Amerindian life that it is difficult to imagine the situation before the Europeans introduced them. Similarly, the introduction of metal tools and firearms have had far reaching consequences for agricultural labour, hunting, fishing, trade and warfare<sup>2</sup>. The discussion that follows, concerning Carib society, must therefore be understood in this context of change and adaptation to new circumstances. Since not all Carib groups would have been exposed to these forces to the same degree, or at the same time, this does mean that it is not possible to generalise about a 'Carib-society-as-a-whole'<sup>3</sup> but, equally, it also implies that comparatively late historical data may yet reveal something of the aboriginal character of Carib life, just as is the case with modern ethnography.

(a) Subsistence

In the preceding section a range of population densities were suggested from which estimates of total Carib population were extrapolated. These varied from as little as 0.2 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, in the forests away from the Orinoco and Atlantic coast, to as much as 2.0 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, for those groups settled on the llanos and floodplain of this river. Clearly such a variation implies a great diversity in Carib techniques of subsistence and in the relative abundance of their different habitats.

Early historical evidence concerning these features of Carib life is scant, for the same reason that knowledge of the size and extent of Carib populations was limited until the end of the 16th century, i.e. European penetration of this area was negligible. In this context it is almost impossible to be certain of the nature of the pre-Columbian economy of the Caribs but the insights of modern ethnography and such traces as there are in the historical record, do permit some degree of reconstruction.

It is the intention here to examine three complementary systems of agriculture, currently employed by the modern Caribs of Venezuela and Guayana, direct descendants of the historic populations discussed in this thesis, in order to elucidate those techniques and adaptations open to aboriginal groups and to present evidence from the historical record that such techniques were actually employed by the Caribs.

The order of presentation should also be taken to imply a historical sequence, representing a progressive adaptation to new environments, as Carib groups moved from the tropical forests, where swidden agriculture was practiced onto the floodplain and llanos of the Orinoco, developing methods of floodplain cultivation, and then spreading across the eastern llanos, employing techniques of ditching and draining, in order to cultivate the swampy terrain.

The antiquity of these latter techniques and the time depth of Carib occupation of the floodplain and llanos, almost certainly go back to the pre-Columbian era and as such lie outside the province of this thesis. However, as we have seen, since there is no definitive evidence concerning the extent of Carib occupation before ca.1600, it must remain a possibility that such developments were contemporary with the arrival of the Europeans<sup>4</sup>.

Swidden, or slash-and-burn, cultivation was, and is, the most prevalent and simple form of cultivation in tropical South America and it is in this aspect of their subsistence techniques that the Caribs most resemble the

Amerindians of the tropical forests. Both Denevan (1978:p.19) and Schwerin (1972:pp.39-57) suggest that, though the evidence is meagre, the Caribs left their home, somewhere in the tropical forests, during the period 0 - 400 A.D., spreading down the Orinoco, along the Guayana coast and into the Antilles, driving out earlier inhabitants, probably Arawaks. Hence the modern Karinya of Venezuela, the Barama River Caribs of Guyana<sup>5</sup> and the Galibi of French Guyana and Surinam are lineal descendants of those prehistoric Carib settlers.

During these population movements some groups occupied the Orinoco and its llanos, forcing a change in agricultural techniques, while others found habitats to settle in which they could directly employ the traditional methods of swidden cultivation<sup>6</sup>.

As far as those Carib groups which are the subject of this thesis are concerned, the areas between the Sierra Imataca and the Essequibo and along the Caura, Aro and Caroni Rivers, away from the Orinoco floodplain, would seem to have been the most favourable sites to apply such techniques and the appropriate population densities, in the preceding section, have been applied to these areas accordingly.

Being the most common and effective system of agriculture, in the South American tropical forest, swidden cultivation has been extensively studied by modern anthropologists. In particular modern studies of the Barama River Caribs by Gillin (1936) and, again, by Adams (1972) as well as the Pemon of Venezuela by Thomas (1982), permit insight into the type of agricultural regime that must have been employed by those Carib groups occupying regions of tropical forest and savanna.

Basically the pattern today seems to be of a house or village site located at some distance from a cleared patch of forest, whose productivity is at an optimum for, perhaps, less than three years. Having cleared such a site, through the felling and burning of the undergrowth<sup>7</sup>, a variety of crops may be planted, pre-eminently manioc, which, in conjunction with meat

and fish, forms the staple diet (Gillin:1936:p.2, Adams:1972:pp.10-12, Thomas:1982:p.36). Thomas (Ibid:p.36) suggests that, after manioc which is consumed daily, peppers, sweet manioc, banana, plantain, pineapple and sugar cane are eaten at least once a week and more infrequently, maize, yams, peanuts and beans. Both Gillin and Adams also testify to the importance of these items of diet.

However, some of these crops are of Old World origin; bananas, plantain, yam and sugar cane, and so would not have been a feature of aboriginal Carib diet<sup>8</sup>.

Gillin and Adams (Ibid:p.14 and p.10) say that the Caribs have a distinct preference for agricultural sites located on a hillside<sup>9</sup> for reasons of good drainage and soil types. Since this kind of site is only found on the middle to upper reaches of rivers in the Imataca - Essequibo region, this may also partly explain the apparent preference of historic Carib groups for settlement away from the immediate coastal area of the Atlantic.

Once the fields have been cleared it is the exclusive responsibility of the women to harvest and prepare the crops and of the men to hunt and fish<sup>10</sup>. The latter activities would have been undertaken traditionally with bow, arrow and spear and, for fishing, with the use of poisons as well. For modern Carib populations fishing seems to provide the most available and consistent source of protein but this would not necessarily have been true before the introduction of shotguns (see note 10).

Gillin, Thomas and Adams all agree that gathering of wild species does not make a major contribution to the diet, being largely a function of individual knowledge and inclination. As Adams (Ibid:p.13) points out, for some fruit, nuts and roots, no common name exists in the Carib language. However, these are rather surprising observations since gathering does form a significant part of Amerindian diet among other Guayana forest groups, such as the Trio, Wai Wai and Yanoama. It thus seems likely that this discrepancy

in the evidence, at least in the case of the Barama River Caribs, could be explained by the degree of deculturation and economic dislocation that they had experienced by the time they were visited by these ethnographers.

For Carib groups of the Orinoco floodplain and llanos swidden techniques would have been as inappropriate as they are today. However, recent work by Denevan and Schwerin (1978), on the agricultural techniques of the modern Karinya of eastern Venezuela gives a valuable insight into the adaptations Carib populations were required to make in order to occupy this area.

Apart from lacking forest cover<sup>11</sup> the Orinoco llanos contrast with the forest - savanna habitat by being poorly drained although the eastern extension, where Carib groups settled, is also characterised by uplifted tableland known as the Mesas Orientales. The rainy season lasts from May until November/December, with the dry season being too arid for most plants to survive without irrigation but despite this streams do flow all year round, originating in the highest parts of the Mesas. The sharp, steep valleys these streams have eroded separate the tablelands into distinct units, such as the Mesa de Guanipa, at the heartland of historic Carib territories. Such streams are fed by seepage from the sides of the Mesas, which keeps the ground swampy and, where untouched, these streams are characterised by gallery forests of the moriche palm (morichales). This palm does best when its roots are wet and where there are virgin stands the course of the river is meandering and slow, the main channel often being obscured so much that the river bottom is best described as swamp. It is these areas which are the most intensively exploited by the Karinya (Denevan and Schwerin:1978:p.11).

To the north of the Mesas is an area of scrubby thorn forest but the Karinya tend to occupy the intervening region of tropical savanna, an area of extensive grassland with scattered low trees. Soils here are of low

fertility, being sandy, deeply leached, low in organic material and with poor water retention.

In contrast the morichal soils are very fertile, being of alluvial origin and high in organic material, but the excess of water must be controlled before cultivation is possible.

This Mesa landscape does not extend as far as the Orinoco but terminates 5 - 50 km short of it. The intervening region, in addition to an area south of the river, constitutes a low lying floodplain. The annual flooding of the Orinoco thus replenishes the many lagoons, lakes and backwaters which are found, often at a considerable distance from the main channel. However, certain points are never flooded and are often used for settlement or as a place of refuge for criollo livestock, while due to the many springs and streams which drain into the Orinoco, much of the floodplain remains permanently moist, despite variations in river height.

Faced with such different habitats pre-Columbian Carib settlers had two alternatives. Firstly, as has been suggested was the case for those groups of the hill lands south of the Orinoco and in the Imataca/Essequibo area, they could simply settle where traditional techniques could be employed, or, secondly, they could adapt to the regimen of the annual floods through techniques they learnt from other floodplain inhabitants they traded with or from the women, responsible for agricultural production, whom they seized when raiding them (see below p. 85).

For those that adopted this latter course seasonal flooding meant only seasonal cultivation (i.e. November to May), excluding those traditional crops which had a long growing season, such as pineapples and manioc, and necessitating peak periods of intensive labour in order to gather the harvest and clear new and old fields, according to the rise and fall of the river.

Despite this different work regime<sup>12</sup> Denevan and Schwerin (Ibid:p.20) detail some definite advantages of this type of subsistence pattern over that

SYSTEM OF

CULTIVATION: 5 3

1A

4

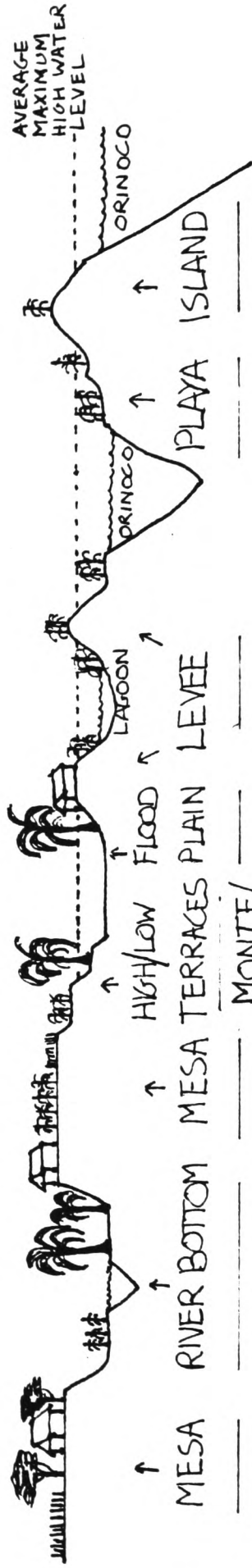
1B

2A

1B

2B

1/2C



LANDFORM: MESA

RIVER BOTTOM

MESA TERRACES

PLAIN

LEVEE

PLAYA ISLAND

BIOTOPE: SAVANNA

MORICHAL

MONTE/

SAVANNA MORICHAL

SWAMP MONTE

PLAYA MONTE

BIOTOPE

MONTE

PLAYA

MORICHAL

SAVANNA

SYSTEM OF CULTIVATION

SWIDDEN

MIXED CROPPING

DRAINED FIELDS

SAVANNA CULTIVATION

- 1A FLOODPLAIN HIGH TERRACES
- 1B ORINOCO LEVEES
- 1C HIGH ISLAND
- 1D OTHER FOREST (NOT SHOWN)

- 2A EDGES OF LAGOONS AND BACKWATERS
- 2B RIVERBANKS, BEACHES, LEVEE EDGES AND SAND BARS
- 2C LOW ISLAND

- 3 RIVER BOTTOMS
- 4 FLOODPLAIN LOW TERRACES

- 5 HOUSE GARDENS

(AFTER) DENEVAN

AND SCHWERIN: 1978

of swidden cultivation; i) the soils retain adequate moisture for crop growth during the dry season, while the silt deposits maintain fertility, ii) the abundance of fish and aquatic game to be found in such a large river and iii) the same area can be cultivated for longer periods of 6 - 10 years, or even permanently, given favourable social conditions.

Within the floodplain the lowest depressions are not cultivated, due to near permanent lakes or swamps here, the intermediate levels are drained by ditching and cultivated like the morichales (see below), while the highest levels have only a limited attraction (see note 6). The richest soils are to be found at the margins of the lakes and watercourses which are annually joined to the main river.

Cultigens grown in these areas today are similar to those grown throughout the tropical forest; bitter manioc, maize, squash, beans and a few introductions such as the banana plantain (Denevan & Schwerin: Ibid: p.18). The general agricultural potential of this environment is reflected in the fact that it is the criollo farmers who control most of the Orinoco floodplain today, selling their surpluses in Ciudad Bolivar and Ciudad Guayana, for, as the Karinya say, these locations are attractive because 'they are rich and produce rapidly'.

One important consequence of the development of floodplain cultivation by Carib populations was that it may have suggested the draining of low and swampy spots within the mesa-morichal habitat. Denevan and Schwerin (Ibid: p.22) speculate that this practice could have originated in an attempt to hasten the drainage of backwaters and lagoons in order to extend planting around their margins. From here the technique could have been extended to the marshy, swampy areas of the morichales, unsuitable for cultivation even at periods of low water.

In this manner the Caribs could have spread from the northern affluents of the Orinoco to the Guarapiche, Guanipa and Tigre River areas,

allowing a widespread and exclusive occupation of the region, in view of their mastery of ditching and draining techniques. Denevan and Schwerin write:

This system of agriculture is clearly more intensive, in terms of both cropping frequency and labor inputs, than swidden or annual floodplain agriculture. Once perfected it has continued with little change down to the present. (Ibid:p.24)

Denevan and Bergman (1975), and Denevan and Schwerin (1978), have observed these practices of ditching and draining in the modern Karinya community of Cachama where they:

... are particularly numerous /drained fields/, large and complex, and where they are the main means of cultivation by the community. (1978:p.24)

The arduous and strenuous work of digging ditches to provide drainage for a plot, as well as the original clearance of the site and the maintenance of the ditches once dug, is the responsibility of the men. Following this there is a period of intensive planting, between May and July. Manioc, followed by the banana plantain, are the major staple crops. Seed crops, such as maize, beans and squash, only being planted as supplements to the diet.

Under this method of cultivation a further dry season crop is also possible as the soil retains moisture, despite ditching, most of the year round, though if drainage is too excessive this opportunity is removed. Denevan and Schwerin (Ibid:p.26) observed a crude damming system at Cachama, however, which was used to counteract this tendency<sup>13</sup>.

Once drained and cleared it does not take much more labour to maintain these plots, as is the case with the forest gardens which may only be cultivated for 2-3 years. Although the ditches have to be cleaned annually, by the men, 2-5 hours work by the women, every other day, is adequate to control weeds, harvest and replant the crops. In general such fields are left fallow after 2-4 years for 1-2 years but some individuals

cultivate particular plots for 20 years or longer (Denevan and Schwerin:Ibid: pp.27-8).

Thus the cycle of cultivation tends towards the long term, at a more or less continuous level, because the labour required to start a new field is considerable and the distance to another suitable streambed may be too great, if a person is reluctant to leave the local kin group. Denevan and Schwerin summarise:

... the long period of occupation of most extant Karinya villages is indicative of the long dependence on continuous cultivation... it must be remembered that the inhabitants of Tabaro /on the Caris River/ have occupied the same general site for better than 380 years. There is no doubt that morichal agriculture is what has made possible such long term occupation of the same sites. (Ibid:p.30)

It has already been noted that an important factor in encouraging Carib settlement on the Orinoco floodplain and llanos was the access it would have given to the rich faunal resources of the region. Thus, in contrast to forest communities where faunal protein is often, or is felt to be, scarce<sup>14</sup>, the Orinoco is still such a rich source of fish, aquatic mammals and birds that:

So abundant are these resources that it is possible to trade surpluses of game and dried fish for bitter yuca and other morichal crops. (Denevan and Schwerin:1978:p.47)

Techniques of fishing do not differ from those in the forest areas, as is the case with hunting, but the importance of mammalian species is often far less close to the Orinoco. Clearly when Carib populations moved north into the Mesas Orientales their access to the aquatic resources of the Orinoco would have been curtailed. This may partly have been overcome by trade, as it is today, but the impact of cattle on other species of the llanos should not be forgotten, making it difficult to assess what, if any, disadvantage accrued through expansion into these areas<sup>15</sup>.

Early travellers to this region, while often noting the crops being grown and their uses, were rarely resident long enough, or even sufficiently interested, to make detailed observation of the labour that produced them.

Nonetheless, the productivity of Amerindian agriculture was continually stressed, as was the abundance of wildlife along the Orinoco and throughout Guayana. Indeed, the survival of many 16th century expeditions through this area relied on the Amerindians having a tradeable surplus of food<sup>16</sup> (Oviedo y Valdes:1959:Book 24:Chap.II, Aguado:1956:Book V), an eloquent testimony to the effectiveness of their subsistence techniques at this time<sup>17</sup>.

The first descriptions of Amerindian agriculture along the Orinoco and in Guayana make clear that manioc was by far the most important crop raised. All the accounts of expeditions to these areas refer to the use of manioc (e.g. Aguado:1951:Book IV, Oviedo y Valdes:1959:I:Chap.III), and, of those that penetrated beyond the Orinoco mouth and delta, the use of maize as well (e.g. Aguado:Ibid:Book IV, VI, Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Chap.VIII).

Recent archaeological work by Roosevelt (1980) at Parmana, on the mid-Orinoco between the mouths of the Caura and Cuchivero Rivers, suggests that maize cultivation may have been of greater significance among the inhabitants of the floodplain than had previously been thought. If so this could dramatically change calculations of Amerindian densities in this region. As Roosevelt suggests:

... the carrying capacity of the Parmana region would be almost ten times greater with the addition of intensive maize cultivation to the tropical forest subsistence system. (Ibid:p.186)

Certainly the impression given by the chroniclers in their accounts is that maize use was more common the further west along the Orinoco one travelled. Thus, while the Amerindians of the lower Orinoco certainly grew maize as a supplementary to their diet, those groups further to the west seem to have adopted it as a staple of at least as great an importance as manioc.

Oviedo y Valdes informs us that the Amerindians of the town of Araucay relied principally on manioc, although they also grew maize '... which was highly prized' (Ibid:Chap.III:p. 96), while Domingo de Vera y Ibarguen, lieutenant of Antonio de Berrio, was presented with richly decorated maize stalks by

an unidentified cacique of this area. Further west the evidence suggests that maize use was more important for Aguado (Ibid:Book IV:p.510) says that it was grown in such quantities that surpluses were stored in caves and specially constructed silos.

There is the question, then, as to the extent that Carib groups of the floodplain might have also used maize. Although there is no evidence of their producing it in quantities sufficient to merit special storage techniques<sup>18</sup>, there are indications that it may have been of greater significance in Carib diet than modern ethnography has suggested. Thus the region around the Pao River, an important zone of Carib occupation, was described as '... a fertile land of much maize and manioc' (Oviedo y Valdes: Ibid:Chap.XI:pp.421-2, Aguado:Ibid:Book V·p.507), while Robinson (1967:p.60) notes that the alluvial soils in these lower reaches of the Orinoco were certainly conducive to maize production. He writes of the area around Santo Tomé:

... two harvests of maize could be collected each year, the first in winter (September) and the other in summer (March) ... It appears that the summer maize crop was the more abundant, yielding in a good year over three hundred bushels for each bushel sown.

Moreover, as has been indicated (see above p.66), the annual flooding of the Orinoco, which may last up to 7 months, precludes the cultivation of those crops which have a long growing season and are destroyed by being water logged, such as manioc which can take 8-10 months to mature. In this case one might expect floodplain cultivators to favour seed crops of a quick maturing variety like maize (Zea mays). Gumilla describes just such an intense cultivation of quick maturing maize along the floodplain of the mid-Orinoco:

They sow there ... a singular species of maize. They call it ... this month maize because in two months after sowing it grows, makes cobs and matures so that in the space of a year they get six crops by searching out the appropriate terrain. (Ibid:pp.347-8, see also Gilij:1780:I:p.194)

While in the sixteenth century the conquistador Alonso de Herrera saw '... a great quantity of maize and manioc' growing along the Meta River (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.413). Clearly such a plant is particularly appropriate for use in an area which is subject to periodic flooding for the major part of the year.

Denevan and Schwerin (Ibid:p.21ff) indicate that the modern Karinya do plant a variety of manioc on the floodplain that is quicker to mature than the tropical forest variety but they also emphasise that the unpredictability of the water level of the Orinoco, rainfall varying in this region between 1000mm. and 1428mm. annually, means that even on the highest levels of the Orinoco such plantings might easily be wiped out. Maize, beans and squashes are thus the favoured crops in the region of the floodplain.

Comparative evidence from the floodplain of the upper Amazon, along the Rio Ucayali in Peru, also demonstrates how the regime of annual flooding imposes clear limitations on the cultivators of such regions. Bergman (1980: p.39ff) writes of the Shipibo Amerindians:

Neither wind nor rain nor extremes of temperature limit life in the floodplain, but the annual flood does. The flood marks out the seasons and all patterns of livelihood must adjust to it.

So, too, as was probably the case with Carib agriculturalists of the Orinoco floodplain, the Shipibo plant maize and beans in those areas most susceptible to flooding and the banana plantain, their major staple, only in the highest parts of the floodplain; though these chacras are also periodically destroyed through inundation due, as happens also along the Orinoco, to the unpredictability of the level of the annual flood.

Harvesting is also affected by these ecological conditions (Bergman: Ibid:p.53) since, as the waters rise, the crops must be gathered and processed immediately, while the lengths of the wet/dry seasons, being uncertain in any given year, further compound the difficulties of trying to raise a crop that is sensitive to flooding in such an environment.

In sum then, both the historical evidence concerning cultivation of the Orinoco floodplain and the agricultural exigencies imposed by the annual flooding of that river suggest that manioc cannot have formed the major staple of diet for the Caribs of this region but rather, as is true today, have shared this role with quicker maturing crops such as maize, beans and squashes. However there is no evidence that maize production reached the intensity it did further west and it is unlikely to have replaced manioc entirely as the staple item of diet<sup>19</sup>.

The abundance of the wild life, both aquatic and land based, was a constant theme in the early accounts of the Orinoco and Guayana. Along the Orinoco itself the quantities of fish seem to have awed early travellers (e.g. Aguado:Ibid:Book IV:p.413, Book V:p.28, Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Chap.III:p.396, Chap.XI:pp.422-3, Raleigh:1868:p.51<sup>20</sup>), as well as the diversity of wild fowl, deer and rich turtle beaches<sup>21</sup> (Aguado:Ibid:Book V:pp.507-9, Book VI:p.538, Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Chap.V:pp.397-8).

Elsewhere in Guayana the productivity of hunting and fishing was also evident. For example, in 1664 Antoine Biet, in his description of Guayana, wrote:

... game swarms in such abundance that there is here all that is necessary for life. (1664:Chap.III:p.339)

and:

... the fish here is so good and so excellent that I am able to say that it utterly surpasses the bounty of our own coasts of France. (Ibid:Chap.IV:p.339)

However, details concerning Carib agricultural techniques do not emerge until the era of the missions. This is partly explained by the temperamental difference between the conquistadors of the 16th century, intent only on cataloguing the obvious resources of their future domains, and an educated missionary, sensitive to the changes overwhelming the societies in which they lived<sup>22</sup>. Nonetheless the first Europeans in this region did appreciate, in every sense of the word, the burden of field labour

that fell on the Amerindian women. Much was made of the fact that the men seemed to spend most of their time lying around in their hammocks, when not hunting or fishing, while the women worked to produce the crops (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book 24:Chap.III:p.397). Walter Raleigh wrote:

... men do nothing but hunt, fish, play and drink, when they are out of the wars. (1868:p.109)

Among both Carib and Arawak groups 'slaves'<sup>23</sup> were also used in field labour. Thus Oviedo y Valdes says that the Arawaks of the Orinoco mouth killed their war-captives unless they:

... serve them in their fields as slaves, and they are bought and sold as slaves, and are called pretos or moavis.  
(Ibid:Book 24:Chap.XVIII:pp.435-6)

From later sources (see below) it is confirmed that this was also a Carib practice and, in the context of the relatively sedentary and intensive agricultural production associated with llanos-floodplain cultivation, the use of such labourers must have been an important element in supporting the more influential Carib leaders, as well as being a source of agricultural innovation. The possible importance of Carib captives in permitting adaptation to new environments has already been referred to above.

Whatever its social origin, this willingness to experiment and innovate with new crops and the exceptional variety of modern Karinya cultigens<sup>24</sup> may be considered a direct legacy of the historic Carib populations of the floodplain and llanos. Denevan and Schwerin write:

... curiosity and an interest in experimentation seem to be long standing characteristics of the Karinya farmer ... Presumably this readiness to adopt new cultigens goes back to the days of early penetration of the Mesas ... Nonetheless, the conditions which made it possible to expand the basic inventory of cultivated species may be identified in the longer period of cultivation in the river bottoms and the relatively sedentary settlement patterns which this has made possible ... (1978:p.46)

This is particularly evident in the extensive planting of trees which, if any benefit is to be derived, requires just such a sedentary settlement pattern.

The adaptability of Carib populations, and those of other Amerindians,

to new crops is also attested to by the rapidity with which Old World cultigens spread, sometimes in advance of extensive contact with the Europeans. Thus by 1580 the banana was being cultivated along the Orinoco (see p. 36 above) and in his description of Trinidad in the 1590's Antonio de Berrio observed that:

It is a land very abundant in yuca, maize and sugar cane. The undergrowth is of plantain and there are plenty of potatoes. (BGB:BC:API:p.4)

As the missionaries penetrated into the Carib villages of the northern llanos, in the late 17th century, accounts of the agriculture become more detailed. Capuchin missionaries, from their base at Piritu, were evangelising the most northerly of these villages in the 1660's, hastened in these attempts by the successful French overtures to the Amerindians of the Guarapiche River in the preceding decade (see Ch.II).

Spearheading this campaign to develop a French enclave north of the Orinoco were two Jesuits, P. Pelleprat and D. Mesland, who spent some five years among the Caribs of this area and left a detailed account of their experiences. In general they confirm the type of Carib subsistence techniques outlined above. In particular they relate that sugar cane and plantains were well established crops and that the Caribs had planted many types of tree, especially orange and lemon, both of Old World origin, as well as a variety of medicinal-recreational drugs (1965:II:p.61).

Metal tools were not yet common (Ibid:p.48) and so stone axes were used to fell or girdle trees and a hardwood sword (macana) was used like a machete to clear smaller trees and brush. The Orinoco missionary, Spanish Jesuit J. Gumilla, although writing a century later, left a detailed description of the labour necessary in field clearance before metal tools were introduced:

With their axes made of a stone celt, with a cutting edge at each extremity, fixed mid-way in a suitable wooden handle, they would cut at the green stems of the brambles and under-

growth after having broken them down with their macanas ... the women subsequently burning the dry timbers. It took them two months to cut down a tree ... To start, throw up and form furrows, after burning the undergrowth, they employ shovels formed of hardwood ... They heap up the earth on either side of the furrow and with it cover the straw and dried grass. They then sow their maize, manioc and other roots ... . (1966:II:p.229)

As Barrere noted:

... before commerce with the Europeans it took them a very long time to clear their fields. (1743:p.151)

Writing specifically of the Caribs of Guayana, another French missionary, contemporary of Mesland and Pelleprat, says that they planted manioc by:

Digging, loosening and heaping up a small mound of earth, the Indian female will place in it two slips of cassava stem from 18 to 20 inches in length. Being inserted on the slope the extremity of each stick is left exposed, the other being covered up with the earth just removed. (La Borde:1674:p.241)

These descriptions illustrate the technique of planting 'cassava hills' (see p. 64) and the exclusive role of women in agriculture for all but the initial stage of field clearance, and when Spanish missionaries encountered the Caribs of the northern llanos they were also much impressed by the effectiveness of these apparently simple techniques. Mateo de Anguiano, a Capuchin, wrote:

With the labour of two pairs of mules in one day, following the method in Spain, it is possible here for an Indian to produce enough to sustain his family for a whole year, even yet for ten, indeed, twelve persons. Taking the green branches of the plants /manioc/, they clear a space and then ram them into the ground and without any more attention in eight to ten months they are ready to gather the roots, which is the fruit of the plant. They are as big as the leg of a man and they are as thick as they are long(!), such is the goodness of the earth. (In Carrocera:1964:p.466)

Along the Orinoco floodplain the Caribs and other Amerindian groups clearly employed those techniques that can be observed today. Gumilla has left this description of their method of planting:

When the waters are drying up after the rains, all the Indians that live near the large lagoons sow all the bare earth from which the water has withdrawn. There they get

an abundant crop because the soil is very rich ... They do not lose a palm width's of land, for between those maize plants, they plant sugar cane, many different roots, diverse calabashes, and, above all, an immensity of water melons. (Ibid:II:pp.347-8)

Despite the 'ease' with which such results were achieved, agricultural labour, as has already been mentioned, was carried out by poitos as much as by women, though as most captives used in this way were either women or children (see Chap.V) this is a distinction that would probably not have been drawn by the Caribs themselves<sup>25</sup>. Letters of the Capuchins, Agustin de Frias and Mateo de Anguiano, say that groups immediately neighbouring the Caribs, such as the Chaimas and Cores:

... work like slaves in their fields and during their /Caribs/ voyages. (in Carrocera:Ibid:pp.151,377)

However, that the Spanish chose to call such people 'slaves' may be misleading since it is known from modern ethnography that different Amerindian groups will exchange their labour for European products traded into the area by a neighbouring people<sup>26</sup>.

Concerning the faunal resources of the areas of Carib occupation, 17th century sources merely amplify the impression, given by the earlier accounts, of a great abundance.

Pelleprat estimated that the Amerindians of the Guarapiche would have been able to catch a 'vast' amount of fish in only half an hour (Ibid:p.64). Among the reptilian species the cayman, hunted with bow and arrow, and the eggs of the turtle were specially relished. Pelleprat suggests that the seasonal crop of these eggs might be collected at the rate of 12-15,000 a day, enough to sustain 50-70 persons for that period (Ibid:pp.62-5, see also Biet:1664:III:Ch.IV:pp.347-8). Along the Orinoco Gumilla informs us that some Amerindian groups kept turtles in specially dug pens (Ibid:I:pp.292-3), as did Carib groups of the Atlantic littoral (Barrere:1743:p.156).

Where it was available the Amerindians would also hunt the manatee

(Gumilla:Ibid:I:pp.285-7). This mammal, now extinct, was to be found in many of the larger rivers which flowed into the Atlantic and formed an important source of protein for the Amerindians. Biet (1664:III:Ch.IV:p.346) describes it as a fish 'as big as a cow' and, indeed, its colloquial English name is sea-cow.

The huge quantity of such aquatic foods to be had from the rivers of this area can be gauged from the fact that French and English commercial ships would go regularly to make catches along the coast and in the lower reaches of the rivers (Pelleprat:Ibid:p.65) and that dried fish was a vital source of food for the black slaves of the Guayana colonies<sup>27</sup>.

Among the land animals, deer on the llanos and agouti in the forest areas, seem to have been the most valued foods and, again, to be found in copious numbers (Pelleprat:Ibid:p.66, Biet:Ibid:Ch.III:p.340). An interesting observation made by Agustin de Frias, and repeated by Mateo de Anguiano, was that the Caribs of the llanos would not eat beef. They do not make clear the precise reason for this preference, but in view of the use of Carib labour in the 18th century Capuchin missions in the Yurari River valley, south of the Orinoco, whose economic base were cattle, such conservatism, in contrast to the realm of cultigens, was probably short lived (in Carrocera:Ibid:pp.151,467).<sup>28</sup>

It should also be noted that the Spanish consistently claimed that human flesh formed a significant, even exclusive, item of Carib diet. The Capuchin Jose de Carabantes suggested, somewhat ludicrously<sup>29</sup>, that:

... a principal cacique and the most celebrated amongst the Caribs, called Atirama /from the Amana River/ fiercest of the fierce and a great enemy of all mankind ... ordinarily eats the flesh of men to sustain himself and his family.  
(in Carrocera:Ibid:p.90)

The whole issue of Carib 'cannibalism', and its relation to persistent European notions of Carib life, are fully examined in Chap.V. Suffice it to say here that such comments are more revealing as to the insecurities of the European mind than as to the nature of Carib subsistence techniques.

Undoubtedly great changes in Carib agriculture, hunting and fishing took place as a result of the arrival of the Europeans. Until the era of the missions and increased European colonisation, in the 18th century, the Caribs, however, were still in a position to accept or reject new items of diet and preserve or change traditional methods of work. Certainly the advantages of metal tools were quickly recognised as was the usefulness of some of the Old World cultigens, like the plantain, certain fruit trees and sugar-cane, especially in the form of rum!, but adaptation to a changed environment, in this case, implied an increased dependence on the Europeans, who opened the vista of new, and previously unrecognised, needs, ranging from metal tools and firearms to cheap trinkets and 'modest' clothing.

From the point of view of subsistence techniques the introduction of metal tools certainly induced the greatest changes<sup>30</sup>, particularly in the amount of labour that would have been required to clear and maintain a field or garden plot. In turn this would have affected social relations between those groups possessing such items and those that did not, unbalancing the delicate relation between trading and raiding. At the same time trade with the Europeans could induce a re-orientation of labour towards an increased production of items for exchange and profit, ranging from the dyes and woods of the forest to the 'red gold' of its inhabitants. Under the mission regime these relations of production were also encouraged or imposed and the items involved dictated by the mission bureaucracy<sup>31</sup>. These latter aspects of the changes that overtook Carib society will be discussed in Chap.III, the re-orientation of aboriginal patterns of trade is examined now.

(b) Trade

There are many indications that the Orinoco formed the backbone of a vast and highly developed trading system. It also seems probable that the position of Carib groups within that trading system changed radically due to

their contact with the Europeans.

Morey (1965) has researched extensively into the ethnohistory of the western llanos and shows that the Amerindian groups of this area were at the centre of a network of trading relationships, extending right across the northern part of the continent. Of these groups Gilij noted that:

... there is no savage nation which does not have something singular in manufactures. (1784:II:p.268)

such singularity being probably related to localised natural resources, as can still be seen in the case of the Piaroa and Ye'cuana today (Thomas:1972). According to Morey (Ibid:p.265), other than salt from the Andean region, before contact, the items traded into the llanos seem to have been of less value than those traded out, though this pattern was quickly reversed by the introduction of European goods. A by-product of this reversal in the flow of goods was, of course, to disrupt the balance of relations between peoples of this area, specifically to the advantage of Carib groups on the lower Orinoco.

Among the incoming goods, before European articles arrived, were curare from the Piaroa (Gumilla:1966:I:pp.360-1) and vegetable dyes, yellow from the Maipure (Humboldt:1907:IV:p.514) and red from the Piaroa and Guaypunavi (Alvarado:1945:p.323). The Guaypunavi also made manioc graters which were sought after by some llanos groups (Gilij:1784:II:p.48).

Once European items became available, both Arawak and Carib groups appear to have moved in quickly as 'middle-men'<sup>32</sup>. The conquistador, de Berrio, found Caribs trading on the Orinoco in 1590 (BGB:BC:p.10) as did many other of the first expeditions to this area, while their role in the slave trade is quite the most dramatic expression of European economic disruption (see Ch.V).

However, a simple list of the items used in trade, even if available, would be of no help in assessing the probable social impact of European goods. Thus it is not the case that European goods simply took the place of

'native' ones but, rather, they implied a different order of social relations between groups, as in the case of slaving. Equally the use of 'shell-money' throughout this area implies sophistication of inter-group relations which could not be inferred from the present situation and which offers a glimpse of pre-Columbian conditions of trade.

Shell-money, or quiripa, was used throughout this region as a medium of exchange. Manufactured in various regions, these strings of shell discs, served as a strong attraction for trade from other areas (Morey:1965: pp.113-24). Quiripa was manufactured from the shells of a fresh water snail, called namu or manu in Carib languages, which were cut into discs and then pierced with a hole in the centre. After they were strung the whole unit of shell discs was ground and finished to a uniform size, usually that of a thumb nail.

At the time of contact this shell-money was known to be made by the Achuaga, Otomaco and Amariba, groups of the western llanos (Rivero:1956:pp.20, 160, Cassani:1741:p.181). By the 18th century only the Otomaco were still bothering to make it, due, no doubt, to the European impact on trading relations.

In the context of Carib history, both the source of manufacture of this 'money' and the fact that Carib groups were reported to use these strings as jewellery (Morey:1965:p.124), strongly support the idea that their trading dominance on the Orinoco was post-Columbian and based on their superior access to European goods<sup>33</sup>.

This point is underlined by reports of 'trade centres' on the middle Orinoco, where many different groups would trade for a variety of goods. Five such markets are mentioned in the historical sources; two on the turtle beaches of the middle Orinoco (Humboldt:1908:IV:pp.475-9, 48217) and the Inirida, Guaviare and Orinoco confluences (Humboldt:Ibid:IV:p.481), two fish markets, one at the Atures Rapids (Gumilla:1745:p.228) and another

on the Cojedes (Federmann:1916:pp.210-14) and a curare market in Piaroa territory (Gumilla:1745:pp.360-1). Though Raleigh mentions that the Caribs had an important trade centre between the Cari and Limon Rivers on the lower Orinoco, for the trading of slaves for the West Indies (1868:p.87), this again must be considered a post-contact development.

It seems probable that it was precisely those western llanos societies, which had originally developed these complex patterns of trade, that were the first to suffer from the growing importance of Carib slavers and traders.

Some groups, such as the Achagua and Saliva, appear not to have been able to offer any effective resistance to the Carib warriors (Gumilla:II:p.91) while others, such as the Otomac, fought off the Caribs, until the latter obtained an increasing number of firearms through their Dutch allies<sup>34</sup>.

As can be seen from the relevant map, the length of Carib trading expeditions was prodigious and are, for example, still occasionally undertaken by the modern Pemon. Thomas (1982:p.125) records that one trader has been going from the upper Paragua, down the Caroni and as far as the Eretrato since he was a young boy. In times past, Barrere says that the Caribs were quite prepared to undertake a journey of great distance, perhaps 200 leagues or more, for nothing more than to trade a hammock or join a drinking party (1743:p.177). Such expeditions might, however, easily opt to raid some of the villages they passed. Gumilla says that the Caribs often justified their raid of a particular village:

... because if the latter had only received them well and sold them provisions for their journey they would not have hurt them. (Ibid:II:p.73)

Thus discussion of indigenous trade systems cannot be divorced from a consideration of Carib warfare and its motives and character will now be considered.

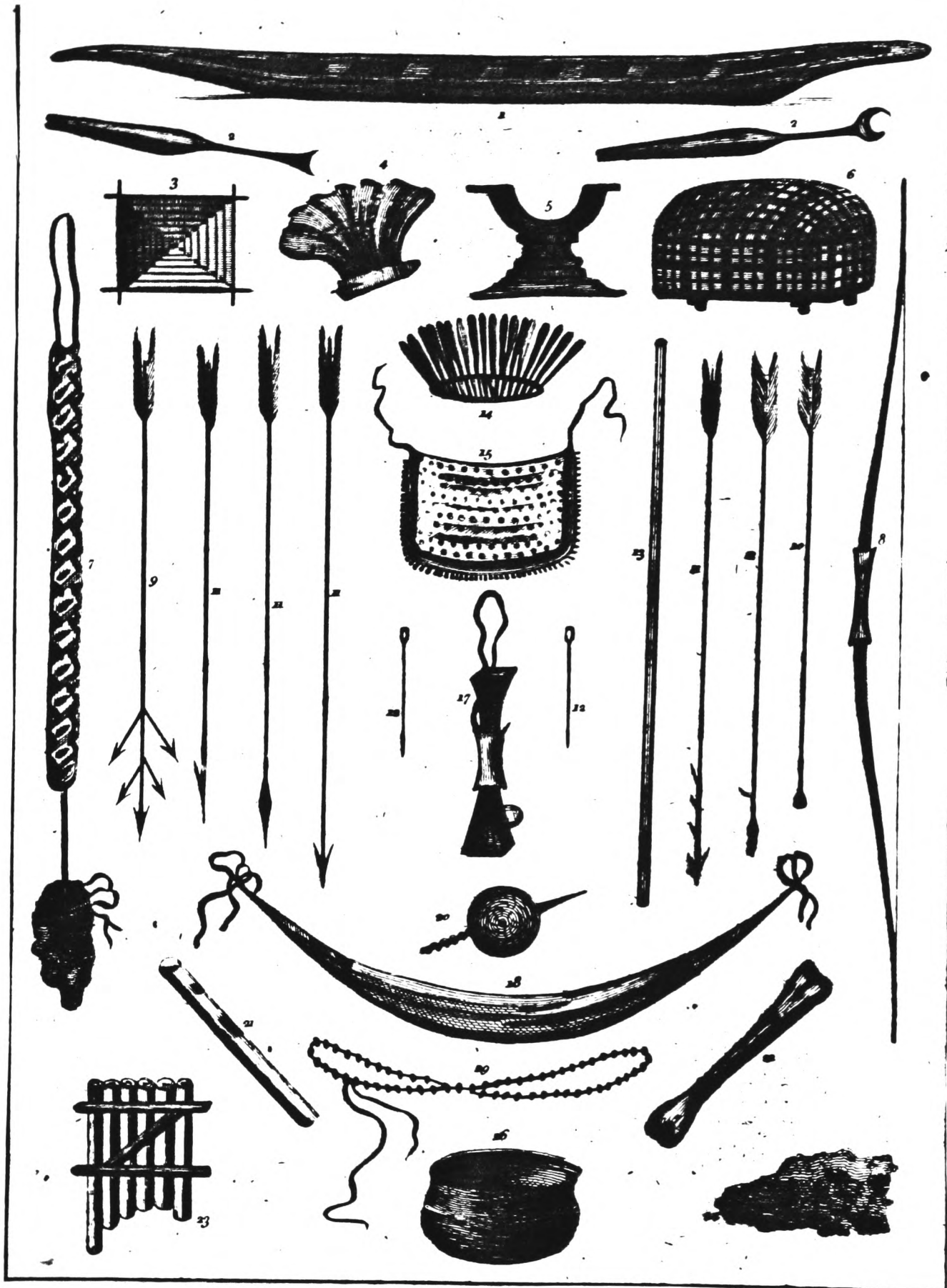
(c) Warfare and Raiding

Modern ethnography has recognised the importance of the link between trading and raiding. For example, Sahlins (1972) has proposed a 'scheme of reciprocities' within which the, sometimes fine, distinction between a trading and raiding expedition, can be understood. Thus Sahlins argues that reciprocity between individuals may vary from a situation where the material side of the transaction is repressed by the social ('generalised reciprocity'), for example, food sharing with kin, through to a situation where the material side of the transaction is at least as important as the social ('balanced reciprocity'), for example the use of another's shotgun or fishing hooks, or, finally, a situation where material considerations only apply ('negative reciprocity'), for example anything from haggling to a well conducted village raid.

As a corollary Sahlins suggests that it is the 'span of social distance which conditions the mode of exchange' (Ibid:p.57) and that what is considered to be 'close kin' will vary, according to circumstances not directly specified by kinship categories, for example the history of village fissioning.

In the context of Carib society, the social category of poito, or ito'to,<sup>35</sup> variously translated as son-in-law, client, servant or slave, seems to have been a means by which the changes in degrees of relationship, between a situation of balanced reciprocity and negative reciprocity, could be expressed, within the idiom of kinship, between Carib and non-Carib speakers. Thus Hoff writes:

The Maroni River Caribs still remember that war parties went up the river until ito'to shamans made a certain rapid impassable; actually the settlement of the Djuka, Paramacca and Boni Negroes between the villages of the Caribs and the ito'tos may have ENDED the wars between the Indians. In these wars, adults were killed, but boys and girls taken and married off to Carib partners ... The Maroni Caribs still apply the name ito'to to both Wayana and Trio, "all upland people with long hair".<sup>36</sup> (1968:p.336)



ARMS AND ORNAMENTS OF THE  
AMERINDIANS

While it is certain that Carib raiding pre-dated the European presence it also seems to be the case that, under European influence, trading relationships would have moved more often into the sphere of 'negative reciprocity', as European trade goods offered high profit margins in exchange for 'native' goods and for the natives themselves (Gumilla:Ibid:II:p.73).

By the 18th century the word poito had become virtually synonymous with 'slave', perhaps as much for the Carib as for the European. Thus an account of the Orinoco from this period informs us that:

... the Caribs go up /the Orinoco/ to attack other tribes of Indians, whom they called Poitos, and sell them for slaves in the colonies, which is a very sad thing.  
(BGB:BCC:AP:p.190)

while the Commandant of Guyana was informed in 1750 that:

... so great is the spite of the Caribs against them on this account /that certain Indians worked for the Spanish/ ... that they say they are slaves even before they are seized. (BGB:BC:APII:p.145)

Indeed the possibilities for domination and temptations to indulge in negative reciprocity are well illustrated from modern ethnography. Thus Chagnon (1970) has argued that it is the long trade monopoly in steel tools of the Ye'cuana, a Carib group, over the Yanomama of the upper Ventuari, that has forced the Yanomama to work for the Ye'cuana. He writes:

Although both the Yanomama and the Makiritare /Ye'cuana/ have very low opinions of one another, the fact that the Makiritare have a monopoly on steel tools, which they jealously guard, has given them the advantage in various social relationships that emerge in mixed villages. One way in which this is expressed is that Makiritare men (in mixed villages) demand and usually obtain sexual access to Yanomama women. (Ibid:p.343)

Significantly, before the intrusion of the national state, when Hamilton-Rice visited this region in 1920, the Ye'cuana were being raided by the Yanomama for metal tools which the Ye'cuana managed to control because of their access to firearms (1921:pp.321-44, Arvelo-Jimenez:1973:p.14). It

would thus appear that the 'balance of reciprocity' between the Yanomama and Ye'cuana has been subject to considerable variation in content, giving us a modern insight into how historical trading conditions might have been altered by the European occupation.

Away from such influences the motive for raiding seems to have been the capture of women and the vengeance of past wrongs (Barrere:1743:p.167, Fermin:1764:p.88, Rochefort:1665:pp.524-5<sup>37</sup>), much as is the case with the present-day inter-tribal raiding of the Yanomami of Venezuela (see Chagnon:1968). Once a gathering had been called, in which morale had been lifted by the rehearsal of past outrages by the enemy, Penard (1907:I:pp.66-7) says that the warriors consumed a ritual drink, paiwarri<sup>38</sup>, and smeared their arms and war-clubs with a salve made of powdered jaguar claw.

Sources say that the summons to such assemblies might be made by the blowing of a conch<sup>39</sup> or the sending of an arrow (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book 24:Ch.XII:p.426, Gumilla:Ibid:II:pp.74,134, Stedman:1796:p.404) or a knotted cord (Penard:Ibid:I:p.67).

The two traditional Carib weapons were the club and the poisoned arrow. It seems likely that the poison used was, principally, curare but it was known to the Spanish as aji caribe (Carib chili) and many weird and wonderful recipes were proposed (e.g. Aguado:1951:Book V:p.50, Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book 24:Ch.X:p.419). Whatever the exact constituents the effects were greatly feared. The Dutchman A. Cabeliau described them in the following way:

... they [the Caribs of the Orinoco] shoot poisoned arrows  
... which are so poisonous that if anyone is hit by them, so  
that blood flows, he must perforce die within 24 hours, ...  
and his flesh would drop from his bones, so that the Spanish  
greatly fear that nation and their arrows. (BGB:BC:API:p.18,  
dated 1598)

While Fermin (Ibid:p.52) says that the poison was effective within half an hour and that, if wounded in an extremity, only amputation could save the victim.

For close fighting the Caribs used a heavy wooden club. Stedman, who, as a mercenary fighting with Carib auxiliaries during the Berbice Slave Revolt in the 1760's, had ample opportunity to observe its use, judged that:

One blow from this club, which is frequently fixed with a sharp stone, scatters the brains. (1796:p.396)

There were four distinctive types of war clubs employed by the Amerindians of this region, the Carib preference being for one with square ends and sharp corners, turned in the middle, where it was wound with strong cotton thread and wrist-loop attached. They gave the name butu or aputu to this weapon, which also might be richly carved (Fermin:Ibid:p.55, Pelleprat:Ibid:p.70, Schomburgk:1923:p.425)<sup>40</sup>.

Strategy and tactics in warfare were summed up by Gumilla (Ibid:II:p.99) as ambushes, false retreats, night attacks and otras inventivas (other inventions), which both Pelleprat (Ibid:p.70) and Stedman (Ibid:p.401) confirm, the latter writing:

The Indians always fight their battles by midnight; indeed their contests resemble more a siege than a battle, as these broils consist only in surrounding the hamlets of their enemies while they are asleep, making prisoners of the women, boys and girls, while they shoot the men with poisoned arrows, or with their clubs or apootos, divide their skulls when they come to close quarters.

Should the village be protected by a palisade, fire arrows were employed. Rochefort describes their use thus:

... they are wont to force them out by shooting fire into the houses with arrows, at the point whereof they fasten lighted cotton. And these arrows being shot on the roofs, which consist of grass or palm leaves, they presently set them on fire ... (Ibid:p.529)

Other tactics, in inland waters, might include the concealment of their pirogues to look like fallen trees (Brett:1868:p.96, Penard:Ibid:I:p.68), while, in coastal waters, the attacking party would always try to travel with the current, as this would diminish the noise of their paddling (Schomburgk:1923:II:p.322).

However, this type of warfare would have been changed by the use of firearms. As has already been indicated above, Carib possession of firearms gave them a decisive advantage over some of their traditional enemies of the Orinoco, such as the Otomac and Caverre<sup>41</sup>. Nonetheless the Caribs' competence with these weapons did not automatically follow from their possession of them. Fermin (Ibid:p.51) says that firearms were rare among the Caribs, even by the 1760's, and that those that did have them did not know how to use them effectively, not understanding the correct combination of powder and shot required. Similarly, Pelleprat (Ibid:p.70) says that, in the 1650's, the Guarapiche Caribs neither possessed nor were much acquainted with the use of guns<sup>42</sup>. Even so those Caribs that managed to acquire such items soon learned to use them to some effect. Gumilla (Ibid:II:p.73) writes of a night attack on a Jesuit mission on the middle Orinoco:

What with the terror of the flames and the noise of the firearms which the besiegers use, their only safety lies in flight ...<sup>43</sup>

In response to this new use of firearms and the increasing intensity of Carib raiding in the 18th century, under Dutch influence, the mission stations were often heavily protected. A report made by Governor Diguja to the Council of the Indies, in 1756, contains a description of these mission defences:

Close by the padre's house there is a large tower, built of beams and clay, roofed with thatch, in which they have placed two or three swivel guns. The said tower, house and church are defended by a hedge of stakes, a sufficient wall to keep off the Caribs, unless they come accompanied by the Dutch, against whom the swivel guns are useful, if there is anyone in the village who can use them, and their noise too frightens off the Caribs, so that they do not venture to come near the village or still less near the stockade which protects the tower where the women and children are, and also the Indians, if the enemy are in superior force, nor give them opportunity to attack with their arrows.  
(BGB:BC:API:p.190ff)

It would seem that before the Europeans arrived such precautions were rarely taken. Barrere (Ibid:p.165) says that the Guayana Amerindians

did not palisade their villages, knowing nothing of the art of building forts as:

The forests are their ordinary defence and greatest security<sup>44</sup>.

There are some references to the construction of village defences, mostly by the Arawaks of the Atlantic coast (see above p. 14) which were probably a response to their conflict with the Caribs of the region. Brett (Ibid:p.36) tells of the Arawak of the Pomeroon River making a fort by clearing a piece of ground in the forest and laying all the trees cut in this operation in a circle, branches turned outward, with a strongly built house in the middle, two arrow flights from the surrounding wood. In a legend of another battle with the Caribs, the Akawaio (Kapon) are said to have escaped by means of a tunnel when the former had set their stronghold on fire by means of flaming arrows (Ibid:p.139). However, there is evidence that the Caribs were also forced to fortify some of their more exposed settlements. Carib groups of the Caura River created defences for their villages which were being raided, with great success, by the Caberre in the early 18th century (Lopez-Borreguero:1875:I:p.219).

Those taken in combat were either killed outright, various trophies being made of parts of their body, enslaved or used in cannibalistic rituals<sup>45</sup>. For these reasons, says Pelleprat (Ibid:p.70) the Caribs did not leave their dead in the hands of their enemies:

... in order to regain them, they will expose themselves to a whole range of dangers and on many occasions lose more men through this desire than in the actual battle.<sup>46</sup>

Oviedo y Valdes (Ibid:Book 24:Ch.III:p.396) records that Diego de Ordás found human trophies in a village near Cabruta, on the Orinoco, while the Capuchin missionaries to the Caribs of the northern llanos said that arms, legs and heads were decorated with animal and abstract designs and displayed as trophies in the caves and grottos of the mountains to the north.

MAP 5

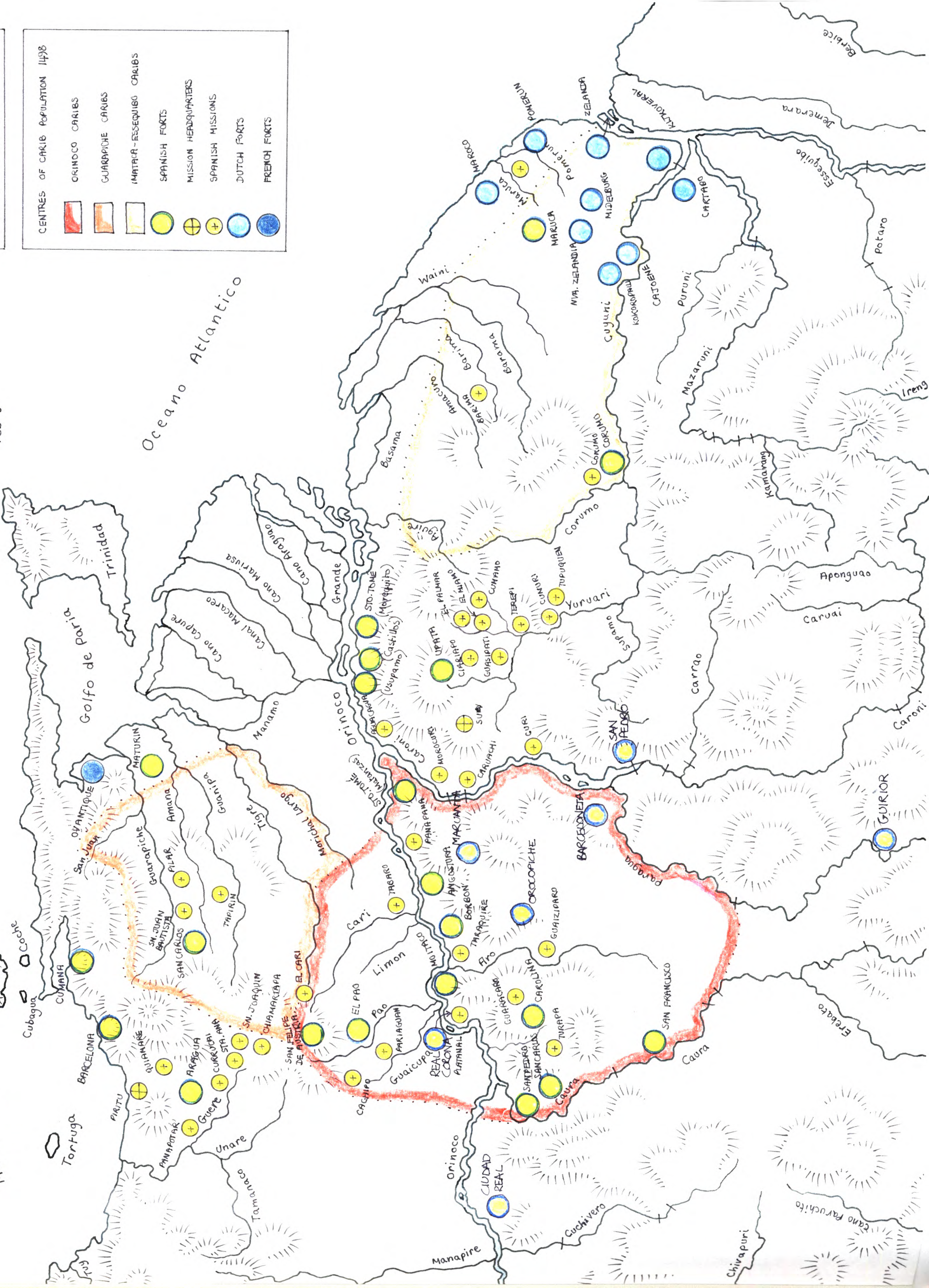
CONQUEST OF THE CARIBS 1722-77

CENTRES OF CARIB POPULATION 1498

	ORINOCO CARIBS
	GUARAPICHE CARIBS
	MATACA-ESEQUIBO CARIBS
	SPANISH FORTS
	MISSION HEADQUARTERS
	SPANISH MISSIONS
	DUTCH FORTS
	FRENCH FORTS

Mar Caribe  
 Tortuga  
 Cubagua  
 Margarita  
 Cacao

Oceano Atlantico  
 Tobago



Berice  
 Demerara  
 Essequibo  
 Potaro

Aponguao  
 Caruai  
 Carrao  
 Caroni

Erebato  
 Cano Paruchito  
 Chivapuri

Mar Caribe

Margarita

Cubagua

Coche

CUMANA

Golfo de P

Tortuga

BARCELONA

San Juan OYANTIQUE

MATURIN

QUIAMARE

Guarapiche

PANAPOTAR'

ARAGUA

SN. JUAN BAPTISTA

ALAR

Amana

Guere

CURRUCAI

STA. ANA

TAPIRIN

Guanipa

Tamanaco

Unare

SN. JOAQUIN

CHIAMARTAPA

Tigre

Manamo

SAN FELIPE DE AUSTRIA

EL CARI

Morichal Largo

Orinoco

CACIPO

EL PAO

Limon

TABARO

STO. TOMÉ (Matanzas)

AGUACAGUA

(Castil)

PARIAGUAN

MOITACO

PANA PANA

Caroni

(Usupamo)

Manapire

Orinoco

REAL COLONA PLATANAL

ANGOSTURA

MARUANTA

MOROCUPI

UPATE

CIUDAD REAL

SAN PEDRO SANCARLOS

GUARACARA

BORBON

THARQUIRE

CARUACHI

SUAY

GUASIPATI

TURAPA

OROCOPICHE

CURI

Cuchivero

CAUCA

GUAIZIPARO

BARCELONETA

SAN PEDRO

Supar

SAN FRANCISCO

Caura

carrao

Chivapuri

Cano Paruchito


Erebato

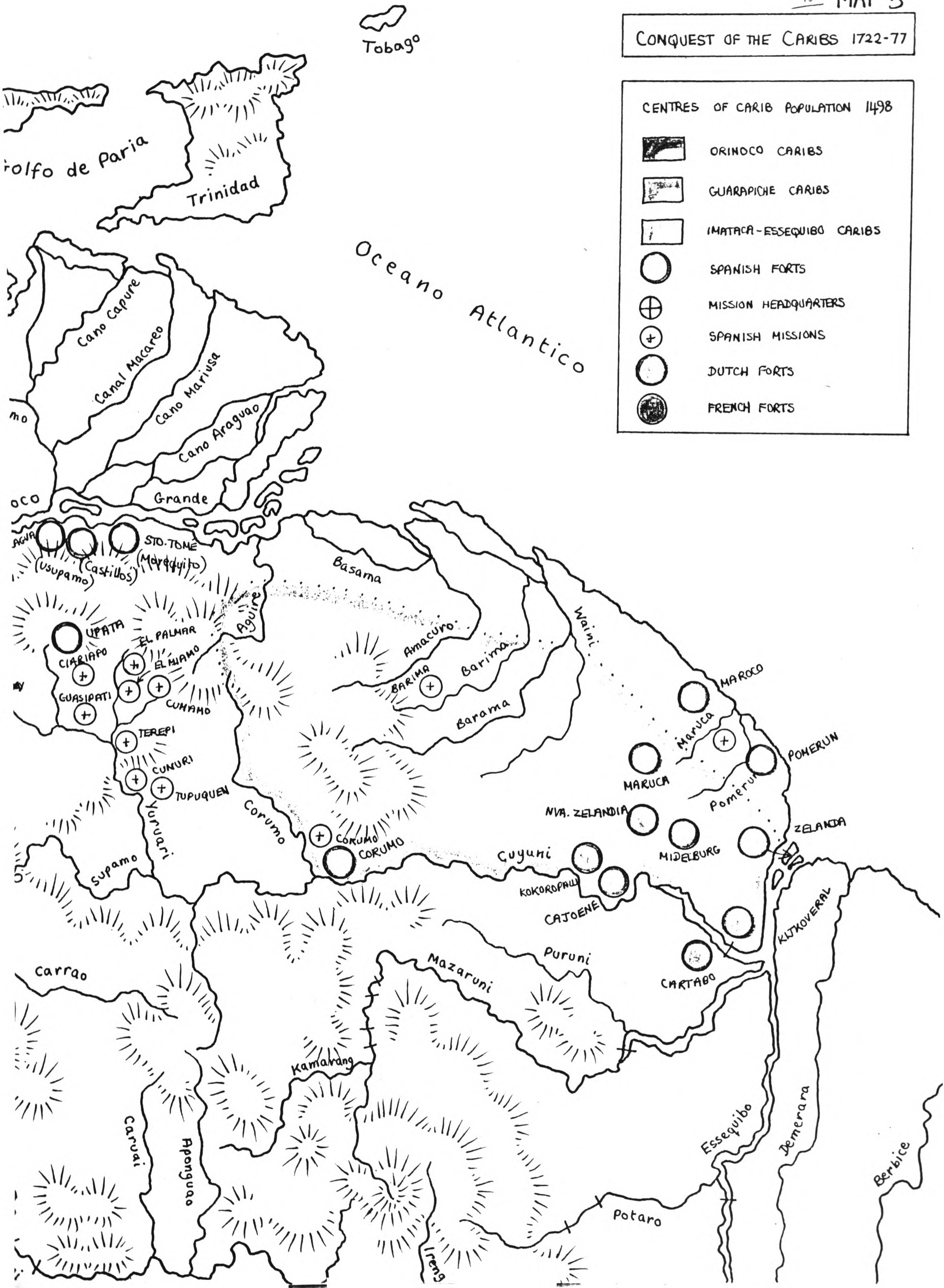
GUIRIOR

Caroni

CONQUEST OF THE CARIBS 1722-77

CENTRES OF CARIB POPULATION 1498

-  ORINOCO CARIBS
-  GUARAPICHE CARIBS
-  IMATACA-ESSEQUIBO CARIBS
-  SPANISH FORTS
-  MISSION HEADQUARTERS
-  SPANISH MISSIONS
-  DUTCH FORTS
-  FRENCH FORTS



Stedman (Ibid:I:pp.386,393,401) relates that flutes were made from the bones of dead enemies and scalps taken, either to be sold to the Europeans at Paramaribo, in Surinam, or to be worn in a girdle around the waist. Barrere (Ibid:p.171) also relates that the heads of enemies might be hung from the rafters of the karbet (long-house), as does Biet (1664:p.382).

Plausibly enough Gumilla (Ibid:II:p.91) suggests that great kudos attached to the display of such trophies, a good collection being a requirement for any individual who aspired to leadership in his community. Other indications are that, while prowess in battle might be a useful quality for the would-be leader, it was not the sole one.

The conditions under which an individual might assume the leadership of trading and raiding expeditions among the Caribs, as well as the other kinds of political authority that once existed in their communities, will now be discussed.

(d) Leadership in Carib Society

Among modern Carib populations, as has been the experience of modern ethnographers elsewhere in tropical South America, the actual authority of those styled capitan or cacique of a village is usually far less than such a title suggests. However, there does seem to be a general agreement among the ethnographers of the modern Caribs that there was some kind of war-chief, under whose authority whole villages or alliances of villages, might have raided neighbouring poitos (Gillin:1936:p.154, Kloos:1971:p.87, Thomas:1982:p.5, Schwerin:1966:p.36). Similarly Thomas (1972:p.7, 1982:pp.123-30), from a study of Amerindian trade in southern Venezuela today, emphasises the importance and authority of particular individuals in these trade networks. Both these ethnographic conclusions are strongly supported by the historical record.

Thomas (1982:p.119ff) identifies three types of leadership amongst

the modern, Carib speaking, Pemon. These are related to long range trading, the village (or villages) and the spirit world<sup>47</sup>; distinct spheres of influence which can also be recognised in historical Carib society. So too, Thomas' remarks on the character of Pemon leadership provide a useful reminder of the limitations, even in the past, on the real authority of the village head, war-chief and shaman:

A leader in Pemon society is a person who can exert more than ordinary influence on the course of events but who does not necessarily maintain a defined followership. Ultimately we are talking about persons of renown rather than bounded groups encompassing leaders and followers. (Ibid:p.119)

However, since the development of Carib society has been drastically altered by the European occupation, the modern conditions of leadership have changed greatly from those of the past, as Colson writes:

The social order was essentially egalitarian, there were no differences of class, only those of personal prestige and influence as war leaders and 'big men', elders and village leaders acquired either respect or larger followings. To have was to give away, in feasts or to dependent kin and those who asked for aid. The possibilities for any dramatic accumulation were slight and both the economic and social order militated against it. With foreign settlement a gradual erosion of this system began. (1972:p.79)

Most obviously the role of war-chief disappeared, around the beginning of the 19th century in Venezuela and somewhat later in the rest of Guayana, as the national society was able to extend its political control into the interior (Thomas:Ibid:p.5)<sup>48</sup>, while the residual role, of long range trader, had more limited scope due to the disappearance of the vast majority of Amerindian peoples.

Similarly, under European occupation the authority of the shaman would have been directly challenged by the missionaries, albeit with varying degrees of success, as was that of the village headman, who might now receive, or be supported in, his title by the national government and who, at worse, might act as an agent of the state and, at best, as a mediator between Amerindian and European society<sup>49</sup> (see Kloos:1971:p.170).

Before such influences had had their effect, and Carib society retained its independence, the indications are that such leaders had some pre-eminence over their fellow Caribs, in both political and economic terms. However, as has been suggested, this is not to be equated with the possession of political authority and economic power as they are understood in European terms, but was always limited by the personal charisma and success, past, present and future, of the individual<sup>50</sup>.

The leadership of trading and raiding expeditions seems to have been decided either by common assent of those gathered for this purpose or by deferment to the individual who had initiated the enterprise, though clearly any such individual would have had to have demonstrated prowess in war and the taking of captives even to be considered for such a role (Biet:1664:p.377). Knotted cords or an arrow would be sent out to neighbouring villages and the warriors assembled. Among these there seems to have been a definite group of war-chiefs, from among whom the leader of the expedition would be chosen. Meanwhile the other warriors drunk, danced, acted out mock battles and recalled past triumphs, while the women prepared provisions for the journey (Biet:Ibid:pp.367-70, Bolingbroke:1807:p.146, Fermin:1769:p.88, see also note 44). In 1686 it was reported to the Spanish authorities that:

... every year at a fixed time they gather together /the Caribs/ and go to the districts of the Orinoco to make war on other nations... They summon gatherings among themselves, to rejoice in these feasts, wherein they usually decide on warlike expeditions against the Spaniards ... other Indian nations ... and against the Missions and the Fathers.  
(BGB:BC:API:p.193)

That such inter-village raiding parties might contain hundreds of warriors is illustrated by another Spanish document concerning the attacks made by the great Carib war-chief of the Barima River, Taricura, on the Jesuit missions of the mid-Orinoco, in 1733-5 (see Chap.III). The war-chiefs under Taricura's command, plus the forces that each brought with him were itemised as follows:

<u>AREA</u>	<u>NO.OF PIROGUES</u> <sup>51</sup>	<u>COMMANDER</u>
Cachipo	2	(unknown)
Anapari	1	Mararwana
Curuntopa	2	(unknown)
	1	Araruana, (Taricura's lieutenant)
	1	Cabayn
Tauca	3	(unknown)
Puruey	2	(unknown)
Morichal	3	Acabari
	1	Marayuari
	3	Araguacare
'various'	20 'smaller vessels'	
	<hr/>	
TOTAL	39	
	<hr/>	

(in AGI:SD:583:7/4/1733, letter of Padre Gumilla)

Such a force could have comprised over 1,000 warriors and clearly would have demanded effective co-ordination from the war-chief whose own pirogue, by tradition, was at the front of the armada (Biet:Ibid:p.70). Stedman (Ibid:p.401) adds that the commander of such a force was given the title Uill<sup>52</sup>.

These leaders of long range trading and raiding expeditions, whose authority was ultimately based on their success in these enterprises, were, in some respects, distinguishable from the headman of a locality or village<sup>53</sup>, whose position derived from different sources. Thus, from the Orinoco llanos, it was reported that:

Caciques or capitans<sup>54</sup> are given this title solely because they sustain a large family or because of the frequency of their drinking parties, but not because they hold anyone in subjection. If he is a hard worker, he is also called cacique, and the same if he is an old man. (in Carrocera: Ibid:p.472).

Similarly, Stedman (Ibid:p.383) says simply that '... the oldest acts as captain'.

Pelleprat, also writing of the llanos Caribs, relates that every village had a cacique and that the honour might also be given to a man who was brave in battle or who had killed a fierce animal, but that the aspirant had to undergo the ordeal of living on nothing but cassava and water for a month, while periodically drinking large quantities of tobacco juice (Ibid: pp.70-1). If the candidate survived this process he was named capitan, but if he failed then bad luck would befall the warriors on their next raid. However, the ferocity of this initiation might be lessened if it was not intended that the capitan should also be a war-chief.

Biet (Ibid:p.377) says that, should the candidate be destined to lead the warriors, during the period of seclusion and ordeal he would be lectured on the importance of his role and on the background to past wars and feuds. Biet (Ibid:361) also relates that community leaders and war-chiefs could be distinguished by the type of club they carried and Pelleprat further confirms this distinction, between leaders in war and leaders of the village, by the observation that it was only in times of conflict that the war-chiefs had a special position of precedence in the pirogue (Ibid:p.70, see also Chap.V for evidence on the initiation of warriors).

The role of local headman was probably, as is the case today (Schwerin:1966:p.36, Thomas:1982:p.131ff), to lead the community on social occasions, mediate in local disputes and act as an intermediary with the world outside the immediate confines of the village or kin-group<sup>55</sup>. His social base was described by Eugenio Alvarado in the 1750's as:

... nothing more than a union of persons of both sexes, composed of sons, brothers, first cousins, and nephews, who form an association and occupy a certain district with their rancherias, and he is considered the most powerful among them who can bring together the greatest number of people. (BGB:BC:APII:p.111)

However, both these types of leader seem to have distinguished themselves by a greater degree of polygamy, as far as was practicable, than others<sup>56</sup> (Biet:Ibid:p.389<sup>57</sup>, Carrocera:Ibid:p.468, Stedman:Ibid:p.383) and to have been granted a more elaborate form of burial (Barrere:Ibid:p.231, Pelleprat:Ibid:p.73). Raleigh writes:

When their commanders die, they use great lamentation, and when they think the flesh of their bodies is putrified, and fallen from the bones, then they take up the carcass again and hang it in the Casquies house that has died, and deck his skull with feathers of all colours, and hang gold plates about the bones of his arms, thighs and legs. (Ibid:p.56)

The Capuchin missionary, Francisco de Tauste, adds that all the animals belonging to the leader, as well as all his slaves and wives, except one, would be killed (in Carrocera:Ibid:p.201, see also Van Berkel:1695:p.134, Gumilla:Ibid:I:p.200).

Although there is no record of the shaman, or piiai, piache men, as they are known in the historical literature, having been distinguished by such elaborate funerary practices, it is nonetheless clear that they were important and influential members of their communities. The first Spanish missionaries amongst the llanos Caribs were very impressed by the role of these individuals in the community, no doubt partly because it was analogous to their own. Mateo de Anguiano wrote:

Those who are much venerated, and who are arbiters of everything are the priests and doctors, they are great sorcerers called piaches: they are the agents of the devil for the ruin of these people and have so many tricks that no one will do anything without their advice and counsel. (in Carrocera:Ibid:p.473)<sup>58</sup>

According to another Capuchin missionary working in the same area the Caribs believed that all illness and death must be related to witchcraft on the part of one's enemies<sup>59</sup> and that it was the role of the piaches to adjudicate as to the origin and remedy, if relevant, for such misfortunes (in Carrocera:Ibid:p.187ff, Barrere:Ibid:p.210, Stedman:Ibid:p.399).

These men were also vital to the welfare of the community as a whole, especially when engaged in warfare when they would be consulted in the period before departure of a raiding party as to the propitiousness of the venture. Travelling with the war-pirogues, which would stop short of their target and debate tactics, the piaches would be consulted as to the likely outcome of the attack. One method of making such a prediction was for the warriors shields to be placed in a line and from the manner in which they fell could be read whether the coming battle would go well or not (Biet:Ibid:pp.369,380).

The severity of the ordeals, and the length of training involved in assuming the role of piache, are indicative of the respect in which such individuals must have been held (Biet:Ibid:pp.385-6). Among these ordeals were some similar to those undergone by an aspiring cacique, involving a restricted diet and the drinking of copious amounts of tobacco juice (Barrere:Ibid:p.211) and which could involve many piaches from all over the region.

The skills learnt would include training in voice inflexion for use in ritual chants, a knowledge of the use of roots and herbs and the receipt of a special Maraka, or rattle (Bancroft:1769:pp.309-13, Barrere:Ibid:p.207, Carrocera:Ibid:p.187ff). Barrere also states that each piache possessed a personal 'familiar', used principally to chase evil demons and strike down enemies<sup>60</sup> (Ibid:pp.211-2).

Such individuals were certainly polygamous to a greater degree than the ordinary Carib man, as was the case with the war-chiefs and caciques (Carrocera:Ibid:p.102). However, the manner in which they acquired extra women is not mentioned, possibly, as is the case with the modern Pemon the piache would receive direct payment, according to the importance and success of his intervention (Thomas:Ibid:p.142ff).

The standing of such individuals would have been undermined by the

intrusion of the European missionaries and especially by the disease which they brought with them, against which their curing rituals would have been tragically ineffective. Mateo de Anguiano noted that when an epidemic had struck a village the piaches from many different areas would gather, up to ten at a time, and pass the night chanting and drinking tobacco juice (in Carrocera:Ibid:p.480) but to no avail.

Nonetheless, these early missionaries continually emphasised that it was the piaches who were a particularly important source of opposition to the successful conversion of the Caribs (in Carrocera:Ibid:pp.81,102,187ff).

Taken together then, the cacique, war-chief/trader and piache represented the traditional sources of leadership in Carib society. However, such authority did not imply an automatic control over the immediate community of the village, though it might involve, as in the case of the war-chief, considerable influence among a number of related villages.

As Kloos points out (Ibid:pp.170,262), all forms of leadership in Carib society would have quickly degenerated under the shock of population loss combined with the increasing economic and political dominance of the Europeans, resulting in a trend towards an isolation, even alienation, between communities<sup>61</sup>. The character and structure of these communities, before such events overwhelmed them, will now be examined.

(e) The Carib Community

(i) The Village:

Information concerning the size of Carib villages is scarce, spread over many different periods of Carib history and often conflicting. The reasons for this are not difficult to find. Thus, as was found to be the case when making estimates of Carib population, there are many difficulties in the interpretation of the information that is available, such as deciding what number of persons might have inhabited a 'house' or how many and what



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sort of dwellings comprised a 'village'. For example, some Spanish sources indicate that a typical village might contain some 30 houses, of an unspecified size (AGI:SD:179:4/12/1637:letter to the King, AGI:SD:179:1618, 'Sobre castigo de los Indios Caribes') while others speak of small settlements of only 2-4 houses containing a single familia, located at some distance from any others (in Carrocera:Ibid:p.101). Such information might, of course, not necessarily be as contradictory as it appears since a pattern of dual residence, observed in modern ethnography (Colson:1971:p.79), between the village and a garden site, where a few shelters might be erected to house the family as they worked the plot, could explain these differing, though roughly contemporary, observations.

Most observers, if they considered the problem at all, seem to have preferred to move directly from statements, of the kind that '... there were numerous villages ...', to an estimation of the total numbers of the Amerindian group under consideration. Nonetheless the sources do describe something of the social and physical structure of the Carib community and perhaps their reluctance to offer an estimate of village size can be related to the possibility that no such estimate was feasible, because there was a great variation in the size of actual settlements.

Such an interpretation is plausible in the light of the discussion of Carib leadership, where it was emphasised that the influence of, say, a village cacique was ephemeral, 'followers' being attached to his community as their own interests dictated and with no guarantee as to future alignments<sup>62</sup>. Thus Spanish documents of the 16th century indicate that the renowned war-chief, Taricura, had over 200 warriors in his village, where he lived in a 'big house' and entertained Dutch and Swedish traders (AGI:SD:583:7/4/1733, letter of Gumilla). Similarly, the following was reported to the Dutch authorities in 1769:

My brother-in-law, Van Bercheyck, who is not afraid of trifles, once visited a village ... up the Weyne /Waini/, but he told me that he was never so much afraid in his

life as when he saw 200 Caribs surrounding him armed with their bows and arrows and although it was an extraordinarily profitable journey he declared that he would not undertake it again for four times as much. (BGB:BC:APIII:p.3)

However by this time Carib populations were declining rapidly as a result of just this sort of contact with the Europeans, especially the missionaries, so that data from this period are unlikely fully to reflect the aboriginal situation. For this reason also the reports of the occupation of the Carib villages by the missionaries, even where numbers have been recorded, cannot be relied upon.

Comparative cultural data, as well as the documents relating to the first contact with the Amerindians (see above p.7), suggests that 'villages' could have been as large as, or even in excess of, 1000 persons, in areas where aquatic game was plentiful (Steward:1949:VI:p.667) or 500-600 in the tropical forests proper (Carneiro:1961), while Newson (1976:p.32) assumed an average of 400-500 people per village in her calculations of the Amerindian population of Trinidad.

Biet (Ibid:p.354) says that a village included many family houses:

... where there are 30 or 40 men with their women and children.

While Barrere (Ibid:p.143) says that the Caribs lived in 'family' houses which might hold 20-30 people, though:

... the grandeur of the dwelling is determined by the number of people who stay there.

and Fermin (Ibid:p.58) records that each village was comprised of many families, '... as many as wish to be there ...', with the headman commanding some 30-40 men for the defence of the village at all times.

Thus in the absence of more consistent information on the number of family houses and the sex ratio of Carib villages, any estimate of an 'average' for the number of inhabitants must be considered highly speculative and, in itself, misleading.

Fortunately the physical structure of Carib villages has been described more clearly, being basically a number of family houses with a 'big house' or karbet as the focal point of the community. Barrere says that two types of house were constructed, the tabouii and sura. The function of the latter, as a family house, has already been alluded to, the tabouii, or big house, is described as follows and is reminiscent of the big house ascribed to Taricura:

The most spacious of all the Indian dwellings is the Tabouii, commonly called the grand Karbet by the French. This structure is the customary meeting place of the savages ... It is here that they hold all their assemblies, where they receive strangers, where they inter the dead and also where they hold their solemn festivals as well as their debauches. (Ibid:p.145)

The size of this tabouii was said to be about 50-60 feet long by 10-15 feet wide and capable of holding over 150 people at drinking parties (Grillet:1698:p.47). Biet (Ibid:p.364) confirms the positioning and function of this structure but says that it could be up to 150 'paces' long, probably around 100 feet. The family houses were located nearby and were where people slept at night, also being strengthened and fortified against surprise attack<sup>63</sup>.

Modern ethnographers of the Caribs have raised the possibility that there was at one time a 'men's house' where political affairs and other masculine pursuits were conducted (Hoff:1968:p.20, Kloos:1971:p.121, Schwerin:1968:p.35). Certainly both Biet (Ibid:p.355) and Barrere (Ibid:p.146) suggest that this was predominantly a centre of male activity, a place where their hammocks were hung during the day, when not occupied with hunting or fishing, and where weapons were manufactured. Barrere also adds that there were only spaces for the men to hang their hammocks and that women did not have this privilege, being allowed only a small bench to sit on or having to squat on their heels. However, there is little to suggest that this male exclusivity was as obsessive or as harshly enforced as has been observed from

other Amerindian societies<sup>64</sup>.

Under increasing European domination this communal house seems to have disappeared very quickly, partly due to the cessation of those quintessentially male activities of warfare and trading and partly due to the direct intervention of the missionaries who preferred to see the Caribs:

... separated according to principles of morality and decency, of which there is a general lack in the settlements of the Indians, accustomed to sleep all together.  
(Lopez-Borreguero:1875:p.245)

The life of the community was then re-oriented towards the church or the padre's house rather than the trophy hall of the warriors.

(ii) The Kin Group:

The problems involved in determining the size of a Carib 'family' have already been discussed, something must now be said concerning the probable structure of this most basic element of Carib society.

Riviere (1977:p.41) has spoken of an 'invariant core' common to all Carib-speaking peoples, which is defined by:

... the fact that, for the Carib, 'wife-givers' are superior to 'wife-takers'. This fact, together with certain other features of Carib culture, such as the tendency towards matrilineal residence, the lack of unilineal descent rules and the absence of any corporate groups, seems to produce a pattern of culture that may be peculiarly Carib.

The evidence from the historical record would seem to support this notion, suggesting that it is at this level that Carib society has proved the most resistant to change.

Most discussion in the historical sources of Carib 'marriage' tends to emphasise, often somewhat wistfully, the total domination of the men over the women, who are often described as being no more than 'slaves'. The observations of Pelleprat are typical:

... women respect and obey the men as if they were slaves; they prepare the food and come late to the public square /plaza/, where it is their custom to eat, usually from what has been left by the men. (Ibid:p.72)

Certainly the practice of integrating women captured in raids into the village and family life cannot have helped to raise the status of Carib women in general<sup>65</sup>, but in view of the statement by Fermin (Ibid:p.80), that the women also gloried in the martial victories of the men, and of the vital importance of women in agricultural production, this feature of social relations should not be overemphasised.

Aside from such 'marriage-by-capture' the historical sources, where such details have been recorded, all agree that cross-cousin marriage was the expressed ideal (Barrere:Ibid:p.223, Biet:Ibid:p.388, Rochefort:Ibid:p.545), though marriage might also take place between even more closely related individuals (Barrere:Ibid:p.223, Fermin:Ibid:p.79, Rochefort:Ibid:p.451).

Modern ethnography confirms the endurance of such practices. For example, among the Pemon men are enjoined to marry a category of female, genealogically supposed to be a cross-cousin, but may, on occasion, marry someone simply classified as a cross-cousin, in a so-called 'sister-exchange'. Exactly the same practices have been recorded among the Barama River Caribs (Gillin:1936:pp.92-5).

The motive for this latter kind of marriage is said to be the desire to avoid the difficulties in the relationship of father-in-law and son-in-law, which carries with it a tradition of brideservice for the women that the father-in-law gives away, i.e. as Riviere says, ... 'wife-givers' are superior to 'wife-takers'<sup>66</sup>. Gumilla wrote:

... in one thing there is more or less agreement among all the /Orinoco/ nations, and that is their daughters are saleable, that the bridegroom must pay the parents for the trouble taken in rearing them, and also for the solicitude and care with which they will work for their husbands.  
(Ibid:II:p.384)

Barrere (Ibid:p.223) also confirms this aspect of Carib sociology:

The old men regard their sons-in-law as servants to wait on them and from the time that their daughters are married

have no more cause to work. The newly married Indian has to see to the garden, the home, the hunting and the fishing.

Combined with a tendency to matrilocal residence<sup>67</sup> we might thus expect that the core of the extended Carib family, then as now (Colson:1971:p.81), to have consisted of a man, wife or wives, unmarried children and his daughters and their offspring. It is such a kin group as this that probably lived in the separate family houses, described above.

One other aspect of Carib family life that particularly struck early observers was its polygamy (Biet:Ibid:p.389, Barrere:Ibid:p.222, Fermin:Ibid:p.80, Stedman:Ibid:p.383, Pelleprat:Ibid:p.72, Carrocera:Ibid:pp.102,181,488). It has already been suggested that such practices were more common and taken to greater lengths by the leaders of Carib society. For example, the war-chief Yaguaria, father of Taricura, was said to have had as many as 30 wives, each one from a different group of Amerindians (Gumilla:Ibid:p.135).

In general though, Biet, Barrere and Pelleprat all indicate that it was more usual to have only one wife, perhaps two, the accumulation of more being left to the war-chiefs and, to a lesser extent, the caciques and piaches. However, with the decline of raiding and trading the opportunities for polygamy were severely curtailed and it is only rarely observed today.

Aside from this change the emergence of a 'nuclear', rather than an 'extended', family and a limited adoption of European kinship terminology seem to have been the major effects of intensifying contact (Schwerin:Ibid:pp.224-7, Adams:1972:p.104). Even so such changes, where they occurred at all, took place very slowly and today are still only partial. On this basis the domestic household seems to have proved to be one of the most durable of all Carib institutions, surviving to the greatest degree, the irreconcilable patterns of European and Amerindian ways of life.

The permanent establishment of the Europeans in this area of the New World and the reaction of the Caribs to these events will now be examined.

NOTESCHAPTER I, Section (iii)

1. The plantain has, until now, been a more important staple than manioc for the Yanomama of southern Venezuela (see Chagnon:1968).
2. As is attested to by the influence that metal possessing peoples are able to wield over those who lack such items. Such is the situation between the Ye'cuana and Sanuma of the upper Orinoco, the former enjoying greater access to industrial manufactures of the national society (Colchester:pers.comm.).
3. Colson writes:  
 ... levels of contact of approximately the same kind can be recognised from the historical records. However not all Amerindians have experienced them to the same degree or in automatic order of intensity ... Different segments of the same tribal group may have had different experiences.  
 (1971:p.62)
4. The Spanish fort on the Paria peninsula, founded by Alonso de Herrera in the 1530's, was said to have been attacked by '... Caribs from the sierras' (Aguado:1951:Book 4:p.480), possibly meaning Caribs from the Mesas Orientales but equally likely to have been one or other of those Carib-speaking groups to the north of them, such as the Coaca or Chaima.  

Stronger evidence of pre-Columbian Carib occupation of the llanos is given by Jorge Griego (AGI:SD:14:1583) who noted ditching and irrigation in the area of the Caris River, on the Orinoco north bank, a traditional zone of Carib settlement. This, at the least, suggests that Carib groups had perfected the appropriate subsistence techniques by this time, implying, in turn, that their arrival in this area was of sufficient antiquity to have permitted this adaptation to have been completed by the time Griego witnessed it.

This is the earliest documentary evidence, yet uncovered, of the Caribs employing these type of techniques, though there is archaeological evidence of some ridged field cultivation from the coastal flatlands of Surinam (Roosevelt:1980:p.260), another area of Carib occupation and from the morichales of the north-east llanos (Denevan & Bergman:1975) and the central-western llanos (Denevan & Zucchi:1973), though the latter is probably not of Carib origin, being too far west.
5. However, Richard Schomburgk reported that local traditions among some of the Barama River settlements was that their ancestors had migrated from the upper Corentyn River, less than 100 years previous to his visit - i.e. ca.1730 (1922-3:Ch.XI, see also Gillin:1936:p.113).
6. Robinson (1967:pp.28-9) distinguishes two types of habitat south of the Orinoco, according to which the relative population densities in the preceding section were assigned. Robinson calls these two environments the 'hill lands' and 'plains'. Of the former, where traditional swidden techniques of agriculture could be employed he writes:

Bounding the Orinoco plains on the south lies a belt of high ground extending from the Caura eastwards to the head of the delta ... it was to this insect free, windswept higher ground that settlement proceeded, once the situation allowed an advance from the strategic sites in the Orinoco valley. It was also within and on the edge of these hills that yet more Indians were located, clearing the forest and cultivating yuca and maize.

7. A task performed by the men and one which would have been particularly facilitated by the introduction of metal tools.
8. Though, as we have seen (above p.36), in the case of the banana it was very rapidly adopted by the Amerindians.
9. Referred to as 'cassava hills' (Gillin:Ibid:p.14, Adams:1972:p.10). It is interesting to note that the Caribs of the Lesser Antilles also cultivated their manioc on raised earthen platforms, montones, suggesting a further cultural continuity between the Caribs of the mainland and islands. Sauer (1966:p.51) writes that most of the hill and mountain slopes of sufficiently deep soils were under cultivation and that in the lowlands:  
 Descriptions of various heights and dimensions indicate that earth was piled up about as high as mounds would stand and the depth of soil permitted. Some were knee-high and several feet wide. They were more or less round and provided a loose, well aerated soil to grow root crops.
10. The introduction of shotguns, as opposed to earlier firearms (see note 30), changed the nature of these tasks, though obviously to a greater degree in the former case, but with adverse consequences for the faunal reserves of a given region. Thus Thomas (1982:p.41), Adams (1972:p.41) and Gillin (1936:p.3) all refer to the problem of the 'hunting out' of an area once shotguns have been introduced, leading to longer and less productive hunting trips, perhaps lasting 2-3 days. The introduction of the dog would also have increased hunting efficiency but, perhaps, with not such a dramatic effect on the ecology of a region.
11. Some forest is available for cultivation within the Mesas and on the highest levels of the floodplain but, in the first case, the relative paucity of the humus layer would lead to a rapid exhaustion of the soil, if cultivation was attempted. In the second case the periodic high flooding, to which the Orinoco is subject, would wipe out any plantings in these areas (Denevan & Schwerin:1978:p.18).
12. Thus the striking feature of the swidden agriculturalists pattern of work, except for the initial, intensive clearing of a garden site, is that it requires only a few hours labour, two to three times a week, in order to maintain the plot (Denevan & Schwerin:Ibid:p.18).
13. As Denevan and Schwerin observe, this is one of the few instances of Amerindian irrigation in lowland South America (Ibid:p.26).
14. For example, Gillin writes, of the Barama River Caribs, that men would rather stay away for two or three days on a hunting trip than endure the ridicule of their spouses (Ibid:p.3). However, that the scarcity of game may only be due to local conditions and attitudes is shown by Lizot's work on the Yanomami (1976) of the Orinoco headwaters. He writes:

Variations in the level of consumption between different communities depend more on the attitude towards work than on the supply of game. (Ibid:p.497)

15. It is for this reason, among others, that the floodplain and llanos are treated as an homogenous habitat for the purposes of calculating population in the preceding section.
16. Though the Spanish were also prepared to take food by force, sometimes to their own cost. In 1533 Antonio de Sedeño tried to seize supplies from a village on the coast of Trinidad. Oviedo y Valdes (1959:Ch.V: p.407) informs us that, as a consequence:  
 ... within half an hour more than 3,000 Indians had wounded 25 men and killed 2 Spaniards, who died rabid with poison.  
 A similar fate for similar reasons befell Alonso de Herrera on the mid-Orinoco (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Ch.VII:p.413).
17. This point needs to be stressed because colonialists, including those of the present day, are apt to justify the seizure of Amerindian territories in terms which suggest that the indigenous people are incapable of using the land 'economically' (see Bodley:1975:pp.83-100).
18. The implication here being that evidence of intensive maize cultivation and storage, because of the organisation implied by such activities, is also an indication of the development of hierarchal social relations (see Roosevelt:Ibid:p.57ff).
19. Nonetheless, since, according to Roosevelt (Ibid:pp.186-7) even a marginal increase in the use of maize can initiate a degree of population expansion and because of the evidence as to the abundant faunal resources of the Orinoco and its llanos, the maximum population density of 2.0 persons/km<sup>2</sup>, applied to these areas in the preceding section, is quite plausible.
20. Raleigh also describes the diet of the Warao of the delta region. They:  
 ... use the tops of Palmitos for bread, and kill deer, fish and porkers for the rest of their sustenance, they have also many sorts of fruits that grow in the woods, and great varieties of birds and fowl. (Ibid:p.51)
21. An important source of Amerindian food even today (Denevan & Schwerin: 1978:p.51).
22. This aspect of missionary mentality, and its contradictions, are well illustrated from the following letter, written by Padre Joseph de Patricio, a Capuchin who attempted to evangelise the Caribs of the Orinoco in the early 18th century:  
 It is sad that there is no man here curious enough to note down these thousand curiosities, have knowledge of these Nations and their customs and mode of life, throughout all these Provinces ... and yet it is also provident to populate these lands /with Spaniards/, as is the method of Conquest and the reduction to obedience /of the Amerindians/. (AGI:C:120:8/5/1735, letter to Governor Sucre)
23. The role of 'slaves', or poitos (Carib) or macos (Arawak), is referred to throughout this section and is examined closely in Chap.V.

24. Denevan and Schwerin (1978:p. 40) have identified 65 different species being cultivated at the modern Karinya community of Cachama. This may be contrasted with the typical tropical forest agriculturalist who grows no more than 15 or 20 different cultigens (Lowie:1948:III:pp.1-56) of which two-thirds may be counted as very basic. Leeds (1961:pp.31-33), for example, observed only 16 different species being grown by the Yaruro of the western llanos.
25. Though the illustration, in Rochefort's account of the Carib Antilles (1665:p.105), of the method of preparing manioc, is curious since a man is shown grating the root before it is pressed to remove the toxic juices. The early date of this work suggests that the usual explanation of greater male participation in agricultural production, i.e. the decline of raiding and long range trading, cannot be employed. It may be, therefore, that male slaves, or poitos, were used in this fashion, though in general adult male captives were put to death.
26. For example, the Sanuma undertake various agricultural tasks for the Ye'cuana in return for metal tools (Colchester:pers.comm.).
27. When the conflict between the Dutch and Spanish, in the 18th century, halted Dutch fishing north of the Essequibo, the Director General of the colony, Storm van Gravesande, wrote, in some alarm, to the Dutch West India Company:  
 The Spaniards continue to cruise along the coast, so that there is no chance of getting anything salted for the plantations which does the Honourable Company and the planters a great deal of harm ... Meanwhile our fisheries are ruined, and we have lost all our runaway slaves. The slave cannot live and work without rations, and 3lbs of fish, once a fortnight, is not really much. This has now to be bought from the English. (BGB:BC:APIV:p.41:1769)  
 As the black slave population of Essequibo numbered around 4,000 at this time an annual catch of 312,000 lbs (2,800 tons) would have been required to maintain these rations.
28. The dislike of eating beef and other domestic animals is actually quite widespread among Amerindians, being based on the perception that such creatures are true members of the household.
29. Even more incredible, though, is the opinion of the most recent ethnographer of the Barama River Caribs who suggests that a good indication of the basic incapacity of Carib agriculture is that:  
 Cannibalism and other drastic measures, in times of subsistence crisis, are a pronounced and recurrent theme (Adams:1972:p.72).  
 It would be fascinating to know just what these 'other drastic measures' might be!
30. Firearms, as opposed to the very recent introduction of shotguns, would have probably little affected hunting since the difficulties associated with their use, for example the length of time they took to muzzle load, the necessity of keeping powder dry in a highly humid environment and their propensity to rust, would have made them slow and unpredictable in their performance.

31. The head of the Capuchin missionaries in Venezuela wrote to the Governor of Cumaná in the 1740's:  
 ... what I consider best for the civilisation of the Indians is their communication with the Spaniards ... for by intercourse with the Spaniards they will become industrious, being by nature disposed to laziness ... and by this means there is no doubt that the best service would be rendered to God and King. (BGB:BC:APV:p.85)
32. R.H. Schomburgk was moved to describe the Caribs as people who:  
 ... among the Indian tribes replace our Jew pedlars (footnote in Raleigh:1868:p.29)
33. One item of purely exchange value was extensively traded by the Caribs, so called 'green stones', 'liver stones' or 'Amazon stones'. Apparently some kind of jade, these objects were highly prized by all the Amerindians of Guayana. They were shaped into cylinders 2"-3" long, perforated at one end and often worn by community leaders (Barrere: 1743:p.176, Schomburgk in Raleigh:1868:p.28).
34. Roth records (1924:p.578) that among the Otomac:  
 Before battle each would stimulate his passions by pricking his body with bone points, and say to himself, 'Take Heed! If you are not brave the Carib must eat you.'
35. The words poito and ito'to are not exact equivalents. It has been (e.g. Civrieux:1976:p.875, Dreyfus:1982:p.15) suggested that the former emphasises the roles of son-in-law, client or slave and the latter those of enemy, foreigner or prospective prisoner. Among the Carib speaking Trio, for example ituhtao, literally meaning those in the forest, has come to stand for outsider or stranger (Riviere:pers.comm.). The implication here being that persons so classified might become poitos. These categories are thus related but distinct.
36. Barrere (1743:p.26) also says that the Caribs of French Guiana made this distinction, calling the up river dwellers Itouranes. (see also note 35).
37. Rochefort relates the following:  
 When they begin to have their brains warmed with drink an old woman comes into the assembly with a sad countenance and deportment ... She represents that injuries which the whole nation has received from the Arawak ... and having reckoned up the greatest cruelties which they have so far committed against the Carib ... she comes to particularise those who were lately made prisoners, massacred and eaten at some later meeting; saying that it was a shameful and insupportable insult to their nation if they were not to revenge themselves. (see also note 46).
38. This drink consisted of, among other things, the heart, brains and liver of a jaguar and of vanquished, but respected, enemies. The brains were supposed to awake cunning, the liver courage (see note 33 - this may be one reason why these stones were highly valued) and the heart put life into them.

39. Washington (1884:p.785) writes vividly of Juan de Ponce de Leon's expedition to Puerto Rico in 1510:  
 ... the whole of this wild island was in rebellion and the forests around the fortress of Capana rang with the whoops and yells of the savages, the blasts of their war conches and the stormy rolling of their drums.
40. Stedman (Ibid:p.397) also says that the number of kills would be recorded on these clubs and that the stone celt was the more firmly embedded in them by being placed in a suitable niche of a living tree. The tree would then be allowed to grow round the stone, to be later cut and shaped as required (see also Brett:1852:p.134, Crevaux:1883:p.16).
41. The Caverre, inhabitants of the area around the confluences of the Guaviare, Inirida and Orinoco Rivers (Giliij:1965:I:p.134, Gumilla·Ibid:I:pp.203,316), were described by Gumilla thus:  
 ... the Caverre nation, which is numerous /and/ warlike  
 ... It is these Caverre who use the big war drum to call their men to arms, and the Carib, tutored by experience, leave them alone, pass on out of arrow shot, and never dare sleep on the western side of the river /Orinoco/ which they inhabit ... (Ibid:II:p.73)
42. Pelleprat also relates that when one of his companions shot a bull his Carib audience was greatly impressed.
43. Colson (1983:p.13, footnote 47) says that:  
 An oft repeated tale of both Kapon and Pemon relates that the Kalitna (Caribs) entered the upper Mazaruni and were put to flight. They retreated up the Kako River, tried to re-enter via the Ataro and Kukui Rivers to the south but failed. They then turned into certain rocks on the Gran Sabana, which can still be seen there and from which reports as of gun shots may be heard. These are said to be the spirits of the Caribs inside, letting off their guns.
44. On the Orinoco llanos, however, conditions were different and the Palenques were so dubbed by the Spanish precisely because their villages were palisaded; palenque being the Spanish word for a palisade or fortified enclosure.
45. Evidence concerning the cannibalism and enslavement of captives will be considered separately in Chap.V since it raises a whole series of questions, not just about Carib society but also about the ideology and history of the European occupation of this area. Such questions can be better answered once the course and character of this conquest has been examined (see Chaps.II,III,IV).
46. This concern for those that fell into the hands of an enemy was well grounded. Van Berkel(1695:pp.52-5) witnessed the following events on the return of an Arawak raiding party to the Berbice River, following the capture of a number of Caribs from the Corentyn River:  
 If they catch females who are neither young nor pretty, such as they judge suitable to gratify their passions on  
 ... they slay them straight away ... but unfortunate is

he ... who, finding no chance for escape or of fighting to the death, happens to fall alive into the hands of his enemies ... /for/ ... each ... is provided with some maquarys, a sort of torch streaked with a certain stuff which has the quality of pitch, so that it will burn better ... they thrust the burning maquary into the skin of the captive ... one sticks it in his face, another about the genitals, a third upon the tenderest of spots, at the same time he is being dragged here and there by ropes ... this lasts until the morning ... they then have to make an end to it, which is done by a captain, who crushes the miserable prisoner's head with a wooden club. Everybody now falls upon him with a knife ... The cut off flesh, after boiling, is put into the pepper pot and eaten for good food ... It is a horrible thing to see. Besides that the smell of the flesh, which is burnt incessantly with the maquarys, and the seething fat almost gushing out of it, is likely to make a European not only squirm, vomit and be sick, but even also to suffocate.

Biet (1664:p.383) says that the Cayenne Caribs tortured their captives to death in a similar fashion (see also note 37).

47. Thomas actually distinguishes two types of leader in the latter sphere, the 'shaman' and the 'prophet' (Ibid:pp.145-6) but, since such prophets only emerged at the end of the 19th century, in response to messianic movements such as the Hallelujah cult, the distinction is not relevant to the present discussion.
48. Though up until this point the influence of the war-chief may very well have been strengthened by the intensified conflict consequent upon the European intrusion.
49. See Chap.IV for a discussion of the emergence of such a policy in Dutch territories, where Amerindian 'owls' were appointed among each group, and even a 'Great Owl' or 'Common Chief' for the Caribs of the Essequibo colony, distinguished by various insignia, usually the caracoli, a crescent shaped breastplate, and an engraved staff.
50. The Europeans usually misunderstood the nature of Amerindian leadership. For example, during the conquest of the Orinoco Caribs in the 1740's Governor Jose de Iturriaga made attempts to achieve a pacific reduction of the Carib peoples through the cacique Pattacon, from the Caroni River, who had assured Iturriaga of his great prestige and influence among the Orinoco Caribs. However, Iturriaga's lieutenant, Francisco Alvarado hastily advised (BGB:BC:APII:p.110) that Pattacon was but one of the '... many celebrated chiefs of the Caroni'. Capuchin missionaries working on the northern llanos specifically cited this apparent lack of clear political authority among the Caribs as one of the major reasons for the difficulties they were experiencing in reducing them (M. de Anguiano in Carrocera:1964:p.380, letter of 1702).
51. The Carib pirogue, or kanawa, from which word the English 'canoe' is derived, is no longer made since the long trading and raiding expeditions have ceased but it is still remembered in the songs of the Maroni River Caribs (Hoff:1968:p.19) and a similar vessel is still made by the Warao of the Orinoco delta (Wilbert:1980:p.96, plates 5,6/). Pelleprat (Ibid:p.75) says that among the Guarapiche Caribs such vessels

were 50-60 feet long and about 6-7 feet wide. They were hollowed out and shaped with the use of fire from a cedar-like tree called the caoba, chosen for the three important qualities of thickness, length and resistance to termites. Biet (Ibid:pp.369-70) adds that at least twelve benches were fitted for the paddlers who sat two abreast along each side and that two or three sails might be fitted (see also AGI: Mapas y Planos:Venezuela no.22, drawing of Carib pirogues off Santo Tomé). Such vessels might carry up to fifty warriors.

52. Rochefort (Ibid:p.518) says that the Island Caribs similarly distinguished their war-chiefs from the village headman (trouboutoli hauthe) by the title trouboutli canoa, for a pirogue commander and nhalene for the overall commander.
53. Dreyfus (1982:p.6) says that, among the Island Caribs, or Kalinago, war-chiefs were entitled to virilocal residence with their sons, had a greater opportunity for polygamy and, as a result, were able to further boost their prestige through the holding of drinking parties. Thus, his sons could clear the land, hunt and fish, while his many wives produced more beer. Certainly these opportunities were also open to the mainland Caribs - see note 67.
54. Raleigh says that the word 'captain' originated in Amerindian usage because:  
 ... since the English, French and Spanish are come among them, they call themselves Capitaynes, because they perceive that the chiefest of every ship is called by that name. (Ibid:p.7)  
 Fermin (Ibid:p.58) says that some Surinamese Caribs had adopted the expression 'Grand-Man', probably from the bush negroes, whose word for a headman is Granman.
55. Barrere (Ibid:p.189) says that on social occasions the leader of the host community was required to make a speech, '... which is always very long', to his guests:  
 They speak with an extraordinary rapidity and a great volubility ... They affect, above all, to speak through the nose ... we French call this manner of speaking to Karbeter.  
 as the speeches were delivered in the grand Karbet, or long house (see text below). Modern ethnography confirms the importance of oratorical skills for the community leader (Thomas:Ibid:p.122).
56. Thus Pelleprat (Ibid:p.71) says that most men had only one wife because otherwise '... they would have to work to feed them'.
57. Biet (Ibid:p.389) also notes that really famous leaders might maintain their wives in separate houses '... in order to keep the peace'.
58. This description is perhaps more reminiscent of the Warao of the Orinoco delta who have a developed caste of priests and practice idol worship. Wilbert (1980:p.156) writes:  
 Limited political authority rested with the band headman who determined the daily routine of his people, especially that of his son-in-law's. Maximal religious authority was vested in a ranking priest-shaman. He was in charge of the temple and was the guardian of its Sacred Rock.

59. This is still the case among many Carib-speaking peoples today (Colson:1972:p.84)
60. This is reminiscent of the Akawaio (Kapon) whose shamans have a spirit helper in the form of the kumalak bird (Colson:1977:pp.55-6).
61. Gillin (1936:p.108) has emphasised the isolation in which he found the Caribs of the Barama River, both from the Europeans and amongst themselves. He writes:  
 Since the early part of the nineteenth century ... the European political control of the colony /British Guiana/ has succeeded in repressing inter-tribal warfare. Within their cultural background, therefore, the Caribs have found environmental conditions and exterior political conditions unfavourable to the development of political power and group solidarity. (Ibid:p.154)  
 This situation contrasts strongly with the 17th century observation of Padre Francisco de Tauste that among the Caribs of the Orinoco llanos one of their most notable traits was their solidarity and unity in the face of enemies and for purposes of vengeance, such that '... others fear them, even if they are more numerous'. (in Carrocera:Ibid:p.203).
62. It has been observed from modern ethnography that Amerindian settlements can be highly unstable under certain circumstances (see Chagnon:1968, for a discussion of Yanamamo village 'fission and fusion'). Moreover the subsistence techniques of tropical forest life require a high degree of flexibility in relocating village sites as the necessity to clear new gardens emerges every 3-5 years. However, a tendency to become more sedentary was suggested as one of the possible effects of Carib occupation of the Orinoco llanos, see above p.69.
63. Pelleprat says that (Ibid:p.75) in the Guarapiche area the plagues of mosquitoes were so bad that each family had built two shelters, one in the village, which was open at the sides and used during the day, and another in a more wooded area, which was, as far as possible, sealed to stop the penetration of insects by night (see also Crevaux:Ibid). Apparently the mosquitoes were more prevalent in the woods by day and the fields by night. The statement of Carabantes (see text above p. that Carib villages only comprised 3/4 houses and one family, could be explained by this practice.
64. Riviere (1982) contrasts the Guiana Caribs with the Tukanoans, of the north-west Amazon, in terms of their relations between the sexes. He notes that Tukanoan women, unlike their Carib counterparts, are forbidden to see certain objects, such as bull-roarers and trumpets. classified as 'male', on pain of gang rape.
65. The experiences of Helena Valero, captured by the Venezuelan Yanoama gives an insight into the relations between the sexes in such a situation - see Biocca:1971.
66. It should also be reiterated that the word poito expresses this ambiguity, being translated a 'son-in-law' and also as 'servant' or 'slave' - see above, note 35.

67. Though Fermin (Ibid:p.79) indicates a preference for virilocal residence, which is not as surprising as it may seem since place of residence could be negotiable. Thus a powerful leader, as Dreyfus has suggested (see above, note 53), might well have been able to live away from his father-in-law. For a young man making a marriage for the first time, the ability to successfully negotiate such an arrangement with his senior, the man who gives him his wife, would be practically non-existent, hence the tendency to matrilocal residence.

CHAPTER IITHE CARIB FRONTIER 1498 - 1700

As we have seen during the first eighty years of the European presence in South America, contact with the Carib populations of Tierra Firme was minimal. Although Spanish conflict with the Carib groups of the Lesser Antilles had heavily conditioned the Spaniard's initial attitudes and subsequent policies, on Tierra Firme, actual knowledge of the character and extent of Carib populations was limited. This situation is reflected in Spanish documentation of this period, there being no detailed references to Carib groups until Antonio de Berrío's explorations of the Orinoco in the 1580's.

The little information that was available to the Spaniards seems to have been supplied mainly by Arawak informants, a situation which was guaranteed to encourage Spanish antipathy to the Caribs, in view of the reported hostility between these groups.

Thus early Spanish documents contain many references to 'Carib' attacks on their settlements and alleged cannibalism. Certainly it seems likely that the Caribs were ready and able to attack Spanish shipping and outposts but in view of the Spanish enslavement of coastal populations for the pearl fisheries of Margarita, Cubagua and Coche, it seems unlikely that the Caribs would have been the sole source of hostility to the European intrusion. Accordingly, only those raids for which there is further contextual evidence of Carib involvement are mentioned here, a procedure followed throughout this thesis.

As European penetration of the continent increased, so the reports concerning Carib populations become more detailed. After 1580 the Dutch, English and Spanish came into direct conflict over possession of the Orinoco and although the Spanish were twice driven from their capital, Santo Tomé,

in the 17th century, no other foreign power was able effectively to hold it.

At the same time Spanish control of the Orinoco, throughout this period, was little more than nominal and relied, to a significant degree, on illicit trade with the Dutch. Since this area was marginal to Spanish imperial priorities, there was little option for the Spanish colonists.

In this context the successive governorships of the Berrio family, under which trade with the Dutch was allowed and a 'modus vivendi' eventually reached with the Orinoco Caribs, may be considered highly successful. Thus once these policies were reversed, as, for example, under Governor Alquiza in 1611 and under Governor Viedma in 1658, Spanish control of the Orinoco evaporated and again turned Santo Tomé into an isolated and beleaguered outpost of empire, rather than the springboard of conquest that had been envisaged by Antonio de Berrio.

On the llanos to the north of the Orinoco the Spanish were more successful in establishing secure bases from which the conquest of the Amerindians could proceed. In particular, Juan Orpin's conquest of the Cumanagotos, a Carib-speaking group, in the late 1630's, definitively established the Spanish presence in Cumaná and Barcelona, as well as providing the Carib groups of the Guarapiche area with their first experience of determined Spanish attacks against their settlements.

Not surprisingly it is also from this period that the French had most success in cultivating the friendship of these Carib groups, so that, although the first successful entradas were made here by Spanish missionaries in the 1660's they were almost immediately expelled by the Amerindians in alliance with the French adventurers.

However the 1680's represent the high point of French activity in this area and when the Spanish missionaries returned in the 1720's it was their turn to drive the Caribs from their settlements and the hope of a stable French enclave in this area collapsed.

In contrast, due to the 'de facto' situation of free trade on the Orinoco and the instability of the new Dutch colony of Essequibo, the alliance between the Dutch and Caribs only became fully active and aggressively anti-Spanish until the early 18th century. Thus the intense Carib raiding of the Spanish during the 1670's and 1680's, despite being denounced as a Dutch plot by the Spaniards, was more directly related to the attempts of the Jesuits to move east, out of the Colombian llanos, onto the Orinoco, thus interrupting Caribs trading relationships in this area.

From the Carib point of view the end of the 17th century represents the zenith of their influence, both among other Amerindians, due to their trading alliances with the Dutch, French and English, and also among the Europeans, due to their importance to colonising projects.

At the same time, that they were probably unaware of their importance and certainly lacked the political organisation to capitalise on it, meant that they were ill prepared to face the determined Spanish colonialism that emerged under Bourbon rule in the 18th century. In this way the Carib 'threat' of the 17th century was more an expression of Spanish demoralisation and weakness than a conscious and well organised attempt to drive the Spanish from South America.

It seems likely that Carib association with anti-Spanish powers gave more specific direction to Carib raiding, there is, for example, evidence of Carib raids being led by Dutch, French and English adventurers, but it must be emphasised that the degree of involvement of different Carib groups in anti-Spanish activity would have varied according to time and place. Thus, while the Guarapiche Caribs came into serious conflict with the Spanish in the period 1650 - 1670, because of Spanish advances onto the llanos, their interruption of communication with Carib groups of the Lesser Antilles and the incitement of the French, those Carib groups of the Orinoco and the Essequibo - Imataca region did not experience significant Spanish interference

until the start of the 18th century.

Until this date the economy of the Orinoco and Guayana was dominated by the Dutch whose trade with the Amerindians, organised largely through the Caribs:

... in turn reflected the continued dominance of the Indian economy of the region. Before cattle ranching and more extensive arable cultivation, Guayana, via its waterways, provided tropical forest products for the Dutch trading network centred on the coastal colony of Essequibo.  
(Robinson:1967:p.90)

Nonetheless the foundations of the Spanish colonisation of the Orinoco in the 18th century were being laid. Fernando de Berrio, for example, greatly stimulated cattle ranching by introducing, around 1620, over 300 cattle as well as pigs and horses. By 1637 their number was estimated at over 50,000 (BGB:BC:API:p.77).

These herds were to form the basis for the highly effective Capuchin occupation of the Yuruari River valley in the 18th century and it was from here that the reduction of the strategic Carib populations living between the Essequibo and Orinoco Rivers took place. Similarly, as the Dutch-Carib trade in forest products declined, due both to this new direction given to the economy of the region by the Spanish and a change to the intensive planting of sugar by the Dutch West India Company in Essequibo, the trade in red slaves expanded rapidly to sustain the new needs that access to European goods had taught the Amerindians.

In summary, this chapter outlines the major events of European and Carib contact up to the end of the 17th century, in which period the Caribs were central to the fate of many colonising projects. The demographic and social changes that this contact induced in Carib society has already been discussed but there was little in this experience to prepare them for the aggressive Spanish colonialism that emerged after the accession of the reformist Bourbon dynasty at the beginning of the 18th century.

Initial Contacts 1498 - 1584

On the 5th of August 1498 three vessels lay at anchor in the Gulf of Paria. Since it was a Sunday and, as his son Ferdinand records:

... from motives of piety [Christopher Columbus] did not wish to set sail that day ...

several small boats were dispatched to forage for supplies which landed in a sheltered cove (Columbus:1968:p.17). It was in so casual a manner that the first Europeans set foot on the continent of South America and, in particular, the Carib domain.

The following day Columbus continued along the coastline of Venezuela, as far as the island of Margarita, and then sailed north to the Antilles. It was these islands, pre-eminently Hispaniola, that became the starting point for many bands of conquistadors during the boom years of the island's economy, and it was those men left without encomiendas<sup>1</sup> who were to go on to form the mass of those groups that conquered Puerto Rico, Cuba, New Spain, Central America and Venezuela.

While exploring the coast between the gulf of Paria and the Araya peninsula Columbus had heard tales of gold and pearls, particularly as originating from the island of Cubagua. He saw:

... infinite canoes carrying people who were wearing neck collars fashioned from gold, like horseshoes.  
(Las Casas:1971:p.134)

More than the gold, however, it was the lure of the pearls which were to attract subsequent Spanish expeditions to this area and Columbus set another precedent for the exploitation of the resources of the New World by seizing a pirogue of twelve natives and transporting them as slaves to Santo Domingo (Las Casas: Ibid:p.134). Amerindian slavery was to go hand in hand with Spanish wealth.

Within one year the first of a series of Spanish adventurers had arrived. The first expedition, under Alonso de Hojeda, was to be closely followed by further sailings by Pedron Niño, in 1501, and Cristobal and

Luis Guerra in 1502 (Simon:1963:I:p.48ff). These voyages served to confirm the occurrence of pearls along this stretch of coast and, as early as 1500, Spanish merchants had arrived on Cubagua and Margarita to trade with the Guayqueri inhabitants<sup>2</sup> (Navarrette:1923:p.25, Oviedo y Valdes:1957:I:Book 4·p.93, Herrera·1934·II:Book 4·p.345).

As has already been mentioned (see Chap.I) Hojeda and the Guerra brothers had also received Royal licences to take slaves from this coast for export to Hispaniola. Initially, however, following the prohibition of Amerindian slavery by Queen Isabella<sup>3</sup> and the rapid exhaustion of the native store of pearls that had taken place due to the intense trade that had developed, even in the few years since Columbus's arrival, the depredations of such slavers were limited (Sauer:1966:p.114).

The pearl beds themselves were not discovered until 1512 and the islands of Margarita, Cubagua and Coche, as well as the immediate mainland were then declared to be 'non-Carib' by the Audiencia of Santo Domingo, possibly reflecting a desire to maintain a native labour force in situ, much as was the case when gold was discovered on Trinidad in 1518 (see Chap.I). Indeed, prior to 1512, the government of Diego Columbus was sufficiently concerned about the security of this trade in pearls to have specifically ordered that natives were not to be transported from Trinidad to Hispaniola in case this should bring conflict with the Amerindians of the Pearl Coast (Alexander:1958·p.121).

Under such favourable conditions relations between the Spanish and the Amerindians flourished (Sauer:Ibid:p.191, Alexander:idem.) and, following permanent settlement in Cubagua<sup>4</sup>, missionaries were able to establish a Franciscan monastery at Cumaná (AGI:DI:Vol.I:p.422) and a Dominican mission at Chirivichi (Piritu) by 1516 (Oviedo y Valdes:1959:Book 24·chap.4, Las Casas:1971:II:chaps.18,33,34,45).

This concern of the Spanish, at least initially, to develop peaceful

trade with the Amerindians of this region can be related not only to their desire for pearls but also to the necessity for the Spanish to rely on native goodwill in supplying them with food and water. Thus Cubagua, site of the first Spanish settlement in this region and the most productive of the pearl beds, was totally arid supporting only a minimum of flora and fauna. In 1539 the King was informed:

The island of Cubagua is totally sterile ... there is neither water nor plants nor anywhere that it is possible to grow vegetables. (AGI:SD:49:22/7/1539)

As a result the Spanish were completely dependent on the food, water and wood brought from Cumaná by the local Amerindians (Alexander·Ibid·p.124, Castellanos:1874·p.142).

The ability of the Spanish to maintain these amicable relations, while still exploiting the newly discovered pearl beds with Amerindian slaves was due, in part, to the fact that they were able to import Amerindians from the Lucayas (Bahamas) to use as divers, instead of the local population. Las Casas considered this trade in the natives of the Lucayas to be the principal reason for their total extinction by the end of the second decade of the 16th century. Las Casas wrote of their treatment, and that of those Amerindians subsequently brought to the Pearl Islands as follows·

There is nothing more detestable or cruel than the tyranny which the Spaniards used towards the Indians for the getting of the pearl. Surely the infernal torments cannot much exceed the anguish they endure, by reason of that way of cruelty: for they put them under water some four or five ells deep where they are forced without liberty to gather up the shells wherein the pearls are: sometimes they come up again with nets full of shells to take a breath, but if they stay any while to rest themselves, immediately comes a hangman rowed in a little boat who, as soon as he has well beaten them, drags them again to their labour. (1972:p.50)

However, this situation changed in 1519 under the famous sentencing of Rodrigo de Figueroa (see Chap.I, p.2 ) and although the Guayqueri population of the Pearl Islands were declared 'non-Carib' (Otte·1977·p.356)

the Amerindians of the mainland coast were not.

Accordingly the activity of the slavers in this area re-commenced and almost immediately the Amerindians of the region took vengeance on the Spanish, sweeping away the missionary outposts on the mainland<sup>5</sup>, Castellanos relates (1874:pp.142-3) that the principal cause of the revolt was an attempt by a Spanish slaver to carry off a group of Amerindians who had been trading with them for maize on the Cumaná River. Certainly the Amerindians appreciated that the Spanish dependence on traded supplies was a serious weakness in their position, even if it appeared that, for the moment, the Spanish had forgotten it. The subsequent blockade of Cubagua by the Amerindians forced the Spanish to abandon the island through lack of water, although it was quickly re-occupied in 1520 by a force sent from Santo Domingo under the command of Gonzalo de Ocampo<sup>6</sup> (Oviedo y Valdes:1959:Book 19:pp.195-6, AGI:DI:I:pp.438-9).

In the same year Las Casas attempted to set up a kind of sanctuary for those Amerindians fleeing the slave raiders but this did nothing to dissuade the Spanish on Cubagua who regularly continued to seize local Amerindians while on foraging expeditions (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.199). Consequently Las Casas went to Santo Domingo to protest against this short sighted policy but in his absence his own captain of guards began seizing slaves, provoking another Amerindian rebellion in which Las Casas's foundation was itself destroyed and Cubagua was again denied food and water (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.201, Civrieux:1980). Some years later Las Casas was to write with understandable bitterness:

Of the Shore of Pearls, of Paria, and the Island of Trinity, from the Shore of Paria, to the Bay of Venezuela, which takes up above two hundred miles in length, the Spaniards committed most wonderful depopulations: for they gave themselves wholly to their wanton robberies, enslaving also infinite numbers of men, on purpose to sell them for money, against all faith and pledges which they had given them for their security ... (1972:pp.44-5).

In 1522 a second force from Santo Domingo re-occupied Cubagua, punished the Amerindians with 'fire and sword' and built a fort in the mouth of the River Cumaná to ensure that no such uprising might succeed again (Oviedo y Valdes:1959:p.201).

Despite these setbacks Cubagua had in fact developed into a very prosperous settlement by the time of the first rebellion in 1519 and was already an important stopping off point for Spanish shipping, administered by the full panoply of imperial bureaucracy, including a justice and royal officers (Alexander:1958:p.124). After this date the settlement was re-named Nueva Cadiz, no doubt reflecting optimism as to the commercial future that might one day rival its name sake and the King himself made a personal donation for the construction of a church on the island (Oviedo y Valdes: Ibid:pp.201-2, Humbert:1976:p.157).

Certainly the production of the pearl beds was prodigious. For example, in 1528 an oyster-bed was discovered at Coche and during January of the following year more than 11,000 ozs. of pearls were extracted from this site alone (Alexander:Ibid·p.125, Mosk:1948·pp.392-400). However, by 1534 the pearl beds were nearly exhausted, doubtless due to the intense over-exploitation of the preceding decades, and Oviedo y Valdes wrote:

They have commenced to have a shortage and lack and now they are not found in abundance as in the beginning.  
(Ibid:Book 4:p.133).

By 1537 Cubagua was virtually finished as an important pearl producing centre and attention turned to the west and the newly discovered pearl beds at Cabo de Vela. In this same year government officials on Cubagua were planning to move the remaining population to Margarita (Alexander:1958:p.125). Some of the colonists stayed on until 1541 but after a devastating hurricane in that same year this remnant followed the rest to Margarita<sup>7</sup> (Castellanos:1874:p.150).

Although Margarita had been settled in 1525-7, under a licence

granted to Marcello de Villalobos<sup>8</sup>, its importance as a pearl fishery was short lived and never matched that of Cubagua. Moreover, following a general prohibition on Amerindian slavery by the Crown in 1530, alternatives to the pearl trade were severely reduced for the Spanish of the area, encouraging a similar desertion of population to that that had already occurred on Cubagua (Otte:1977:p.212). Nonetheless Margarita was to figure as an important supply base, both for foodstuffs and men, for Spanish expeditions into this area during this period, especially those of Antonio de Sedeño and Jeronimo Dortal (see below), but a series of droughts in the early 1540's discouraged any renewed settlement and by 1545 the Guayqueri population was probably once again in the majority on the island as the Spanish moved elsewhere in pursuit of their dreams of wealth (Alexander: Ibid:p.128).

However, brief and unstable though the Spanish occupation of these islands may have been, its effect on those populations that had been condemned as 'caribe' by Rodrigo de Figueroa or unprotected by a 'special relationship' with the Spanish, as the Guayqueris seem to have been, was permanently debilitating. Some idea of the scope and scale of Spanish slaving in this area has already been given in Chapter I but, since the action of the Spanish in this region in these first decades of the European intrusion fatefully conditioned subsequent attitudes, both Spanish and Amerindian, it is worth considering this slaving in further detail, for it is only against this background that the enduring resistance of Carib populations to Spanish domination can be made intelligible.

Unfortunately, in the judgement of Otte:

The documentation relevant to Cubagua is little concerned with the slaves ... (1977:p.360)

but it is known that they often received Spanish names and were baptized to indicate their origin or duties, if they were destined to become house-slaves.

Those reserved for work in the pearl fisheries as divers might expect harsher treatment. Thus among the practices of the Spanish slave captains was the branding of captives with a 'C' to indicate either their destination, Cubagua or Castile, or their origin as Caribs. The historian M. Rojas has written:

Castille, Cubagua or Caribe, what might be the effect of this initial, left forever on the body of a free man, as a mark of opprobium and death? (quoted in Humbert: 1976:p.163).

Nonetheless, as in so many other aspects of the European occupation of the New World, Spanish slavers relied to some extent on the co-operation of the Amerindians, just as later the Dutch were to rely on the Caribs. Girolamo Benzoni's eyewitness account of a slave raid on the Venezuelan coast makes this point well:

All along the coast the Indians came down from the hills to the shore to fish. We therefore used to land and hide ourselves in places where we could not be seen. We often used to wait all day hoping to take prisoners. When the Indians arrived we jumped out like wolves attacking so many lambs and made them slaves. We caught over fifty in this way, mostly women and small children.

However, this alerted other Amerindians of the area to the presence of the slavers and a different strategy was adopted:

Our captain then ... turned back and led us to the house of a poor chief, a friend to the Spaniards, and, giving him a jug of wine, a shirt and some knives, with civil words entreated him to lead him to a place where slaves could be caught. The chief went off with a party of his men and returned the following day bringing sixteen Indians, with their hands tied behind their backs. (1857:I:pp.6-7).

In general the documentation only sporadically records either the numbers of slaves that were taken on such raids or their origin and when slave taking formed a minor part of the activity of a commercial flotilla this was particularly true<sup>9</sup>. However, although the most powerful persons on Cubagua had, since the 1520's, been receiving royal licences for slaving on the coast of Tierra Firme, the first attempt by the community of Cubagua to

get such a licence to slave and reconnoitre in Guayana, in 1527, was refused, the Crown maintaining that such licences were only available to its justices and officials.

Nonetheless, in 1532, the community of Cubagua did receive a licence to make war upon and enslave the tribes of the Caribbean coast, supported by the troops of Antonio de Sedeño, who was attempting to colonise Trinidad, and Diego de Ordás, who was penetrating the Orinoco in search of the legendary kingdom of Meta (see below)<sup>10</sup>. The result was a bloody Amerindian uprising, provoked by the atrocities committed by these Spanish, and the Crown quickly returned to a policy of allowing the enslavement of 'caribes' only, by individuals specifically licenced for this purpose (Otte: Ibid: p.213).

Under such conditions the area nearest to Cubagua itself seems to have suffered the most. Within one year of the Cubaguan authorities declaring the area between the Neveri and Unare Rivers its own preserve the effects were so disastrous that in 1527 it was said that in this region there was 'little land' left for slaving and that there were only four small villages within four leagues of the coast. As a result the authorities at Cumaná forbade further raids in this region and started to promote the rescate pacifico, which was to take place only at 40 day intervals with no more than 8 men, who were allowed to remain no longer than 12 days among the Amerindian villages.<sup>11</sup> However, once the alcalde responsible for this measure, Jacomé de Castellón<sup>12</sup>, had been re-appointed to Santo Domingo, Cubaguan slavers had already taken some 75 slaves within weeks of his departure (Otte: Ibid: pp.211-20).

The rescates pacificos also continued led by Pedro Ortiz de Matienzo, under Castellón's licence, and were organised with the aid of a local cacique, named as 'Don Diego'<sup>13</sup>. However, the Spanish were faithless allies and some of the other local caciques who co-operated in this way were themselves

seized. For example, a principal cacique of this coastal region, Chatauma, was sold as a diver to a member of the Cubaguan elite, Antón de Juez, by the successor to Castellon's office, Juan Lopez de Achuleta (AGI:J:8:Doc.no.I).

As the pearl fisheries began to fail in the late 1520's so the economic importance of these slaving expeditions increased and the slavers travelled further in search of their victims. Similarly, rivalries and disputes over titles to Venezuelan territories, such as that between Diego de Ordás and Antonio Sedeño, referred to below, only helped to augment the violence of the armadas de rescate. Otte writes:

Each additional time the 'keeping of the peace' on the Venezuelan coast was a pretext for the seizure of Indians, in which were involved, in one way or another, the whole population of Nueva Cadiz. (Ibid:p.227)

This trend towards a collective participation in slaving by the Cubaguans really emerged in the 1530's. As early as 1531-2 an armada under Andres de Villacorta was organised, to which all the Cubaguans were invited to contribute and whose proceeds would be shared accordingly (AGI:J:53:Doc.no.598). Similarly, in 1531, a large force was prepared by Pedro Ortiz de Matienzo and Francisco Portillo, again by subscription, with a complement of over 80 men. On its first voyage it took some 500 Amerindians and continued to bring slaves to Cubagua, often for re-sale to Hispaniola, throughout the 1530's (Otte:Ibid:pp.229-30).

From 1542, following the abandonment of Cubagua, the slave hunting expeditions were organised from Margarita, five licences being given out to royal officials in this year alone (Otte:Ibid:p.231). The scope of these later expeditions was certainly wider than those of the earlier decades, which had concentrated on the north Venezuelan coast, and may have captured some Caribs since there is evidence that they penetrated deep into the Orinoco llanos (see Chapter I:section I:note 18).

Although Carib populations did not suffer to anything like the same degree as the coastal Amerindians, such as the Cumanagotos, who had played a

leading role in the various uprisings against the Spanish (Civrieux:1980), it was from the slavers' base of Margarita, in the 1530's and 1560's, that several Spanish expeditions left to enter the Orinoco for the first time. The Europeans had now begun to seek further riches in the hinterland of Carib territories<sup>14</sup>.

The first of these expeditions<sup>15</sup> left Tenerife in 1531, under the command of Diego de Ordás, with 600 men and 36 horses. The fleet, having been scattered during the Atlantic crossing took some months to reach the New World in its entirety and Ordás himself had to sail for some 40 days along the Guayana coast before making landfall on the Paria peninsula. From here a scouting party was sent ashore the following day and encountered a friendly cacique, who had already been baptized by the Spanish as Pedro Sánchez (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book 24:p.391). This cacique also informed the scouting party that 12 Spaniards had fortified a position some 6 leagues distant<sup>16</sup>, which Ordás promptly ordered to be destroyed. The garrison of this fort, acting under the orders of Antonio de Sedeño, had been taking slaves from among the local population and because of this Ordás found that the Amerindians '... were little disposed to serve him' (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.392, Ojer:1966:pp.101-8, Simon:1963:I:170-8).

From the Paria peninsula Ordás's expedition entered the Orinoco delta region and, after a difficult passage through the flooded landscape (see Chap.I:p. 27 ) came upon a large Arawak village called Huyapari (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.393). Here they rested for some time but apparently under the fear of an imminent attack from their hosts. Eventually Ordás provoked a night skirmish and the Amerindians fled, burning their village and its crops as they went. Now lacking the necessary supplies to continue Ordás led a foraging party to the Warao village of Baratubaro but his emissaries were met with arrows and Ordás's men attacked the village, killing many Warao and distributing their women as slaves among the Arawaks of

Araucay (Aguado:1951:Book 4:p.417, Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.217, Simon:Ibid:pp.178-82).

While at Araucay a scouting party was sent into the Guayana foothills, under the command of Juan Gonzalez, to try to find and castigate the Amerindians of Huyapari but he returned 20 days later with no successes to report (Aguado:Ibid:p.418).

Ordás was now determined to pursue his original plan and ascend the Orinoco in search of the fabulous land of Meta<sup>17</sup>. Using captured Carib pilots his depleted party of 200 men and 18 horses begun rowing and dragging their specially constructed launches upstream against the floods (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.394), finally reaching the Orinoco-Meta confluence only to find their further progress blocked by the Atures Rapids (Aguado:Ibid:p.421).

Accordingly Ordás turned back, rejecting any attempt to ascend the Meta River itself and soon came under attack from a Carib war-party, possibly comrades of the Caribs he had seized on the lower Orinoco to act as navigators. Alonso de Herrera, his campmaster, landed on horseback to disperse the attackers, who responded by setting fire to the savanna, a favoured hunting technique. But the Spanish horsemen charged through the flames and inflicted many losses on the Amerindians, capturing two of them who, under interrogation, confirmed Ordás's notion that there was much gold to be found in the area of the Meta (Aguado:Ibid:pp.424-6).

Ordás now returned, without further incident, directly to the Paria peninsula, thinking to enter the province of Meta from the Curiaçao Gulf to the west. However, his men became mutinous during their stay at Cumaná and he agreed to return to Spain. Once back Ordás planned to seek the support of the Crown in making Margarita a forward base for future exploration of the Orinoco-Meta region, which idea the entrepreneurs of the Pearl Islands had opposed. In fact Ordás was never to see the Orinoco again as he died at sea during this return voyage to Spain in 1533 (Aguado:Ibid:p.437, Oviedo y

Valdes:p.399, Embid:1950, Hemming:1978b:p.16).

Meanwhile in Spain news of Gonzalo Pizarro's discovery of Peru had arrived. Galvanized by these further proofs of the fabulous wealth to be discovered in the unknown regions of the New World the treasurer to Ordás's expedition, Jeronimo Dortal, immediately set about recruiting a new expedition, convinced that Ordás had been correct in seeking a similar kingdom in the province of the Meta (Hemming:Ibid:p.46).

Securing royal titles to Paria and the Orinoco, Dortal left Seville in August 1534 and arrived in the Paria Gulf in October with some 200 men. Here he joined forces with Ordás's ex-campmaster, Alonso de Herrera<sup>18</sup>. Herrera had in the meantime fortified a position on the peninsula with those men that had been left behind in 1533 (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.409).

As has already been indicated most of the Amerindians of this coast were hostile to the Spanish at this time due to the atrocities and slave taking of the expeditionary troops and the Cubaguans, but Dortal:

... secured a degree of peace with the Indians, but had no power over them because of the enmity towards the Christians they had deep in their hearts. (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.410)

As a result Dortal delayed his departure to the Orinoco but sent Herrera ahead with a force of 130 men. Herrera found the settlement of Araucay deserted<sup>19</sup> while the Amerindians of Baratubaro fled on his approach, no doubt remembering their previous encounter with Ordás. Fortunately for Herrera they did not have time to strip the settlement and he was able to re-supply his party and gather enough food for an ascent of the Orinoco. He then sent word that Dortal should join them without delay (Oviedo y Valdes: Ibid:p.411).

However, Herrera's encampment came under attack from Amerindians using fire arrows and a quantity of his stores were destroyed. Feeling now that to wait any longer for Dortal might endanger the possible success of the whole enterprise he decided to embark immediately and began his ascent of

the Orinoco with the advance party alone, early in 1535 (Simon:Ibid:pp.306-14).

His progress along the Orinoco was rapid and Aguado (1951:pp.505-6) records that they encountered Carib pirogues on the river and saw the lights of their campfires by night. No doubt confident after his similar action during Ordás's descent of the Orinoco, Herrera landed a force of 30 horsemen and attacked one of these encampments. Three Spaniards were killed in this action but all the Caribs were put to the sword except two, one escaping completely but the other, badly wounded, being eaten by a cayman as he attempted to swim to the safety of the other bank of the Orinoco. In the Carib encampment itself they found five Amerindians who had been taken prisoner in a raid on a nearby village. These Amerindians led them to their village where Herrera's expedition was given ample provisions to continue their journey.

Once the expedition had entered the Meta River itself their progress slowed, covering only some 20 leagues in 40 days (Oviedo y Valdes: Ibid:p.411). As a result Herrera now divided his party into two in the hope of finding an easier route. The ill and wounded were left with the boats while 100 of the fittest divided into two groups in order to scout by land (Aguado: Ibid:Book 5:pp.515-7, Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.412, Simon:Ibid:pp.322-5).

Some three days later Herrera and his scouting parties were reunited outside an Amerindian village but Herrera acted with '... great impetuosity' and he and the advance party were attacked by over 100 archers (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.413). Herrera, three of his men and all but one of their horses were killed by poisoned arrows (Aguado:Ibid:p.521, Simon:Ibid: pp.329-32).

Alvaro de Ordás, nephew to Diego de Ordás, now assumed command and immediately returned to the rest of the expedition who had been waiting on the river. The original expedition was now reduced to 90 men and one horse and a further 25 men were lost in a hurried retreat to Paria, arriving there

in mid-1535 (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.414, Simon:Ibid:p.332).

Jeronimi Dortal organised two further attempts to penetrate the province of Meta, both overland across the Orinoco llanos from the north coast. The first, under the command of Alvaro de Ordás, left Nueva Cadiz almost immediately on his return from the Orinoco and fortified a position, named San Miguel, on the Neverí River (Aguado:Ibid:p.576). From here a raiding party moved south under the command of Agustin Delgado:

... because he was a man skilful in war and of shrewd understanding ... and in the space of two months he invaded and pacified the interior for a distance of 40 leagues ... and many villages of Indians came to be his friend. (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.416)

In March 1536 the advance guard was joined by the main force, under Dortal's personal command, at San Miguel de Neverí. However, Delgado's 'pacification' of the llanos was not as complete as appeared for he was himself wounded leading the advance from San Miguel and died before he could return to the main body (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.418, Simon:Ibid:II:pp.9-33).

Undeterred by this setback Dortal began to march south-west across the llanos, crossing the Timanaco, Guarico, Tisnados, Pao, and Tinaco Rivers. They found a few gold objects but their horses started to sicken and refuse to eat, while the men suffered from fevers and dysentery. By the time that 25 men had died, out of the 120 who had set off, and only 12 horses were left, a mutiny broke out. Dortal's force split, some of the men marching north to join Nicolas Federmann in the Welser Company's jurisdiction, the rest returning with Dortal to the coast (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.423, Simon:Ibid:pp.41-5, Hemming:Ibid:p.65).

Following these repeated failures to locate significant wealth in the Orinoco basin and the discovery by Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada in 1536-7 of the rich Chibchan culture of the Magdalena River to the west, there were no further expeditions into the Orinoco region until the 1560's, when two abortive attempts were made to colonise the Orinoco-Guayana region.

The first of these was in 1568 when Fernandez de Serpa received royal titles to a region between the Orinoco and the Amazon. He called this projected enclave Nueva Andalucia and marched inland from Cumaná in 1569 to occupy it, accompanied by a horde of settlers. However, the column was ambushed near the mouth of the Cabruta River on the 10th of May 1570 and Serpa, with 76 of his men, was killed. The survivors straggled back to the coast as best they could (Oviedo y Banos:1885:II:Book 6:p.87ff, Ojer:1966:pp.253-64, Hemming:Ibid:p.149).

Also in 1568, Pedro Maraver de Silva received a similar title for territory between the Amazon and Orinoco, beyond that granted to Serpa. This he dubbed Nueva Extremadura. Arriving in Margarita in April 1569 he crossed almost immediately to the mouth of the Unare River and encountered a force of Cumanagotos, said to have numbered over 3,000 warriors:

... an innumerable multitude of arrows broke the air at the same time that their voices, tambourines and drums, with which they made a great show and confusion, provoked them to battle. (Oviedo y Banos:Ibid:Book 7:p.158)

and was driven back. The subsequent desertion of his captains forced Silva to abandon his attempt to reach his territories in Guayana (Oviedo y Banos: Ibid:pp.162-4, Ojer:1966:pp.285-93, Hemming:Ibid:p.150). The challenge of penetrating the Orinoco to locate the fabulous wealth of El Dorado was not taken up again until 1583.

However, as has already been indicated, a small European presence persisted on Margarita and in Cumaná even after the middle of the 16th century and these colonists offered a base not only to these Spanish adventurers but also to the French and English privateers who were slowly penetrating these waters, as well as Dutch commercial shipping that visited the vast salt pans of the Paria peninsula (see below).

As a result, in 1570, the Audiencia of Santo Domingo attempted to intervene to stop this growing collusion between the colonists and 'foreign' interlopers but to little avail and Margarita became widely known as the

first port of call to foreign shipping, where they could easily get supplies and trade for contraband (Alexander:1958:p.131). Nonetheless attempts by the people of Margarita to get licences to trade with the Amerindians of Guayana were repeatedly refused by the Crown because of their, certainly justified, reputation as slavers and in 1576 a special royal commission was sent to investigate the slave trade and contraband activities of the islanders (AGI:SD:191:18/4/1596).

Despite this official discouragement it seems likely that many contacts would have been developed between the people of Margarita and the Amerindians of the Orinoco and beyond<sup>20</sup>. The case of Jorge Griego, a native of Margarita, examined in Chapter I, is a good example of this process of 'unofficial' contact being developed independently and, to a certain degree, probably more successfully, than with the expeditions of the conquistadors.

In the same year that Griego travelled to the Orinoco, 1583, an expedition under the leadership of Antonio de Berrio, who had inherited the title to the provinces of El Dorado through his wife's uncle Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada (see above), left Bogotá beginning a new phase in the European occupation of the Orinoco.

In this period Trinidad rather than Margarita became the forward base for this penetration and Santo Tomé, the first Spanish establishment to be made on the Orinoco, its beleaguered but stubborn outpost. No longer was Spanish intrusion into the heartland of Carib territory to be a sporadic affair for the increasing presence of the English, French and Dutch in the New World now made it a matter of utmost importance that the Orinoco be secured for the Spanish Crown. Accordingly it was from this date that Carib populations began to experience the full effects of a permanent European presence.

The Conflict of Berrío and Raleigh 1583-1597

In contrast to previous expeditions those of Antonio de Berrío in search of El Dorado all left from Bogotá. The first, in 1583, reached the Orinoco/Meta confluence by February 1584, passing through the villages of the Achagua on the way. The Achagua were described thus:

Their barter consists of shells and beads, salt and dogs, tools and gowns that they have exchanged with peaceful Indians in return for Indian women and child slaves that they obtain by raiding or barter from other tribes ... They seem to me a people ... who are very shrewd traders. (Alonso de Pontes, quoted in Hemming:1978b:p.151)

By April the rains had started and Berrío encamped some four leagues from the Orinoco/Meta confluence. Here he was attacked by the Achagua, with some losses, and captives were interrogated as to the nature of the highlands to the south:

They say that on the far side of it are great settlements and a very great number of people, and great riches of gold and precious stones. I asked whether there were as many people on the llanos. They laughed at me: they said that in the cordillera there were many settlements in each of which there were more people than in all the llanos. (A. de Berrío, quoted in Ojer:1960:p.52)

When the rains ended Berrío crossed to the Orinoco south bank but:

... nearly all of them /his men/ fell sick of fevers so violently that they forthwith became delirious: so for this curse, and because we knew that the Indians, seeing us so ill, were uniting to attack us, I decided to depart at the end of seventeen months, after I had entered the llanos. (Letter to the King: 1/1/1593: BGB:BC:API:p.1)

In March 1587 Berrío re-entered the llanos and struck the Orinoco near the Atures Rapids, crossing to the south bank in three rafts. From a small encampment here he:

... tried many times to cross the cordillera and skirted it for more than 200 leagues, and in all that length it was not possible to cross it ... for it is very broad, rough, wooded and quite uninhabited. (Idem)

Berrío was now faced with a mutiny among his troops as they became disillusioned with these repeated failures to progress beyond the confines of

the Orinoco itself. Indeed, even the relief expedition that was dispatched from Bogotá by his wife refused to accept his command and sided with the mutineers. Antonio de Berrio reluctantly returned once again to Bogotá (Hemming:1978b:p.155).

Berrio's third expedition left Bogotá in March 1590 and, following the now well established pattern, passed the rainy season on the Orinoco south bank, camped on the lower Cuchivero. However, once again the expedition was unable to penetrate the cordillera to the south and was also afflicted with a mysterious illness that caused blindness and madness among both his men and the horses (BGB:BC:API:p.2, see also description in Chapter I). As a consequence of these misfortunes Berrio decided to descend the Orinoco by raft, eventually reaching the Caroni River where he made contact with the caciques Carapana and Morequito.

Berrio found that they were willing to offer both food and shelter to him and his men, possibly because of the peaceful trade, as exemplified by the journey of Jorge Griego, that had developed between these Amerindians and the Spanish at Margarita, despite the excesses of Diego de Ordás and Jeronimo Dortal earlier in the century. In any case Berrio was confident enough of these caciques' friendship to leave a number of the most afflicted and weakened of his men with them while he continued on to Trinidad, reaching the island in September 1591 (Ojer:Ibid:p.83, Hemming:Ibid:p.158).

Having decided to use Trinidad as his future base for further attempts to discover El Dorado, Berrio then left for Margarita to recruit more troops. He was joined here by his campmaster Domingo de Vera y Ibarguen who took an advance party directly to Trinidad and secured a position near the Dragon's Mouth, naming it San José de Oruña, in May 1592. Antonio de Berrio joined him here with the new recruits in January 1593 and promised the King that:

... with these /70 Spaniards from Margarita/ and a number of articles of barter I shall attempt to penetrate into the interior of Guayana by means of the cacique Morequite, whom I have in my power, and of the other caciques, of the same river who are my friends. (BGB:BC:API:p.4)

As a prelude to his own arrival Vera y Ibarguen was sent with an advance party of 35 troops and some 5,000 worth of barter to deal with Carapana and Morequito:

... for it has been found that no passage could be forced even with 500 men . (BGB:BC:API:p.7, Letter to King - 2/12/1594)

Vera y Ibarguen appears to have been relatively successful in his mission and he was able to scout along the Caroni, thought to be the most likely route to the highlands, for some distance (Raleigh:1868:p.107).

However, obstacles to Berrio's plans now emerged from another quarter. Francisco de Vides, the Governor of Margarita, sent a slave raiding party among Morequito's people, losing Berrio the goodwill of this important cacique (BGB:BC:API:p.4)<sup>21</sup>. Following this Vides himself appeared on Trinidad in October 1594, with a royal order giving Vides title to the governorship of Caracas and Trinidad. On the return of Vera y Ibarguen from the Orinoco, where some of the advance guard remained with the cacique Carapana to 'insure' his loyalty to Berrio, Vides prohibited Berrio's troops from entering the Orinoco. Accordingly Berrio, powerless to oppose Vides, sent Vera y Ibarguen back to Spain to plead his case before the King and sent his son, Fernando, to take command of the small force of Spaniards on the Orinoco (BGB:BC:API:p.8; 2/12/1594, Raleigh:Ibid:p.39).

It was while Berrio was waiting for the return of Vera y Ibarguen that Walter Raleigh appeared before Trinidad in April 1595, having learnt of the existence of El Dorado from captured Spanish documents. After opening diplomacies Raleigh seized San José de Oruña with the aid of the local Amerindians and also captured Antonio de Berrio himself. From his interrogation of Berrio and the Amerindians Raleigh gathered much useful intelligence

on the Orinoco and its environs which was later published as a book, 'The Discovery of the Large and Beautiful Empire of Guayana', which caused much excitement in Europe at the time and stimulated various attempts to colonise the region (see below).

Meanwhile Raleigh had ordered his captain Lawrence Keymis<sup>22</sup> to attempt to raise a rebellion against the Spanish among the Amerindians living between the Gulf of Paria and the Essequibo River. Thomas Masham, secretary to Keymis, recorded that there were some three hundred Spaniards involved in commerce on the Barima, Moruco and Essequibo Rivers, the fort of El Burgo on an island in the Essequibo River forming the focus for Spanish trade in the area (BGB:British Atlas). As will become clearer below, Keymis's efforts resulted in an immediate and lasting hostility developing between the Spaniards and the Amerindians of this area, particularly, of course, the Caribs.

By December 1595, however, Raleigh himself had left for England, releasing Antonio de Berrio but leaving two Englishmen, Hugh Goodwin and Francis Sparrey, to live amongst the Amerindians of the Orinoco and taking the son of a local cacique, Topiawari, by way of exchange. The treasurer of Cumaná, Roque de Montes subsequently wrote to the King of Spain that Captain Philip de Santiago was going to:

... ascend the Orinoco and apprehend the two Englishmen whom Guat-erral /Walter Raleigh/ left here last year ... for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the country and the best sites /for settlement/ and learning the language of the natives.

And in like manner I instructed him that he should warn the caciques of the Indians not to admit or receive any strangers henceforth in their territories, except Spaniards in your Majesty's service. (BGB:BC:API:p.11:18/4/1596)

Sparrey was indeed captured in Morequito's province but Montes was told that Goodwin had been eaten by a jaguar<sup>23</sup>.

Shortly after Raleigh's departure Vera y Iburguen returned to Trinidad after a highly successful interlude in Spain. He brought confirmation of

Antonio de Berrio's titles to the Orinoco and Trinidad as well as many colonists, eager to settle in this fabled region. So many colonists in fact that they could not all be accommodated at San José de Oruña which was in a state of disrepair, having been abandoned by Berrio after some of his best officers had defected to Governor Vides (Hemming:1978b:p.176).

Antonio de Berrio had then joined his son on the Orinoco and founded Santo Tomé de Morequito on an island in the mouth of the river to await the return of Vera y Ibarguen. Many of the colonists that arrived with Vera y Ibarguen were killed or captured by Caribs from Dominica and the Guarapiche River while attempting to cross from Trinidad to Santo Tomé<sup>24</sup> and when Vera y Ibarguen himself arrived in Santo Tomé, with the handful that did survive the crossing, he found the garrison itself was starving and quite unable to cope with even this moderate influx of newcomers (Simon:Ibid:I: Book 15:p.230). As a result of this debacle Vera y Ibarguen broke from Berrio's leadership and joined Vides on Margarita (BGB:BC:API:p.15).

Berrio, however, attempted one last time to unlock the secrets of El Dorado and dispatched a force under the leadership of Alvaro Jorge to further explore the Caroni River. All went well until Alvaro Jorge died<sup>25</sup> but then:

... the command was shared among the captains and each one, according to the number of his supporters, committed outrages, and they began to demand gold and to take the daughters and wives of the Indians, and ill-treated them before their children, consequently, their men broke up in disorder and confusion, and the Indians, losing all respect for them, killed over 350 men. (BGB:BC:API:p.15)

A few of the survivors escaped to join the pirate enclaves on the Caribbean coast, while Berrio and the remnant of his men struggled back to Trinidad by August 1596, leaving his son, Fernando, commanding a small force at Santo Tomé.

Within a year Antonio de Berrio was dead and his titles to the governorship of El Dorado passed to his son whose own exploits were to prove as controversial as those of his father.

Stagnation on the Orinoco, Initiative on the  
Guarapiche: 1597 - 1617

Following his father's death in 1597, Fernando de Berrio sought out and regained the allegiance of Vera y Iburguen (BGB:BC:API:p.15, Letter from Vera y Iburguen to the King, 27/10/1597). On Berrio's orders Vera y Iburguen now began to take action against a rising tide of Amerindian rebellion, due in part to the actions of Keymis and Raleigh, which was threatening the isolated outpost of Santo Tomé. The following extracts from a report submitted to the States-General of Holland in 1599 make clear the gravity of the situation for the Spanish:

... Santo Tomé, the Governor of which is Fernando de Berrio, Marquis of Weyana /Guayana/, the river Worinoque and the whole coast being still unconquered as far as the River Marignon or Amazonas, and they /the Spanish/ are about 60 horsemen and 100 musketeers strong, who daily attempt to conquer the auriferous Weyana, but cannot conquer the same by the forces already used or by any means of friendship, since the nation named Charibus /Caribis/ daily offer them hostile resistance with their arms, which are hand bows, and they shoot poisoned arrows therewith, ... so that the Spaniards greatly fear that Nation and its arrows ...

Of the Caroni River area it is said:

... that Spaniards also said that upwards there was much gold but that they dared not come there on account of war with the aforesaid Charibus ... a cacique of these Indians, taken prisoner by the Spaniards, said that he had spoken with a spirit, Wattopa, and the latter prophesied to him the liberation by the Dutch and the English. (BGB:BC:API:p.18)

Clearly this repetition of the Carib cacique's prophesy was designed to stress the opportunities for Dutch traders in this area while the active conflict between the Spanish and the Caribs on the Orinoco could only encourage the development of such a situation. The Dutch, as much as the English, as this report shows, were keenly aware of the necessity to cultivate Amerindian alliances, especially Carib, if they were to cancel out the advantages of the greater Spanish presence on Tierra Firme.

Accordingly, during the period 1597-1617 the Spanish at Santo Tomé made little headway against the hostile Carib settlements which surrounded

them and were powerless to prevent the development of tactical alliances between the Caribs on the one hand, and the Dutch, English and French, on the other<sup>26</sup>. In 1601 translations of Raleigh's 'Discovery of the Large and Beautiful Empire of Guayana' appeared all over Europe, exciting further interest in Manoa and El Dorado. In 1602 Henry IV of France authorised French explorers to seek out El Dorado and gave permission to found a colony at Cayenne and start trade with the Brazilian Indians, but, as yet, to make no approaches on the Orinoco (BL:ADD:4149). In 1604 the Dutch reconnoitred the Orinoco with the intention of founding a colony there, but a large Spanish force under Antonio de Mujica Buitron, Governor of the fort at Morequito, including some thirty musketeers and three hundred Indian auxiliaries (probably Arawaks and/or Parias), simultaneously raided plantations and the fort on the River Corentyn (Ojer:1966:p.576). The Dutch gave up the project. The following year, 1605, the Swedes made their first attempt to establish a base on the Orinoco and the will of one Joice Waus (H.H.Collection) dated 1606 makes it clear that an unnamed Englishman had already been living and growing tobacco on the Orinoco for some seventeen years.

At the same time Carib military pressure on Santo Tomé de Morequito was alleviated, to a degree, by political and military initiatives of the colonists in Cumaná, under the Governor, Suarez Coronel, with the Carib groups on the Mesa de Guanipa. From correspondence between Governor Coronel and his military aide, Captain Campos (AGI:SD:187·24/5/1605, 9/8/1605, 29/3/1605, 20/5/1605) it is clear that although the Spanish initially looked for a peace with the Caribs, full scale military conquest was finally accepted as the inevitable course.

Coronel estimated the Carib population in this area at around four thousand (see Chapter I), noting also that they were cannibals. As a diplomatic opening he suggested a visit to the principal Carib caciques; firstly to the cacique of the Guanipa Hills, one Aguaireba; secondly to a cacique named

Aruaca, dominant in the region near Santo Tomé and thirdly to the cacique of the Guarapiche Caribs, called by the Spanish 'Ingles'. A central feature of this diplomatic mission was to emphasise the peace between the Spanish and the Cumanagotos and explain the advantages that would accrue to the Caribs, should they choose to come to a similar arrangement. At the same time, Coronel makes it clear the Caribs are not to be under-estimated for they form an effective ring around Spanish settlements. However, he also points out that given the bad relations between Carib groups and their immediate neighbours, such as the Palenques and Cumanagotos, should the Caribs opt for war, the Spanish would not necessarily lack for Amerindian auxiliary troops.

Leaving in February, Captain Campos travelled south, along the Guarapiche and down to the Orinoco, but with little success. Turning west he reached the Aro River by the end of March, where negotiations also proved fruitless, and he contented himself with seizing a few Carib prisoners and then turning north east to try and make contact with Aguaraba on the Guere River. Here Campos was more successful. What arguments he used we do not know but he was allowed to fortify his position on the Guere and gave this fort the name of San Felipe de Austria.

Campos remained here until mid-1607 when he was recalled by Coronel to control a Cumanagoto rebellion on the Aragua River. Thus little, if anything, was achieved by Coronel and Campos. Undoubtedly valuable intelligence had been gathered on Carib dispositions but Spanish control of the area was no greater than before. Nonetheless Coronel was proved to be correct, albeit nearly a century later, on the strategic importance of an alliance with the Palenques and Cumanagotos in conquering the Caribs of the llanos.

For the miserable colony of Santo Tomé, reduced to only sixty persons (AGI:SD:179:14/1/1603), this was of little comfort. Indeed as far away as Hispaniola, Spanish colonies were coming under increasing pressure from Carib

groups in alliance with other colonial powers. Armadas of up to fifty pirogues were reported raiding plantations and settlements (AGI:SD:89:1606). The pearl fishers of Margarita were raided by groups of island and mainland Caribs who helped the black slaves, imported from the Congo, escape to the neighbouring islands, particularly St. Vincent (AGI:SD:180:15/6/1610, 20/6/1610).

Then, in 1611, the Governor of Santa Fe de Bogotá accused Fernando de Berrío of illegally trading with the Dutch. Fernando de Berrío claimed that the tobacco crop had been seized by a force of over 1,000 Dutch troops but Sancho de Alquiza, sent to replace Berrío as governor of Trinidad and the Orinoco, managed to extract confessions from the planters of Trinidad that they had traded with the Dutch, under Berrío's influence, for slaves and tobacco.

Faced with this evidence Berrío claimed, no doubt with a degree of justification, that such a trade was vital to the survival of the colony, but he was fined and deprived of office in perpetuity. Alquiza then forbade the planting of tobacco for the year 1612-3 in order to ensure that there was no further barter with the Dutch or English. Juan Tostados and Antonio de Moxica were appointed to enforce this policy on the Orinoco and Trinidad (BGB:BC:API: pp.28-9, Letters of Sancho de Alquiza to the King:11/2/1612, 13/6/1612, 14/6/1612).

Thus such an accusation was undoubtedly well founded, given the isolated and desperate position of the colony of Santo Tomé, but was also an expression of the low morale among the colonists, due to the stagnation of the Spanish imperialist effort on the Orinoco. In the same year Sancho de Alquiza arrived on the Orinoco to take office and Berrío was imprisoned. Under Alquiza a war footing was once again assumed and the Dutch settlements on the Corentyn and English forts on the Barima and Mazaruni, established by Keymis, were destroyed (BGB:BC:API:p.28).

Information gathered in the course of these raids (AGI:SD:179: 9/12/1614) indicates that the English had allied themselves with the Caribs in

their conflict with the Arawaks, as had the Dutch. It was reported that the Dutch and Caribs were jointly manning a fort on the Essequibo which was fitted with swivel guns and contained a garrison of some thirty Dutch musketeers and three hundred Caribs. In view of this it is not surprising that the possibility of an alliance with the Arawaks of this area, much as had been achieved at the beginning of the fifteenth century in the Cumaná area, was mooted. Indeed a report prepared for the Governor of Cumaná (AGI:SD:187:7/6/1615) on arms and munitions lost to the Caribs and their allies in raids, would indicate that such an alliance might prove highly desirable. For the year 1614/5, the following arms are said to have fallen into the hands of the Caribs; 25 muskets, 25 bayonets, 70 arquebuses, 25 pikes, 12 arquebus ball moulds, 6 musket ball moulds, 4,000 arquebus balls, 1,000 musket balls and various swords, knives and pieces of armour. A raiding party equipped with even a portion of these weapons would prove a formidable force.

Indeed the Spanish appeared powerless to do little more than defend their settlements and launch counter-raids against the intrusive colonies of the Dutch and English<sup>27</sup>. The following extract is from a memorandum (BGB:BC:API:p.35) dated 7/10/1614, on the condition of the Island of Trinidad and of Guayana:

... in the country of the friendly Indians the Araucas /Arawaks/, not far from Margarita on the coast of the mainland, some English had settled with favour of the Caribs, with the intention of cultivating tobacco. He /Vargas, Governor of Margarita/ begs leave of His Majesty to allow him to leave a Lieutenant in his place while he goes to subdue the Caribs and drive the English from their settlement.

The memorandum continues saying that the Lieutenant of Morequito is also asking for assistance in ejecting Carib-supported English settlements at the mouth of the Orinoco whose colonists are 'stealing' friendly Indians to work their plantations. Such assistance was received, and on the 30th May 1614, Spanish troops also succeeded in destroying the Dutch/Carib fort on the Corentyn (BGB:BC:API:p.31).

The Defeat of Raleigh and the Death of  
Fernando de Berrio: 1617 - 1629

By the beginning of 1616 these posts were re-established and in 1617 Walter Raleigh returned with a large military force and installed himself, once again, on Trinidad. Leaving Plymouth in August with seven ships and nearly one thousand men he reached Trinidad on the 4th December. Almost immediately he despatched Keymis and his son, also Walter, to enter the Orinoco via the Manamo Channel.

On the night of the 1st January 1618, Keymis and the young Raleigh reached Santo Tomé, besieged and successfully took it, with a force of 10 ships, 500 troops and the aid of the local Guayanos, killing the Governor of Guayana, Diego Palomeque de Acuna. Wat Raleigh was also killed. A small group of Spaniards managed to escape this deadly attack and under two young Captains, Jeronimo de Grados and Juan de Lezana, took refuge on the left bank of the Caroni.

After sixteen days Keymis stripped Morequito of its guns and took his troops up river as far as Cabruta where he established friendly relations with Caribs trading there (BL:Cotton Titus B:VIII). However, many of this party fell ill and found it beyond their abilities to repair and hold Santo Tomé de Morequito for Juan de Lezana had meanwhile been preparing a counter-attack:

... and he collected and closely united 60 Indians, with their arms ... and with them and 24 soldiers, after 26 days, he attacked the enemy in the town from different parts from midnight to daylight, and he killed many of their people ... on account of which they soon embarked leaving the city, church and monastries burned to their foundations and carrying away all that was in it and having excited and raised all the native Indians in rebellion, at their pleasure, who dwell on the sea coast, Aruacas, Chaguanas and Caribs of that province, who renounced obedience to S.M. /your Majesty/. (BGB:BC: API:p.49)

Keymis arrived back in Trinidad on the 20th January and was not well received.

Indeed the whole of Raleigh's last adventure was a debacle. The English crown was not pleased with the tension that Raleigh's killing of so high a Spanish official as Acuna caused and he was ordered home to imprisonment in the Tower (Hemming:1978b:p.178).

The young Captain Grados, received a battlefield promotion to become the new Sub-Governor of Santo Tomé. Among his first actions was the organisation of a squad of troops to capture Caribs, for slaves, on the Essequibo and Barima Rivers. However, this was easier to order than to execute and six soldiers lost their lives, Grados was captured and no Caribs were taken. (AGI:SD:178:26/11/1618)

Not surprisingly Grados was replaced by Juan de Lezana who was despatched from Cumaná with reinforcements and orders to rebuild the fort at Morequito. Fernando de Berrio's 'perpetual' exclusion from office was also lifted and he returned to the Orinoco as Governor of Trinidad, Guayana and El Dorado.

In a report to the Council of the Indies, titled 'Sobre Castigo de Los Caribes' (AGI:SD:179:1618), the Spanish position and successes for this campaign are summarised. It is estimated that the Carib population of Tierra Firme was about thirty thousand, and, both on account of their attacks on Spanish settlements and their 'cannibalism', their immediate enslavement is recommended. Moreover it is noted that such attacks are the work of island-based Caribs as well as those of Tierra Firme, and that often these different groups band together. Accordingly the Caribs of Dominica and St. Vincent as well as those of the Orinoco were raided, causing 'many deaths amongst the enemy'. One example in particular is cited of an attack on a Carib village somewhere on the Orinoco. In this attack it was claimed that twenty five Caribs were killed and 'many'enslaved. The advantages of a Dutch alliance for Carib groups, bringing with it access to European weapons, can easily be appreciated.

For the Dutch it was clear that a weak and isolated Spanish presence would certainly be forced to come to some short term accommodation with Dutch traders in order to survive. Understanding this, Berrio, when he returned to Santo Tomé in 1619, immediately began pursuing the realistic policy of free trade with the Dutch, for which he had been cashiered six years previously. Such realism allowed the small Spanish colony to survive and trade a little tobacco, wood and dyes. These activities then might go hand-in-hand with the immediate task of crushing Carib independence, which was expressed most forcibly by an assault on Santo Tomé in August of that year (AGI:SD:177:16/9/1619).

In reply Berrio managed to secure reinforcements from Cumaná and organised an expedition to the Barima to 'punish' the Caribs there for this latest outrage and the capture of Captain Grados the previous year. However, English pirates on the mouth of the Orinoco captured all but six of these troops. The six managing to flee back to Santo Tomé (AGI:SD:177:16/9/1619).

So also the venture of Berrio in constructing a fort on Trinidad, Punta de Galera, to control shipping was unsuccessful. Continuous attacks by the English and Caribs from the Guarapiche destroyed it (AGI:SD:179:23/11/1619).

For the next ten years, until his death in 1629 at the Atures Rapids, Berrio struggled to maintain Spanish presence on the Orinoco. However, supply ships rarely visited this obscure outpost of Empire and trade with the Dutch was the only lifeline for the beleaguered colonists. This weakness was also apparent to the Dutch. In 1624 a 'fact finding' expedition, commissioned by the West India Company reported:

It /the Colony Essequibo/ is inhabited by Caribs and Arawaks. The Spaniards of Santo Tomé formally traded there, but now they dare not go there. (BGB:BC:AP:p.20)

But the Spanish were not passive in this situation and actively sought alliance with other Amerindian groups in order to neutralise the Carib threat. Information prepared for Berrio, just prior to his death, by Captain Juan de

Lacaure, indicates that an Arawak cacique from Trinidad was proving amenable in this regard. This cacique, Aramaya, had just been baptised and expressed strong anti-Carib emotions (AGI:SD:179:11/4/1629). However, no record has been found of what practical aid, if any, he gave the Spaniards.

Amnesty on the Orinoco, Conflict on the  
Guarapiche: 1629 - 1658

For the Spanish, the death of Fernando de Berrio was the start of a decade of disaster. In 1629 the new Governor of Santo Tomé, Luis de Monsalve, was surprised by a Dutch expedition, sent to make a precise survey of the geography of the Orinoco and of Spanish positions there. Arriving before the fort of Morequito, panic apparently struck the garrison and colonists who deserted the fort, church, and surrounding plantations. Seizing this opportunity the Dutch reinforced with Carib auxiliaries from the Essequibo who, in conjunction with elements from the Caroni burnt Santo Tomé and captured many slaves on the return journey to Essequibo. The following is an extract from a report by the Marquis de Sofraga to the King of Spain, made in July 1631, after an investigation of this debacle:

... In the year 1629 a squadron of nine ships of English and Dutch enemies arrived at the port, and, landing a number of men, endeavoured to seize the said city /Santo Tomé/ ... after this squadron had departed, other squadrons of corsairs came and settled and fortified themselves in the arms and creeks of the River Orinoco, and in an island they called Tobago, they joined in this with Carib Indians who inhabit those coasts ... (BGB:BC:API:p.70)

Santo Tomé was not reoccupied until 1631 when Monsalve returned from Margarita with fifty men-at-arms under Captain Campos, supplied by the Audiencia de Santa Fe de Bogotá. It was decided at this point not to rebuild the fort on the same site but to move it closer to the mouth of the Caroni to a site named Usupamo but this project was not begun until 1637 (AGI:SD:180:1633).

Monsalve also immediately forbade all trade with the Dutch and so lost his last vestige of support as this commerce, forbidden or otherwise, was vital to the success of the Spanish tobacco growing colonists. Accordingly, in 1634, he was replaced by Cristobal de Arana, as Governor. However, the isolation and powerlessness into which Spanish settlements on the Orinoco had fallen is perhaps best illustrated by a memorandum, entitled 'The Powers of the Dutch in the West Indies' (BGB:BC:API:p.77, 19/11/1637). It is said of the Dutch that:

... the Indians embrace their company because they imitate the barbarity of their lives and allow them to enjoy full liberty without the constraint of tributes, labour or the sweet yoke of the Gospel, heavy in their opinion.

The author, Juan Desotogruen, goes on to point out that Dutch traders can easily undercut the Spanish through their avoidance of excise and duty. Moreover, despite the fact that the Spanish had some 50 - 60,000 head of cattle in Guayana at this time, '... much coveted by the Dutch', there were only some 60 Spaniards and 4,000 friendly Amerindians to guard them.

In 1637, the anti-Spanish forces took the offensive once again. On April 11th the corporation of Santo Tomé sent the following warning to the Royal Council of Justice at Santo Domingo:

The forces of the enemy have increased in this Government /i.e. Guayana/ on the mainland, with new settlements among the Carib and Aruac nations, who are allied with them ... they have recently settled in the River Amavero /Amacuro/, which is at the mouth of this River Orinoco, and it is a province of four thousand Indians of the Carib nation who are pirates and eaters of human flesh. (BGB:BC:API:p.109)

In July the attack came, led by the Dutch with a large contingent of Caribs from the Essequibo and Caroni Rivers, Santo Tomé de Morequito was utterly destroyed and the Governor, Escobar, and a few survivors took refuge in the mountains of the Sierra Imataca. Miguel de Morillas, one of the commanders of the Santo Tomé garrison described the attack:

... having remained in /Santo Tomé/ with some few of the inhabitants ... on the said day of Magdelene /22nd July/ at 4 o'clock in the morning, the Dutch enemy, with a number of Carib Indians and other tribes, attacked the said place and burned the houses and plundered all that remained there. (BGB:BC:API:p.90, 4/12/1637)

Then in December came further disaster:

... the Dutch and the Indian tribes of Aruacs, Caribs, Tibetives and Nepuyos came in great numbers to this island of Trinidad, making their entrance by the Port and River Caroni and having taken prisoner the watchman set fire to the fort. We kept watch at the mouth of the river ...  
(BGB:BC:API:p.88)

Not since the days of Raleigh had the Spanish been so decisively driven from Guayana.

In the following year, 1638, an expeditionary force<sup>28</sup> made contact with Escobar who withdrew to Cabruta, near the confluence of the Apure and Orinoco, and fortified a position there. The expeditionary force under Diego Ruiz Maldonado, sent from Santa Fe de Bogotá, and following the same route down the Meta River that Antonio de Berrio had pioneered, took this opportunity to make a reconnaissance in force of the Orinoco region; the following extracts are from the report he made on his return:

There are on these banks (near the mouth of the Orinoco) large forests of good timber useful for ship building. The Chaguana Indians dwell about these territories where they have a village of about one thousand able bodied men and another village of Tivitives, and on this bank the village of Guayanos is also who ... have in all invasions ... that have taken place by the Lutherans, rendered succour. On the other side of the river is the town of Aruacs, a very powerful people and all enemies of the Caribs and friends of the Spaniards ... They /the Caribs/ all trade and traffic with the Dutch and others of other nations in bartering striped wood, yellow and murrey coloured, and planks of different kinds of wood, annotto, oil of Curucaí, dragons-blood and other spices in exchange for hatchets, machetes, beads and knives. And the Caribs sell the Lutherans the Indian women they steal from the villages, and thereby are in their service; and they also barter pirogues for river travel and provisions. (BGB:BC:API:p.119)

Maldonado goes on to propose that Guayana and Trinidad ought to be under the ecclesiastical authority of Caracas, not Puerto Rico, for:

To ascend from Margarita, pirogues and an escort of soldiers are necessary for Caribs are met with at every creek, and therefore, with that danger, neither the Bishop dare undertake the journey, nor will the priests go up. (Ibid:p.119)

He considers the Carib 'problem' in greater detail:

... and between this settlement /Cabruta/ and the city /Caracas/ the Indians existing between these rivers /Guarico and Apure/ will become domesticated, and on finding therein security from the Caribs they will serve with goodwill, and a hindrance will be put, so that these cruel wolves may not ascend the river to carry on the cruelties referred to, and to drive away the Caribs that are settling in the plains of San Sebastian, for some of the people, through fear of them have gone to Cumanagoto territory.

for:

... these Caribs, who are from the mouth of the Orinoco to the windward are united with the heretics who are in a fort in the mouth of the River Amacuro, to windward of the Orinoco twenty leagues, and at thirty leagues more is the fortress of Essequibo and Berbice ... and from those places referred to there go forth every year a number of pirogues of Caribs to murder and rob along the entire coast during the Summer, which is the most favourable time to do so ... And at this time war must be made upon them ... and granting to them /the soldiers/ the Caribs that they apprehend for slaves, on the grounds that they are such cruel butchers of human flesh ... and as they are sacrilegious from the many deaths of friars and other priests they have caused. And in these past days, Father Sedeño the Superior, while going in a pirogue from the Cumanagotos to Cumaná, was carried away with all the others, and in an island before reaching Paria, they were murdered and eaten. (Ibid:p.120)

At the beginning of 1639 Escobar rebuilt Santo Tomé<sup>29</sup> with the aid of Maldonado's reinforcements but in July a combined Dutch/Carib force from the Essequibo attacked the new site of Usupamo killing eleven Spaniards and laying waste to the surrounding farms and plantations (AGI:SD:86:8/7/1639). The attack was described in a letter from the city council of Santo Tomé to the King:

... the fleet arrived an hour before daybreak, so unexpectedly because they came in pirogues ... so that when they went to take arms the whole town had already been surrounded and the Flemings were master of the guardhouse ... It was a miracle that the Governor escaped and the rest were left badly wounded ... the priest and the sacerdote were the first who fell under the weapons and arrows, and thus those savages and heretics took away the reliquary with its tabernacle ...<sup>30</sup>  
(BGB:BC:API:p.102)

Realising the fragility of his hold on the Orinoco, Escobar then acted with consummate realism. Opening negotiations with the Caribs of the Caura he proposed that they jointly raid a neighbouring Amerindian group, on

the River Pao, for slaves (AGI:SD:86:17/8/1639). To this the Caura Caribs agreed and from this developed a decade and a half of peace between these Carib groups and the Spanish, an alliance which functioned to neutralise that of the Dutch with the Caribs of the Essequibo.

However, during this same period the colonists of Cumaná were adopting a much more hostile stance to both the Caribs of the Mesa de Guanipa and Guarapiche and the Cumanagotos to the north west. Not starved of resources by the Crown, and thus unencumbered by the necessity to rely on trade with the Dutch, in this area Spanish colonialism was given free reign. The practical meaning of this was the violent, armed conquest under the iron hand of Juan de Orpin, 'conquistador' par excellence.

Two attempts had been made in the sixteenth century to carry out similar campaigns to that of Orpin, one by GarcíaGonzalez in 1579 and another by Andres Cobos in 1585, but neither was successful. However, Orpin, accompanied by eighty soldiers and heavy artillery (AGI:SD:623·1639) made rapid headway against the Cumanagotos between 1635 and 1639, who suffered very heavy casualties due to the use of this artillery. Moreover Orpin used the military momentum built up by his savagery against the Cumanagotos to lead a series of armed entradas against the 'cannibals' of the Guanipa and Guarapiche (AGI:SD:823·1634·7/5/1635, 1639) killing over two hundred and taking many more as slaves, to be shipped to Margarita and Trinidad (AGI:SD:623·1639).

This campaign definitively established Spanish presence in Cumaná and Barcelona but in turn created solid Carib resistance to further Spanish encroachment. As we shall see it is from this period that the French of the Lesser Antilles make great advances in forming an alliance with the Caribs of the Guanipa and Guarapiche.

However, before considering French initiatives among the Caribs of this area it will be well to examine the 'peace' that had been established between the Spanish and Caribs of the Orinoco.

Although Governor Escobar had been to the fore in developing an amnesty with the Carib groups of the Caura and middle Orinoco, this, of course, did nothing to halt the raiding of the Dutch and Caribs from Essequibo (AGI:SD:870:16/9/1640). Moreover, the Berrío family were agitating for removal of Escobar on the grounds that he had used the reinforcements supplied by the Audiencia of Santa Fe for personal profit. Soldiers returning from the Orinoco, whether at the instigation of the Berrío family or not is unknown, accused Escobar of slave taking on the Orinoco, selling the captives to the pearl fisheries of Margarita and Cubagua. Accusations that were justified in view of his joint action with the Caribs in 1639. As a result, Mendoza de Berrío was appointed Governor of Santo Tomé in 1641 and took possession of the fort with reinforcements of one hundred soldiers. In 1642 the title 'Governor of Trinidad, Guayana and El Dorado' formally passed to Martín de Mendoza la Hoz y Berrío and he completely refurbished the fort of Usupamo.

In the same year he also reinforced the Carib detente by the baptism of one of the most important caciques of the Orinoco, Maguráe, whom he also dubbed 'Don Martín, General' (Caravajal:1648.p.37). This peace lasted until the death of Berrío in 1658.

Moreover in 1649 Spain and Holland had signed the Peace of Westphalia by which Spain, among other things, accepted Dutch colonies in Guayana. Accordingly the threat of Carib raiding inspired by the Dutch was temporarily lifted and Mendoza y Berrío further consolidated the Spanish presence on the Orinoco by fortifying a position at Moitaco, on the other bank to the large Carib settlement at the mouth of the River Pao. To this the Caribs made no resistance.

For the next decade, until 1658, when the Dutch broke the Peace of Westphalia by raiding Santo Tomé and the Caribs resumed hostilities after Berrío's death, the Orinoco experienced a period of relative calm.

Realistically enough Berrio allowed a free trade with the Dutch throughout this period and, indeed, from the moment that it was forbidden by the new Governor Pedro Viedma, in 1658, Spanish control of the Orinoco deteriorated once again.

However, with the Orinoco secured for the moment, the Spanish in Cumaná, Trinidad and the Orinoco felt able to continue the conquest of the Guarapiche and Guanipa Caribs where Juan de Orpin had left it in the 1640's. Unfortunately, they found that the French had already established themselves as allies to these Carib communities.

#### Dutch and French Enclaves in the 17th century

From the preceding discussion it is clear that the intrusion of foreign powers, most dramatically by the English under Walter Raleigh, but more consistently by the Dutch West India Company, was a crucial factor in the success or failure of the development of Spanish colonisation of the Orinoco and its llanos up to the mid-17th century and, indeed, the rest of this period.

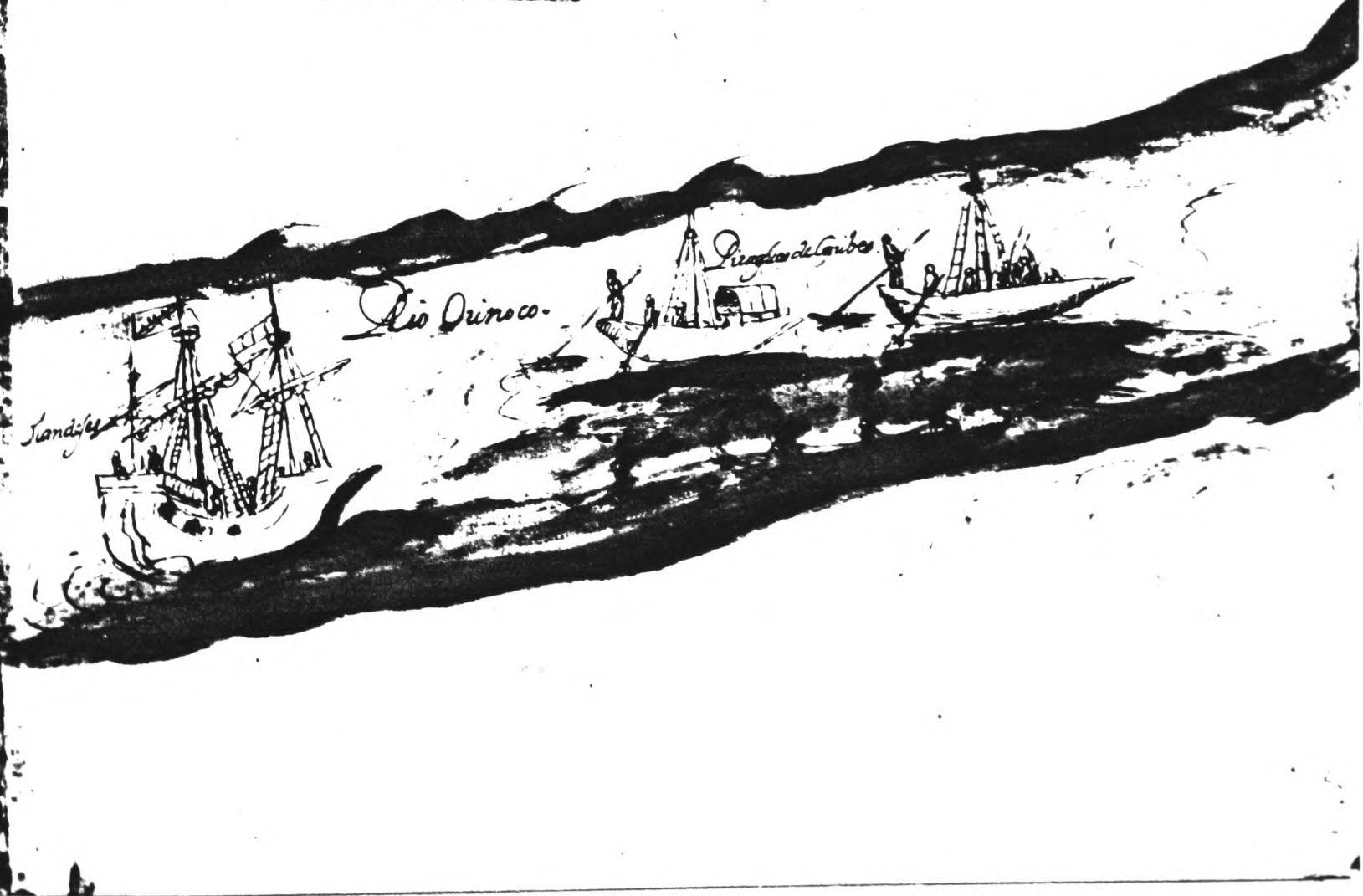
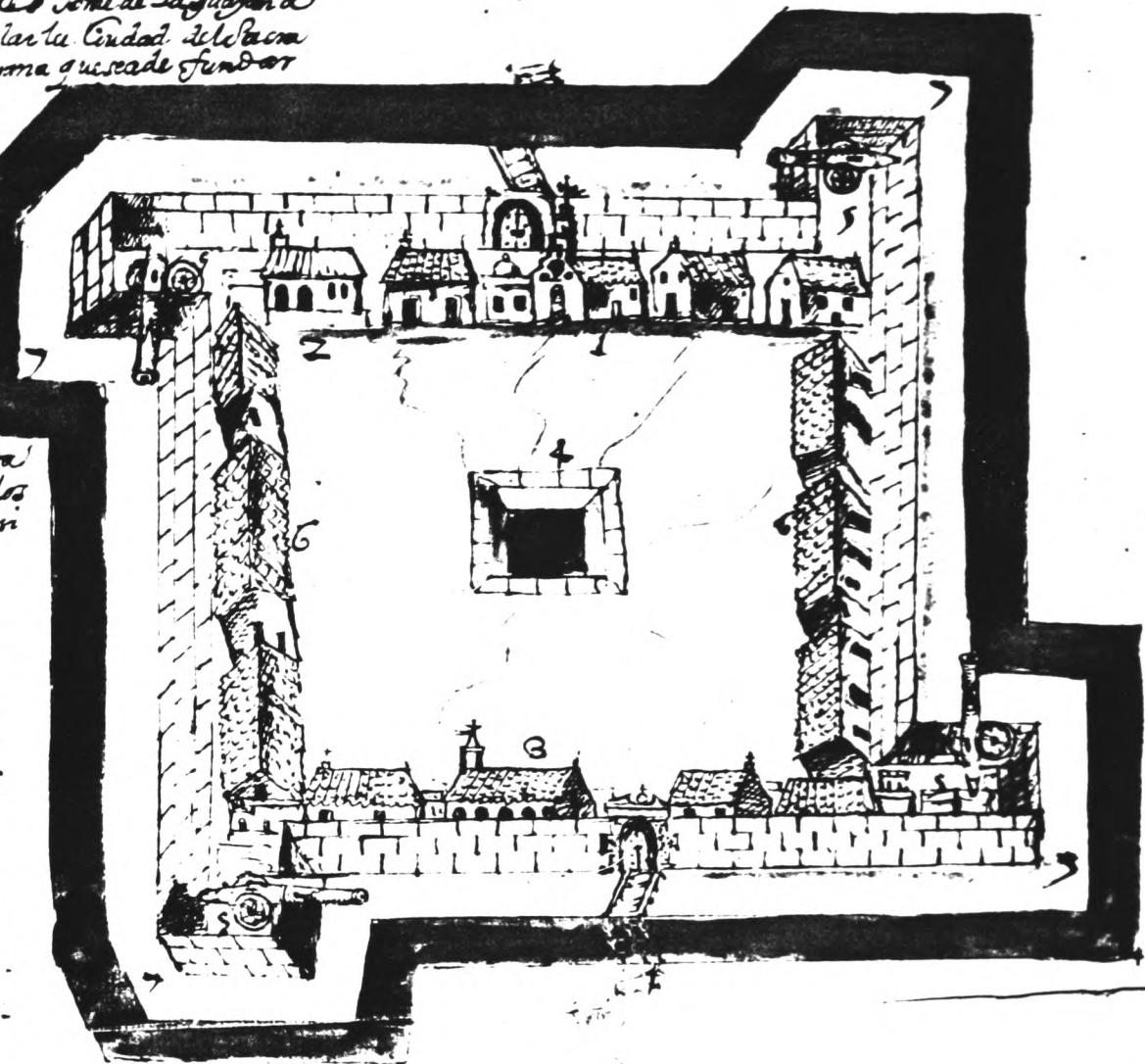
So too the emerging significance of Carib groups, as an enduring source of resistance to the Spanish domination of the Amerindians of this area, must be understood in the context of their links with the Dutch, French and, to a lesser extent, English traders that had penetrated this region. Accordingly, the focus of this section will be on the development of the Dutch colony of Essequibo and the background to French efforts to establish a bridgehead on Tierra Firme among the Caribs of the Guarapiche, from their bases on the Lesser Antilles.

As has already been mentioned, after the virtual abandonment of the Pearl Islands by the Spanish in the 1540's the remnant population of Margarita looked to the many privateers and contrabandistas who were

Planta de la Ciudad de Don  
 o se ora sede intitular la Ciudad de la Com  
 munito de la Guayma que sede fundar

de tierra y de agua  
 con baluarte y cañonada  
 y la vivienda de los  
 vecinos conien de  
 fuera de la muralla  
 las huertas y semidos  
 de finca para  
 el en de la ciudad  
 y huertos que  
 a cada lado de  
 las calles de  
 Guayma y lo que queda  
 de la de la ciudad en los  
 costados y en medio  
 orientales.

- 1. Iglesia
- 2. Casa del Gobernador
- 3. Casa de la Pólvora
- 4. Huerta de Agua
- 5. Saluantes
- 6. Casas de los vecinos
- 7. Puente de la ciudad a otra
- 8. Puente de la ciudad a otra
- 9. Puente de la ciudad a otra
- 10. Puente de la ciudad a otra



operating in the Caribbean at this time to supply themselves with an alternative living to the overexploited pearl-beds. For example, it is known that the notorious English privateer, John Hawkins, often used Margarita as a base for re-supply (Alexander:1958·p.131). Moreover, the policy of the Spanish Crown towards its colonists in this area, of refusing licences to slave or trade with the Guayana Amerindians, could only help to reinforce this trend (see above p.132).

It was into this economic and political vacuum that Dutch trading ships sailed at the end of the 16th century and so laid a basis for the first attempts to found a permanent settlement in this region in the beginning of the 17th century. However, neither the mechanics of Dutch trading, nor their attitudes and policy towards the Spanish and Amerindians can be fully understood without some reference to the European situation. Thus, from the global standpoint, the struggle of the Spanish and Dutch in the New World was just one expression of an enmity and rivalry that was being carried on both in Europe and throughout the entire colonial world, until the end of the 17th century (Sluiter:1948·p.165).

By 1594 Spain had lost the initiative in its war against the rebels in the Netherlands<sup>31</sup> and Dutch vessels, with the English who had defeated the great Spanish Armada of 1588, controlled the entire Channel and North Sea. However, the Dutch were heavily dependent on the carrying trade between Iberia and northern Europe and were keenly aware that a sudden change of policy on the part of the Spanish Crown, which was in turn dependent on the import of such strategic materials as grain, timber and naval stores from northern Europe and Scandinavia, might spell financial disaster. Thus, although:

This trade in the midst of war was a matter of necessity rather than choice on both sides.<sup>32</sup> (Sluiter:Ibid·p.167)

towards the end of the 16th century Dutch shipping experienced increasing

confiscations at Iberian ports, accelerating the search for alternative markets overseas.

It was under these conditions, and as licensed traders for the Portuguese, that the Dutch first came to the New World, appearing off Brazil in 1587. From this time more and more Dutch vessels entered the Spanish colonial world, often without licences, seeking out new sources of supply to replace the highly uncertain Iberian markets (Sluiter:Ibid:pp.168-71).

In the Caribbean and Guayana area the Dutch found those commodities that they had traditionally obtained from the Iberia, most notably wine, wool, fruits, sugar, spices, dyes, bullion, tobacco and, particularly on the north Venezuelan coast, salt, which the Spanish had never exploited to any great degree. Moreover, as has been emphasised, the Dutch found that they were often very welcome among the neglected communities of the area. Sluiter writes:

The reception that some of the Spaniards of Cumaná gave to these pioneer Dutch smugglers on Tierra Firme may be inferred from the report to the Crown that Lucas Fajardo, the owner of an estancia a league and a half west of Cumaná, on the Bordonos River, not only fêted Raleigh /after his capture of Trinidad in 1595/ but that his ranch was the place most of the foreigners go to to unload, and there hold public market and sell their goods as if they were in their own land. (1948·p.172)

More than any other commodity it was salt, from the vast natural pans on the Araya peninsula<sup>33</sup>, that attracted a great influx of Dutch traders into this area at the end of the 16th century. The volume of these sailings is not known before 1600, when statistics were first kept, but in May of that year around 75 Dutch ships visited the salt-pans. Subsequently, from figures compiled by the Governor of Cumaná at this time, Diego Suarez de Amaya, it is known that during the years 1600-5 a minimum of 611 salt ships and 55 contrabandistas came to this region. This represents something like 10 a month for the entire period or a tonnage of around 34,000<sup>34</sup> (Sluiter·Ibid·p.177).

This intense exploitation of the salt pans by the Dutch knocked the bottom out of salt prices in the Iberian market and, not for the first time, made a nonsense out of Spanish claims to a monopoly of trade with the New World. Although various counter-measures were continuously proposed throughout the 17th century, the most essential element, the support of the local population, was missing and so the grandiose schemes for the flooding of the pans and even the more realistic enterprises, such as the building of a fort, were never carried through in their entirety (Ojer:undated pp.30-1).

Although various smuggling centres, most notably Nueva Ecija de los Cumanagotos<sup>35</sup>, were depopulated in an attempt to try and break up this close relationship that had developed between the Spanish colonists and the Dutch traders, the effect was only temporary and new havens for the contrabandistas soon sprung up at other points on the coast.

As we have seen the Crown was similarly unsuccessful in its attempts to hinder such developments on the Orinoco, despite the appointment of a series of Governors who were prepared to be ruthless with the foreign interlopers or who were less attached to the local vecinos. The appointment of Sancho de Alquiza as Governor of the Orinoco in 1611 (see above p.141) is a good example of this policy, though the fact that Fernando de Berrio was only briefly deprived of office for his encouragement of trade with the Dutch is indicative of the economic necessities which governed the existence of Spanish settlement on the Orinoco (see also footnote 32).

Following the agreement of the Twelve Years Truce in 1608<sup>36</sup> by Spain and the Netherlands the intensity of conflict in this area was lessened to a degree as the old Iberian markets re-opened to the Dutch. Nonetheless the door to the New World had been definitively opened to the foreigners:

... the ultimate significance ... of the heavy pressure maintained by the Dutch in the colonial world throughout the first half of the 17th century is that it provided a shield behind which, in the Guianas, Lesser Antilles and North America, not only the Dutch but also the English and French were able to permanently settle. (Sluiter: 1948:p.196).

For their part the Dutch were quick to appreciate the possibilities of the situation that had developed due to this burgeoning salt trade and which had brought so many Dutch vessels in to the Venezuela-Guayana area each year. In 1599 a petition was submitted to the States-General of the United Provinces concerning the coast of Guayana:

This province being the most suitable and best situated place in America in which to establish an arsenal and sedem belli where the war could easily feed itself or be carried on or be supported by all kinds of foreign nations - of English, French, Liegois, Germans, Austrians, Swedes, Danes, etc. ... (BGB:BC:API:p.22)

There has, of course, been literally volumes of debate as to the dates of the first establishment made by the Dutch in Guayana and one of the most important sources to emerge on this question is a document written in 1667 by a Major John Scott describing the various settlements of the Dutch in this area during the early 17th century (BL:Sloane:3662). Although the credibility of this source has been challenged<sup>37</sup>, following Edmundson (1901), the evidence of Scott's testimony will be accepted here.

Scott lists the various colonies of the Dutch and other nations as they were founded<sup>38</sup>. He says that the first settlement of the Dutch on the Essequibo River was made in 1616 by a Captain Groenewagen, who died in 1664 aged 83 years, having been the Governor of this colony for the intervening 48 years. Following this, says Scott, there were a number of attempts to settle Tobago and the Pomeroun River. In 1637 the first of these expeditions landed on Tobago, under the Dutchman Jan de Moor (see also BGB:BC:API:p.105 - letter of Governor Escobar). However, it appears that they were driven out by the raids of the Spanish from Trinidad and the Caribs from St. Vincent<sup>39</sup>.

Also around this time there were two attempts to settle the Pomeroun River, one by the Duke of Corland in 1639 and another by a Captain Marshall, on the orders of the Earl of Warwick, in 1642. Scott says that the first of these faltered because:

These people being new hands, as they phrase them in these parts, and having no experienced planters in their colony, and people that came from so far northward and not any amongst them that knew what was food or Physic in their proper seasons did occasion their mouldering to nothing ...

and that the second attempt collapsed because they:

... were often disturbed by the Caribees and at length, for want of supplies were forced to quit and went to Surinam. (Ibid)

Although it is, perhaps, impossible to resolve disputes as to the precise dates of Dutch colonisation, since it is always a matter of judgement as to the credibility one gives a particular source, it is nonetheless clear that Dutch shipping had been active in Guayanese waters for a sufficient length of time for a considerable knowledge of the geography and inhabitants of the area to have been gained and for this type of settlement to have been attempted<sup>40</sup>. Spanish sources themselves also give us some confirmation that the Dutch were probably settling this area of the Guayana coast by the second decade of the 17th century and certainly by the third.

Thus, for example, Dutch settlement of the Corentyn River was sufficiently advanced by 1614 to have warranted the dispatch of a special Spanish expeditionary force to destroy the plantations and fort that were sited at the river's mouth. Notably the local Caribs were prepared to come to the aid of the Dutch, suggesting that the settlement was already some years old (BGB:BC:API:p.31).

On the Essequibo River itself it will be remembered (see above p.144) that the acting-Governor of Santo Tomé, Geronimo de Grados, was taken prisoner by the Dutch while raiding on the Essequibo River in 1618 (BGB:BC:API:p.24, AGI:SD:178:26/11/1618). From these events it might be inferred that some kind of continuous, if not permanent, Dutch presence had been established here. Edmundson, in his review of such contextual evidence, summarises the position thus:

The presence, then, of a settlement of Kykoveral<sup>41</sup>, eight years before 1624, under private auspices, can scarcely admit of reasonable doubt ... (1901, p.674)

The 'official' settlement of the Dutch in Guayana may be dated from 1621 when the States General of the United Provinces granted a charter to the Dutch West India Company (BGB:BC:API:p.44). By 1628 colonisation of the Essequibo was well under way and the Dutch West India Company issued a series of detailed regulations, in that year, to govern the activities of the settlers in all areas of their life, including trade, planting and the defence of the colony (BGB:BC:API:p.65). Certainly by this date the Dutch must have been at least as well established in the region as the Spanish since they were able to attack and overrun the Spanish outpost of Santo Tomé in the following year (see above p.146).

Broadly the Dutch policy towards the Spanish throughout this period on the Orinoco was to wage a covert war in conjunction with overt trade. We have already seen the extent to which the ambiguities of this situation affected the colonists of Santo Tomé, who were obliged to carry on this illicit trade due to the neglect of their government. Thus, in stark contrast to Santo Tomé, 2 - 4 Dutch provisioning ships visited Kykoveral every year (BGB:BC:API:p.90).

Nonetheless, until the 1660's, after the collapse of the Dutch West India Company's Brazilian enclave, Essequibo was not the focus of the greatest Dutch efforts. Accordingly economic activity centred on the trade with the Amerindians for dyes and woods and on the raiding of Spanish settlements and shipping, particularly the annual treasure fleet (see Hemming: 1978a:chap.5).

The success of this strategy may be gauged from the alarm it created among the Spanish authorities. For example, after the Dutch from Essequibo had overrun Santo Tomé for a second time, in 1637, the Governor, Diego de Escobar wrote:

I find myself in this government with the enemy so near and powerful that every day we are obliged to walk around armed ... and the people are so exhausted and badly clothed that

I fear the issue will be bad ... /through trading/ they hold all this country on their side and being thus united /with the Amerindians/ and in particular the Caribs, who are in great numbers, ships of war from Holland enter here ... /though/ it is seven years since even a barque from any part came here. (BGB:BC:API:p.101)

Indeed it appears that, on account of the 'good understanding' between the Dutch and the Amerindians generally, the Dutch had had very accurate intelligence on the defenses of Santo Tomé prior to this attack:

... from the Indians, whom we regarded as friends, but who were much more devoted to them than to us ...  
(BGB:BC:API:p.114)

The origin and character of the Dutch-Carib alliance will be considered more fully below (see chap.IV) but it should be emphasised here that it was this ability of the Dutch to cultivate the amity of the Amerindians through their trading activities that gave them the power and influence to hold off and even, as in the above example, directly challenge the Spanish domination of Guayana. Indeed, as will become clearer below, once the Spanish missionaries were able to interrupt the flow of Dutch goods among the Amerindians of the Orinoco both Dutch and Carib influence declined accordingly, though not without fierce opposition on the part of the latter (see following chapter).

By the second half of the 17th century, then, the Dutch were firmly established in Guayana<sup>42</sup>, despite the efforts of various European powers to dislodge them, and the planting of sugar, which was to prove the real engine of prosperity in the colony of Essequibo, had begun (Menezes:1973:p.3). Nonetheless trade with the Amerindians continued and in particular that in red slaves with the Caribs, which expanded quickly as the ready profits of such activities gave fuel to inter-tribal disputes (see chap.V). The neglect of the Orinoco by the Spanish Crown, against which successive Governors had issued dire warnings, had thus finally permitted the 'rebel Flemings' to share in the riches of the New World.

Four years after the foundation of the Dutch West India Company, in 1625, the French had established the Compagnie des Isles Amerique. Although the activities of the French in the area of the northern llanos, especially on the Guarapiche River, encouraged the Amerindians of the area (see below) to resist Spanish attempts to 'pacify' them, their overall effect on the struggle between the Spanish and the Caribs in Venezuela was of far less importance than that of the Dutch. Thus after various abortive attempts to establish a colony on the Guarapiche itself, between the 1650's and 1670's, no further resources were committed to this region but were directed to the plantations of Cayenne and the Antilles (see Sausse:1951).

However, in the 1620's, due to Richelieu's enthusiasm for Raleigh's book, the French had determined to seize all those islands of the lesser Antilles which had escaped Spanish control in order to penetrate Tierra Firme itself. They were to achieve some success in this regard, as was the case with the Dutch, mainly through exploiting the trading and kinship ties which existed between the Caribs of the Islands and those of the mainland, in particular those settled on the Guarapiche and Maroni Rivers.

In February 1635 the French Company ordered the colonisation of Guadeloupe as the opening phase in this strategy. This island was, until this point, the exclusive domain of the Caribs, but the French arrived in force bringing five hundred soldiers and some Dominican missionaries. The traders of Dieppe backed up this effort by supplying transport for some two thousand five hundred colonists of both sexes (Du Tertre:1656). In the following year, due to the good relations established with the Caribs of Guadeloupe, Ponceau de Bretigny was appointed the future Governor of the projected colony of Cayenne, where there was also extensive Carib settlement, in expectation of the discovery of El Dorado (Du Tertre:1656:p.127)

From this initial effort by the French at colonising the New World comes some of the most important studies of the Carib language. Under the

guidance of D'Esnambuc, Governor General of French territory in South America, and Fouquet, Counsellor of State for the King, missionaries were sent to study the Caribs of Martinique, Guadeloupe and St. Christopher. They found that there was constant communication between the island and mainland Caribs and that their language was identical. They gave the name 'Caraibe' to those of the islands and 'Galibi' to those of the mainland (see Du Tertre:1656, Pelleprat:1966).

The French occupation of various islands of the Lesser Antilles during the 1640's and 1650's was not wholly without violence, but, in fairness, this was not due to French policy, as it was with the Spanish, but rather the activities of a few undisciplined colonists - 'pirates'<sup>43</sup>.

Equally Carib groups were not always prepared to accept French occupation, however enlightened, as an unqualified benefit. After all, as Pelleprat points out (Ibid:p.36), they were the rulers of these islands.

On St. Vincent, Pelleprat tells us (Ibid:p.37), there were nine to ten thousand Caribs and General de Poincy, French Commander-in-Chief, intervened repeatedly to stop pirates selling these Indians to the Spaniards on Tortuga.

On Dominica the Caribs resented French settlement and were also raided by French slavers. In retaliation they assassinated a leading cleric in February 1654 (Ibid:p.41).

On St. Lucia the Caribs accused the French of usurping their lands. Pelleprat records (Ibid:p.44) that as a result some one hundred and fifty Caribs left in three pirogues and settled with the Caribs of the Guarapiche, planning their vengeance.

On St. Vincent, Grenada and Martinique during the early 1650's a virtual war broke out between the Caribs and the French. Carib raiding parties of up to three hundred travelled all over these islands taking French settlements unaware. The final death toll gives some indication, however, of

the advantage of modern weapons. Some three to four hundred Carib warriors were killed while the French lost only seventy-eight men, including two clerics, P. Gaspar Jacquinet and P. Antonio Barré (Ibid:p.45).

It would be misleading, nonetheless, to over-emphasise this conflict between the French and the Caribs, since the French, in the form of the two Jesuit missionaries, Pelleprat and Mesland, were able to use the contacts between the Caribs of the islands and those of Tierra Firme to establish themselves on the Guarapiche. Indeed, when Mesland encountered those Caribs of St. Lucia, who had settled in the Guarapiche, he was able to dissuade them from carrying out the vengeance that they had planned. (Ibid:p.44.)

It was with the Caribs of Grenada that Mesland and Pelleprat first journeyed to the Guarapiche. They arrived here in 1651 and began their missionary work by distributing knives, axes, machetes and beads. Pelleprat writes (Ibid:p.48) that, evangelically speaking, their greatest successes were with the children. However, both missionaries occupied themselves with the study of the Carib language and in 1655 Pelleprat returned to France to publish his book which included the first grammar of the Carib language. With the Carib themselves he was clearly enchanted (Ibid:p.49). Interestingly, and contrary to Spanish efforts, he says that the Caribs were at peace with their neighbours at this time, which greatly aided their mission work, while the great cacique of the Guarapiche, Macau<sup>44</sup>, although not taken with christianity himself, put no hindrance on their free movement between Carib settlements.

Unknown to the missionaries the Spanish had spies among the Caribs and in 1652 Mendoza y Berrio learnt of the presence of the French on the Guarapiche, but the fact that they were both good Catholics forced Berrio to act with some circumspection and diplomacy. Accordingly, at the beginning of 1653, Mesland received a letter 'inviting' him to visit Santo Tome as it was claimed they had no clerics there (Ibid:p.58). Pelleprat tells us (Ibid:p.59)

that the Caribs were not very keen for him to go. Nonetheless Mesland left for Santo Tome in September 1653, accompanied by only a Carib cacique, who wished to recover the bodies of kinsmen killed by the Spanish near Santo Tomé. He never returned but spent the rest of his life, until 1672, working in Spanish missions, first in Guayana, later on in the Colombian llanos. Pelleprat records (Ibid:p.59) that they waited many months for a communication from Mesland and hearing rumours of his death Macau wished to lead a raid on Santo Tomé but that a letter from him arrived in time to prevent it.

After Pelleprat's return to France in 1655, and due to his efforts, two further expeditions left to reinforce the French presence on the Guarapiche, under the aegis of a newly formed 'company of Tierra Firme'. The first left Nantes on the 15th June 1656, under the command of the aristocrat De La Vigne. Arriving on the Guarapiche by October they immediately built a fort, Ovantique. From here the Caribs and French jointly raided the Spanish settlements of the llanos. An attack on the Spanish fort of San Carlos resulted in the death of sixty Spanish troops, including the Commander, Captain Pedro Blanco, after which they retreated to the hills.

In the same month they also attacked the Capuchin redoubt at Pilar, making off with a large quantity of arms and ammunition, for the loss of only two men. Finally, though, the Spanish managed to track down this raiding party and killed two French soldiers, the Captain and some twenty Caribs. By October, according to the Capuchin who recorded these events (AGI:SD:187:6/10/1656), nothing had been done to further control these 'rabid wolves'. But during the months of December and January a large Spanish force from Cumaná drove the French from Ovantique. The second expedition from France, leaving in 1657, never reached the Guarapiche at all but instead threw in its lot with the pirate colony on Tortuga (Du Terte:Ibid: p.173).

The subsequent intervention in this area by French troops, which

lasted for one year (described below), similarly failed to establish a lasting presence in this area but, although the French never established a colony on the Guarapiche, the alliance between the Caribs and the French, built up by Mesland and Pelleprat, endured, even after the Spanish occupied the Guarapiche in the 1720's, right up until the Venezuelan war of independence in the early nineteenth century. But for the Spanish this was to be a long hard fight. The first missionaries to attempt to establish themselves on the Guarapiche, after the Crown had ordered the armed conquest to cease in 1652, had little success. The Capuchins of Aragon were assigned to this task, as the Franciscans had resented their working among the Cumanagotos, but one of the first Capuchins sent to make contact, Fr. Pedro de Arquela, was promptly killed (AGI:SD:64:3/8/1659).

Conflict on the Orinoco, Missionary Efforts  
on the Guarapiche: 1658 - 1700

After his death in 1658 the precarious peace that Mendoza y Berrio had established with the Orinoco Caribs began breaking down. Under the new Governor, Pedro Viedma, the colonists, as 'encomenderos', tried to assert their 'rights' over the Caribs of Moitaco and the Caura mouth, provoking a general rebellion against Spanish presence.

Viedma wrote to the King of Spain:

... these foreign nations hold at their disposal all the Indian natives of these windward coasts, so that they cause me great anxieties in fearing a ruin, for this Government has such a very small number of people that in this city and the island of Trinidad they do not reach one hundred and forty residents /emphasis in original/ between old and young, and one hundred capable of bearing arms.

Caribs from the Caura (servants appropriated to residents of this city), Guayqueries and Nepuyos and other nations revolted in general, killed all the people that were among them, more than thirty persons ... The cause of this rebellion and havoc was the incitement of the Dutch ... From this your Majesty may gather the miserable state of this Government. (BGB:BC:API:p.152)

It would seem a misrepresentation of the situation to describe Carib anger at being treated as 'servants appropriated to the residents of this city' as nothing more than 'the incitement of the Dutch'. Thus there is little evidence (see Ojer:1966:p.576) to suggest that the Caura Caribs, or any other Carib communities, were ever involved in the encomienda system, notwithstanding this attempt to bring them under the control of the vecinos of Santo Tomé. In any case, as can be seen from the events of 1658, it was clearly beyond the ability of the Spanish on the Orinoco to enforce such a relationship at this time<sup>45</sup>. Indeed, even in those areas of Venezuela where encomiendas were more successfully established, such as in the province of Caracas, their operation was less than ideal, being established at a relatively late date and failing to match the productivity of those instituted in other areas of Spanish America (Arcila-Farias:1957:p.5)

Viedma responded by leading armed entradas against the Caura Caribs, many of whom were transported to Trinidad as slaves, and by providing an armed escort for the Capuchins who were sent to reduce the Caribs of the Areo, Amana and Guarapiche. However, as his report to the King suggests, Spanish control of the Orinoco had utterly collapsed. Viedma, so keen at first to stop it, relented on the question of trade with the Dutch but it was too late and in June 1664, the English easily overran the fort of Usupamo, which no Spanish supply ship had visited in thirty years (BGB:BC:API:p.153).

Pedro Viedma was replaced by Jose de Azipe y Zuñiga the following year who, on his first visit to Santo Tomé, found the Dutch trading there. He arrested them and the Dutch responded by re-activating their Carib alliance. Spanish power on the Orinoco was rapidly approaching its nadir.

Despite initial setbacks the Spanish were nonetheless keen to stop the Carib/French trading that had developed on the northern llanos in the 1650's and in 1662 managed, with the aid of Viedma's troops, to establish the first Carib mission<sup>46</sup>. Located on the llanos in the village of the cacique

Macuare and named 'Virgen del Pilar' it lasted over ten years until its destruction by the French. P. Carabantes and his soldiers managed in this time to concentrate six hundred Caribs at this mission after repeated entradas into the surrounding mountains (Carrocera:1964:p.217).

This success was followed in 1664 by the foundation of a second Capuchin mission, San Juan Bautista with the cooperation of the cacique Ocapra who brought over 100 people with him. Within weeks the Capuchins made another entrada against the Coaca Indians taking them to Ocapra's settlement. This provoked tension between the two groups and Ocapra withdrew his support from the whole project and the Caribs eventually left<sup>47</sup> (Carrocera:Ibid:p.218).

By 1668 a third mission had been founded, San Francisco, on the Guarapiche River which reached a population of over 700. However, this mission, Virgen del Pilar and the remnant population of San Juan Bautista were all to be destroyed by a Carib led rebellion, with French support, that erupted over the years 1669-73.

The Caribs were under few illusions as to the intention of the Spaniards in their 'christian' efforts; as the cacique Atirama, whom Carabantes described as:

... the fiercest of the fierce, general enemy to man who ordinarily uses human flesh to sustain his person and family (Ibid:p.78)

explains:

If we receive the Padres into our lands we must make peace and give obedience to our ancient enemies the Spanish. (Ibid:p.75)

Accordingly over the next four years the Capuchins of Aragon and their militia were driven out of this area and forced to take refuge in Cumaná.

The background to this rebellion against the Spanish was, in the opinion of the Capuchin missionaries, due largely to the 'oppression' of the Spanish encomenderos of the region, which had impeded the progress of the reduction of the Amerindians and led to a deterioration in Spanish control of

the llanos.

Throughout the 1650's and 1660's the Caribs and other Amerindians, principally the Chaimas with whom the Caribs reached an alliance under French influence, had conducted sporadic raids on the more exposed Spanish settlements, killing any cattle to be found and seizing captives for slaves. Such was the general instability of this whole area that an armed escort was required in order to travel even the shortest distances on the llanos (Carrocera:1964:pp.210,239,385).

However, the Capuchins involved in the attempted conversions of the Caribs in this area made it clear at the time that it was the activities of the local encomenderos, who raided Amerindian settlements for plantation workers on the pretext of searching for escapees from their encomiendas, that sparked a general rebellion against both the missionaries<sup>48</sup> and the Spanish colonists (Carrocera:1964:p.220).

The Capuchins were in fact highly critical of the whole encomienda system. Padre Francisco de Tauste described how the system might be subject to abuse:

... it is very common for there to be conflict between the encomenderos and the doctrineros and missionarios, and the cause of this is that the doctrineros and the missionary concern themselves with the offences and harm that is done to the Indian, and the encomendero solely looks to accumulating wealth through the labour of the Indian, and woe betide the Indian when the encomendero and the doctrinero work together, for this is a sign that the miserable Indian is being exploited by each of them. (in Carrocera:Ibid:p.239)

Equally, at least some of the encomenderos had little time for the missionaries. One of the vecinos of Cumana is quoted as saying that:

The Capuchins are real dogs, just like the Indians  
(in Carrocera:Ibid.p.239)

Accordingly the encomenderos agitated against the presence of the missionaries but the latter, who pointed out that the encomienda system only served to encourage the Amerindians to seek protective foreign alliances, eventually won

the argument, the encomiendas being abolished throughout the Spanish empire by 1716.

In 1669, as a result of these pressures, the Caribs of the Guarapiche mission of San Francisco destroyed this reduction on the 16th of August. Some 30 Spanish troops and 70 Amerindian auxiliaries were sent from Cumaná to crush this revolt but, according to contemporary testimony, were met by a force of 800 Carib and Chaima warriors, assembled under the leadership of 20 different caciques, the majority of whom were Caribs. At least a quarter of the Spanish punitive force were killed by poisoned arrows and as the news of this victory was received in other Amerindian settlements the revolt spread (Carrocera:Ibid:pp.221-3).

Under the leadership of the Caribs:

... who are recognized as masters of the land and to whom all render vasallage. (Carrocera:Ibid:p.224)

the rebel forces successfully attacked the Spanish settlement of San Carlos and emissaries were dispatched to the Antilles to solicit the aid of the French (AGI:SD:641:1683 - Prefect of Capuchin missions to Council of the Indies).

This aid was not immediately forthcoming but in mid-1673 a force of 30 French soldiers entered the Guarapiche. From this date until August 1674, when the French finally withdrew, there followed a period of hit-and-run raiding of Spanish settlements and missions. San Juan, Virgen del Pilar and the Spanish pueblo of San Carlos were all destroyed, as were various isolated ranches. At the same time French privateers from Tortuga raided Spanish settlements on Trinidad (AGI:SD:187:2/4/1674) and the Dutch sent a small force to support their trading partners among the Guarapiche Caribs (AGI:SD:187:10/11/1674). However, a slow but steady reinforcement of the Spanish, who had re-grouped around the ruined settlement of San Carlos, eventually forced a French withdrawal (Carrocera:1964:pp.224-30, 384-402).

Deprived of French military support the rebellion collapsed and many of the Caribs fled south to join their relations in the independent Carib settlements of the Orinoco, while many of their Chaima allies retreated to the lower Guarapiche, where the mass of small creeks and channels might offer some chance of avoiding Spanish reprisals (Carrocera:1964:p.231, BGB:BC:API:p.195 - Report on Caribs of Guayana by Governor Zuñiga, 1686). San Carlos and the mission of Virgen del Pilar were rebuilt in the following year, 1675 (Carrocera:Ibid.p.233).

Similarly on the Orinoco Spanish domination was being strongly resisted. As we have seen, the new Governor, Zuñiga, adopted a very hostile attitude to the Dutch as a result of which the colony of Santo Tomé foundered for want of supplies and was unable to control the surrounding Amerindian groups as the Dutch, backed by their Carib allies, moved freely among them trading for woods, dyes, and slaves. Moreover, with the royal decree that the armed conquest should cease, the Jesuits, who had founded missions on the Colombian llanos as far as the junction of the Orinoco and Casanare Rivers, were keen, in the manner of the Capuchins, to win control of the Amerindian populations of the Orinoco. However, Carib and Dutch influence on the Orinoco, plus the presence of their war pirogues, blocked such a Jesuit advance over the next five years.

Then in 1679 Jesuit missionaries, accompanied by infantry from Sante Fe de Bogotá, occupied the Orinoco between the Meta and Artures. The Caura Caribs responded immediately by sending a large force, eight pirogues containing some three hundred warriors, to dislodge them. They were successful and the Jesuits returned to the llanos (AGI:SD:179:15/11/1680).

Meanwhile, following a lull of two years the French moved to occupy the Orinoco and eastern llanos. In July a joint force of Caribs and French drove the Spanish from Trinidad (AGI:SD:641.1683). A second joint force of Caribs and French entered the Orinoco in August and overran Santo Tomé de

Usupamo, capturing Zuñiga, paralleling English action in 1617, under Raleigh.

These events did not go unnoticed by the Dutch and on August 18th 1684 the Commander of Essequibo wrote the following to the Directors of the West India Company:

... The French ... made themselves masters of the fort in Oronoque ... and have taken prisoner the Governor of Trinidad as he was on the way to said Oronoque ... they have for their assistance many Caribs from Copename /in Surinam/. Just previously Captain Gabriel Bishop, with his barque from Surinam and Berbice, coming into the Barima in order to trade there ... and being surprised by Caribs (from Copename) he, with fifteen of his men, was slain ... with threats to some other Indians friendly to us, that they conjointly with the French will probably come to destroy all the plantations outside the fort at Essequibo. (BGB:BC:API:p.187)

In the same year, 1684, a general rebellion of Orinoco Caribs broke out under the leadership of the Caura cacique, Quirawera, due to new Jesuit initiatives on the Orinoco. Again it was a Spanish debacle. The Caribs trapped the Jesuit force near Cabruta and wiped it out, killing also three Jesuit missionaries, Ignacio Fiol, Ignacio Tokebast and Gaspar Bek (Del Rey: 1966:p.136). The French, however, probably due to lack of manpower and resources were unable to capitalise on this situation and withdrew from the Orinoco by the end of the year, allowing Zuñiga, whom they had released, to re-occupy Santo Tomé.

As part of the attempt to restore Spanish control of the Orinoco, at the instigation of Governor Zuñiga:

... orders were given to abolish, in the Province of Trinidad and Guayana, every sort of bondage contract of Indians, in order that they might enjoy their liberty. (BGB:BC:API:p.193)

In May 1685, the Commander at Essequibo wrote:

The Spaniards having resumed possession of Oronoque ... The dispersed and hunted-away Caribs from the Copename River are flying the leeward about Barima, Weyni, Amacura, often alarming the coast and sometimes slaying some unlucky Aruac Indians or Christians, as happened to Bishop and the men from Berbice. (BGB:BC:AP:p.188)

But Spanish occupation of Santo Tomé represented only a nominal control of the Orinoco. When Rotela, appointed Governor of Guyana in 1688, visited Santo Tomé in 1690 he found it in a 'wretched and miserable condition' (BGB:BC:p.32). Under the leadership of the cacique Quirawera the Orinoco Caribs had effectively isolated Santo Tomé. In 1692 the Archbishop of Santa Fe withdrew all military support from the Jesuits on the Orinoco and by 1694 they had withdrawn to the Casanare, their point of departure. They did not return for forty years.

On the Guarapiche the Caribs and their French allies kept the Spanish at bay. In 1688 four Carib pirogues even appeared before the city of Cumaná, carrying some two hundred men. They waited before the city for a day and then moved on (AGI:SD:875:11/5/1688). Also the French and Caribs fortified a position on the Guanipa River where, through Carib trading contacts, the French attempted to gain influence among other Indian groups. The French also maintained their presence on the Guarapiche (AGI:SD:641:2/7/1696) occasionally raiding the Spanish missions on Trinidad, killing the missionaries (AGI:SD:639:6/6/1699), and Spanish outposts on the Mesa de Guanipa (AGI:SD:641:26/4/1695).

Not surprisingly, during this period, there were various Spanish plans on how to deal with the Caribs. On the one hand some favoured the mass transportation of the Carib population to Cuba, Santo Domingo or even Florida. A report concerning the Indians of Guayana, submitted to the Council of the Indies in 1686 (BGB:BC:AP:p.195) recommended the release of all Indians from slavery except for the Caribs who were to be removed from the proximity of the missions and:

... to place the Caribs in other islands and in the neighbourhood of Spanish settlements, so that by change of climate, and by being held in subjection on all sides, they may live as rational beings and in safety to the increase of the public good, and may be better educated in the Catholic faith and doctrine ... as to providing a measure for removing

the Carib Indians from their present place ... and the conveyance of them to another part where it might be hoped that with the change of climate they would change their habits, as we have experienced with those who were brought from Brazil and who are now peaceful ... I have to observe that this nation is very numerous ... for on the mainland various places are occupied by them, as, for instance, Amana, Pao, Caura and all the coast from the River Orinoco to Maranon ... it will be very advantageous if the said Caribs are compelled to leave and the method which seems most suitable is that His Majesty should bestow on anyone who will drive out the Caribs from that part the grant of an appointment Captain Conquistador and a claim to the first vacancy in Cumaná, upon condition that he raises the necessary troops at his own cost ... and also on condition that all the Carib Indians, men and women, above the age of fourteen years, who might be captured should be conveyed to the islands of Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo and Havannah ... and if this measure should seem harsh(!), we must bear in mind their mode of life which is very harmful, for they regard human flesh as a delicate food, and kill Indians who are not of their nation, and even white people, without any cause, but simply from their evil nature; and those of the Golfo Triste in particular have committed much slaughter and devastation in alliance with the French, with whom at present they have traffic and communication, and it is much to be feared that they are going to help the French to settle on the mainland. These Indians likewise prevent the conversion of others, and have on various occasions sacked the village of Indians already subdued. For these crimes such a race must be chastised by force of arms ... and thus the Capuchin missionaries will easily convert the rest of the Indians.

On the other hand some Spanish favoured less ambitious plans, preferring to rely on a strategy of occupation to bring the Caribs under control. Such a strategy involved the importation of colonists, mainly from the Canaries, who were also to act as a militia in support of Capuchin evangelisation (AGI:SD:641:28/9/1676) and the construction of forts on the Guarapiche and Orinoco (AGI:SD:641:1683).

However, as is clear from the history of the first two centuries of Spanish attempts to colonise the Orinoco, few resources were made available for the conquest of this region and it was well beyond the abilities of the Spanish to carry out such plans at this time.

Thus, at the close of the seventeenth century, it was the Spanish who were isolated and demoralised by Carib resistance. Carib power at this

time, underpinning French, English and Dutch colonialism, was never greater. But this was also a watershed in Carib history, for in the eighteenth century the Spanish colonising effort began in earnest and by the turn of the nineteenth century this great people had all but vanished from the rivers, forests and seas of Guayana.

Notes: Chapter II

1. Basically, the Crown might grant to an eminent settler or conquistador the tribute of a number of Amerindians, in return for which the encomendero was supposed to provide physical protection and spiritual instruction for his tributary Amerindians. However, the Crown was careful to try and prevent this developing into a full feudal relationship which might then form the basis for a challenge to its own power in the New World. Accordingly the rights of the encomenderos over the natives were limited and their power was counteracted by officials of the royal bureaucracy, such as the corregidores de indios, responsible for the regulation of trade with, and the use of the labour of, the Amerindians and the curas doctrineros, charged with their religious instruction.

Although this system was open to some flagrant abuse (see below p.165) it was not entirely abolished until 1716.

2. The name Guayqueri was first used in the 1550's for these Amerindians by Castellanos (1874:pp.23-4: see Otte:1979). Their close and friendly relations with the Spaniards, in contrast to the majority of other Amerindians in this area, has often been noted (Otte:1979, Alexander: 1958:pp.129-30).
3. Indeed, the laws governing Amerindian slavery, and the slavery of Caribs in particular, had almost outpaced European settlement on Tierra Firme. In a decree of August 1503 Isabella of Spain specifically forbade the captivity of all Amerindians, except in the case of 'cannibals' (Arcila-Farias:1957:pp.12-3). In practice such a law was open to wide abuse given that, even in the case of the Caribs, in response to whom the law was framed, the evidence for cannibalism was entirely conjectural (see chap.V below). Nonetheless a whole series of legal clarifications followed (e.g. Cedula Tordesillas 25/7/1511, Burgos 3/6/1512, Burgos 22/2/1512) in an attempt to control the scope of Amerindian slavery, but with little success.

In fact the officials of Santo Domingo rated the Caribs as among the most desirable of captives:

... few of them dying, good for a lot of use but hard to guard as likely to escape in canoes. (quoted in Sauer: 1968:p.194).

4. The exact date of Spanish settlement on Cubagua is not known (see Alexander:1958:p.123).
5. Over 80 Spanish were killed at Cumaná and Chirivichí, the Dominican victims having the dubious distinction of being the first christian martyrs in the New World.
6. Oviedo y Valdes (Ibid:Book 19:p.197) says that this expeditionary force was led by Antonio de Flores who had escaped the massacre of the Spanish in the preceding year.
7. Although Castellanos gives the date of this move as 1543, Alexander (1958:p.126) points out that the Audiencia of Santo Domingo had informed the King of it in December 1541.

8. Villalobos immediately denounced the population of Guayqueris as 'caribes' and, despite his death in the following year, they were only saved from slavery by the intervention of the Guayqueri concubine of the Governor of Cubagua, one Doña Isabel. As a result there was still a population of 700 Guayqueris on the island in 1528 (Otte:1977:p.357).
9. Under these circumstances only cases which were controversial at the time and/or involved powerful persons have tended to come down to us. For example, it is known that the elite of Santo Domingo organised a commercial armada in 1533 which brought 252 Amerindians from the coast of Tierra Firme only because of the protests that Las Casas made against this action at the time (Otte:1977:pp.207-8).
10. Between 1530 and 1538 three Spanish forces, under Diego de Ordás, his lieutenant, Jeronimo Ortal, and Antonio Sedeño, plundered the coast from the Paria peninsula to the Unare River, causing 'many deaths' among the Amerindians of the area (Herrera:1934:I:Book 7:pp.5-6,98-105, 158-62, Book 8:pp.29-30).
11. In fact this was probably a trade that could have been handled by the local Amerindians and was of equivalent scale to that of the Dutch and Caribs in the late 17th-18th centuries (see chapters IV & V). The co-operation of the Amerindians in Spanish slaving is also evident from the later testimony of Walter Raleigh, who identified Amerindian organised slave markets, based on Spanish demand, on the Orinoco and Essequibo Rivers (see Raleigh:1868:p.39).
12. Jacomé Castéllon had in fact commanded the expedition which re-occupied Cubagua in 1522, using the remnants of Gonzalo de Ocampo's force which had put down the first Amerindian rebellion in 1519, and he had shown exemplary brutality in the execution of his task:
 

From here /River Cumaná/ he waged a war on the Indians who had committed the wickedness and robberies ... and he inflicted a heavy punishment on them, by death and the seizure of many captives, and he sent a number of slaves from here to this island of Hispaniola, and he took possession of the land and reduced all to the service of Your Majesty. (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid: Book 19:p.201)
13. See note 11 above.
14. Hernando Cortés had conquered Mexico by 1519 and the first Spaniard to penetrate the Orinoco was one of his captains, Diego de Ordás (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book 19:p.389). Undoubtedly the wealth of the Aztec fuelled the notion that the New World was replete with fabulous riches and, certainly, Gonzalo Pizarro's conquest of Peru, contemporary with these first explorations of the Orinoco, would have done nothing to undermine it. Thus for the next century, occasionally even thereafter, the Orinoco itself became the gateway to the legendary El Dorado, encouraging many vain attempts to penetrate the Guayana highlands, where his kingdom of Manoa was thought to be located, after the expeditions of the 1530's had shown that it was not to be found in the region of the Meta River. Coupled with these fantasies the sober reality of the end of the boom years of the economies of Hispaniola and the Pearl Islands naturally focused attention on the unexplored and unexploited regions of the Orinoco and Guayana. It was with such motives, of repeating the exploits of Pizarro and Cortés, that these early expeditions were undertaken and, in this context, not without a justified expectation of success.

15. The information concerning Carib settlement given by these conquistadors and their chroniclers has already been examined in chapter I and will not be repeated here.
16. This fort was undoubtedly constructed on the orders of Antonio Sedeño (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:Book 24:p.387, Aguado:1951:Book 4:pp.381-2) who was a fierce rival to Ordás. Although Ordás only had titles to Maranon (the Amazon region), which was not necessarily meant to include the Orinoco basin, Sedeño's titles clearly restricted him to the island of Trinidad and so his attempt to settle the mainland in this manner might be interpreted as a direct challenge to Ordás, which it was. In any case, as a consequence of the fort's destruction by Ordás, Sedeño was no longer able to maintain his position on Trinidad and was forced to retreat to Margarita (Oviedo y Valdes:Ibid:p.388, see also Embid:1950:p.66ff).
17. Later to become known as the land of El Dorado (see note 14 above and Hemming:1978b, Ruiz:1959).
18. Oviedo y Valdes described him as:
 

... a valiant man and experienced. He had been with Hernando Cortés in the conquest of New Spain. But he knew more about killing Indians than caring for them (Ibid:Book 24:p.410).
19. Hemming (1978b:p.47) suggests that this was due to a Carib raid. However, there is no supporting evidence of this in the chronicles or documentation and a simple desire to avoid the Spanish seems the most likely explanation, since this settlement was found to have a thriving population on subsequent occasions (see chapter I, p.29 above).
20. Raleigh (1868:p.46) says that the trade with the Arawaks of the Orinoco for manioc was of great importance throughout the 16th century, as was the slave trade (see also Ojer:1966:p.161ff).
21. The cacique Morequito is known to have traded gold to the Spanish at Margarita and was even feasted by the Governor, Francisco de Vides, while on a visit for this purpose. As a result of this favour shown to Morequito a conflict developed between Antonio de Berrio and Vides, whom Berrio felt, quite correctly as it transpired, was trying to undermine his authority amongst the Orinoco caciques, jeopardising his attempts to locate El Dorado. Raleigh (1868:p.36) says that Vides even encouraged Morequito positively to mislead Berrio whenever possible, probably also informing him that the slave raid of his people, the Orenoqueponi, had been conducted at Berrio's instigation.
22. Incidentally a Balliol man!
23. In this letter Montes also emphasises the need to act quickly to forestall an English colonisation of the Orinoco, suggesting that Peruvian gold might be transported from Bogotá, along the Meta route pioneered by Berrio and finally despatched to Spain from Trinidad (BGB:BC:API:p.11).
24. Raleigh informs us that Morequito had attacked one of these advance parties but fearing the vengeance of Berrio had fled to Cumaná to seek the protection of Governor Vides. However, due, probably, to Berrio's

recent confirmation of his titles to Trinidad and 'the province of El Dorado', Vides chose to hand Morequito over to Berrio's campmaster Pedro Fajardo:

Morequito offered Fajardo the weight of three quintals of gold to let him escape, but the poor Guianian, betrayed on all sides, was delivered to the campmaster of Berrio, and was presently executed.

However, Vides had Morequito's nephew baptised as Don Juan and planned, with no eventual success, to establish him in his uncle's old domain (Raleigh:Ibid:p.39).

25. Of natural causes at the age of 60. Antonio de Berrio was also in his sixties at this time.
26. The development of Dutch and French influence in this area is examined below (see p. 152).
27. Sancho de Alquiza, successor to Fernando de Berrio, wrote to the King that no boats or rowers were to be had at Santo Tome because the Caribs had driven the Amerindians further into the interior and they now:
 

... do not come to this town unless they are fetched!

and with only 33 people resident in the town at this time Alquiza was understandably concerned at the constant threat of the Dutch and English:

... for they go about in this port just as in the English Channel, and it is necessary to sleep, like the crane, on one foot. (BGB:BC:API:p.27, 11/2/1612)
28. This was sent by Ruiz Fernandez Fuenmayor, Governor of Caracas. Further requests for help from Escobar were, however, refused because Fuenmayor had also committed troops to Juan de Orpin's conquest of the Cumanagotos, being carried out at this time (BGB:BC:API:p.100).
29. When the Dutch had attacked Santo Tomé de Morequito, in 1637, Governor Escobar had in fact been in the process of moving the population to the new site called Usupamo. The ease with which the Dutch overran Santo Tomé de Morequito was thus partly due to this fact, only a portion of the garrison and populace being present at the time (see BGB:BC:API:p.90, declaration of Miguel Morillas also quoted above p.147 ).
30. It was reputed to have been kept in a Carib long-house on the Essequibo River, but was recovered during a raid conducted by a Captain Llanes:
 

... who understood the Carib and Aruaca languages very well. (BGB:BC:API:p.102)
31. The revolt by Calvinists in the Netherlands, against the ruling Catholic House of Hapsburg, had begun in 1566 and was to continue, with varying degrees of enthusiasm until the Treaty of Utrecht was signed with the new Bourbon dynasty in 1713 (Elliott:1972:p.232).
32. It is interesting to note that this was exactly the plea that Fernando de Berrio made after having been deprived of office for allowing trade between the Dutch and the tobacco growers of Trinidad in 1611. However,

in the New World the Dutch were in the happy position of not being dependent on the Spanish market whereas the colonists of Santo Tomé were faced with the stark choice of either trading illegally or living in destitution. In 1638 Escobar wrote:

... Santo Tomé is quite unprovided with men, arms and munitions, and everything, for there is not one who has a shirt, as it is many years since a vessel came from Spain and the residents have no one to whom they can sell the products of the country. (BGB:BC:API:p.105)

that is except to the Dutch.

33. They were first sighted as early as 1500 by Cristobal Guerra but the Spanish did not bother to exploit them as they were not exporters of salt from Iberia.
34. These vessels operated in squadrons, unescorted by warships and carrying a crew of between 20 and 50, who would work the salt pans themselves. As the only watering places nearby were the Bordonos or Cumaná Rivers these salters were liable to ambush, though as the vecinos of Cumaná rarely exceeded 50 persons at this time, a smugglers rendezvous was perhaps the more likely encounter at these points.
35. In February 1606 the Council of the Indies recommended the depopulation of Nueva Ecija de los Cumanagotos and prohibited the growing of tobacco in Venezuela for 10 years (AGI:SD:187:26/8/1606).
36. Though the treaty was not finally signed until 1609 (Elliott:1972:p.290).
37. During the adjudication of the United States of America on the Venezuelan-British Guiana boundary dispute Professors Burr and Jameson questioned the reliability of the testimony in this document. However, Edmundson (1901:p.640) has argued that Scott's evidence can be treated as reliable on the grounds that i) Scott is, otherwise a generally credible witness and ii) other early evidence as to Dutch settlement confirms Scott's testimony.
38. Only those attempts made in the area under discussion are examined here.
39. Scott says that the Caribs of St. Vincent were in the process of colonising Tobago themselves from around 1628. This is also confirmed by Caravajal (1648 - see chapter I, p. 11 above) who identified, in the 1640's, a group of recent Carib settlers, Tobagos, that had arrived from St. Vincent. Indeed, a close reading of Scott's document reveals that the attitude of the local Amerindians, notably the Caribs and Arawaks, was vital in the fortunes of these nascent settlements. Thus, while planning a second attempt to settle Tobago for the Duke of Corland in 1650, the leader of the expedition was advised:
 

... to carry a fair correspondency with the Arrawacoos which he did to the disgust of the Careebs of St. Vincent who took their advantage and destroyed a great part of that hopeful colony ... (BL:Sloane:3662)
40. The familiarity of Dutch shipping in these waters, as well as the extensive relations that were being formed with the Amerindians, is well illustrated by a rather woeful Spanish description of Trinidad in 1614:

... this island is generally surrounded by the Flemish and the Caribs both by sea and by land ... the Caribs coming as far as the city /San José de Oruña/ to rob and ill-treat them, which comes of their strong alliance with the Flemish, always moving together as they did when they attacked the Aruacas, taking many of them prisoners, and carrying off their wives. (BGB:BC:API:pp.34-5)

41. The Dutch fort on the Essequibo which later became the capital of the colony. The name literally means 'Sees-over-all' and the original fort was constructed under the direction of Captain Groenewagen in 1623, according to Rodway (1893:I:p.4).
42. The Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1649, between Spain and the Netherlands, had also given a de facto recognition to the colony of Essequibo.
43. For example, Pelleprat saw slavers, arriving from Cayenne, having visited the Guarapiche River, with 3 Caribs, a grandmother, her daughter and her grand-daughter for sale on Martinique. Pelleprat himself purchased these captives in order to smooth his way when he first visited the Guarapiche (1966:p.54).
44. Macau had originally encountered Pelleprat on Grenada where he had threatened to kill him with a knife. Apparently as an act of vengeance against French slavers from Cayenne. Macau told Pelleprat:
- If we become friendly with the French, they then wish to become our masters.
- But, Pelleprat continues:
- I believe that this cacique was a little drunk, because when I questioned him on this theme two days later he became ashamed and changed the conversation. (1966:p.90)
45. There is some indication that those Amerindians in the immediate vicinity of Santo Tomé were subject to the encomienda system. Thus Simon (1963:I:p.309) says that some 3,000 Amerindians were encomendados by the residents of Santo Tomé in the 1660's. Also in the declaration of Juan Desotogruen on 'The Powers of the Dutch ...' (quoted above p. 147) the Spanish at Santo Tomé were said to have had 4,000 'tributary' Amerindians. However, Desotogruen also says that they were:
- ... to be as much trusted as the enemy, unless they see that they have shelter and protection here. (BGB:BC:API:p.77)

while Governor Viedma wrote of Santo Tomé in 1662:

... it is in such a state that those who live in it are compelled to do so, because I do not grant to them licences that they desire and today more so by the rising of these Indians, who, after all, served them somewhat, though badly, for there is no one to make their bread, bring them a pail of water and cultivate their plantations. It must necessarily be abandoned if some remedy does not come to them within a year, for they are in despair of it. (BGB:BC:API:p.152)

This suggests that, throughout this period the encomiendas of the Orinoco were, at best, of limited scope and effectiveness and, at worst,

a legalistic fiction of the Spanish. However, even in this situation they might have been a significant factor in the fate of some Amerindian settlements, as can be seen from the events of 1658.

46. Six Capuchins had been sent for from Spain in 1657, for the purpose of pacifying the eastern llanos. Initially they were delayed at Caracas, where they had disembarked, because of an outbreak of disease, delaying their arrival in Cumaná until 1659. Their preliminary entradas into the llanos, with an armed escort of Spanish soldiers and reducidos, from Santa Maria de los Angeles, served to confirm the influence of the Dutch and, particularly, the French in this area. As they travelled among the Carib communities of the llanos they encountered many signs of a trade between the Caribs and the Dutch and French, even surprising a Dutch trader on the Guarapiche (Carrocera:1964:p.215).
47. Padre Francisco de Tauste (in Carrocera:1964:p.218) says that this happened because the Coacas were:
- ... completely subject to, and treated as if they were slaves ...
- by the Caribs and because, accordingly, when the Governor of Cumaná, Juan Bravo de Acuña, insisted that the Caribs were removed to a site in the western llanos, the Caribs, out of resentment at this treatment, decided to abandon the mission.
48. The missionaries were also blamed for the spread of epidemic disease to Carib settlements at this time (see chapter I, p. 26 ). Padre Tauste gives an example which shows how the cultural barriers between the Spanish and the Caribs could further aggravate this situation. He relates (Carrocera:1964:p.221) how a missionary had given a Carib cacique some cacao as a gift, during an illness he was suffering. When the cacique later died of the disease the missionary's gift was blamed for causing the illness and death, souring relations between the Capuchins and the Amerindians for some time.

CHAPTER IIITHE CONQUEST OF CARIBANA: 1700 - 1771

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Caribs of Guayana still occupied those settlements and rivers which they had done so before the Europeans arrived. Two centuries of raid and counter raid had not produced any dramatic results for the Spaniards, who were essentially isolated at those points from which the invasion of Caribana had begun; in Cumaná, Trinidad and Santo Tomé. Such a situation cannot be simply related to Carib military power for other important circumstances combined to hold back Spanish colonisation. Thus, on the one hand, Nueva Andalucia, which included Venezuela, was a somewhat peripheral part of the Spanish Empire. In terms of the 'Royal-Fifth' tax on treasure, for example, it always offered the possibility of El Dorado, but never in practice watched the bullion flow of Mexico and Peru. On the other hand the presence of Dutch, French, English and even Swedish colonists, meant that Spain was not permitted an imperial monopoly of this area. However, none of the colonial powers had the resources, human or economic, to exploit decisively the weaknesses of the others and so Amerindian alliances were cultivated in an attempt to offset the lack of support from Europe and, indeed, so that these projects might have any hope of survival. It is in this context that the importance of the Caribs as a military power is to be assessed.

For the Caribs, unconcerned and unaware of the political and economic complexities which brought increasing numbers of Africans and Europeans to the New World such alliances gave them a preferential access to such highly prized items as metal goods and alcohol, thereby enhancing not only the standing of individual leaders and traders within Carib society but also, through their associated kin networks, that of Carib groups generally.

Such a situation also implied an erosion of Carib independence

from the Europeans, in Spanish territory this occurred via the missions and by the Dutch as their traders continued to penetrate further into the interior of Guayana. As a consequence of these European activities Carib society was exposed to many new and often lethal forces. In particular the diseases carried by the Europeans and their African slaves spread rapidly, resulting in a sharp decline not just in Carib populations but in the numbers of all Amerindians.

Moreover, as trusted and effective military allies to the Dutch the Caribs were in the forefront of the intense conflict between Spain and her colonial rivals for the control of Guayana. Carib raiding thus centred on the missions, both as a means of disrupting Spanish colonisation and in order to sell the occupants into slavery (see chapters IV, V for discussion of the trade in 'red slaves'), while Spanish attacks, designed to break this alliance, was directed at the Dutch posts and independent Carib villages.

However, the Spanish commitment to gaining control of the Orinoco basin was far greater in the 18th century than ever before and as the missionaries re-embarked on their evangelisation of the Guarapiche Caribs in the 1720's they, and their successors, were now supported both by the direct military assistance of the civil authorities and, indirectly, by the expansion of European settlement throughout eastern Venezuela.

This contrast between the failures of Spanish colonialism at the end of the 17th century and the vigorous programme of conquest that was initiated in the 1720's is to be related to the decline of the ruling House of Hapsburg and the eventual succession of a Bourbon king, committed to reform, during this period.

When Philip IV died in 1665 he was succeeded by his 4 year old son Charles II, but the Spain that this boy-king inherited:

... had lost the last vestiges of its political hegemony over Europe and seen some of its most valuable overseas

possessions fall into the hands of the heretical English and Dutch. Its currency was chaotic, its industry in ruins, its population demoralized and diminished. (Elliott:1972:p.361)

Moreover, the ineffectualness of Charles II as a monarch, throughout his reign, meant that the authority of the Crown, not only in the New World but even within Spain itself, was limited and at a time when the other monarchies of Europe, especially that of France, were in the process of consolidating their power.

By the 1680's Spain was in a position of almost total political and economic collapse. Thus the only export that might earn foreign currency was raw wool, two-thirds of the silver of the treasure fleets went straight into the hands of foreign creditors without even passing through Spain and the Spanish currency itself was continually undermined by rampant inflation (Elliott:Ibid:p.367).

This decay was paralleled in the cultural sphere as an intellectual paralysis gripped the educated classes at a time when the rest of Europe was embarking on a new era of scientific and philosophical investigation (Elliott: Ibid:p.368).

Charles II himself remained childless and by the 1690's the question of the succession had become acute. The great power blocks in Europe accordingly began to manoeuvre in expectation of Charles's death, Louis XIV of France somewhat prematurely invading Catalonia in 1697. In turn the Dutch and English, alerted by Louis's adventurism, formed an alliance to prevent the emergence of a new European hegemony, either that of the French Bourbons or that of the Austrian Hapsburgs, who both had sound claims to the Spanish inheritance.

After Charles II's death, in November 1700, Philip of Anjou, the Bourbon candidate, was made King, as had been the desire of Charles. However, alarmed by Louis XIV's arrogance following this accession, the Dutch and English jointly declared war on France.

The ensuing War of Spanish Succession lasted from 1702 until 1713, though it was the accession of the Archduke Charles, the Dutch-English candidate for the Spanish throne, to the Austrian throne, that, by threatening a union of Austria and Spain, which was a possibility that appealed to the allies even less than the presence of a Bourbon in Madrid, prompted the Dutch and English to accept Philip of Anjou as the King of Spain, so long as he renounced his claim to the French Crown. These conditions were met by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, which also transferred all Spain's possessions in the Netherlands and Italy to Austria.

The Spanish Empire had now shrunk to '... a truly Spanish empire, consisting of the Crowns of Castile and Aragon and of Castile's American colonies' (Elliott: Ibid: p.375). On this basis Philip V began to create the modern machinery of government in Spain, such as had already appeared in France in the preceding fifty years. Within Spain this meant the eradication of the regional autonomy that had been allowed to develop under Charles II, such as occurred in Catalonia in 1714, while in the New World, as we shall see, the uncertainties, indecision and neglect that had characterised his reign and the period of the War of Spanish Succession were replaced by the relatively competent leadership of Philip V and his French advisers. Furthermore, since the Treaty of Utrecht had left the trading monopolies of the Spanish untouched, the priorities of the Spanish Crown in the New World remained essentially the same and in this context the effective occupation of the Orinoco region was vital if the spread of Dutch, French and English settlement was to be forestalled.

It was this determined colonialism that now swung the balance against the continuation of Carib independence from European domination and for them the 18th century became the century of conquest.

Broadly the first two decades of the 18th century were ones of relative calm before the storm of the Spanish advance in to the interior after

1720. Following the intense Carib raiding of the late 17th century, the Capuchins were reluctant to pursue missionary work in or around Carib territories, but in 1719 money and manpower for evangelisation began to flow again, marking in this part of America the emergence of Spain into the new epoch of Bourbon kings (Carrocera:1979:I:p.15).

In this same year Carib raiding round Aragua provoked the Spanish into 'punitive action'. The subsequent campaign against the Caribs, led by Governor Carreño, paved the way for successful missionary work among the Guarapiche Caribs in the following decade, those not reduced here being forced to re-locate further south (Carrocera:1979:I:p.xiv).

During this period the Franciscans working on the Orinoco also made some limited advances. It seems that intense Carib conflict with the Caverre, an Arawak group of the middle Orinoco, in which the Caribs were heavily defeated, encouraged the Franciscans, as Carreño's campaigns had the Capuchins, to attempt reduction where others had failed. Under the leadership of Fr. Fernando Ximenez, who later wrote a Carib grammar, two missions were briefly established.

However, the limits of these successes were well illustrated by the events of the years 1729-40. In this period documents indicate a greater and more sustained pattern of Carib raiding than at any other time. The immediate cause of this conflict seems to have been the Labrid affair (see below), which was used, by the Spanish, as a pretext to appear in force among Carib settlements on the Aguirre and Barima Rivers. In the longer term, this diplomatic incident was used to force the pace of imperial military commitment to this area.

The Carib cacique, Taricura, hunted by the Spanish for the murder of Archbishop Labrid, was also the leader of two impressive Carib war fleets, which appeared on the Orinoco in 1733 and 1734, in an attempt to drive the Jesuits from their newly founded Orinoco missions among the Achagua and

Saliva, of the western llanos.

That the Jesuit, and not the Franciscan missions, bore the main brunt of these attacks (though Franciscan missions were raided later in the 1730's) suggests that the Jesuit reduction of the Achagua and Saliva was seriously upsetting Carib trading patterns. Thus the trading superiority of Carib groups, referred to above, would have been undermined by the presence of missionaries among their trading partners, offering similar goods, apparently for nothing.

Certainly the Spanish were clear in this regard, knowing that, even if they could not crush the Caribs militarily, they could still neutralise them economically by undercutting or obstructing their trade with other Amerindian groups, the source of their influence among these peoples of the Orinoco.

Similarly the mission system, by which indigenous populations were held in one place, access to them controlled and in which men's labour for the Fathers' agricultural projects was paid for in European goods, was an institution perfectly designed to help achieve this end.

After 1740, having weathered the best organised Carib attacks and now firmly supported by the imperial authorities, Franciscan and Capuchin entradas against Carib settlements greatly increased, as did the overall stability of the missions they founded. By this time the change in the balance of forces, between the Spanish and Caribs, was becoming irreversible.

The appearance, in 1750, of the Real Expedición des Límites, charged with the exploration, pacification and defence of the Orinoco basin exemplifies this growth of Spanish domination. For their part the Dutch, alarmed at these developments and confronted by domestic crises over the increasing numbers of fugitive black slaves and a series of slave rebellions, now attempted to restrain anti-Spanish activity on the part of their Carib allies in order to avoid further antagonising their increasingly powerful neighbours.

Thus this firm commitment of resources to the Orinoco region by the Spanish coincided with a change of economic priorities for the Dutch West India Company. Although this will be discussed more fully in chapter IV, it should be noted here that, during the 18th century, Dutch economic activity put greater and greater emphasis on the planting of sugar, largely at the expense of the trade in forest products that was carried on with the Amerindians.

Moreover, in line with these developments, the trade with the Amerindians itself changed in character, red slaves for the plantations, in the Antilles as well as Guayana, coming to form a more significant item as the profits here were much better than on the woods and dyes that had been the mainstay, other than foodstuffs, of the Amerindian-Dutch trade in the 17th century.

Accordingly, the expansionist Dutch policies that had sustained this trade altered, as the importance of achieving a stable relationship with the Spanish of the Orinoco, clearly a necessary element in ensuring that the sugar production of the downstream plantations was not jeopardised, eventually dominated Dutch thinking.

Taken together these changes in the relative political and economic positions of the Dutch and Spanish help explain the comparatively rapid reduction of the Caribs, who were now no longer given unqualified support by the Dutch, in the three decades after 1740, the Franciscans achieving this among the Orinoco Caribs by about 1756 and the Capuchins making their final mission foundation for the Caribs in 1771, although entradas continued against remnant populations of the Imataca-Essequibo region until 1816 (Carrocera:1979: I:p.xxvi-xxviii).

After this date the mission system throughout Venezuela collapsed following the upheavals of the War of Independence. Many Caribs from the Orinoco south bank fled into the forests of Dutch-Essequibo but even here their

numbers continued to decline through epidemic diseases until, by the end of the 19th century there were no more than a few hundred left.

The Change in the Balance of Forces: 1700 - 1721

As we have seen, the Capuchins and the Jesuits had experienced heavy Carib resistance in their attempts to found reductions on the Orinoco and Guarapiche. In the first decades of the eighteenth century the Caribs of the Guarapiche capitalised on this situation, reintroducing their allies the French with whom among other things they ran a profitable slave trade. Letters of the Governor of Cumaná to the Council of the Indies (AGI:SD:589, 584: 26/3/1705, 11/9/1703) and to the Commandant of Santo Tomé (AGI:C:30: 6/10/1705) indicate that the French, in particular from Martinique, and some English from Jamaica, were constantly trading for slaves on the Guarapiche; at this time paying some two axes, two machetes and a knife for each slave. As a direct result of this renewed trading activity, in 1717, the French reoccupied their old fort of Ovantique. However, a force from Cumaná, under Captain Arias, quickly destroyed it.

On the Orinoco the defeat of the Jesuits at the end of the seventeenth century had left this waterway dominated by the Caribs and their Dutch allies. Santo Tomé itself was, according to Diguja, future Governor, in a 'wretched and isolated' condition (BGB:BC:p.14) at this time, though not without the ability to raid Dutch outposts (BGB:BC:API:p.235).

Similarly demoralised, the Capuchins, charged with the reduction of the Caribs south of the Orinoco, abandoned their Arawak and Pariagoto stations, in 1703, and returned to Trinidad<sup>1</sup>. Even here the Caribs relentlessly pursued them and not even a Royal decree, demanding their return, could induce them to continue without military escort, which the colonists of Santo Tomé were unwilling to provide. Accordingly, in 1714, they deserted Trinidad

completely on a French trading vessel (Lodares:1930:II:pp.169-70, Carrocera:1979:II:pp.3-14).

Although, after seven years negotiations, the Capuchins were finally granted a military escort in 1715 and came to Santo Tomé in 1718, they again decided to withdraw to Trinidad where they remained another six years before beginning entradas against the Orinoco Caribs (AGI:SD:632:15/2/1719).

After the Capuchins had been driven back in the Guarapiche area in the 1670's (see above) the Franciscans had elected themselves the task of continuing the missionary work. Having completed an effective reduction of the Cumanagoto to the mission regime, over one thousand families being held in eleven mission stations on the llanos, they now evolved a plan for the Carib conquest, centred on the fort at Aragua (AGI:C:123:5/4/1718). Letters from the Prefect of Missions and the Governor of Cumaná to the Council of the Indies indicate that although there was some apprehension over this task, due to the fact that the Cumanagoto reductions were still somewhat unstable, it was felt that the reduction of the Caribs could not wait on better control of other populations (AGI:C:123:13/10/1715,30/4/1718, 26/5/1718).

This urgency was shown to be well founded when, in 1718, two Carib caciques from the Guarapiche, Maturin and Tuapocan, raided Spanish settlements near Aragua. Troops from Cumaná managed to track and corner these caciques on the Guarapiche. In the ensuing attack Maturin was killed and Tuapocan captured and taken to Cumaná to be baptised (AGI:C:122:16/7/1719). Over the next four years the subsequent punitive campaign, led by Governor Carreño, forced many Caribs to abandon the Guarapiche to the Spanish and relocate their settlements further south, on the Tigre and Orinoco<sup>2</sup>.

Meanwhile, on the Orinoco itself, other developments were favouring the plans of the Capuchins. Since about 1715 the Caverre of the Cuchivero River and the Caribs of the Cuchivero and Caura Rivers had been at war. Gumilla (1745:I:p.140) says that there was a long tradition of enmity between

these groups which developed into a large scale conflict around this time. However, by about 1719-20, despite the numerical superiority of the Caribs in this area, the Caverre had driven them from the Cuchivero, forcing them back to their strongholds at Moitaco and the Caura mouth<sup>3</sup> (ibid:II:p.313; Lodaes: ibid:p.188). However, despite some strengthening of the Spanish presence, twenty five families having arrived from the Canaries to reinforce Santo Tomé in 1719, the Capuchins were still wary and did little more than develop Suay as a base for future operations, unconvinced that this new influx of settlers and Carib defeats on the Guarapiche and mid-Orinoco had yet swung the balance of forces in their favour (AGI:SD:809:15/1/1719; Carrocera:1979:I:p.19).

Nonetheless, the defeat of Maturin and Tuapocan on the Guarapiche and the loss of the war with the Caverre, had convinced some of the Spanish missionaries that they should take the initiative and in 1721 Observant entradas began in the Guarapiche area and on both banks of the Orinoco, under the leadership of Fr.Jose Jurado.

Missionary Advances Against the Guarapiche and  
North Bank Caribs: 1721 - 1729

Using an improvised escort of soldiers, civilian militia and Palenque Indians, Jurado made his first entrada against Tapurequen (Mucura), a major centre of Carib settlement on the Pao River. From here twenty three families were taken to the Palenque Mission of San Lorenzo in the north (Caulin:1966:II:p.161). On the Guarapiche, Carreño's actions (referred to above, p.189) culminated in the same year, 1722, with the foundation of the fort of Maturin. From here innumerable entradas were made against the Caribs who, in response, gradually withdrew from the area to be replaced by settlers, who formed the base of a militia for further raids (AGI:SD:643:15/4/1722, 14/9/1723). Nonetheless the Caribs kept open their links with the French and

English by occasionally striking back at isolated Spanish settlements, such as San Carlos, which they destroyed in 1723 (AGI:SD:632:28/8/1723), and encouraging trade with supposedly reduced Amerindian populations.

Throughout 1723 entradas continued against the Caribs of the Pao and Guere allowing the foundation of the first Carib Mission of San Buenaventura de Panapotar with seven Carib families (Caulin:1966:II:p.17) and in the following year, 1724, the foundation of a second Carib Mission, San Joaquin de Pariri, with six Carib families from the Cari River under their cacique Guararima (Canedo:1967:II:139). Both these missions had their population augmented by the prisoners taken by Carreño in his campaigns on the Guarapiche (AGI:SD:599:25/4/1730). Although there were no further Carib missions founded in this area over the next decade, these two settlements received a steady stream of captives due to the repeated entradas made by the Franciscans, led by one Fr. Fernando Ximenez, the founder of San Joaquin, who was to become a central figure in the conquest of the Caribs<sup>4</sup>.

However, the Mission of Panapotar was experiencing great difficulty in controlling its population and many fugitives joined the settlement of San Salvador, founded by the Capuchins of Caracas, on the River Aracay. Inter-Order competitiveness, a continual feature of this period (see below, p.221), resulted in Fr. Jurado pursuing the runaways to the Aracay River where he demanded their return from the Capuchins. Eventually he succeeded in taking three hundred and fifty Caribs back with him. However, the introduction of Palenques into the Mission of Panapotar in this year, 1724, caused disruption to such a point that, by 1728, it was abandoned (AGI:SD:643:3/8/1724).

Similarly illfated was the Mission of San Salavador de Aracay, founded with the two caciques of that river, Samat and Tomuto, who had brought over one hundred of their people with them. In October 1726 soldiers from Cumaná sacked and burned this settlement, the Caribs fleeing to the hills (AGI:SD:809:11/10/1726) where, the Prefect of Capuchins notes, it would be

nearly impossible to follow and reduce them again. Testimonies concerning the event indicate that the soldiers arrived accusing the Caribs of stealing weapons but that when Fr. Thomas de Ponce denied this on their behalf, individual soldiers then accused the Caribs of cheating them over the sale of pirogues and hammocks (AGI:SD:809:13/10/1726). Whatever the truth, this event can hardly have helped mission work among the Caribs, and incidents such as these may well have contributed to the outbreak of the widespread Carib rebellion of the 1730's.

Parallel with the limited advances being made by the missionaries, an influx of settlers from the Canaries augmented the limited garrisons of Santo Tomé de Usupamo and Maturin.

In 1725 eighty families arrived from the Canaries in Cumaná (AGI:SD:590:12/8/1725). Fifty were to proceed to Maturin on the Guarapiche and thirty to Santo Tomé on the Orinoco. Each family was equipped with a rifle, bayonet, gunpowder and tools. Also despatched with these families were regular troops from Araya, (twelve for the Guarapiche, fifteen for the Orinoco) and six-pounder swivel guns (eight for the Guarapiche, twelve for the Orinoco). At the same time construction also started on a new fort on the Isla de Fajardo, in the Caroni mouth, which was intended to block Dutch and Carib access to the Orinoco via this river.

Against this background of Spanish military build-up, Ximenez made a series of entradas round Santo Tomé, in 1728, aided by Capuchins from their base at Suay<sup>5</sup>, taking over one thousand Amerindians in their raids (AGI:SD:809:24/11/1728).

#### The Great Carib Rebellion: 1729 - 1740

Simultaneously French diplomatic intrigue in Europe was attempting to undermine the Spanish presence on the llanos to the north. Basically,

French cardinals in the Vatican managed to secure a Papal Bull nominating an obscure cleric, Nicolas Gervaise Labrid, as a 'Papal Commissioner for Paria and the Orinoco'. With apparent papal backing for French claims to the llanos north of the Orinoco, Labrid arrived in Martinique in 1729. In February he left for Santo Tomé but the Archbishop of Puerto Rico, nominal spiritual head of the Orinoco, ordered his arrest.

Learning of this, Labrid sailed directly to Essequibo but found the Dutch also unenthusiastic at his arrival. By September he had managed to settle with a group of Aguirre River Caribs, under the caciques Tucapabera and Ariwaca. Here Labrid stayed secretly for six months, informing the French of the opportunities for settlement. At the beginning of 1730 he was murdered (Caulin:1966:p.208, Lodaes:Ibid:p.196, Carrocera:1979:pp.24-5).

In his discussion of this event, Civrieux (1976:pp.918-20) suggests that he may have, in fact, been murdered by Spanish agents and not the Aguirre Caribs who were, of course, the first to be blamed. Certainly 'reasons of security' may have persuaded Agustín Arredondo, Governor of Santo Tomé, that such a troublesome cleric was better dead, and certainly his campaign against the Aguirre Caribs in revenge for the death of Labrid was conducted in a halfhearted manner.

Appearing on the Aguirre in 1731, instead of reducing the Caribs, he named their three principal caciques, Tucapabera, Ariwaca and Tocanay, 'Captain Vassals of the King of Spain' and accepted their explanation that only Taricura, a Barima cacique already notorious to the Spaniards, was responsible. Arredondo wrote to the Council of the Indies (AGI:SD:508:2/4/1732) that he found Taricura in a village on the Aguirre but that as they were gathered for a fiesta, he had some five hundred men at his disposal, compared to Arredondo's force of twenty men at arms. Accordingly, after fourteen hours, he returned to the settlement of Araguacare. From here he returned again to the settlement, where he had first discovered Taricura, after three



*El Illmo. S. obispo D. Nicolas Serrano de Larrea  
fue martirizado con toda su familia por los yndios  
del Orinoco el año de .*



days. But it was almost deserted, many of the Indians having returned to the mountains. He rounded up the twenty Caribs that he found there and took them back, in chains, to Santo Tomé.

He says also that although he had other Carib caciques with him, they were unable to locate Taricura as they '... did not know the channels of the Aguirre'.

There are many ambiguous features to Arredondo's account, the major one being that it is highly unlikely that Carib caciques, from the Aguirre, would be unable to locate Taricura in an area which was virtually their 'backyard'. On the other hand there was clearly dissension amongst the Caribs over the killing of Labrid. In view of the fact that Taricura now led a revolt against the Spaniards, which engulfed the Orinoco for the next five years, there was possibly also conflict over how the Spanish were to be dealt with. Thus the caciques Tucapabera, Ariwaca and Tocanay may, by being conciliatory to the Spanish, have been using them to pursue their own quarrels with Taricura, who was clearly a dominant, if not overbearing, Aguirre cacique. However, unless further documentation becomes available, the real reasons for the death of Labrid will remain a mystery.

Spanish anxiety over Labrid's presence among the Caribs of the Orinoco mouth had encouraged them to take measures to neutralise any possible repercussions. Thus the Capuchins founded an ephemeral mission on the Moruca River at the beginning of 1730 and the authorities at Santo Tomé placed two armed pirogues in the mouth of the Orinoco in an attempt to control movement to and from the Essequibo (AGI:SD:584:15/9/1730).

However, these measures were not really adequate to deal with the concerted onslaught that the Caribs, and their Dutch allies, unleashed on the Spanish settlements. As has been mentioned, Taricura and the Barima Caribs, played a central role in these attacks, though many different Carib groups took advantage of the general instability of Spanish control during this

period. Accordingly the general features of this Carib uprising will be presented before the career of Taricura is examined in detail.

In the year after Labrid's death the Caribs of Panapotar rebelled and destroyed the church and houses. A report from the Prefect of Cumaná (AGI:SD:580:17/4/1732) indicates that they immediately re-opened their trading links with the French, on the Tigre River to the South. In 1732 Ximenez made a series of entradas into this area seizing a cacique, Yacabai, and his people as well as one hundred and forty Caribs from the Aguirre River. They were transplanted to the llanos mission of San Joaquin de Pariri (Caulin:1966:p.188). Further entradas were then made against the Warao, round the Laguna de Mamo. From here they were transported to Santa Rose de Ocopi, a Chaima mission, to be used as an auxiliary force against Carib settlements (AGI:SD:575:16/7/1732).

At the end of the following year, 1733, against a background of rising Carib power on the Orinoco, Jurado seized eighty Carib fugitives from the southern entradas and founded Santa Barbara de Currucay on the Aragua River. This foundation was augmented in the following year by fugitives from the Orinoco missions of the Jesuits, destroyed by Taricura (Caulin:Ibid:p.207). From a heavily fortified Currucay, using Indian militia, Jurado multiplied his entradas against the Orinoco, managing to hold off repeated Carib attacks.

In the same year, Carlos Sucre, arriving on the Orinoco to take up his Governorship<sup>6</sup>, called a conference of all the missionary Orders designed to work out the best method of countering the threat from the Caribs (AG I:SD:590:20/3/1734). Although Sucre was unable to eliminate competition between the Orders, he managed to enforce a demarcation<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly the Capuchins began entradas to the south of the Orinoco (AGI:SD:591:21/6/1739), although the first Carib mission was not founded until 1744. Also Sucre secured agreement that, until the south bank was secured, Mamo, not the Capuchin headquarters of Suay, should be the base of armed entradas.

Accordingly more Waraos were seized and settled at Mamo where they were trained as an anti-Carib militia (Caulin:1966:p.215), much needed in view of the repeated assaults on Santa Barbara de Currucay by Carib raiders while fugitives were re-settled at Santa Ana de Anaco as plans were advanced to reinforce the fort at Aragua with mestizos and black runaway slaves<sup>8</sup>.

Following these practical initiatives, Sucre then attempted to wean the Orinoco Caribs from the influence of Taricura. Taking only a minimal escort to avoid provoking attack, Sucre travelled the whole length of the Orinoco, as far as José Gumilla's<sup>9</sup> Guayqueri missions on the Guaviare, trying to persuade Carib groups that they should not leave their settlements and not trade with the Dutch. Despite the fact that Sucre took some three thousand eight hundred knives, four thousand axes, and four thousand two hundred flasks of rum (AGI:SD:632:23/3/1734), and that he considered the Caribs 'beben Aguardiente como agua' (AGI:SD:632:23/4/1735), he had little success. By June the Observants had received warning that the Caura Caribs were planning to destroy their reductions on the lower Orinoco and Sucre heard rumours of a grand alliance, presumably that of the Barima and Caura Caribs under Taricura.

This intelligence proved accurate and the Caura Caribs attacked several reductions on the middle Orinoco, 'cutting to pieces' a settlement of two hundred persons and killing one missionary.

... upon hearing this, he /Sucre/ went in search of the said Caribs but directly they knew it they went off to the hills and he was not able to reach them ... He shows likewise how the missions are on the point of perishing at the hands of the Caribs, in view of which he will do his utmost to try if he can to get together as many as one hundred and fifty men, in order to try to form at the Angostura of the River Orinoco a redoubt with good stakes, in order once and for all to block their way and restrain it. (BGB:BC:APII:p.22, AGI:SD:632:30/6/1735)

Almost simultaneously there was an attack on the new reduction of Mamo by some thirty Carib pirogues from the Caura and Barima, carrying over four hundred warriors. They killed all except five of the Waraos and one of the

three missionaries they found there (AGI:SD:591:12/11/1735) (Caulin 1966: pp.218-20). In this year Taricura also attacked Jesuit reductions (see below).

Under this intense military pressure Sucre made two decisions designed to consolidate the Spanish position. Firstly, he abandoned the fort on the Isle de Fajardo in order to concentrate his forces elsewhere, at Angostura. In 1738 he wrote to the Council of the Indies to explain the position (AGI:SD:591:2/9/1738). Apparently the fort had collapsed twice during construction due to the heavy rains, also he said that the general site was inhospitable, for 'eight months of the year it is plagued with mosquitoes'. Moreover, the elevation of the guns was incorrect so that in fact the Caroni River was still open to Carib vessels while the fort could also be easily bye-passed overland.

Secondly, Sucre re-opened trade with the Dutch, echoing the political realism of the Berrios over a century previously, and encouraged the Capuchins in the foundation of a mission on the Barima, although this did not last out the year. A despatch sent to the Governor of Cumaná at the end of 1735 explains that he was:

unable to carry out suitable measures, both for want of means ... and likewise for want of suitable forces, those of the Indians of the Capuchin missions of Guayana being useless, for they have only recently been converted, and are quite uninured to fire and warfare: also the fort /mission/ existing there /Barima/ is short of men, for this reason nothing further can be taken in hand except defensive measures against the Caribs.

The Observant missions on the llanos, San Joaquin de Pariri and Santa Barbara de Currucay, had a tenuous existence over the next two years, suffering many desertions, especially from San Joaquin. In 1736 the cacique Yacabai attempted to lead his people to freedom but Ximenez managed to contain the rebellion initially. However, Yacabai and some ninety followers eventually escaped and, gathering forces on the Orinoco, returned to liberate the rest of his people.

Ximenez, receiving information as to their approach, managed to get reinforcement from the militia at Aragua and Chaima auxiliaries, from their reduction at Santa Rosa de Ocopi. This force compelled the Caribs to withdraw but they managed to return and free their comrades during the night. While Ximenez pursued these runaways into the mountains Yacabai returned to San Joaquin and burnt it to the ground (AGI:SD:643:28/8/1736).

Although Sucre reported to the Council of the Indies (AGI:C:30:13/8/1737) that little progress was being made with the Carib war, the militia, that he had encouraged and supported at Aragua, were to prove crucial in breaking Carib resistance north of the Orinoco over the next decade. However, before tracing the course of this campaign the exploits of the great Carib war-chief, Taricura, will be examined.

#### Taricura's Challenge: 1733 - 1735

As has been explained, Taricura first became known to the Spaniards because of his alleged involvement in the death of Archbishop Labrid. His age is unknown and the only personal details uncovered are that he was from a settlement on the Barima and that his father, Taguaría, had also been a renowned leader:

Taricura declared that, with the Caribs from below, he is going to burn all the whites that are on the Orinoco and will come up after December with a great fleet. He is an Indian, but, nevertheless, we know that his father came up from the sea in years gone by with more than sixty pirogues ... 10 (BGB:BC:p.163)

He was supported in his rebellion by Araguacare, also a Barima cacique, who had taken his side against the caciques of the Aguirre when they had denounced him as the killer of Labrid. Moreover, initially unknown to the Spaniards, he had permitted Swedish<sup>11</sup> colonists to settle on the Barima, giving him access to more guns.

On his return /the government scout/ reported that he had ... entered the creek called Barima, where, according to the Caribs ... the Swedes were established. They said they had seen a number of white men seeking a place for their settlement, and they had presented the Caribs with beads, knives, cutlasses, hatchets, muskets and spirits and left them much pleased, and expecting their return the Summer following, according to the account of the said Caribs, who also declared that two long boats came to the creek full of Frenchmen and negroes, fugitives on the way to the city of Guayana, who were all slain by the said Indians, who took their boats and all that they had with them. That in the creek there was a Carib chief, son of Chief Taguaría /Taricura/ who had more than two hundred Indians, with numbers of arrows, guns, and broadswords, which force he kept, said the Indian for the whites of Guayana, because they hindered him taking the Indians of the nations of the Orinoco and selling them to the Dutch. That these latter told the aforesaid Indians not to show the Swedes a good place for their settlement, and they themselves would give them all they required ...

(Governor of Cumaná to the King, BGB:BC:APIII:p.81, AGI:SD:648:20/4/1733, 3/2/1733)

Taricura's first major action against the Spanish was in the Summer of 1733. In a petition to the Alcades of Trinidad, Gumilla wrote:

... there came up this Summer from Barima Taricura, the son of Taguaría, and, sheltered under the protection of Araguacare; he went up and terrified all the villages of my mission, threatening death to the missionaries and their escort and to such Indians as might believe the Fathers: and they actually killed the Salina Captain Chabiruma and many of his men belonging to the village of Los Angeles, and descending to the mission of Santa Teresa, they carried off the Salina Captain Aritana with his men: from there they sent a wicked Indian, whom they bribed with some axes to kill Pugdua, the Lieutenant of these missions: this was discovered, and he with four soldiers took up arms. There was a great affray with four pirogues of the said Taricura who withdrew after losing one and four Indians. And after three weeks, being joined by the pirogues of Araguacare, and forming a fleet of nineteen boats, they came against the village of San Joseph. Here they were forcibly driven back by my escort, and pursued for three days down the river to prevent them from burning the villages of San Ignacio and La Concepcion (as they declared they would do). I learned that Araguacre was with them, and I ordered the Captain of my escort to tell him (as he did) that if he was a friend of the Governor of Guyana he was to leave Taricura: but another Indian replied for him, stating the falsehood that he was not there and so we were obliged to attack them all ...

(BGB:BC:p.163)

The Carib pirogues withdrew, Taricura swearing revenge.

Gumilla wrote to the Governor of Trinidad the following:

Being in these missions, which my mother, the Society of Jesus, occupies on this River Orinoco without further protection (after the Divine) than what we await from your Lordship's compassion against the inundations of Caribs from Barima and the sea ... I do not doubt that you will take the most effectual measures to prevent greater injuries ... (BGB:BC:APII:p.162)

But, true to his word, Taricura moved up the Orinoco the following year, 1734, with eight pirogues of warriors from the Barima. Bernard Rotella, Gumilla's aide, writes:

... not content with this he brought a pirogue of Guaraunos Indians, residing at the Mission of Suay and another pirogue of Araguacas, pointing out the former power exercised by the Caribs, and showing the latter the way up to the sources of the Orinoco and persuading both parties to become Caribs. Furthermore, he brought with him two pirogues of Caribs from Cachipo /Guere River/, and one from Anapiri /Pao River/ under Captain Marauana and two pirogues from Curumotopo /Cuyuni River/, and another from an assassin of the Most Illustrious Bishop /Labrid/, called Cabain, another from Arrariana and brother-in-law of Taricura: likewise three pirogues from Tauca /Caroni River/ and two from Puruey /Caura River/ and three from Morichal /Tigre River/, the Captain of one being Acabari of another Marayucari: and twenty canoes, which with three pirogues belonging to Araguacare, amount to forty nine vessels.<sup>12</sup> (BGB:BC:p.165)

Taricura took this fleet to the mission of La Purisma Concepcion on the mouth of the Caura where:

... all the Caribs unanimously decreed to kill me and the soldiers. For this purpose they despatched Taricura by land with men to carry it out. He arrived at some Carib houses three short leagues from this mission and learning that, although I had few troops, I was resolved to resist him, and that we were not sleeping, as a spy he sent by night discovered, he resolved to turn back and join the rest of the fleet and then fall upon us.

In the event the Carib war fleet contented itself with mooring before the mission, leaving about nine at night. Then:

... in sight of the mission of San Joseph the whole fleet began to fire as in a Royal Salute, with the object of terrifying the Indians of the said mission. And, having anchored there, many of them landed and plundered the Indians and their wretched belongings; ... Taricura did not land at the said mission, because he declared that if he went on shore he had sworn not to leave an Otomaco alive, and that they might know that those he might meet on the river on the

way back and whenever he went up or down would have their throats cut.

Thereupon they went to the mission of Los Santos Angeles de Salinas with the intention of killing the Lieutenant Governor of this mission, called Potucua, because he lent his men when the soldiers of the fort, by order of the Governor, Don Augustin de Arredondo, came to kill Taricura for the death of the Bishop. And the said Caribs would actually have destroyed the mission but for the interposition of a son of Araguacare by a Salina woman who was terribly angry with Taricura, telling him that she knew from henceforth the whites would pursue him as they pursued his father, as an infamous traitor, and because he slew the Indians who desired a Missionary Father and were relations of the Spaniards (this is what the Caribs call those we keep in a mission.) Consequently Taricura desisted but he took from Potuca an Indian woman to be a slave. And the other Caribs did not leave a thing they could plunder or a house which they did not hack with swords or machetes.  
(BGB:BC:p.166)

From here Taricura's forces moved to the mission of Santa Teresa where the chief of the mission Aritana, was the son of a Carib and a Salina woman. Here Taricura persuaded Aritana, and the other Salina caciques, Caro and Tavari to desert this mission and:

... thereupon follow the Caribs, and even to go and live with them, so as not to find themselves someday compelled by their own relatives to form a mission. And they forthwith went with the Caribs to the war and Captain Caro sold the Salina to the Caribs, including one of his sisters-in-law, and this is what the Caribs wanted.  
(BGB:BC:p.166)

Leaving Santa Teresa:

In the river, above the Artures or Adoles, they met a village of Maypures who were descending in a body in their canoes to the mission of Los Angeles and by dint of threatening them with death, the Caribs made them turn back: and by the same threats another village of Yuruas, who were about to descend to the said mission and, similarly the Surribas, or Quinubas and Abamis, all of whom are calling out for a missionary. In short the whole Carib fleet (with the Salinas, who had already joined them, and seven Carib vessels which went up in September 1733, with orders to wait there for the fleet) arrived at a Caviri /Caverre/ settlement where they killed everyone, seizing as slaves those under twenty four years of age: and it is to be noted that the smallest Caviri settlement contains about five thousand souls, or at least, three thousand.

From there part of the fleet proceeded to kill other tribes, part with the said Taricura, descended rapidly to look for the Indians who wished for a father, and to kill them, which they did. (BGB:BC:p.167)

In 1735 Taricura moved up the Orinoco once again. With a smaller force, some five hundred Caribs, he attacked Los Angeles, San Joseph, San Miguel and Uyapi, which Gumilla defended (Gumilla:745:II:p.331). Meanwhile other Carib groups, possibly under his direction, in view of the forces he grouped together for the campaign of 1734, raided missions of the Observants and Capuchins (see above).

However, never again was such a Carib war fleet to appear on the Orinoco. Taricura, now earnestly hunted by the Spaniards, was not captured until 1755. But, it is symptomatic of a fundamental change in the balance of forces, in favour of the Spaniards, that Taricura was unable to dislodge the Jesuits, as the 'Caribs from the sea' had done in the 1680's. Accordingly, it is the final victory of the Spanish that dominates the story of the next four decades. Unable to find a focus Carib resistance crumbled under a determined colonial effort, aided by the devastating effects of introduced European and African diseases.

#### The Observant Conquest of the Orinoco Caribs: 1740 - 1756

In the aftermath of the campaigns of Taricura in the early 1730's, various Carib populations on the llanos south of Cumaná continued sporadic resistance, but the Spanish had gained the upperhand in this area. For example, Caribs who had been apprehended trading with the French in the Gulf of Paria in 1738, were all executed (AGI:SD:591·28/6/1739). Moreover the legal position of the Caribs had been adjusted to deal with their rebellious attitudes. A decree of 14/10/1738 (AGI:SD:59·21/6/1739) specifically allowed the continuation of armed entradas against Carib runaways because of the 'special difficulties' involved in reducing them, although this was to be the exclusive responsibility of the ecclesiastical authorities. In this situation the militia based at Aragua made numerous entradas against Carib

settlements in order to re-populate the missions of Santa Ana de Anaco, San Joaquin de Pariri and Santa Barbara de Currucay, which had suffered many raids and revolts during Taricura's campaigns.

The extent to which this militia influenced the llanos Caribs can be gauged both from the success of Ximenez in founding Carib missions in this area by voluntary means and from contemporary reports, concerning Carib settlements.

Thus, in 1740 and 1741, Ximenez founded two new Carib missions, Chamariapa and Pariaguan without recourse to arms. In 1740 Ximenez moved the population of San Joaquin de Pariri to Chamariapa and supplemented it by persuading scattered fugitives to come out of the mountains and settle there (Caulin: Ibid·p.229), and in 1741, he persuaded the cacique Paubia to bring his people to Pariaguan and become a feudal vassal of the King of Spain. Here the cacique was baptised, Juan del Rosario (Caulin: Ibid·p.230).

Caulin (Ibid·p.232) pays tribute to the militia from Aragua in defending these reductions and others, founded later on the Pao, from attacks by Caribs that:

... as beasts of the field lived without obedience or reason, or with more law than appetite and brutal Paganism.  
(Ibid·p.207)

By 1744, having reinforced the fort El Pao, the Observants were ready to start the reduction of the independent Caribs living to the south. In this year also the Observants founded their final mission for the Guarapiche-Guanipa Caribs, Quiamare, supplementing its population over the next five years with Caribs kidnapped from the Aro and runaways caught on the Mesa de Guanipa (Caulin: Ibid·p.238).

Although the Caribs of the Guarapiche-Guanipa were described to the Archbishop of Puerto Rico, in 1744, as 'docilizando' (AGI:SD·591 4/4/1744) the Caribs of the Pao River were far from ready to accommodate the Spanish and, in 1747, the Observants suspended operations on the Pao, due to heavy losses amongst the militia and Indian auxiliaries

(AGI:SD:591.17/6/1747). As a result of this temporary setback the Observants concentrated their efforts on mopping up the remnants of Carib groups left in the north, concentrating them at Quiamare (Caulin:Ibid:p.239).

When the Observants re-entered the Pao in 1749, they did so as a heavily armed force. Fr.Garcia, Commisario of the Missions of Piritu, seized Caribs from near the Caura mouth and transported them to Santa Cruz de Cachipo<sup>13</sup>. The Observants continued their policy of armed entradas over the next three years and by 1752 they had gathered a large force at Pao for a concerted attack on the Carib settlements at the mouth of this river and on the south bank, particularly near the mouth of the Caura. However, the vanguard of this force, under Ximenez, deserted when they encountered their first Carib force, near Puruey. The Observants retreated and took up a fortified position at Moitaco, on the mouth of the Pao. From here a small force entered the Aro River but the local cacique, Oraparena, chose to move his people to the Paragua River, rather than fight the missionaries (Caulin:Ibid:p.247). The Observants withdrew again to Moitaco, reinforcing it again with reduced Amerindians, mostly Palenques and Chaimas, from the Guere and Aragua Rivers.

With this show of force the cacique of the Pao, Carumaca, submitted peacefully to the missionaries and the Commisario suspended armed entradas, as Ximenez had always advised.

In the following year this policy bore further fruit and two caciques from the Aro and Caroni Rivers, Abaruwana and Maradupana, both expressed the desire to become Christians, leading their people to the missions of Turapa and Guaziparo (Caulin:Ibid.p.249).

However, this 'reduction' proved a mere formality, to which the Caribs gave a different interpretation from that of the Spanish. Caulin admits that a little while after the foundation of these missions the Caribs still freely continued with their own form of worship or 'festivals of

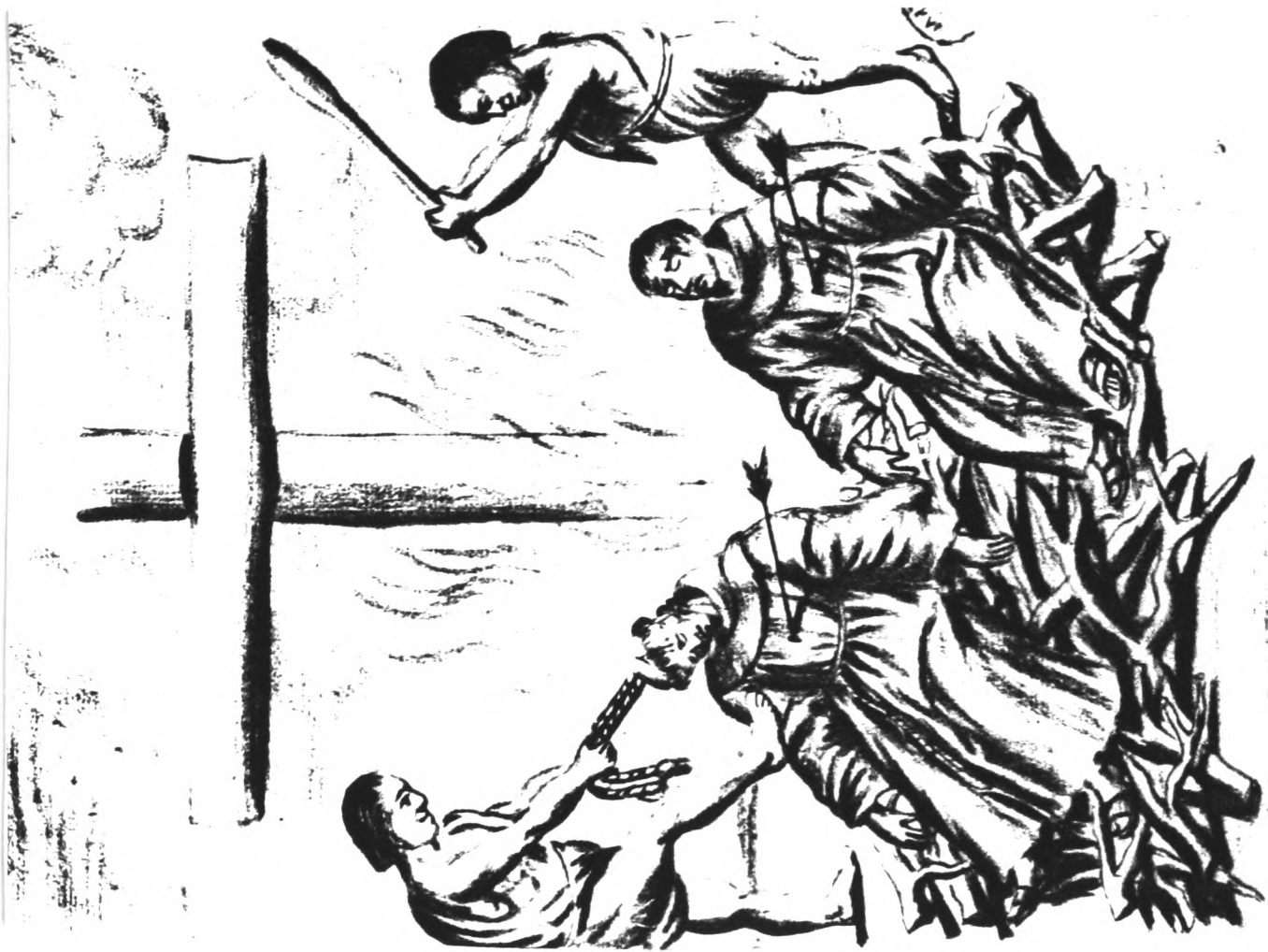
drunkenness' (Ibid:p.256), which were not permitted in true reductions. It was during the course of one of these fiestas that Maradupene, leader of Guaziparo, invited Abaruana, leader of Tarapa to join with him. But Abaruana feared Maradupene's intentions and deserted the mission taking his people to the Upper Caroni (AGI:SD·644:29/4/1752)<sup>14</sup>.

The methods of Ximenez proved more enduringly successful in the foundations of the missions of Mucuras and Atapiri on the Pao, in 1754. Mucuras was founded with the voluntary aid of the cacique Capuana, whose father, Carumaca, had been a good friend to Maradupene, cacique of the Guaziparo. According to Caulin (Ibid:p.259) Capuana said he would follow the example of Maradupene and agreed to found a settlement on the Pao River.

Atapiri was founded with the aid of the reduced Carib Amana, who, since 1749, had been agitating among the settlements of the south bank for co-operation with the Observants. Accordingly, in 1754, he was able to bring thirty three families to the mission of Atapiri (Caulin:Ibid·p.259).

However, Oraparena, who had withdrawn to the Paragua in 1752, under Observant pressure from Moitaco, was inciting Caribs on the Caura to attack these newest reductions. Therefore, the Observants reinforced Mucuras and Atapiri and forced the conversion of the last independent cacique on the Pao, Arimanaca, where a Dutchman was also arrested (Caulin:Ibid:p.267). Arimanaca, 60 years old at the time, was transported with his people to Tapaquire. However, the Caribs fled, after one month, to join the dissidents on the Paragua.

More successfully the Observants managed to hunt down and capture the cacique Tupapo, who had rebelled and taken his people from San Joaquin de Pariri in 1755. He was forced to re-settle at Platanal. So too other fugitives from Pariri were rounded up in this year and used to found Santa Clara de Aribi, on the Pao River. Some two hundred Caribs from all over the llanos were transported to this site (Caulin·Ibid·p.270).



With the foundation of Nuestra Señora del Clari, in 1756, the Observant occupation of these Carib territories was virtually complete, ensuring Spanish control of the Orinoco between the Caura and the Caroni. Carib resistance, now marginalised to the head waters of these rivers, suffered by the wedge being driven between them and their brothers in the Imataca-Essequibo region. So too the access of the Dutch, with all the support they offered the Caribs of this area, was being blocked by the same advances of the Capuchins. It is their campaigns that will now be considered.

#### The Capuchin Conquest of the Imataca/Essequibo

Caribs: 1740 - 1811

Although the reductions of the Franciscans among the south bank Caribs were difficult and required military support in both capturing and controlling the new 'converts' (AGI:SD:644:584:29/4/1752, 15/1/1752), the task of the Capuchins, to the east, was further complicated by the proximity of the Dutch colony of Essequibo and the avenue of communication with imperial rivals this afforded the Caribs.

In 1739 the Marquis de San Felipe y Santiago, reported to the King of Spain, on the strategic considerations involved in the conquest of the south bank Caribs. He recommended that:

... in order to stop the traffic and commerce throughout the Orinoco, not only with the Dutch and French, but also with the Carib Indian (which is the most essential matter required), he considers it sufficient that two pirogues of moderate size, each one armed with twenty five or thirty men and carrying swivel guns or falconets, guns, pistols, lances, swords and firearms, should cruise along the Orinoco and some of its creeks from its mouths as far as the Jesuit Missions. (BGB:BCC:p.185)

He rejected the idea of a fort at Angostura because:

... although ... it is the most appropriate place for intercepting the passage of the river in those parts, it nevertheless remains open to the foreigners and the Caribs for their commerce and hostilities from Angostura as far as

the mouth. There are twenty leagues of river on which many Caribs are established and especially those of Aguirre, Caroni and Tacorapo, who carry on traffic, the latter sailing up the Caroni ... communicate by land at no great distance with the Indian Caribs, who are established above Angostura, on the rivers Caura, Tauca, Puruey, Curumtopo and in other places, where they sail up the river to seize Indians of other tribes, whom they sell, both males and females, as slaves to the Dutch, with whom they carry on this trade and that of horses, which to the Dutch and French are a source of vast profit and benefit ... The Dutch in return for these and other products furnish the Indians not only with various kinds of merchandise ... but also with guns, gunpowder, ammunition and other supplies with which they waged war making their conversion and that of numberless Indian tribes more difficult. Fearing, as they do the power and cruelty of the Caribs, they do not venture to receive, although many would like to do so the Missionary Fathers: and also on account of the many experiences they have had of their opposition and in particular that of the Mamo war, in which the Caribs not only killed the Missionary Father and soldiers who escorted him but also murdered all the Guarauno Indians already settled without exempting women and children from their barbarity, cutting off their arms and legs for food ... (BGB:BCC:p.186)

In this situation the Marquis recommended that:

... having been appointed to command most of the detachments which have penetrated that river /Orinoco/ and its margins during the incessant skirmishes that have occurred with the Carib tribe, experience has taught him that it is necessary and important to make two invasions at the same time, one in the Caura and Puruey and the other in the Aquire, each detachment being composed of one hundred and fifty Spaniards, veterans and militia men suitable for penetrating the woods ... together with one hundred and fifty friendly Indians ... and by these means he is persuaded the object will be attained of punishing their cruelty, and forcing them to quit the country, leaving the other Indians free to settle there. For although they long at present to have missionaries among them, they do not dare, owing to their experience of the opposition of the Caribs and what they did in burning and destroying the village of Mamo ... until the Caribs see that they are hotly pursued, they will continue in their audacity. (BGB:BCC:p.186)

'Hot pursuit' is, of course, a policy favoured even today in South Africa, for dealing with guerilla incursions and proved equally deadly when employed against the Caribs east of the Caroni. So too the military tactic of trapping the Caribs between two armed forces simultaneously entering different southern tributaries of the Orinoco was essentially the strategy employed by the Observants and Capuchins. The Observant drive south has

already been outlined, the Capuchin campaign that complimented it, will now be considered.

In 1740, the Capuchins moved into the Yuruari River valley from their headquarters at Suay. However, it was to be four years, before they were able to found their first Carib reduction in this area. There were two reasons for this, firstly Carib raiding, backed by the French, Dutch and English, was particularly intense following Capuchin activity on the Yuruari River and secondly because the Capuchins had few resources at their disposal, not having developed a militia, as had the Observants at Maturin, Aragua and El Pao.

Both the French and English were active on the Orinoco at this time. In 1740, the French were to be found trading in the delta (AGI:SD:584:11/7/1740), with the Waraos and Parias, as well as the Caribs. In the following year the English and Caribs raided along the Orinoco and down the Caroni, destroying mission posts, and then burning Santo Tomé de Usupamo to the ground (AGI:C:120:1/7/1741, Carrocera·1979:I:p.32). Usupamo was not immediately rebuilt and the Spanish retreated to the fort of Santo Tomé de Castillos<sup>15</sup>.

Simultaneously, on the Paria peninsular, English forces landed and tried to form a bridgehead, but were routed by troops from Cumaná (AGI:C:120:4/7/1741).

In this year also the Capuchins were forced to abandon their Moruca mission due to smallpox and measles epidemics (AGI:C:120:13/10/1741). A report compiled for Governor Diguja, in 1763, notes that in this year the Capuchins:

... have lost eight missions already established from various misfortunes which have occurred, namely smallpox, measles, invasions of the Caribs and hostility of the English in the year 1741, in which disasters more than one thousand Indians perished. (BGB:BC:APIII:p.1ff)

In 1742, the Caribs and English raided along the Caroni once again. They destroyed Spanish settlements and Capuchin missions (Unata and Tipures) (AGI:SD:584,591·20/6/1742, 14/7/1742). Espinosa de los Monteros, the new Governor at Santo Tomé, wrote urgently to the Governor of Cumaná requesting

reinforcements for the Capuchins to make entradas into the Caroni area (AGI:SD:643:30/9/1742). While it was reported to the Council of the Indies that there was a:

... miserable condition [in Guayana] in consequence of the invasion made by the English in those parts in the year 1742, when they burnt two villages of converts and harmed the rest: from which occurrence, and from the incursion of Carib Indians into the same territory, who have likewise pillaged and ravaged it, a great tumult has arisen, and so much restlessness among the converts, that in order not to abandon them some of the religious have had to sacrifice their lives. (BGB:BC:APII:p.43)

By 1755, the Capuchins had received sufficient support for them to found their first mission at Cunuri and, spurred by inter Order rivalry, had equalled the Observant total, of five Carib reductions, by 1749.

By 1746, Capuchin explorations of this area had uncovered the secret forward post of the Dutch on the Cuyuni River and, employing reduced Indians from Paria, destroying this post, they went on to found a new Carib reduction at El Palmar, with prisoners from the Waini River.

Storm van Gravesande, the new Dutch Governor of Essequibo, wrote to the Directors of the West India Company concerning this attack (BGB:BC:APII:p.45 - quoted pp.376-7 below). Apparently Amerindians friendly to the Spanish had attacked Carib villages on the Waini River, while on the Cuyuni River the Caribs had also made known to Gravesande the existence of a new Spanish outpost. However, he restrained them from destroying it out of fear of Spanish retaliation.

In 1748, the Capuchins founded two more Carib reductions at Tupuquen and El Miamo. However, in this year all their missions on the Caroni and Yuruari were struck by epidemics of measles and smallpox, in which many of the Amerindian inhabitants were killed. Though by 1754, their populations had been restored by repeated entradas into the unaffected mountain regions (AGI:C:120:1/6/1754).

After their fifth reduction, in 1749, at Curumo, the Capuchins were halted by a Carib and Dutch counter-attack. The Prefect of the Missions reported the following from Suay, in 1750:

The Caribs of the forests having murdered the Captain of Indians of the Guaica nation, with his comrades, who were engaged in establishing with their people a village, with good beginnings and hopes of very great fruit, at a place called Avechica, on the banks of the River Supamo, that village is now completely lost. For on account of that murder the said Guaicas have returned again to the forests. There are also Indians of that nation in the missions near Yuruari, and they frequently demand to be allowed to avenge the murder of their people ... the murderers were some Caribs who ... had rebelled in the settlement of Tupuquen, commanded by the Indian Cararivara, the Alcalde of said settlement, one of the principal instigators of said rebellion: and that the said aggressors were living in the interior on the River Cuyuni and the very mouth of the River Corumo, which flows into the said river: that they were living with some Dutchman from the Colony of Essequibo, engaged in Slave Traffic for the said Colony, and that the principle reason for their murdering the said Captain was because he was founding a settlement in the neighbourhood of Avechica, and thereby was closing the pass of the River Usupamo and hindering them from passing without being discovered ... these very same Caribs are still living at the mouth of the River Corumo, buying Indian slaves. (BGB:BC:APII:p.145).

At the same time the reductions at Curumo, Cunuri, Tupuquen and El Palmar were attacked by Caribs under the cacique Maracayan, from the Curumo River. In these attacks many of the Christian Caribs were killed as well as the Spanish militia (AGI:SD:584:22/9/1752) and the reductions burnt to the ground (AGI:SD:592:22/9/1752) with four missionaries being killed (AGI:SD:644:28/11/1750: see also Carrocera:1979:I:p.34).

In the following two years Caribs travelling up the Cuyuni continued

to harass the Capuchin entradas and reductions, while in league with the Dutch they attacked Santo Tomé itself (AGI:SD:592:22/8/1750, 29/4/1752, 22/9/1752). However, the Capuchins persevered and founded a sixth Carib reduction at Aguacagua, following numerous entradas into the Essequibo-Imataca region, a final bastion of Carib independence. In 1755, the Prefect of Capuchin Missions reported that 'after immense labour' they were making progress with their reductions but that:

... the Caribs ... never ceased their total hostilities in these parts /Sierra Imataca/, for this unique nation, which is permanently indomitable, and for whose conversion it is necessary to apply maximum force, not solely for their spiritual and temporal well-being, but also to create an obstacle to these enemies /the Dutch/.  
(AGI:SD:592:23/12/1755)

However, in 1754 the Real Expedition de Limites, arrived from Spain, under the command of José Iturriaga<sup>16</sup>. Charged with the exploration and pacification of the Orinoco, this display of Spanish power was to turn the methodical reduction of the Caribs into a rout. Beginning with diplomacy, Iturriaga sent his Second in Command, Eugenio Alvarado, with a vanguard of one hundred men to Santo Tomé, with orders to attempt negotiation with the independent Carib caciques.

In November 1753, he received the following instructions:

Considering that it is the intention to deprive them /the Caribs/ of every means of subsistence ... I communicate to you some order ... to make an effort to see if it be possible to pacify and reduce this Carib nation, and bring them into our missions, by offering them all the inducements possible and compatible with our neighbouring provinces ... On this matter the King wishes that in your journey from Cumaná to Rio Negro you will seek an opportunity of bringing about a conference of the Chiefs of that nation for the purpose of attaining the above mentioned end; by offering them in his Royal name whatever presents might appear to you adequate for the purpose ... and he will confirm whatever you offer on the occasion of the Indians fulfilling their part. (BGB:BC:APII:p.89)

Iturriaga's intentions concerning the Caribs are further clarified in a letter to Don José de Caravajal y Lancaster the following month:

I know by experience that the Caribs of the Orinoco will not abandon their territories to come and dwell in other parts ... however much we may flatter them with advantageous offers, nor will they condescend to admit missionaries. But it may be that they might permit us to found a town of ours in their territories as their friends and allies.

And if this be successful we shall succeed in reducing them by degrees. (BGB:BC:APII:p.90)

Clearly then the Spanish were aware that the missionaries had made only limited advances in controlling the Carib population and were unlikely, on present standing, to be able to reduce those outside immediate mission influence, within a practicable time scale. So also, following Sucre's attempts to buy off Carib resistance in the 1730's it was perceived that Carib independence was not negotiable, even if Spanish 'friendship' was.

In the event Alvarado's overtures to Carib caciques were generally unsuccessful but there were minor exceptions. In 1754, in conjunction with the Capuchins, Alvarado induced a cacique from the Caroni, Pattacon, to settle at the mission of Morocuri. Alvarado wrote:

... there came into my presence, and, through an interpreter, I spoke with, the chief Pattacon (who formerly lived in the islands of the Caroni), and is now settled with the greater part of his people in the mission of Morocuri, founded by Fr. Joseph de Guardia, and I took care to treat him well so as to make sure of him; and as he was already reduced to the civilized life, it was not necessary to treat of pacification; but through him I offered good treatment to his cousin, the cacique Tumuco and to the cacique Oraparena, who styles himself 'King of the Parava'. (BGB:BC:APII:p.110)

However, Alvarado was made to look a fool:

... Pattacon, who, like all of them is a very great liar, when he saw the presents made to him and to all his followers, he offered to bring me Tumuco and other caciques, and to gather a number of Indians forthwith for settlement in the mission of Aguacagua. He fixed a month for this service, but he deceived me for he did nothing, and under futile pretext excused himself from fulfilling his undertaking. Tumuco, his cousin, who is just such another, has deceived Fr. Joseph De Guardia, a true labourer for the Lord on the eastern banks of the Caroni, with hopes of coming into the settlement, but he has raised constant difficulties as to what he wants, and I have not even seen him for up to this time he has not appeared. (BGB:BC:APII:p.110)

Indeed Alvarado wrote further to Iturriaga:

... it is necessary first of all to remove some unintentional misconception which your Excellency is under for want of accurate information. The first is, that there is not merely one celebrated chief of the Caroni, but several; the second is, that those of the sources of the Creek Aguirre are many, and of equal reputation and strength ... and the third is that the sources of the River Caroni have not hitherto been ascertained. (BGB:BC:APII:p.110)

Under such confusions and difficulties it is hardly surprising that Alvarado's diplomatic initiatives were unsuccessful.

In 1755, Iturriaga and the rest of the Royal Expedition arrived at Santo Tome, where many fell ill<sup>17</sup>. From here Iturriaga led an expedition up the Caroni as far as the Cano Morichi where they encountered the fugitive Taricura, leader of the great rebellion of the 1730's. They persuaded Taricura and Tumuco, friend of Pattacon to settle at the mission of Morocuri (AGI:SD:593:12/9/1755). But disputes between these three leaders led to the mission being deserted by the end of the year<sup>18</sup>.

Nonetheless plans for the reduction of the Caribs proceeded quickly outpacing these isolated setbacks. In 1757, the Spanish began a military build up to make a concerted push against the last Carib strongholds in Venezuela. Using soldiers from Spain, black runaways from Essequibo and reduced Indians, especially Arawaks, forts on the Orinoco were reinforced and equipped with new artillery (AGI:C:30:9/11/1758, 11/12/1757, 19/4/1758).

At the same time entradas by the Capuchins in the Imataca region (Carrocera:1979:I:pp.42-3), plus Spanish raids along the Cuyuni, provoked Carib withdrawal from these areas into the Mazaruni and Rupununi River areas. The Director General of Essequibo, Gravesande, wrote to the Dutch West India Company (BGB:BC:APIII:p.143 - quoted p.279 below) that the Caribs living on the Cuyuni River had informed the Company's creoles that around 100 Spaniards had raided the Cuyuni Post and had captured the Postholder and his family.

Having destroyed the post utterly the soldiers then threatened to do the same to the whole of Essequibo.

Again the following year Gravesande writes:

The Spaniards continued to stay where they are and entrap and drive away all the Caribs living there [Cuyuni]. The latter on their part are not taking matters quietly but are beginning to make vigorous resistance!  
(BGB:BC:APIII:p.175)

Combined with Spanish raiding in the east, the troop at Santo Tomé also intimidated the Caribs of the Caura and Aro, forcing a desertion of the large settlement at Moitaco and a regroupment towards headwaters of these rivers, which acted as a focus for Carib resistance until its complete conquest by Governor Centurion in 1771 (Caulin:1966:II:pp.269-70).

In a similar manner, Caulin indicates that there was a Carib bastion in the '... mountains of the Paragua' where Carib refugees concentrated themselves, keeping open their trading with the Orinoco via a southern route, ascending the Uraricoera River and from there descending either the Orinoco or the Caura. Humboldt estimated that there were still some 5,000 free Caribs in this area at the end of the eighteenth century<sup>19</sup>. (Humboldt:1957: p.395).

Iturriaga increased this pressure on the Caribs by founding a fort on the Cuchivero River in 1758, with the aid of the Caverre, thus completely denying the Caribs access to the Orinoco, except from the south via the Caura River (AGI:C:30:19/4/1758). That these measures were proving effective is attested to by the fact that Carib raiding on the Orinoco had all but ceased. Certainly attacks continued on the forward Spanish posts in the east, especially in the Yuruari River valley but the tide of war had changed and documents of these years more often refer to Spanish raids against the remnants of Carib settlements than vice versa (AGI:C:30:258,584). There were also raids deep into Dutch territory, particularly the Waini and Pomeroon Rivers, resulting in the fortification of a Spanish position on the Moruca in 1758.

In 1759, José Diguja y Villagomez was appointed the new Governor in Cumaná. Understanding the initiative gained over the Caribs by the Royal Expedition he reinforced Santo Tomé and Moitaco, and founded Ciudad Real. Not all was in the Spaniards favour though, and in the same year the rebel cacique from the Upper Caura, Maracayan attacked Morcuri, and, releasing the Carib captives, led them towards the headwaters of the Paragua/Caroni (AGI:C: 26:17/4/1760).

In the following year, 1760, Iturriaga received intelligence that indicated that the Caribs were preparing another offensive from the Caura and Aro against the new forts founded there of Real Corona and Ciudad Real<sup>20</sup>, under the messianic leadership of a cacique styling himself 'King of the Caribs'. In April 1760, Iturriaga wrote the following despatch to the authorities in Cumaná:

Since my arrival in Guyana I have treated the Caribs with kindness and presents, in order that, leaving their dwellings in the hills, they might come to settle in the Missions: but they, far from giving ear to my persuasions, have gone higher up beyond the falls of the River Paragua, Aro and Caura, considering them insurmountable to the efforts of the Spanish. Thence they made war upon other nations, took slaves and sent them to Essequibo . . . .

The Caribs in the settlements made repeated journies to the dwellings in the woods, obtaining permission from the missionary Fathers on the pretext of bringing to the settlements some of their relatives and occupied themselves in the same work as those in the woods. Some remained there and others returned to their settlements. Others threatened, after the Expedition had left to take vengeance on the Spaniards who had subjected them to the missions, and there were not wanting some who declared themselves King of the Caribs and King of the Orinoco. The new settlements, Real Corona and Ciudad Real, might be the object of their vengeance, and are in a bad position with such rascally neighbours.

To prevent so many evils I despatched the Lieutenant of Infantry, Don Antonio Mayhew, to the Aroi with twelve men of the troop, and with twelve Indian Cabres . . . the naval Sub Lieutenant Vicente Dioz left with an equal number of troops and Cabres for Caura, arranging the time so that both surprises should be executed at the same moment. This was done and so successfully that without firing a gun or striking a blow all those of Aroi were seized with the exception of those who were on expeditions for capturing slaves from other nations, and, word was sent from the Missions of Piritu to the settlement of Pilar, in order that those dispersed among the other ancient Missions might be hindered in returning to their old dwellings.

The Caribs from the Paragua had proceeded to the River Parime /Uraricoera/: some from Caura had likewise gone to the neighbourhood of Essequibo and the rest were moved to follow them... On the road to Pilar as many as eighty took flight, and sought refuge in the neighbourhood of the settlement of Mucura and Tapiri according what the missionary Fathers have written to me ... (BGB:BC:APII:pp.183-4)

In this manner all but the very last independent Carib groups of the Orinoco south bank were crushed. This action by Iturriaga, with up to three thousand five hundred Caribs already held under mission control was, perhaps, the 'Wounded Knee' of these people.

Indeed two years later, Diguja was able to write:

I have made visits ... especially for the good government and proper treatment, of the Indians, and to prevent the evil effects of intoxication in the Carib missions on the banks of the Orinoco: pointing out to the Deputies of Barcelona, Aragua, Pao and Guayana, the districts to which they ought to hurry at the slightest rumour of disturbance ... Owing to these measures ... all the lands and ranges of these provinces are traversed without the least risk, and a man can now go alone to and from Guayana without any fear. Twenty years ago it could not be done without a strong escort. No foreigners allied to the Caribs are now seen in the said country, nor Caribs save those of a settlement. By sea through the Golfo Triste and the mouths of the Orinoco all these natives, who are sailors by profession pass to and fro with equal security, as they are excellent pilots for both the north coasts and the River Guarapiche. (BGB:BC:APIII:p.1ff)

Nonetheless, the Caribs were still at liberty in those territories under Dutch control, to the east of the Sierra Imataca and, accordingly, the Capuchins continued their entradas into this area (Carrocera:1979:I:p.45).

In 1761, a report was submitted on the progress of Capuchin missions in Guayana:

It should first be noted that nearly all the sixteen missions aforesaid are still being increased by new Indians reclaimed from the forests, or who are taken in as fugitives. Secondly, that it is very difficult to gather together many Indians in the same place for two reasons: Firstly, because they are dispersed in small hamlets, and it is necessary to bring them from a distance to establish them in one spot and they do not wish to leave their own places: secondly, because where many are united it is necessary that there should be many chiefs among them, who are seldom friendly, by strange chance, and this causes each, with his adherents, to withdraw whenever

they disagree among themselves, which frequently happens so that it is extremely difficult to keep many Indians in subjection, especially those of the Carib nation.<sup>21</sup>  
(BGB:BC:APII:pp.183-4)

The Spanish partly overcame these problems by the extensive use of an Akawaio militia from the Sierra Imataca region. Dutch archives indicate that the Caribs and Akawaios of this area had been sporadically raiding each other from the seventeenth century onwards, interfering with the dye trade (see chapter IV). The Spanish, turning this hostility to their own advantage founded a new mission, in 1763, at Caruachi, on the Caroni (AGI:C:11:22/3/1764).

With the accession of Charles III to the Spanish throne, an era of reform commenced. In Guayana this meant there was increased pressure on the missions to give up some of their privileges over the Indian population. In 1763, José Solano became the new Governor of Guayana and, together with Iturriaga, pursued the twin aims of reducing missionary power and consolidating independent status from the Governor of Cumaná for the Governor of Guayana<sup>22</sup>.

As part of this programme work began on a new capital for Guayana at Angostura and, with Dutch forces tied down by the Berbice Slave Revolt (see Chap. IV), trade was re-opened with Essequibo. So also Solano in Cumaná managed to engineer the appointment of Manuel Centurion, well known for his anti-mission attitude, to the Governorship of Guayana, in 1765. It was Centurion's historical role to complete the conquest of Caribana and establish an effective civil power centralised at Angostura, over and against the feudal missions and, in 1767, as a result of these anti-clerical pressures throughout the Spanish Empire, the Jesuits were expelled from South America. However, this little effected the final stages of Carib reduction, and the Capuchins were able to found another Carib mission, Cumamo, using their Akawaio auxiliaries (AGI:C:30:3/9/1769), in attacks on settlements as far away as the Barima and Moruco Rivers.

Together Solano and Centurion now moved to close the last avenues of communication, for the Caribs, into Spanish Guayana<sup>23</sup>. During 1769/70 forces under Centurion travelled along the Orinoco and, reaching Las Esmeraldas, launched a series of raids along the Padamo and Cunucunuma River valleys (Humboldt:1907:II:p.268).

Centurion wrote, at the end of 1770:

... I have subsequently occupied the mouth of the River Erevato where it flows into the Caura and placed there a stronghold and a detachment to further the conversion to Civilization and Christianity of the multitudes of savage Indians in these parts. (BGB:BC:APIV:p.77)

Centurion goes on to detail a plan for a road, consisting of a chain of block houses from the Erebato to Esmeralda, which were built over the next six years<sup>24</sup>. In order to reinforce this defence against Carib penetration from the south, in 1771 Centurion founded the forts of Borbon and Carolina<sup>25</sup> to control access to the Caura and Turapa Rivers and went on in the same year to found the 'cities' of Barceloneta and Guiror on the Paragua (see map 5). From here the final entradas were made against the Caribs of Quiriquiripa, the last independent groups on the Aro-Caura Rivers (AGI:C:12:21/5/1772).

The Capuchins also founded their last Carib reduction at Guri, with captives from the Cuyuni and Venamo Rivers, in this year, marking the effective end of their conquest of this area (AGI:C:12:13/7/1771).

Now only the Caribs of the Dutch territories lay beyond the reach of the Spanish, but with their bases on the Paragua, Caroni, and Caura the Spaniards were able to infiltrate this area. Indeed, the Spanish had, by this time, crossed from the headwaters of these rivers to the Uraricoera River and had even managed to establish a fort on the Majari tributary (BGB:BrC:Ist Mem.: Ann.I:p.95, 151:1903). Thus during entradas on the upper Caroni River the Capuchins captured the rebel caciques Maracayan and Tumuco. Although Maracayan subsequently escaped and led a successful attack on the Orinoco mission of Morocuri, freeing the Caribs there and taking them to Dutch territory (BGB:BC:APIV:p.106).

However, Centurion had alienated the missionaries of the Orinoco through a series of his actions (Carrocera:1979:I:pp.49-59). Most important of these was the installation of military 'controllers' in the Caroni missions, in 1771, and then, in 1777, by establishing a civil Carib reduction at Panapana (see Table VI), with prisoners from entradas made on the upper Caroni. As a result Centurion was dismissed as Governor of Guayana, in 1777, due to pressure from the missionaries Orders in the Spanish Court<sup>26</sup>.

Nonetheless the conquest of Caribs was virtually complete. Only in the Dutch enclaves of Essequibo and Surinam were independent groups, of any significant size, left. The Capuchins, right up to the start of the Venezuelan War of Independence, in 1816, continued to make successful entradas along the Cuyuni to the south and east against remnant Carib settlements, but more particularly against the Akawaios, who had previously helped in the reduction of the Caribs<sup>27</sup>.

After independence the majority of Guayana missions were deserted (see below), by the Caribs who left for Essequibo, only to return to Venezuela in modern times. Had their resistance endured but a few decades longer they might never have had to leave.

### The Spanish Missions

#### (i) The Growth of the Mission System

As can be seen from the preceding history of the conflicts along the Orinoco in the 18th century it was the missionaries who achieved, by violent as well as more peaceful means, the final reduction of the Caribs where the conquistadors of earlier centuries had failed and whatever may have been the individual motivations of mission personnel, as an institution the mission had a key role to play in the establishment and expansion of Spanish imperialism in the New World (see Boxer:1978). Thus, on the one hand, it was present to

'civilise' the frontier, to instruct the Amerindians on the edge of Spanish settlement in the Catholic faith and to thus discipline them ideologically to the point that they could be used by the civil authorities for the benefit of the state, although the reluctance of the missionaries in Venezuela to do this caused bitter disputes with successive Governors of Guayana (see below and note 26 above).

On the other hand, the mission was also a political and military institution which could defend the outposts of empire from the encroachment of foreign powers and to extend them by opening up new lands<sup>28</sup>. In virtue of this function the state offered financial and military aid. As a frontier institution, the mission was expected to move continuously into new territory, turning "reduced" and instructed Indians over to the state. Due to the difficulties of these processes in Venezuela and to the slowness with which the Spanish entered the interior, particularly the Guayana region, the mission was to remain the main agency of Spanish imperialism among the Indians until the very end of the colonial period.

Although mission work in Venezuela began early in the 16th century, for with the conquistadors had come friars to evangelise the Amerindian peoples, the mission, as a recognised institution of the state for the fulfilment of the programme outlined above, did not appear until the middle of the 17th century. The first missionaries came on their own initiative, being given leave, by the King, merely to undertake the evangelisation of the Amerindians. They were granted no aid. With respect to them, the Spanish monarchs pursued a policy similar to that followed in the political sphere with the conquistadors and so early evangelisation was left to individual initiative and, giving little or no financial support, royal control was commensurately weak.

As we have seen early on both Dominicans and Franciscans attempted to establish themselves on the eastern coast of Venezuela, but along with the

celebrated colony of Bartolomé de Las Casas, they soon reaped, through the complete destruction of their enterprises, the result of Amerindian hostility to slave traders. The activity of the church then shifted to the west, where the first bishopric in Venezuela was established at Coro, in 1531.

Missionaries also appeared along the Orinoco for the first time in the 16th century. Apparently a Franciscan accompanied Antonio de Berrío in all his explorations and participated in the foundation of Santo Tomé, in 1592 (Ramos:1955:p.6) and a few years later a number of Dominicans arrived and established a monastery here. However, by the end of the century this establishment was abandoned and with the collapse of this enterprise missionary activity along the Orinoco appears to have ended for a number of decades (see Rivero:1956).

Indeed, generally, the military invasions of Venezuela had largely failed to subdue the Amerindian peoples, other than in the coastal regions and, in recognition of this fact, Philip II, in 1652, ordered that the armed conquest cease and in a royal decree of that same year initiated the mission system (Ramos:Ibid:pp.2-3)<sup>29</sup>. Under the terms of this decree, Philip II granted the Capuchins of Aragon<sup>30</sup> a large part of the province of Cumana and in 1658 they were also established in the province of Caracas. This division of the Franciscans was to become the dominant missionary order in Venezuela while the Observants, usually referred to simply as Franciscans, were second in importance. Dominicans, Augustinians, Jesuits, Candelarians, and Mercedarians were all later located in other parts of Venezuela (see: Watters: 1933).

However, rivalry between these Orders in Guayana was a recurrent theme throughout the 18th century because of the desire for ever an increasing number of converts. The legal basis for such disputes dated back to 1588 in which year it was decreed (Valladolid:1/10/1588) that no Order could enter any territory which another had entered first. Thus the origin

of the claim of the Franciscans to the whole of the Guayana region was the fact that Antonio de Berrio had been accompanied by members of their Order (Simon:1963:p.606). However, since they had quickly deserted the region the Jesuits also felt that they could advance a strong claim to this region because of, somewhat ironically, the missionary work done by the French Jesuit, Pierre Mesland, on the Guarapiche and his subsequent detention at Santo Tomé in the 1660's<sup>31</sup> (see chapter II). Moreover it was only the efforts of the Jesuits on the mid-Orinoco, Casanare and Meta in the period 1670-90, though eventually unsuccessful due to Carib opposition, that had maintained any missionary presence in this region of the New World (Ramos: 1955:pp.7-8).

Although the Governors of this region made various attempts to encourage missionary work at the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th century (see note 1), it was not until the 1720's that any real advances were made in re-settling the Amerindians at designated sites and creating the stable economic infrastructure on which the evangelisation of the Amerindians could proceed (Lodares:Ibid:pp.181-7, Carrocera:1979:I:p.21, and see below) and it was not until 1734 that, under Governor Sucre, that a detente was achieved between the various Orders active on the Orinoco<sup>32</sup>.

It should also be emphasised that it was the difficulties that were being experienced in the reduction of the Caribs which helped to exacerbate these inter-Order conflicts. Following the defeat of the Jesuits by the Caribs on the mid-Orinoco in the 1680's, the attacks led by the Carib war-chief, Taricura, in the 1730's, were blamed by the Jesuits on the entradas being made by the Franciscans against the Orinoco Caribs at this time. Indeed it was because the Jesuits lost these missions east of the Cuchivero, due to Taricura's raids, and just as the demarcation agreement was being hammered out, that this section of the Orinoco was finally assigned to the Franciscans (Ramos:Ibid:pp.12-13).

Nonetheless these inter-Order rivalries continued into the 1740's, not least because the area of the Orinoco-Meta-Apure confluences was appreciated as an area of great aboriginal significance both because of the rich turtle beaches there and because of its position at the heart of a network of Amerindian trade routes between the sub-Andean and llanos regions, with consequent significance for communications throughout the Orinoco basin<sup>33</sup>.

Even after many reductions had been founded their frequent instability meant that many fugitives might end up in the missions of rival Orders<sup>34</sup>, fuelling suspicions further, while the involvement of the clerical authorities in civil territorial disputes between the Governor of Caracas and the Governor of Cumaná again emphasises the worldly concerns which often informed ecclesiastical thinking (Ramos:1955:p.25).

Despite these conflicts, as agents of territorial expansion the mission system proved successful, especially in eastern Guayana where they acted as a spearhead pressed against the Dutch enclave of Essequibo. Watters (1933:p.24) writes:

Since 1734 the missions had been organised into a veritable institution of the state: compared to the simple Dutch posts, the villages founded and peopled by the missionaries represented a colonising effort both serious and solid.<sup>35</sup>

(ii) The Organisation and Development of the Missions

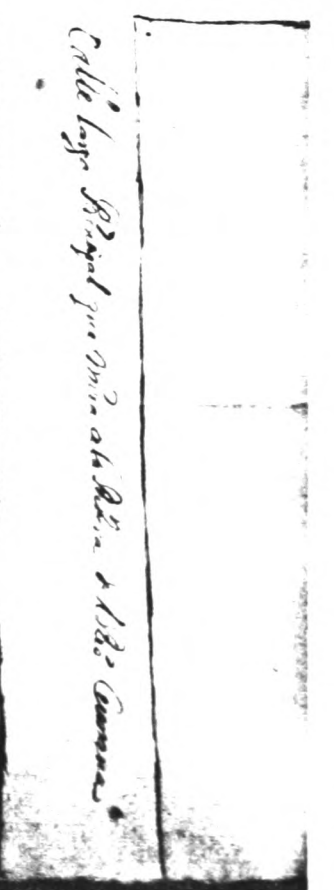
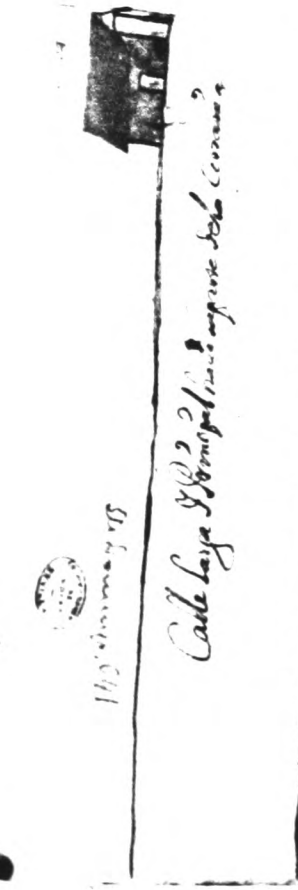
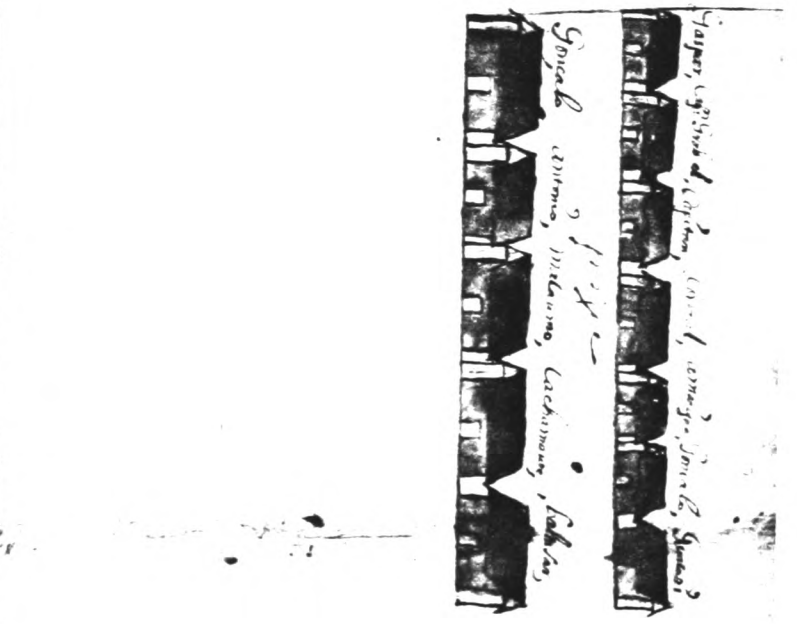
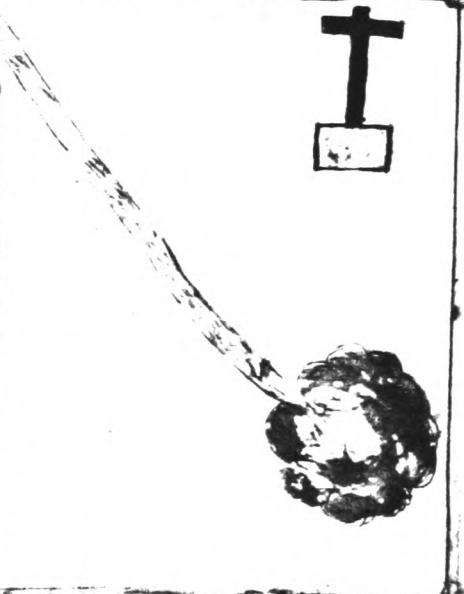
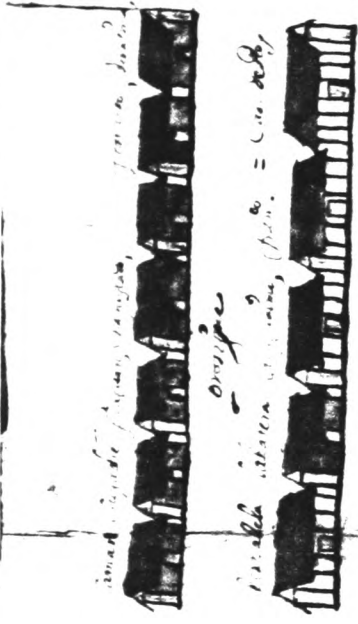
In the report prepared by Eugenio Alvarado for the Real Expedition des Limites in 1755 (BGB:BC:III:p.426ff) the processes by which the missionaries reduced the Amerindians to obedience was outlined (see also Carrocera:1979:I:pp.xxi-xiv).

Following the entradas into Amerindian villages, which might, as we have seen, have resulted in a re-location of the population by voluntary or even forceful means, each of the new missions was assigned a priest as presidente to whom fell the task of organising the economic, political and spiritual life of the mission<sup>36</sup>.

*Handwritten notes in the top-left corner, possibly describing a specific area or street.*



*Handwritten notes in the top-right corner, including the name 'Calle de Santa de Pe' and other illegible text.*



Each of these new missions was apportioned a basic supply of cattle to feed the population, although until the 1750's it appears that the supply was quite inadequate and the Amerindians were required to grow not only their customary staples, such as maize and manioc, in order to feed themselves, but also to feed the priest and troops who watched over them. However:

... by a progressive diversification of the Indian agriculture and the development of cattle ranching, the missions were soon able to assist the principal civil settlement on the Orinoco, Santo Tomé. (Robinson:1967:p.126)

Although entitled to grants from the Crown for the upkeep of the missions, in practice this was rarely, if ever, received (Lodares:1929:III: p.169), and the missionaries were thrown back on their own resources. In the case of the Capuchins they organised themselves into a primitive co-operative with a Common Fund, managed by a procurador for the benefit of all the settlements and into which all profits from their ranching and agricultural activities were paid.

The procurador, under the supervision of the supreme authority of the Prefect of the missions, arranged for the supply and purchase of all goods to the missions as well as developing the markets for mission products. Thus European clothing and salt, used in the curing of hides, were traded in from the Cumaná region and metal tools from Europe. These items were then used to pay the Amerindians who worked the plantations, ranches and farms, while the products of their labour were then sold for a profit which accrued to the Common Fund, under the missionaries control.

An individual Amerindian might also sell directly to this syndicate from which, via the alamacén mayor<sup>37</sup>, he could obtain European clothing or metal tools. In turn the missionaries would sell such produce for a profit which was again added to the Common Fund.

On the one hand the Indians could have individual freedom to grow his own crops, or to sell them to his masters at their quotations, but he could not, and certainly did not, have any say in the matter of deciding the prices or profits, or amount of time that any one individual could spend for his personal benefit. (Robinson:1967:p.129).

and:

Although the priests made every effort to emphasise their role as 'guardians of the fold' it was nonetheless clear that only by these monopolistic practices were they able to survive economically ... (Robinson:1975:p.70)

In addition to labouring to support the mission system the Amerindians were also hired out to the vecinos of Santo Tomé through the presidente of the mission<sup>38</sup>. Alvarado wrote:

... all the residents of the town of Guayana from the Commandant to the last free negro have no other peones to build their houses, till their ground or row their boats, than the Indians. (Ibid)

However, the Spanish padres were able to distance themselves from such oppressive economic practices by delegating authority over the day to day life of the mission to 'reliable' Amerindians, who were given titles of teniente, sargento and guardia. These Amerindian officials organised the communal obligations, defined by the missionaries to be such things as the supply of water, cleaning of the streets and church, and the work rosters for the fields and ranches. Alvarado (Ibid) described a three fold division of labour under which the Amerindians were organised. Thus they might, at any given time, be expected to labour to support the Common Fund of the padres, for the private income of the presidente of the mission or be allowed to work for their own benefit.

The revenue for the Common Fund was generated through several sources, principally the supply of meat and some cattle to other missions, where ranching was not practised, as well as to the vecinos of Santo Tomé and Trinidad and itinerant traders. As the economic infrastructure of the missions expanded further income accrued through the sale of goods such as cheese, soap, tallow, hides, foodstuffs and even rum<sup>39</sup>. In theory, though rarely in practice, the Crown also paid a situado for the upkeep of the missions, though the annual payment due to the parish of Santo Tomé, around 310 pesos, seems to have been maintained (Robinson:1975:p.75).

A private income for the Spanish priest in each mission came from much more restricted sources and was certainly less remunerative. Apart from the 4 reales that was paid for each mass said, the right to sell a number of items was reserved exclusively to the priest, including the surplus agricultural produce of the missions' labranzas, oils collected in the forest, poultry and Carib-made hammocks, which were highly prized<sup>40</sup>.

The third kind of work that the Amerindians engaged in would have been on their own gardens, whose products might be sold at Santo Tomé, as might any manufactured items such as ropes and cords. However, as has already been pointed out, difficulties in the transport of goods as well as the rule that all money earnings had to be spent in the alamacén major, allowed the missionaries to cream off a further profit from even these activities. Robinson has summarised the economic position of the Capuchin missions by the mid-1760's:

From Alvarado's report it can be seen that by the mid-18th century the impact of mission settlement had been felt throughout north east Guayana. Over 3,000 cattle were grazing on the grasslands, 12 settlements were established, a sugar mill was operating near Caroni /mission/ producing, among other things, rum for the Santo Tomé garrison, and the Dutch in Essequibo were already anxious about the new activities<sup>41</sup>. (1967:p,138)

Such economic development went hand in hand with the growth of the missions, whose Amerindians played a vital role in the foundation of the new capital of Guayana, Angostura, in 1764<sup>42</sup> and by 1779 80% of all cultivated land in Guayana was under the control of the missions (Report of Gov. Manuel Centurion quoted in Robinson:1967:p.189).

More impressive, however, was the growth of ranching in the Capuchin missions, based on the herds at Divina Pastora in the Yuruari River basin which by 1772 numbered some 145,000 head, as compared to only 14,000 under civil control (Census of Guayana by Manuel Centurion, quoted in Robinson:1967:p.717).

Undoubtedly these herds were the mainstay of the Capuchin missions,

giving them a secure economic base for the evangelisation of the Amerindians, although by the 1780's, as we have seen, the 'pioneering' phase of missionary activity had practically ended (Robinson:1967:p.221) many entradas were still made against the remnants of the independent Amerindians.

However, the more negative effects of these massive economic and social changes were also becoming apparent by this time, not just in terms of the rapid decline in Amerindian numbers (see below) but also in the exhaustion of pasture land and the consequent decline in the overall numbers of livestock, despite the opening up of new grasslands in the Tumeremo-Tupuquen area to the south<sup>43</sup>.

Thus by 1800 the Capuchin common cattle ranch, or hato, had been abandoned and the cattle grazed freely throughout the Yuruari River valley (Robinson:1967:p.279). Moreover the rapid, forced development of this cattle ranching by the missionaries had led them often to ignore the needs of the Amerindians who worked the herds for them. Thus in the area of the Caroni there is a marked contrast in vegetation cover between the sandy, even stony, grass savannahs of the Yuruari basin and the forests of the uplands and mountainous areas, where aboriginal occupation appears to have been greater since swidden agriculture can be practiced here. As a result the missions of the Yuruari valley experienced food shortages and even famine as the manioc crop failed in successive years<sup>44</sup>. For example, in 1799, though not for the first or last time, the missions of Carapo, Aima, Guasipati, Miamo, and Cumamo all experienced food shortages or the total failure of their crops and great difficulties in locating new garden sites. South and east, in the Tupuquen-Tumeremo area, the problem was the same, compounded by barely adequate water supplies (Robinson:1967:pp.292-4). No wonder then that the Caribs had never chosen to occupy such areas before the missionaries directed their re-location here<sup>45</sup>.

It now remains to examine the fate of those Caribs who were brought within this mission regime.

### The Caribs and the Spanish Missions

It is undeniable that the most obvious result of the missionary intrusion into the Orinoco basin in the 18th century was, for the Caribs as well as other Amerindians, a sharp decline in their population, though, as will become clear, its exact numerical course is very difficult to calculate. Accordingly, before analysing those mission records which provide the basis for such calculations something will be said concerning the factors which caused such a sudden diminution in Carib numbers, when, as we have seen, some two centuries of European presence in the New World had failed to produce such an effect.

In this context it is important to emphasise that missionary activity had quite specific characteristics. Cook (1976:p.8) writes:

In motivation, it is unique in human history, since it was in large measure conditioned by the desire of the invading or dominant race to convert the other to a new way of thinking, that is to say a new religion. Economic and political factors were undoubtedly involved, but the driving force was provided by a group of men inspired primarily by religious, not material zeal. Their purposes were, consequently, not the deliberate social or military subjugation of the weaker race, although this may have been an inevitable by-product, but were those of religious conversion.

To this end, as we have seen, the missionaries made their entradas deeper and deeper into Carib territories, despite the withdrawal of some populations in the face of this advance. Whereas previously such a response would have proved adequate in avoiding contact with the Europeans, the zealous persistence of the missionary left Carib groups, in common with other Amerindians, only two choices - '... obvious opposition or acceptance' (Cook: Ibid:p.11) of missionary control<sup>46</sup>.

For those that accepted, voluntarily or otherwise, to enter the missions the figures (see following tables) indicate that there was a steep rise in the death rate, despite an overall trend towards an increase in mission populations. These and other demographic trends, in so far as they are

discernible<sup>47</sup> are considered below but something of the context in which they arose will first be outlined.

(i) Demographic Trends

The susceptibility of the Amerindians to Old World diseases has already been discussed and it was this lack of immunity, coupled with the concentration of their populations near the burgeoning settlements of the Europeans, which may be cited as the most important factors in explaining the high death rates within the Carib missions. Hemming has written:

These epidemics were a shattering setback to the missionaries. As fast as they preached their ministry they saw their flocks suffer and die from diseases they were powerless to cure. Some must have suspected that they themselves had unwittingly imported the diseases, but they were at a loss in explaining God's purpose in striking down these new converts<sup>48</sup>.  
(1978b:p.141)

However, it was not simply the presence of the missionaries that would have induced such calamities but the general growth of the non-Indian population of Guayana as well, which rose from a few hundreds in the 1730's to over 5,000 by the 1760's and double this by the end of the century (Gonzalez:1977:pp.171-2, Robinson:1967:p.161). As was emphasised in considering the effects of Old World diseases prior to the 18th century, the sporadic and limited contact, characteristic of a frontier, that took place at this time, did not necessarily result in shattering epidemics among the Amerindians.

Nonetheless, just as it is possible to trace the spread of epidemics from Caracas to Cumana and into the Carib villages of the northern llanos by the 1680's, so too the documents show increasing outbreaks of smallpox, measles and 'fevers'<sup>49</sup> spreading from Cumaná to the Orinoco by the late 1720's (see Table VIII), paralleling the extension of non-Amerindian settlement in these areas. In this context the concentration of Amerindian populations in areas designed to increase their intercourse with the Europeans, the better to 'civilise' them, was a guarantee of disaster<sup>50</sup>.

As well as an increased exposure to Old World diseases Amerindian resistance to such infections might also have been undermined by a faulty or insufficient diet, such as was experienced in some of the Capuchin missions at the turn of the 18th century (see above). Even over a short period of time a population can be rendered more sensitive to bacterial or viral infection by resulting deficiencies in the immune system or can display specific deficiency diseases, such as avitaminoses, if basic dietary requirements are not being met (Cook:1976:p.34)<sup>51</sup>.

If we now consider the extant statistical data<sup>52</sup> in detail, Tables III and VII make clear that the Carib population in both the Franciscan and Capuchin missions rose steadily, even dramatically, from their inception. These population increments could have arisen from two sources; births amongst the pre-existing mission population and/or the movement of new populations into the missions. However, lacking any such distinction in the original data it is impossible to give any numerical weighting to these alternative sources of population increase since the birth rate of the mission population is unknown<sup>53</sup>.

Nonetheless, if we consider the slightly more detailed information contained in the records of the Capuchin missions in Guayana (Table IV), it is clear that, despite the high number of deaths, that additions to the mission population, as represented by the number of baptisms, continued throughout this period. Cook has termed this the 'gentile increment', being the factor responsible for increasing population despite the high death rates usually associated with Amerindian missions (Table V) and, possibly, a declining birth rate, for, as the history of missionary occupation shows:

First drawing in the adjacent heathen and then spreading out in an ever widening circle, the missionaries, supported by the soldiers, cleaned up the areas within one or two days march of each mission. Wherever serious gaps occurred, they were filled in by new missions. (1976:p.417)

In such a situation even the simple maintenance of mission populations at an existing level was utterly dependent on continuing wholesale

conversions of the Amerindians.

From Tables III and VII the phases of missionary activity, described in the preceding sections, can be clearly discerned. The most interesting feature of the growth of the Carib Capuchin missions (Table III) is the fact that their population nearly doubled in the period 1780 to 1816, although no new foundations were made in this period<sup>54</sup>, undoubtedly aggravating the difficulties and shortages that the Yuruari valley missions began experiencing at this time (see above). Similarly, the impact of the War of Independence on the Capuchin missions is clearly represented in the dramatic loss of population after 1816<sup>55</sup>.

From Table VII, showing the growth of the Carib population in Franciscan missions, two periods of sudden population loss are clearly discernible; 1741-6 and 1767-73. In the first period it is known that there were widespread epidemics in 1741 and 1743 which could partly explain this population loss, though the Dutch, English and Carib raids on the Capuchin's Caroni missions in 1741 (see above) might also have provoked unrest and desertion among other Orinoco reductions. However, the lack of any data on actual deaths within the Franciscan missions in this period makes it difficult to assess the relative importance of such factors.

Similarly, in the period 1767-73 a smallpox epidemic is recorded in the year 1767 in Guayana, having spread from Cumana in 1765 - see Table VIII. It was also in this period that a series of military campaigns was launched by Governor Centurion on the Orinoco south bank, possibly once again inducing instability among Carib reductions in this area<sup>56</sup>.

Table V shows the death rates for Carib populations in the Capuchin missions<sup>57</sup> and while the average death rate displays a steady increase, it will be noted that those for individual missions show some extremes of fluctuation. For example, the missions of Guri and Caruachi both experienced a moderation of the death rate between 1788 and 1796 while all the other

missions show quite steep increases in the same period and the mission of Carapo a sudden decline in the death rate after 1796. As Cook suggests (Ibid:p.421), it is precisely these kinds of extreme fluctuation in death rates that suggests the action of epidemic disease, since death conditions themselves are highly variable in such circumstances<sup>58</sup>. Moreover, as can be seen from Table VIII epidemics were frequent in eastern Venezuela in the 18th century, as Spanish settlement spread south in Guayana.

In line with these trends Table IV shows that deaths increased rapidly after 1780, as did baptisms, underlining the importance of the 'gentile increment' in sustaining and increasing the overall population of the missions. Furthermore, when it is remembered that the 'pioneering' era of the Capuchin missions had ended by the beginning of the 1780's, the sharp climb in deaths from this point on suggests that the very stability of these missions was itself an important factor in increasing death rates for, as is evident from Table V, there was a tendency for the older missions to achieve the highest death rates<sup>59</sup>. The reasons for this are far from clear. However, those missions that had already experienced some kind of epidemic would be more liable to re-infection, either through the presence of disease carriers among the surviving population, or by the kinds of contacts with the non-Amerindian population that had led to an earlier epidemic occurring. So, too, the older missions would have had more contact with the Europeans generally.

Nonetheless the primary population trend of the Caribs in the Capuchin missions south of the Orinoco is clear; of the 18,906 people who were baptised between 1753 and 1816 over 50% died, by no means an exceptional death rate in view of other examples of the results of European, African and Amerindian contact. In turn this would suggest that some 10,000 Caribs may have passed through the Franciscan missions, despite the fact that recorded population totals (N.B. not baptism totals) never exceeded 5,000 persons.

Moreover, when the maximum population totals of both Franciscan and

Capuchin Carib missions at the turn of the 19th century (approx. 13,000) and the most generous estimates of the numbers of independent Carib groups left in this region of Guayana in this same period (approx. 5,000 - see below) are considered in relation to the estimated aboriginal Carib population (approx. 100,000 - see chapter I:p.53) then a depopulation ratio of 6:1, or a population decline of some 82% is evident. This percentage undoubtedly rose, probably to well over 90%, by the mid-19th century, as Old World diseases continued to spread to even the most isolated settlements of the region. Such population decline is by no means exceptional in the history of Amerindian contact with the Europeans and Africans (see chapter I:p.19).

(ii) Rebels and Fugitives

In the context of these high mortality rates it becomes necessary to ask why the Caribs submitted to the missionaries at all<sup>60</sup>. As has already been suggested, and as can be seen from the advance of Spanish occupation of Guayana in the 18th century, the alternatives facing Carib groups had narrowed to either flight to new areas or open rebellion<sup>61</sup>, tendencies that the Spanish felt were particularly apparent among the Caribs (BGB:BC:APIII:pp.183-4, quoted above p. 216-7; see also note 41)<sup>62</sup>.

However, flight from the missionaries to the more favourable political climate of the Dutch colonies did not necessarily represent a solution to this situation. Thus the missions were not the only source of disease for the Caribs, any European might prove lethal and the large influx of black slaves into Essequibo and Berbice encouraged the growth of malaria and yellow fever in these areas - renowned Amerindian killers. As a result the number of Indians, including Caribs, dramatically declined in Essequibo (British Guiana) between 1810 and 1850. Thus of the 800 Caribs that could be summoned as a bush police in 1795, only 50 could be found in 1853 (Rodway:1896:Vol.X:pp.25-30). From the Indian census for March 6th, 1818 (BGB:BC:API:p.213) only 304 Caribs

could be found in a two day radius from the Pomeroon post, 114 on the Cuyuni and 31 on the Mazaruni. No doubt many more existed on the higher reaches of these and other rivers. Humboldt, for example, says there were some 5,000 "free" Caribs living between the sources of the Orinoco, Essequibo and Rio Branco (1907:II:p.395, III:pp.20-24) and both Kloos (1971:p.158) and Hurault (1965:pp.617-22) give a late date for the bottoming out of the Carib population in Surinam and French Guiana, the middle to the end of the nineteenth century. But there can be little doubt that in general the Caribs were experiencing serious population loss through disease, a situation which neither flight nor rebellion could change. Here then seems to be one reason why the Caribs may have eventually resigned themselves to the mission regime, despite their justified reputation of resistance to the Spanish (see AGI:SD:592.23/12/1755, quoted p.211 above).

At the same time the Carib's Dutch alliance, the origins of their sustained resistance to the Spanish, was itself changing in character after the 1740's, as the growth of Spanish colonisation of the Orinoco basin inhibited Dutch expansionism<sup>63</sup>.

Taken together such factors must have seriously undermined the influence of the traditional leaders of Carib society. Thus the most renowned of their war-chiefs had been defeated and the network of kin, on which the influence of the village headman was based, could have been easily shattered by epidemics which, in turn, the shamans were powerless to cure.

Against this background and:

In the light of centuries of experience the missionaries very skilfully played upon every conceivable natural desire. They emphasised the externals of their religion - the ceremony, the music, the processions. They also sought to make life as attractive as possible by holding out the inducements of clothing, shelter and food.<sup>64</sup>  
(Cook:1976:p.73)

Nonetheless, minor rebellions and a steady number of desertions from the missions continued right up until the War of Independence. For example, in 1769 the Commander at Essequibo wrote:

The Postholder of Maykony has reported that a very large number of Caribs had come there and had asked him for permission to come and live in that river ... He says that the Caribs were nearly all dressed, and even had some priestly garments and ornaments with them. This made me suppose that they had been ill-treated by the Spaniards to such an extent that they had at last adopted measures of reprisal and had raided some of the missions. (BGB:BC:APIV:p.41)

Similarly, in 1790, the Commander wrote:

A report was submitted by Daniel van der Heyden, stating that from the river Mazaruni he had received information that four Indian Owls with their people had come there from the Spanish missions, stating that they had fled the Spaniards, and would like to remain and live in Mazaruni. (BGB:BC:APV:p.78)

While Hamilton records that one Carib cacique from the mission of Cumamo, with a following of 20 warriors, had repeatedly fled, with his people over a number of years. Eventually, in 1818, due partly to the anarchy of the civil war, he was finally successful in making good his escape, but only after all 15 of the pursuit party had been killed in an ambush (1820:IX:p.4).

In view of this evidence, by no means uncommon, of the Caribs' disenchantment with the missionaries one might well question the degree to which those that did not attempt to flee, as well as those forcibly returned to the missions, can be said to have accepted the padres.

### (iii) The Mission Caribs

Cook has written concerning the California missions:

... it cannot be doubted that a great deal of discontent was present, perhaps more than is obvious from the written record of the times. (Ibid:p.56)

and certainly such a judgement could be reasonably applied to the Carib missions, since, even those that were founded 'voluntarily'<sup>65</sup> were established against a background of events that were undermining traditional patterns of

leadership and the centuries old tradition of fierce opposition to Spanish settlement in the Orinoco basin. Thus, in 1770, the Governor of Essequibo wrote:

The deep rooted hatred of that nation towards the Spaniards is so great that there is little probability of a reconciliation between them, and, although that nation has lost many of its old characteristics, this still continues to be one of its innate peculiarities. (BGB:BC:APIII:p.131)

The memoirs of Antonio de Solis (Lopez-Borreguero:1875)<sup>66</sup> give some insight into how the relationship between the missionary and his charges could, under some circumstances, be one of a degree of mutual tolerance rather than open hostility. Moreover they emphasise the importance of those factors, of disease and military defeat, referred to above, which were weakening traditional Carib leadership to the point that the missionary message of peace through useful labour might gain plausibility and a reduction be effected.

Solis recalls that six missionaries first came to the Caura Caribs just after their disastrous defeats at the hands of the Caverre around 1720 (see above p.189). However, except for one Fray Fernando:

... the other unhappy missionaries who accompanied him were sacrificed to the voracity of the savages ... though /Fernando/ was spared as a tasty morsel. (Ibid:p.228)

by the war-chief, Panchito's grandfather. However, this cacique then contracted a fever which the piaches diagnosed as the activity of a malignant spirit, but Fray Fernando suggested that he abstain from alcohol, gave him various medicines and '... invoked the power of prayer'. The cacique duly recovered and:

... believing that the God of this white was superior to his and that of the piaches ... (Ibid:p.230)

was converted, soon to be followed by the rest of his village. From this time, Fray Fernando going on to live in this village for 50 years<sup>67</sup>, Solis says that the missionary worked on the principle of 'rendering unto Caesar

that which is Caesar's', gradually introducing the customs of individual family houses and a Spanish-type administration of fiscales and communal labour in the labranzas, 'laziness' being punished by expulsion from the village<sup>68</sup>. It is clear from these memoirs that these changes were re-inforced by the teaching of the children at the padre's house, where:

... liberty ... a seductive idea inherited from the time of their fathers ... (Ibid:p.257)

was countered with reading, writing and the scriptures. In such a manner the reduction to obedience could be achieved through peaceful and voluntary means.

In those areas, such as eastern Spanish Guayana, where the urgencies of conquest were greater, conditions would have been very different, not least because the majority of reductions here did not take place in situ but required the movement of populations to sites chosen according to the interests of the missionaries, with, as was described above, various negative effects on the Amerindian population. In such a situation:

... the terms conquista and reduccion lost completely their original spiritual connotation and came to signify little more than subjugation ... Indians who were brought into the field of the missions were either induced through persuasion, by force or enticed by presents. (Cook:1976:pp.74-8)

Such a view seems to be borne out by Hamilton (1820) who travelled through the remnants of the Capuchin missions of the Caroni and Yuruari valley in 1818. He records the following conversation with an old Amerindian at the mission of Tumeremo:

... I remember the time when the neighbourhood was thronged with wild Indians inimical to these establishments who often attacked us, and would soon have extinguished the Padres, had they not procured these arms /swivel guns/ from Angostura.

So then the Padres were not always on good terms with the native tribes?

Oh no! They came in by persuasion, but maintained themselves by force, and when once strong enough, sought to aggrandise themselves at the expense of those who refused to submit to their yoke. (Ibid:VIII:p.282)

Indeed, as we have seen, the missionaries themselves saw their role as involving the application of 'maximum force' in order to effect the reduction of the Caribs in this area (see quote p.211 above), while Roth quotes an unnamed Jesuit on the Orinoco who candidly told Humboldt:

The voice of the gospel is heard only where the Indians have also heard the sound of guns. (1924:p.597)

Despite these adverse conditions under which conversions or reduction was made, many thousands of Caribs, as we have seen, remained in these missions, even though the conditions of life were radically different from those who still enjoyed the '... free life of the forest, which continues to appeal to all those recently settled ...'<sup>69</sup> (Governor Iturriaga:BGB:BC:APII:p.52).

A central part of the explanation of this phenomenon has to do with the labour regime practised in the Capuchin missions, informed, no doubt, by the maxim 'The Devil Makes Work For Idle Hands'. This is not to suggest that the work itself was so arduous as to be harmful<sup>70</sup>, but rather that it was the imposed discipline of having to work at all that was the key aspect in the situation. Thus, in Chapter I, we saw how traditional economic activities required comparatively little expenditure of time, in contrast to the Capuchin missions where '... their time was fully occupied' (Hamilton:1820:VIII:p.277), either by labouring for the padres, or themselves, or by enforced attendance at the endless round of religious services. Similarly, the one time Prefect of the Capuchins Guayana missions wrote:

The RR PP Capuchins of Catalan of the lower Orinoco have several settlements of these nations /including Caribs/ and aside from the subjugation in which they hold them, give them plenty to think about ... (my emphasis: quoted in Thomas:1982:p.21)

Moreover, as Cook points out:

Despite innumerable lamentations, apologies and justifications there can be no serious denial that the mission system, in its economics, was built upon forced labour. (1976:p.95)

The contrast between the limited and sporadic work patterns of the Amerindians and the open-ended and continuous labour demands of capitalist production is absolute<sup>71</sup>. In the context of the wars and epidemics that swept the Orinoco in the 18th century such an alien regime must have been that much easier to impose and maintain, while the almost immediate reversion of the Amerindians, especially the Caribs (see Robinson:1967:Table 29,p.747), to a traditional economic pattern following the collapse of Spanish power at the beginning of the 19th century (see Hamilton:1820), only serves to emphasise that a degree of compulsion must have been present, albeit subtly, in the mission regime.

Diseased, defeated and with '... plenty to think about', the social institutions of the Caribs were also attacked directly by the missionaries, since this was the *raison d'etre* of missionary endeavour at all. Thus the shamans were already considerably discredited by their ineffectualness against the epidemics which touched their communities, and ritual life, without its leaders, could the better be blended with the externals of Christianity.

Similarly, Amerindian polygamy was opposed (Robinson:1975:p.65) as it was most obviously at variance with Christian ideals of the family. Bearing in mind the role of polygamy in giving distinction to Carib leaders (see chapter I) such a policy on the part of the missionaries was also a direct challenge to their traditional authority, a fact well illustrated by the manner in which the war-chief Araguacare, lieutenant to Taricura, upbraided the mission Saliva<sup>72</sup> during the rebellion of 1733. According to the Jesuit Bernard Rotella:

'Why do you want to have a Father?', said Araguacare to him /a Saliva cacique/.

Do you not know that the Spaniards are very bad?  
That they will take from you whatever you possess?  
They will take away your wives and leave you only one:  
they will gather up your sons together and carry them  
off for sale. If you complain they will kill you or  
put you in the stocks, and will maltreat you continually

... Know ... that you will no longer be my friends, for you are friends of the Spaniards, nor will you get implements or clothes ...<sup>73</sup> (BGB:BC:APIII:p.163)

As can be seen from Table IV, the actual number of Christian marriages in the Carib Capuchin missions rose steadily up to 1790, increasing rapidly thereafter to a high point of some 2,200, representing some 4,400 married individuals overall. Unfortunately, in the absence of data on the age structure of the Carib population it is impossible to calculate how great a proportion of adult Caribs such a figure represents.

However these repressive aspects of the mission system should not be overworked since, as we have seen already, the position of the individual padre, especially outside the tightly organised Capuchin missions of the Yuruari valley or the well policed reductions of the eastern llanos, might, perforce, have been one of tolerance. Certainly in some of the missions there seems to have been little hindrance put on the movements of the neophytes (see quote p.215 above)<sup>74</sup>, while Hamilton judged that the Caribs in the Capuchin missions:

Though pretty well broken in, they retain many features of their former character, have resisted the forced levies, and, in some instances, united into predatory bands ... (1820:VIII:p.276)

while at the mission of Guri the boys still were performing a war dance:

... with a spirit that seemed to exhibit a strong tincture of national animosity, even in the breasts of these civilised descendants. (Ibid·IX:p.20)

In sum, overt and systematic though the deculturating effects of passage through the mission regime may have been, the basic pattern of Carib life survived, as is evinced by the modern Karinya (see chapter I). Moreover the contact with other Europeans, especially the Dutch of Essequibo, could, as we shall see, be every bit as pernicious in its effects<sup>75</sup>. Certainly one must agree with Hamilton (Ibid:VIII:p.276) that it was 'wonderful' that:

... the padres could ever have surmounted their antipathy ...

in view of the long hostility of Spanish and Carib in the Orinoco basin, but that achievement also marked the end of an era in the evolution of Carib society and, somewhat ironically, was to herald the collapse of the mission system as well.

Epilogue: 1771 - 1818

Between the 1770's and the 1820's colonial interrelationships were, once again, upset by imperial rivalries in Europe. In Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice the British vied with the Dutch and French for control as a result of the Napoleonic wars in Europe<sup>76</sup>. In Venezuela, and in the rest of Spanish South America, precipitated by Napoleon's invasion of Spain and Portugal in 1808, a dormant nationalism was given the opportunity to assert itself, though not without a fierce and bloody civil war that raged through the whole of this part of the continent until 1826<sup>77</sup>.

As far as the Caribs were concerned the takeover of the British in Dutch Guayana had few immediate repercussions and the continuity of colonial policy towards the Amerindians was largely preserved (Menezes:1977:p.7)<sup>78</sup>. However, in Venezuela the War of Independence, which broke out in 1816, engulfed the Orinoco region almost immediately.

The beginning of March 1817 saw the occupation, by the Patriots, of the Orinoco-Caroni area under the command of General Piar. The Caroni missions were seized and the Spanish priests, some 34 in all<sup>79</sup>, were taken to Caruachi, where they were held for three months, at the end of which time 14 had died in prison. The remainder were executed on the 7th of May, 1817 (Lodares:1929:pp.313-5, Carrocera:1979:I:pp.84-5). According to the memoirs of General O'Leary this was done by:

... Colonel Lara who, not being aware of the settlement of Divina Pastora, took the command to send the priests to that place to mean that he was to dispatch them to the eternal pastures. (1950:I:p.393)

The immediate reason for the occupation of the missions and the execution of their controllers was the practical aid that they had given to the Royalist Governor of Guayana, Andrés de la Rúa, in the form of 400 Amerindian archers and some 700 horses, nor did the Patriots underestimate the strategic importance of the resources of the Caroni missions. Thus, in October, 1817 the Patriots demanded the following from the Caroni missions:

Recruits	-	2,421	Cotton Bales	-	202
Cattle	-	14,513	Beans (sacks)	-	33
Mules	-	301	Paper (sheets)	-	111
Mares	-	1,787	Saddles	-	545
Horses	-	851	Pack Saddles	-	635
Hides	-	276	Bridles	-	177

(Armas-Chitty:1968:p.230)

As far as the Amerindians were concerned O'Leary suggests that:

The inhabitants of these missions, accustomed to obeying the Capuchins who were Spaniards, looked upon the patriots as enemies of God and the Faith, but once the monastic government had been removed they quickly turned to the cause of Independence. (Ibid.p.392)

However, as was the case in the conversion to Christianity, it is difficult to tell to what extent such recruits came forward voluntarily. Certainly it seems likely that some Caribs would have been happy to make common cause with the Patriots against the missionaries and the Spanish authorities. Thus Lance (1876:p.154) says that the Patriot cavalry operating on the eastern llanos was supported by a regiment of Caribs:

"Sotillo's men", as they were proud to be called or "Sotillo's bloodhounds" as their enemies called them. Each was equipped with his bow and quiver of arrows suspended over his back and shouldering a lance, his only clothing a narrow strip of girdle and the lap.

In the Caroni region over 800 Amerindians joined the Patriot forces between March and October, 1817, representing just over 8% of the total mission population and there is some evidence that the Caribs formed the largest single group among them<sup>80</sup>. This again suggests that the Spanish-Carib tradition of enmity was no fiction, cruelly reinforced by the fact that

... although the Patriots at first proclaimed Indian liberty, in practice they soon worked for the new authorities just as they had for the missionaries.  
(Hamilton:1820:VIII:p.277)

Either way the war took a terrible toll on the missions and even those Amerindians who fled to the depth of the forests. The devastation and disease engendered by this conflict has been described, first hand, by Hamilton (1820). Visiting the Caroni missions in 1818 his diary is a depressing record of the immediate aftermath of the opening phases of the civil war in Venezuela. For example at the civil reduction of Panapana, where some Caribs were held:

... the war and fever had made such havoc that 48 Indians were the whole that remained. (Ibid:VIII:p.261)

and at Caruachi:

... the fever, conscription and desertion have now reduced the population to about 100, and these very sickly.  
(Ibid:VIII:p.265)

while in general:

... most of the missions have a still and gloomy aspect as they are approached. Clay huts disposed in perfect regularity, all in one cluster, with no tree to relieve the eye and the tall church lording it over the humble roofs, leave a melancholy impression of these monastic settlements. (Ibid:VIII:p.280)

In short the mission system had collapsed and its neophytes were exposed to the random violence of war and pestilence. Hamilton says that of those who fled the missions the majority established themselves between the Cuyuni and Essequibo (Ibid:IX:p.11), including the Caribs:

The main body of the tribe has retired into the lands of the Essequibo, where they communicate with Demerara.  
(Ibid:VII:p.276)

However, the European political dominance of this area was now established to a degree that permitted little hope for the autonomy and survival of the Caribs and by the end of the 19th century they were but a shadow of the people who had held up the advance of colonialism in this region for over two centuries. Indeed so completely had this debt been expunged from

the European political memory that in 1891 the British census of Guayana concluded that the Amerindians were of:

... little or no social value and their early extinction must be looked upon as inevitable in spite of the sentimental regret of the missionaries. (quoted in Menezes:Ibid:p.23)

NOTES for Chapter III

1. The Capuchins had initiated some 4 separate missions among the Arawaks of the Caroni mouth, between 1682 and 1686, at the insistence of the Governor of Guayana, Jose Azipe y Zuñiga, and only finally after the direct intervention of the Audiencia of Santa Fe. The Capuchins, however, blamed their failure to make any further progress, two entradas being driven out of the Orinoco in 1689, on the opposition of the Caribs and the ravages of disease amongst their personnel (Ramos:1955:p.9, Carrocera:1979:I:pp.13-14).  
  
Moreover, the War of the Spanish Succession in Europe (1701-13) had the effect of further undermining Capuchin efforts to reduce the Amerindians of the Orinoco since they were heavily dependent for financial support on the Crown of Aragon. Coupled with a series of deaths amongst their padres on Trinidad, these conditions effectively halted Capuchin advances until the 1720's. (Lodares:1930:II:p.169, Carrocera:1979:I:p.15).
2. José Francisco Carreño had become Governor of Cumaná in 1717 and had inherited a series of plans for the settlement of the Guarapiche with Spaniards in order to stop French-Carib trade in this area. All had failed to get off the ground. Accordingly he, personally, called a meeting with the Carib caciques of the Guarapiche and warned them that unless they agreed to be re-settled, under the directions of the Capuchins, a 'final' entrada would be made against them (Carrocera: 1968:I:p.253, AGI:C:123:4/4/1717 - Letter of the Prefect of Capuchin Missions, AGI:C:123:7/3/1718 - Autos de la entrada ejecutada por el gobernador de Cumaná).
3. Humboldt (1907:VII:p.771) says that the Caverre (or Cabre) had devoured all but one of their prisoners after a big battle on the Cuchivero in 1720. The remaining Carib captive was forced to sit under a tree and watch the spectacle of his comrades being eaten so that he could later communicate the full weight of the Caverre victory to others.
4. Fernando Ximenez was a notable individual in that he came to believe, through bitter experience, that an armed reduction of the Carib people could never succeed. Indeed he evolved sufficient sympathy with the Caribs to write one of the first grammars of their language, eventually brought to Europe by Humboldt (1907:V:p.35).
5. Founded in 1724 (Lodares:Ibid:p.189, Carrocera:1979:I:p.20), with Guayano Amerindians concerning whom Carrocera also notes that they were vital allies of the Capuchins, although they suffered a steep decline in their numbers as a result of this close contact (Ibid:p.xiv).
6. Sucre had actually received his appointment in 1725 but was not released from his former post, the Governorship of Cuba, until this date.
7. On the 20th of May, 1734. The Capuchins were assigned the area of the Orinoco and its margins from the mouth to Angostura, the site of present day Ciudad Bolivar, the Franciscans from here to the Cuchivero mouth and the Jesuits the remainder (Armas-Chitty:1968:II:p.107, Ramos: 1955:p.10). The events that necessitated this agreement are fully discussed below (see also Carrocera:1979:I:pp.27-9).

8. Based on the steady number of desertions by the black slaves of Essequibo and Surinam, various military schemes were advanced throughout the 18th century, despite accords between the Dutch and Spanish authorities agreeing to exchange mission fugitives for runaway slaves. Perhaps the most ambitious of these schemes was the alliance of the Bush Negroes of the Dutch colonies with Spain, proposed as part of the brief of the Real Expedition des Limites (see below and chapter IV).
9. The Jesuit José Gumilla was a central figure on the Orinoco in the 18th century. Apart from his literary work, El Orinoco Ilustrado ..., which contains much valuable material, his missionary work was crucial to the eventual success of the Jesuits' Orinoco missions, since he personally led their defence against the attacks of Taricura in the 1730's. Supported by his aide-de-camp, Bernard Rotella, they succeeded in holding off the 'Caribs from the sea' (BGB:BC:APII:p.160), where their predecessors Fiol, Tokebast and Beck had failed and paid with their lives.
10. It seems likely that he formed part of the war-fleet that had attacked the Jesuit missions in 1684, though, no doubt due to the crushing defeat of the Caura Caribs by the Caverre in 1720, leadership of these great Orinoco war-fleets had passed to the Barima caciques at this time.
11. Correspondence between the Spanish Crown and Carlos Sucre in the 1730's shows that the steady mustering of troops on the Orinoco, throughout this decade, was as much designed to guard against Swedish settlement as it was that of the Dutch. The intrusion of the Swedes in this area seems to have resulted more from the complex network of trade relations that had grown up, between Holland and Sweden, than from the Swedish claims that the Barima territory had been ceded to them by either i) the Elector of Bavaria, who had himself received title as a reward for his support for Louis XIV of France, which grant had in fact been endorsed by Philip V of Spain or ii) the will of an early 17th century Swedish settler on this river. However, in the judgement of Edmundson:
 

It was probably a private enterprise, connived at perhaps and indirectly supported by the Swedish government, but without any actual sanction of the authorities. They hoped that once in possession, the Essequibo Government might acquiesce in their presence as an additional security against Spanish aggression. (1899:p.91)
12. The composition of this war-fleet is discussed in relation to Carib leadership in chapter I (see above pp.91-3).
13. Caulin visited this mission five years later and found only 120 people remaining, the rest having deserted (Ibid:p.239).
14. The intrigue and treachery that can surround Amerindian drinking parties is well illustrated from the ethnography of the Yanomami (Chagnon:1968). Moreover, such divisions among Carib leaders can only have aided the advance of the missionaries, themselves engaged in the struggle for control of Carib groups.
15. Since the first Carib revolt of the 1730's various plans were suggested, starting with Governor Sucre, to move the main Spanish settlement of Santo Tomé to the site of the angostura, or narrows, of the Orinoco. Thus the demarcation between the Franciscan and Capuchin Orders used

this place as a point of division in anticipation of the transfer.

However, this did not take place until 1762, under Governor José Solano. In the meantime two outlying forts were built at the Usupamo site in order to deepen Spanish defences on the Orinoco. The first, San Diego or Padrasto, was built in 1749-50 by Governor Diego Tabares and the second, San Fernando or Limones, simultaneously. The fort of Limones proved useless because it was situated at too great a distance from Santo Tomé and was cut off from the surrounding countryside during the rainy season. In any case the move to Angostura made such fortifications redundant (Armas-Chitty:1968:pp.132-7).

16. The significance of the Royal Commission was, of course, much wider than in its effects on Carib populations. Following the treaty signed between Ferdinand IV of Spain and John V of Portugal in January 1750, the public purpose of expedition, as announced in 1752, was to achieve a demarcation between the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the Amazon-Orinoco region as well as generally extending geographical, zoological and botanical knowledge. However, in 1754, the leaders of the expedition, José Iturriaga, Eugenio Alvarado, José Solano, Juan Galan and Antonio de Urrutia, also received a set of secret orders concerning projects that were to be carried out under cover of these other activities. These had two main aspects: i) the expedition was instructed to ascertain the possibilities for the extensive raising of cacao and canela in the Guayana region and ii) they were to investigate the Dutch-Carib alliance and the role that the Capuchin missionaries might play in this context. As has already been mentioned, they were also instructed to assess the possibilities for an anti-Dutch/Carib alliance with the rebel blacks of the Dutch colonies (Ramos:1946:pp.67-80, Armas-Chitty:Ibid:pp.141-2).

Accordingly a great deal of detailed information was produced on the Guayana region and of special interest to Carib history were the reports of Alvarado on the Capuchin missions of the Caroni and Solano on the Caura-Cuchivero area, as well as information concerning means of communication between the Essequibo and the Orinoco (Ramos:Ibid:pp.135-9, 179-89).

In practical terms the achievements of the expedition were more limited, though they did improve the defences of the Orinoco by overseeing the move to Angostura and firmly integrated Guayana into the Captaincy General of Caracas, as opposed to that of Santa Fe de Bogotá (a connection that went back to the ascendancy of the Berrío's) as well as collecting new botanic and geographic information, in particular from the upper Orinoco region (i.e. beyond the Atures Rapids) (Armas-Chitty:Ibid:pp.143-6, Ramos:Ibid:pp.274-5, Carrocera:1979:I:pp.40-2).

17. Including one of the leaders Antonio de Urrutia, who later died. The expedition's botanist, Peter Loefling, also died as a result of disease, in the Carib mission of Morocure some five months later (Ramos:Ibid:pp.175-6).
18. As with the disagreements between Abaruanan and Maradupene, the caciques of Turapa and Guaziparo, the close proximity of mission life appears to have intensified disputes. By bringing such strong personalities together in one settlement, where previously they would probably have founded their own independent villages, the missionaries were inviting instability in their own reductions (see BGB:BC:APIII: pp.183-4, quoted p.216 below).

19. Though it is difficult to see how he could have arrived at such an estimate given the vast area to which such a vague geographical description might apply.
20. These forts were the first in a series founded between 1759 and 1773 in the heartland of traditional Carib territory south of the Orinoco, though under the Governorship of Manuel Centurion (1766-76), the number of these forts expanded rapidly - see Map 5.
21. Once again (see notes 14, 18) the attempt by the missionaries to concentrate Carib populations can be seen to have run directly counter to their political system of individualistic leadership. It seems possible, in light of this evidence of disaffected caciques decamping with large numbers of mission Caribs, that Thomas' judgement, that modern Pemon leaders do not have well defined groups of followers (Ibid:p.119, see also chapter I above), might only be correct under modern conditions.

Equally it must be recognised that novel and historically exceptional pressures were being exerted on Carib societies at this time.

22. In 1731 it was suggested that the Governorship of Trinidad and Guayana should be divided, at the request of Carlos Sucre. However, it was Solano and Iturriaga who, following the report of the Real Expedition des Limites, finally managed to persuade Charles III to accede in this plan, in 1762, which also involved the transfer of the capital to Angostura and a more systematic approach to the overall defence of the Orinoco.

It should also be noted here that the appearance of Iturriaga on the Orinoco was not generally favoured by the missionary Orders.

Indeed, beginning with Sucre and continuing up to the War of Independence, there was a constant struggle between the Spanish civil and ecclesiastical authorities for ultimate control of the Amerindian population. Originating over the questions of by what means and how forcefully independent Amerindian groups should be made part of the national society, the so called 'Age of Enlightenment' in Europe was to influence events on the Orinoco by producing a series of Governors suspicious, if not overtly hostile, to the feudal power of the Church in the New World (see also Carrocera:1979:I:p.46).

23. The investigations of the Real Expedición, as well as the increasing depth of missionary penetration into the region south of the Orinoco, had given vital intelligence to the Spanish authorities, especially on the overland routes between the Essequibo and the Orinoco used by Carib and Dutch traders (see Map 1 and discussion chapters IV and V).
24. However, under the leadership of the Ye'cuana these blockhouses were destroyed, simultaneously along the whole length of the road, in 1776 (Civrieux:1970:p.17).
25. These forts were initially populated with Warao from the Orinoco delta (Armas-Chitty:Ibid:p.168).
26. It was not just Centurion's ideas concerning the missionaries that were considered unacceptable. Thus his suggestion, echoing the practices of the Berrio's in the 17th century, that commerce between the Spanish of the Orinoco and the Dutch and English of the Antilles and Essequibo

should be encouraged, caused a scandal in Madrid (Armas-Chitty:Ibid: pp.168-70), and it was in this spirit of reforming, progressive capitalism that the attack on the missions was made, not, it must be emphasised, out of any true concern for the well being of the Amerindians but because they were an idle resource from the point of view of economic development. In 1771 Centurion wrote to the Council of the Indies:

They /the Capuchins/ make use of the Indians without paying them, just as if they were slaves. And they make it appear that they are defenders of their liberty ...  
(BGB:BC:APIV:p.95)

and pointed out that they did not allow him:

... to establish Spanish in the Indian villages, nor the latter in those of the former, leaving both in greater misery, for the Spanish, short of labourers to put their industry to good use perish of poverty, and the Indians without trade or the example of Spanish settlers remain shut off in their villages, almost as naked, barbarous and useless to the State as before their reduction.  
(quoted in Robinson:1967:p.196)

27. The Caribs themselves never forgot the role of the Akawaios in the last days of their independence and hunted them down for conscription into the armies of the Patriots. Thus Hamilton writes that Akawaio who had fled the mission of Aima in 1817 had:

... been brought in by the Caraib horsemen from Carapo employed in this service, who had spread much terror and killed many of the fugitives. (1820:IX:p.14)

The Caribs also played a similar role in capturing black runaway slaves for the Dutch, see chapter IV.

28. The Venezuelan historian Duarte-Level pithily summarises this aspect of mission work when he points out that:

In planting the cross they fixed the limits of Venezuela.  
(1880:p.170)

29. Ramos largely credits the passing of this decree to the effective lobbying of the Bishop of Puerto Rico at this time, Fernando Lobo. The immediate effect of this change in policy in eastern Venezuela was the dispatch of Franciscan missionaries to Piritu, under Comisario Alonso de Prado, in 1656. The Capuchins, although they had in fact initiated mission work as early as 1650, in the Antilles as well as the Guarapiche, were driven out of both these areas by the Caribs and the French (see chapter II).
30. The Capuchins of Aragon and Catalan were also formally combined in this year (Ramos:Ibid:p.5).
31. Though their claims were weakened by a Real Cedula of 9/11/1530, which specifically forbade the use of foreign missionaries in the New World.
32. Thus Ramos (1955:pp.1-2) contrasts the 'heroic' image of the persevering missionary, given out by their own propagandists such as José Gumilla and Antonio Caulin, with the simple fact that relations between the Orders often consisted of '... pure and simple rivalry'.

33. It was also appreciated, in the case of the Caribs, that occupation of this area would seriously hinder their wide ranging trading activities. Thus, after Taricura's eventual defeat in 1735, the Jesuits established a fort just below Carichana (downstream from the Atures rapids) of which Gumilla said:
- ... /it/ closed the passage to the enemy totally.  
(quoted in Ramos:1955:p.18)
34. For the Caribs the substance of this conflict was present in the murder of one of their caciques by two young Franciscans at the mission of Guaziparo. The precise circumstance of the killing is unclear, but, having captured the cacique, Capruari, a fugitive from a Jesuit mission, an argument broke out and the Franciscans, Pascual de Villamea and Francisco Gouvea, stabbed Capruari to death (AGI:SD:644:11/9/1758).
- Although they were immediately recalled to Spain, both inter-Order rivalry and civil/ecclesiastical tension increased as a result of the affair (AGI:SD:644:12/9/1759).
35. The Dutch were keenly aware of this feature of the missions, inclining them, at least for a period, to encourage Carib resistance to their further encroachment towards Essequibo - see chapter IV.
36. The following discussion concentrates on the organisation of the Capuchin missions in eastern Guayana. Although there were numerically more Franciscan foundations made amongst the Caribs, as the discussion of Carib demography in this period reveals (see below), their populations were rarely more than a few hundreds and also subject to great instability. This contrast between the Capuchin and Franciscan missions is mainly to be related to: i) the establishment of large scale agricultural and ranching projects by the former, whose resources were used to assist their evangelical operations, ii) to the fact that Carib populations seem to have withdrawn south and east in the face of the Franciscans advance and so, perforce, towards the Capuchin missions of the Yuruari valley and iii) to the fact that most Franciscan missions among the Orinoco Caribs were located at, or very near to, the sites of aboriginal Carib villages, while those of the Capuchins, because of their importance in the question of frontier security, isolated their converts from the main river systems of the area by placing them in the Yuruari valley, (though other factors also governed the choice of this area - see text below). In such a context it would seem likely that those Caribs who found themselves taken to a new and unfamiliar environment, where they might be directly dependent on the missionary for the organisation of their food supply and shelter, would be less apt to rebel than those who remained at or near the place in which they had spent most of their lives.
37. This was located at Caroni village, as was the office of the procurador, and any money the Amerindians were paid, for goods or labour, had to be spent on goods from this store. This was partly intended to discourage free trading with the Dutch or their Carib agents. Such a practice in fact represents a situation of debt-bondage, an institution still used throughout Central and South America to repress and control the Amerindians and criollo peasantry.

38. As a part of the inter-Order concordat of 1734 Carlos Sucre laid down a tariff of wages for such projects. Indeed Sucre was careful to ensure that, in return for the services rendered by the troops at Santo Tome, such as patrolling the interior and assisting with entradas, the town would be supplied with foodstuffs, as reliably as possible, in return (Armas-Chitty:1964:p.107, Robinson:1967:pp.148-9).
39. Live cattle were not generally sold off since the demand within the missions for leather goods, such as harnesses, saddles, halters, etc., was itself considerable. More important was the sale of live mules and horses to the Dutch (see chapter IV) and for the carrying of goods to markets across eastern Venezuela. In effect this resulted in the independent trade activities of the mission Amerindians subsidising the Common Fund of the missions, since the difficulties of terrain, there being no fluvial connection between the Yuruari and the Orinoco, meant that 2-3 Amerindians might have to pool their resources in order to hire the pack animals to transport their produce (Robinson:1975:p.73).
40. Rice and maize were also especially valued. Indeed, Alvarado, in his report on the Capuchin missions, specifically drew attention to the need for their production on a greater scale, since only the missions of Caroni, Murucure and Aguacagua exported them to non-mission settlements.
- The oils carapa, caruachi and currucai (n.b. also the names given to missions) were collected by the mission Amerindians and bartered for by the priest who then, having refined it a degree further, re-sold it at a profit to the merchants at Santo Tomé (Robinson:1975:p.78).
41. The political and military interdependence of the missions and the civil authorities is well illustrated from José Diguja's report to the Council of the Indies, made in the early 1760's:
- ... but if the Missions are absolutely indispensable for the preservation of the fortress /Santo Tomé/, the fortress is also indispensable to them being disorganised and disbanded. And the reason is because most of them are new, and their Indians feel more inclination for the forests than for the settlement in which they live. It is probable that they would go back to the woods and carry on a thousand rascalities were it not for fear of the troops who are at hand to repress disturbances, especially in the villages of the Caribs, who by nature are haughty and apt to rebel ... and it is clear that if through some unfortunate circumstance the fortress is attacked and taken ... the Missions would at once be destroyed. Their own inhabitants would plunder them and set them on fire, and return to the forests, as happened in 1742, when it was found that the Indians did much more harm than the English (BGB:BC:APIII:p.1ff).
42. Thus 1,084 labourers were sent from the missions in gangs of up to 100 to clear the land and build the streets and houses and by 1765 the township had been supplied with a great quantity of manioc, salted meat, and rice (Strickland:1896:letter of Prefect of Capuchins, 20/6/1765, also in Carrocera:1979:I:p.47).

43. Robinson (1967:p.291) suggests that as a result of this exhaustion of pasture, due both to overgrazing and seasonal droughts, the actual area utilised by the Capuchin herds had doubled between the 1770's and the first two decades of the 19th century, despite the fact that the overall number of cattle had fallen to 50,000. However, as Robinson points out, there is also the possibility that earlier figures from the civil censuses had been inflated in order to exaggerate the wealth of the missions, at a time when the reformist Governors Centurion and Marmion were attempting to undermine their influence on the development of Guayana.

44. Though the missions in the north of the Yuruari basin had fewer such problems and managed to offset local shortages, to a degree, by a transfer of foodstuffs between these missions.

45. Hamilton remarked:

The Capuchins seem to have made a point of selecting a spot for the village with little care about the distance of the provision grounds, on which the Indians were never suffered to remain for any length of time. This was, perhaps, the only way of breaking them of their nomadic habits, and making their labour so profitable, as it must have been, to their pastors. (1820:VIII:p.275)

46. Thus up until the 1750's it was still possible for Carib groups to move south to avoid the Franciscan evangelisation, as did some of the Aro River Caribs in 1749 (see above p. 204). But, following the appearance of the Real Expedición des Límites and the punitive campaigns of Governors Iturriaga and Centurion, between 1760 and 1771, such a line of retreat was no longer feasible. Similarly, re-location to the east had been made more difficult by the extensive network of Capuchin missions that were now located in the Yuruari valley. Moreover Dutch support of Carib raiding in Spanish territory was lukewarm by this time (see chapter IV), no doubt further encouraging Carib acceptance of the missionaries.

47. The sources for the statistics used in the following analysis are given with the appropriate table. It should be emphasised that the available range of such data is very limited, as will be apparent from the fact that precisely the same mission censuses are repeatedly quoted in a wide variety of sources. Moreover, the type of information given in these censuses varies widely, some only giving total population, others total population and total deaths, others total population, total deaths and total marriages. Information on the age and sex structure of these mission populations is so scant, especially for the Franciscan reductions, as to be useless for any statistical extrapolation (see Table II).

The main reasons for this dearth seem to be that such detailed data, if it survives at all, is held by the archives of the missionary Orders themselves and although Robinson (1967) has reproduced some data held in Venezuelan national archives, much of this also appears in the secondary sources. Similarly, Carrocera (1979:I:p.xxx) notes the overall lack of documentation on the Capuchin missions in Guayana.

In this context all arguments from such limited data must be treated with extreme caution.

48. It should be emphasised that such results were to be expected whenever Amerindian populations were concentrated near European settlements. Thus in Essequibo and Demerara such epidemics were an increasing feature of Amerindian-European relations from the 1750's onwards and well into the 19th century (Menezes:1977:pp.120-1,209).

49. It would seem likely that such reports refer to malaria, since, by this time, the relevant mosquitoes could have adjusted to the Old World plasmodiums and the rapidly increasing black slave population of Dutch Guayana would have formed an effective pool for re-infection. McNeill has written:

In regions of the New World where tropical infections from Africa could establish themselves freely - coming as they did on top of crushing exposure to European infections - the result was almost total destruction of the pre-existing Amerindian population. (1976:p.214)

50. Though some of the progressive European reformers felt that such contact should be increased. Thus Governor Centurion referred to the missions as a 'recluse' society (quoted in Armas-Chitty:Ibid:p.180) and Humboldt wrote:

The natives that inhabit the missions are held in a state of lack of culture that we would call stationary. (1907:II:p.10)

51. Cook (Ibid:p.47) has even suggested that because the missionaries:

... felt that the spiritual welfare of the newly converted savages would be better served by keeping them confined strictly within the mission influence and preventing any reversion to their old habits of life.

then the Amerindians were actively prevented from using alternative, traditional food sources, even in circumstances of shortage or starvation, though only in those missions where agriculture or ranching was supposed to have been fully established. Certainly in the Capuchin missions of Guayana the Amerindians were required to seek the written permission of the padre before going hunting or fishing, or if they intended to sleep at their labranza while working there (Carrocera:1979:I:p.311).

52. It has proved impossible to calculate either the birth rate, sex ratio or age distribution for the Carib missions since the records, as available, are incomplete (see note 47). Cook (1978:pp.400-46) has managed to produce this kind of demographic data, however, in relation to the California missions, from archives held by the Bancroft Library, San Francisco. In contrast to Venezuelan sources, the censuses are virtually complete for each year between 1770-1836 and are consistent in recording the age, sex, baptisms and deaths of the population. Having a sample size of sixty, being the number of consecutive annual returns, instead of the maximum seventeen scattered returns available on the Carib missions, Cook was able to carry out statistically significant analyses. However, even Cook's sources are secondary, being copies of original documents destroyed in the San Francisco fire of 1906. Of the ultimate sources for demographic data on the mission Amerindians, the libro de mision, Cook writes:

Some of these may still be in existence but, if so, they are in a very fragmentary state. To assemble them and arrange the data in a usable form would involve a labour of extraordinary magnitude and the results would at best be incomplete. (Ibid:p.400)

53. However, Cook's analysis revealed a general decline in Amerindian births and he suggests that:
- ... the child bearing capacity of the females was unaffected and that the apparent reduction /in reproductive capacity/, together with the actual fall in crude birth rate, was the result of a diminished relative number of women in the entire population. (1978:p.415)
54. The mission of Puga had been originally founded in 1760 for Arawaks and Waraos, but was augmented in 1792 by Caribs captured on the Moruca and Pomeroon Rivers (Civrieux:1976:p.1012).
55. Due to desertion of the mission stations. The significance of such desertions, throughout the mission era, as well as the events surrounding their final collapse in 1816 are discussed below. Robinson (1967:p.123) has suggested that drops in the population levels of the missions can often be attributed to the practice of the missionaries of moving groups of Amerindians around to form a 'reliable core' for new reductions. However, as far as the Carib missions are concerned, one might question whether their populations would have been considered 'reliable' enough to perform such a function.
56. Virtually no data are available on deaths, baptisms or marriages in the Carib Franciscan missions. This is partly explained by the lack of such data for any of the missions (see note 47) and partly by the fact that, relative to the Capuchin missions, very little secondary research has been done by the Franciscans own archivists and historians on their activities in Venezuela - see bibliography.
57. However, since these are mainly based on only three censuses, for 1788, 1796 and 1816, detailed and/or generalised inferences are not really permissible, since the sample is too small to be statistically significant.
58. Net reductions in overall mission population totals may, of course, also be explained by the desertion of the inhabitants. However, since these death rates have been calculated on the basis of recorded deaths, rather than fluctuations in the overall mission populations, this source of uncertainty in the figures can be excluded.
59. It can be seen that Puga and Cumamo actually achieved the highest individual death rates (76% and 70% respectively) and were two of the three last missions founded. In the case of Puga, however, the Carib population was added to an already existing one (see note 54), but death rates in Cumamo do appear to contradict this tendency, serving as a reminder of the caution that must be exercised in extrapolating from this data.
60. After all, it was partly on such grounds that the Guarapiche Caribs had resisted the Capuchins between 1650 and 1680. However, fear of epidemic disease was only one factor among many, which led the Caribs to resist conversion. For example, it was reported by Eugenio Alvarado in 1755 that Oraparene, a Carib cacique of the Caroni:
- ... did not want to give up his Kingship and go into a state of misery in the Mission, where he could not have

authority, wives, freedom to capture poitos, or to trade with his friends the Dutch, who provide him with cotton goods, axes, cutlasses, dye-woods and whatever he requires. To these reasons he added many others in favour of uncivilized life, and so he remains obstinately attached to that sort of existence. (BGB:BC:APII;p.111).

61. It will be remembered that the rebellion of Taricura in the 1730's failed to stem the tide of Spanish colonisation, as the Barima and Guarapiche Caribs had done in the late 18th century.
62. Cook (1978:p.62) suggests that at any one time approximately one person in ten was attempting to escape the mission regime.
63. The role of the Caribs as a bush-police for the Dutch was also given greater support after the Berbice Slave Rebellion of 1763-4, incidentally also increasing their contact with the malaria bearing black slave population.
64. Such tactics appear to have changed little over the centuries. Thus a modern missionary to the Venezuelan Panare is quoted as saying:

We leave gifts ... knives, axes, mirrors, the kind of things that Indians can't resist ... After a while the relationship develops. We have to break their dependence on us next. Naturally they want to go on receiving all these things we have been giving them, and sometimes it comes as a surprise when we explain that from now on if they want to possess them they must work for money ... They settle down to it when they realise that there is no going back. (Sunday Times Magazine:15/3/83:p.22).

65. There is, of course, also the possibility that some Caribs were 'converted', in the full sense of the word, by the Christian message but, as Cook writes:

Did the mission group really assimilate Christianity to the extent that it in any way altered their belief or their spiritual equipment? This is an exceedingly difficult question to answer, and in fact cannot be answered at all. (Ibid:p.154).

However, the emergence of the syncretic 'Hallelujah' cults among the Guayana Caribs, and first noted amongst the Akawaio in the 1850's, show that the externals of Christianity were assimilated, though in a context that only serves to emphasise the collapse of traditional patterns of leadership, since it seems to be the case that it is particularly under these conditions that such movements seem to thrive (Colson:1971:p.87, Thomas:1982:p.146).

66. Antonio de Solis was a vecino of Santo Tome who had lived most of his life in Guayana, only being forced into exile (in Extremadura, Spain), because of his royalist sympathies, after the War of Independence. His memoirs were recorded by his son-in-law, Lopez-Borreguero, who says that they had a Carib house-slave from the Caura called Panchito. Panchito was, apparently, rescued from the Caverre when he was about 8 or 9 years old. The Solis family was travelling in a Caverre pirogue whose paddlers:

... appeared civilised, for they wore European clothes, spoke Spanish and called themselves Christians. (Ibid:I:p.20).

but when they encountered a small skiff of Caribs, and despite the entreaties of their passengers, the Caverre attacked them, killing four of them outright and capturing the remaining three. The Caverre then built a bonfire:

... and like true cannibals prepared to roast their bodies for eating. (Ibid:p.21).

Again, despite the pleas of the Solis family the Caverre continued with their preparations and had already killed two of their captives when the wife of Don Antonio managed to barter for the one survivor, Panchito. Nonetheless:

All that night the Cabres indulged in their horrific bacchanalia, intoxicated with their drinks and making an infernal noise, like the true demons they are. (Ibid:p.22)

In view of their apparent adoption of Spanish beliefs and customs one might be highly sceptical of missionary claims to have 'converted' the Amerindians - see also note 65.

67. At a village called Santa Maria. I have been unable to locate the position of this settlement or, indeed, any other reference to it. This raises the possibility that there were missionaries active in Amerindian settlements not officially designated as 'missions' or doctrinas, or that individual missionaries themselves were acting independently of their superiors. In either case there seems to be no satisfactory explanation of this situation at present.

68. Apparently the padre was also responsible for the sharing out of all food, a practice which modern ethnography has shown to be an important function, and source of authority, for some tribal leaders (see Basso: 1973, Maybury-Lewis: 1967 ). Also it is interesting to note that a spokesman for the modern Ye'cuana, Simeon Jimenez, has stressed the importance of the psychological techniques of the missionaries in bringing about Amerindian conversions and in particular that of isolating an individual who proves resistant from his kin. As Arvelo-Jimenez has put it:

Indians like to do everything together. They share everything, particularly their food ... The missionaries understood this so they worked out that the best way to punish those who didn't want to be converted was by isolation. (Sunday Times Magazine:15/5/83:pp.23-4).

69. In 1747 Governor Iturriaga wrote:

The very many attacks on the missions, their desolation and destruction, are proofs of the dislike in which they hold them, and, with this knowledge, the Fathers are obliged to maintain a constant guard ... But it is seen from experience that this is not sufficient for the tranquility necessary for their increase. The threats of the Caribs, which some Indians fear, their suggestions, which perturb others, and the free life of the forest, which appeals to all those recently settled, are likewise the causes of the sudden dispersements, which they are wont to suffer ... (BGB:BC:APII:p.52).

70. Thus, as Cook points out (1978:p.94), the frequent charges made that the work of the Amerindians in the missions was of itself physically harmful is not borne out by the facts (see above), being, by modern industrial standards, very favourable.
71. Sahlins (1972) has made precisely this point in his examination of the domestic mode of production, where he shows that Marx's analysis of commodity production in peasant societies relative to commodity production under capitalist priorities, can be usefully applied to Amerindian economies. The point being, once again, that while peasant and tribal societies produce only to satisfy well defined and limited needs, it has been the historic role of capitalist society to raise the spectre of infinite needs, with a consequent intensification and specialisation of the productive process. Thomas (1982:p.44) records the emergence of just this situation among the Pemon:
- The irregularity and variety of the normal subsistence work regime has made the grind of mission labour onerous for the Pemon who have to take it up to provide things that come from outside and are now necessities.
72. There can be little doubt that for those groups, especially of the mid-Orinoco, that were the traditional source of Carib poitos, the possible protection that they might be afforded by the presence of a missionary and consequent Spanish troops would have been much appreciated (see above p.200). Thus it ought also to be stressed that missionary attitudes to the Caribs were often different to those they might have held of the Amerindians in general, since they were conditioned both by the tradition of Carib-Spanish enmity and by the pressing strategic considerations, underlined by the Real Expedition des Limites, in their rapid and thorough reduction.
73. This 'speech' of Araguacare's also brings out two other themes. Firstly, Robinson (1967:p.180) says that by 1788 in 80% of the Capuchin mission settlements, Carib and non-Carib, those under 18 accounted for more than 50% of the population, suggesting that entradas were, understandably enough, concentrated on those who it was easiest to catch. In this situation, and although these children would have been taken to mission schools for indoctrination with Spanish values rather than sold off as slaves, the suggestion that the Spanish would 'gather up' the sons of the Saliva could well have been believed, the more so since Spanish and Carib slavers had been active in this region for years (see also Chapter V, note 38).
- Secondly, the threat of Araguacare to withhold 'implements and clothes', presumably of Dutch origin, underlines the importance of the Dutch alliance for Carib prestige among other Amerindians and, equally, how vulnerable they were to the changes that it underwent in this century (see also p276 above, note 63 and chapter IV).
74. Indeed the evidence suggests that some supposedly 'reduced' Caribs were still actively engaged in the slave trade with the Dutch and Portuguese (see also the case of the Caverre, note 66). Thus in 1758 the Prefect of the Capuchin missions wrote to the Commandant at Santo Tome:
- And not only the Caribs of the forests, but even those of the Missions, participate in these wars, without our being able to control them in any way: and whenever we make any effort to do so, they immediately desert us in great numbers. (BGB:BC:APII:p.148).

75. Though more indirectly since no pattern of social conformity was imposed. Such a contrast in the experience of contact with the Europeans can be seen in the condition of the Panare. Thus while modern missionaries have directly attacked Panare social institutions, relations with the local criollos carry no social restrictions:
- The miners supplied them with all they needed, no strings attached. In Tiro Loco /criollo settlement/ the Panare could drink, dance, paint themselves and perform their ceremonies to their heart's content. (Sunday Times Magazine:15/5/83:p.31).
76. It was also during this period of British adventurism in South America, North America having been lost to the independence movement, that Belize, Trinidad and the Malvinas were seized (Armas-Chitty:1968:p.246).
77. It is noteworthy that it was a Venezuelan, Simon Bolivar, who led the South American independence movement. Thus, as has already been mentioned, the relative lack of interest shown by the Spanish imperial authorities in the development of Venezuela had led to Venezuela evolving an economy almost exclusively built on markets within the New World. It can easily be appreciated that such a situation provided a fertile breeding ground for the growth of ideas of independence and nationalism. Unhindered by the tight bureaucratic control that Spain maintained over Mexico and Peru, it was thus the most economically backward corner of the empire that was to develop the most progressive consciousness.
78. Although the Caribs appear to have had to impress this clearly on the British in the case of the system of customary presents for their services (described in chapter IV). Thus in 1810, Mahanarva, a Carib cacique, confronted the Court of Policy in Georgetown threatening to unleash his warriors on the British unless they maintained the presents they had been accustomed to receive from the Dutch (Menezes:Ibid:p.23, and see p.301 below).
79. Though 7 fled to Demerara before General Piar arrived (Lodares:1929:p.328).
80. Thus they were among the first to join, 73 from Guasipati being recruited by February (Lodares:1929:p.333) and over 90 from Tumeremo, possibly also because of their value as horsemen (Robinson:1967:p.334). Equally, however, the population of some Carib missions, such as Morocure and Tupuquen, decamped en masse (Lodares:Ibid.). From Robinson's calculation of the population changes in the Caroni missions at this time (1967:Table 29:p.747) it would appear that the Carib missions did experience a slightly higher than average desertion rate, suggesting again that their conversion was rather superficial.

TABLE I: Censuses of the Carib population in Capuchin missions\*

Mission	Date Founded	Pop. at Foundation	Pop. in 1743(i)	Pop. in 1750(ii)	Pop. in 1755(iii)
Cunuri	1743	110	300	300	destroyed by rebellion in 1750
El Palmar	1746	300	-	300	270
Tupuquen	1748	230	-	230	230
Miamo	1748	180	-	-	287
Curumo	1749	180	-	180	180
Carapo	1752	?	-	-	?
Aguacagua	1753	148	-	-	140
Morocure	1754	190	-	-	190
Guasipati	1757	?	-	-	-
Caruachi	1763	403	-	-	-
Cumamo	1767	?	-	-	-
Guri	1771	?	-	-	-
Puga	1792	(non-Carib until this date)	-	-	-
Totals		-	300	1110	1597

(i) Letter of Governor Espinosa to the King, BGB:VC:III:p.269, Letter of Comisario of the Capuchins, quoted in Rionegro:1929:p.100.

(ii) Letter of Fidel de Santo, Suay, 1761: quoted in BGB:BC:APIII:p.96.

(iii) Letter of Benito de Moya, Prefect of Capuchin missions, quoted in Rionegro:Ibid:pp.100-1, also in BGB:VC:III:p.426, Carrocera:1979:I:p.338.

\* Note that <sup>not</sup>all Carib missions mentioned in the text are included here, only those for which data is available.

+ indicates that the mission was disbanded due to either disease or rebellion (see text).

? indicates that the mission was extant at the time of the survey but that no information is given about it.

TABLE I (cont'd.)

Mission	Pop. in 1761(iv)	Pop. in 1764(v)	Pop. in 1766(vi)	Pop. in 1770(vii)	Pop. in 1772(viii)
Cunuri	+	+	+	+	+
El Palmar	350	338	377	389	380
Tupuquen	+	+	110	110	121
Miamo	517	498	534	501	550
Curumo	+	+	+	+	+
Carapo	280	360	377	410	410
Aguacagua	87	+	+	+	+
Morocure	329	361	342	368	370
Guasipati	210	341	360	370	374
Caruachi	-	101	142	130	102
Cumamo	-	-	-	106	121
Guri	-	-	-	-	72
Puga	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1773</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2242</b>	<b>2384</b>	<b>2520</b>

(iv) Report of Governor Diguja in BGB:VC:III:p.348, BGB:BC:APII:p.210, Gonzalez:1977:p.210, Carrocera:1979:II:pp.23-29.

(v) Census of Guayana, signed José Solano, in AGI:C:440:31/12/1770.

(vi) Census of Guayana, in BL:Add.Mss.:36342.

(vii) Census of Guayana, in Robinson:1967:p.717, Table 8, Carrocera:1979:II:pp.116-24.

(viii) Census of Guayana missions, by P. Bruno de Barcelona, 25/1/1772, in Carrocera:1979:II:pp.154-166.

TABLE I (cont'd.)

Mission	Pop. in 1773(ix)	Pop. in 1775(x)	Pop. in 1777(xi)	Pop. in 1788(xii)	Pop. in 1792(xiii)
Cunuri	+	+	+	+	+
El Palmar	407	412	438(419)**	589	630
Tupuquen	369	283	356(292)	435	605
Miamo	512	544	561(564)	762	784
Curumo	+	+	+	+	+
Carapo	507	511	544(518)	761	766
Aguacagua	+	+	+	+	+
Morocure	338	355	368(360)	550	561
Guasipati	440	509	573(531)	706	724
Caruachi	78	90	140 (85)	298	324
Cumamo	290	252	404(379)	712	500
Guri	116	250*	267(213)	235	570
Puga	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	3057	3206	3651	4459	5464

(ix) Census of Guayana, signed by Manuel Centurion, in *Lodares:1929*: pp.254-5, *Robinson:Ibid:p.720*, Table 10.

(x) Census of Guayana in *Caulin:1966:I:p.clxxviii*, *Robinson:Ibid:p.723*, Table 13, *Carrocera:1979:II:pp.267-277*.

(xi) Census of Guayana in *Robinson:Ibid:p.726*, Table 15.

(xii) Census of Capuchin missions, *BL:Add.Mss.:36348*, *BGB:BC:APV:p.69*, *Carrocera:1979:III:pp.20-1*.

(xiii) Census of Guayana missions:*AGI:C:352:28/1/1792*, in *Carrocera:1979:III:pp.106-7*.

\* Ojer (in *Caulin:1966:p.clxxviii*) gives the figure of 186.

\*\* Figures in brackets represent population totals given by the Prefect of Capuchin missions for the same year of 1777 - in *Carrocera:1979:II:p.306*.

TABLE I (cont'd.)

Mission	Pop. in 1797(xiv)	Pop. in 1799(xv)	Pop. in 1802(xvi)	Pop. in 1816(xvii)	Pop. in 1817(xviii)	Pop. in 1819(xix)
Cunuri	+	+	+	+	+	+
El Palmar	656	707	779	1015	780	331
Tupuquen	567	567	559	736	359	400
Miamo	775	748	839	1041	767	458
Curumo	+	+	+	+	+	+
Carapo	746	768	816	1000	1000	492
Aguacagua	+	+	+	+	+	+
Morocure	609	572	570	730	?(328)**	?(277)
Guasipati	731	738	728	984	649	?(374)
Caruachi	664	403	403	634	?(285)	?(241)
Cumamo	502	458	461	364	364	100
Guri	666	678	720	758	375	175
Puga	477	513	513	578*	?(260)	?(220)
Totals	6393	6243	6388	7840	4294	1956

(xiv) Letter of Prefect of Capuchin missions, in Strickland:1896:pp.58-9, Carrocera:1979:III:pp.162-3.

(xv) Memo of Padre Sabadell, in Lodaes:Ibid:p.269, Robinson:Ibid:p.732, Table 18, BGB:BC:APV:p.171, Strickland:1896:pp.61-2, Carrocera:1976:III:pp.176-194.

(xvi) Census of Capuchin missions, Robinson:Ibid:p.733, Table 19, Carrocera:1979:III:pp.208-227.

(xvii) Report on the Capuchin missions of Guayana by Padre Olot, Strickland:Ibid:pp.70-1, Robinson:Ibid:p.742, Table 25, BGB:BC:APVI:p.6, Carrocera:1979:III:pp.314-5.

(xviii) Robinson:Ibid:p.745, Table 28.

(xix) Robinson:Ibid:p.747, Table 29.

\* Lodaes (Ibid:p.269) gives the figure of 458.

\*\* Figures in brackets represent an extrapolation from the average percentage decrease in population in those missions for which there is information available, see also Table III.

TABLE II: Miscellaneous data on the Carib population  
of some Capuchin missions

(i) Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths

Mission	Baptisms	Marriages	Deaths
El Palmar	168	78	68
Miamo	250	15	85
Aguacagua	41	1	8
Morocure	100	0	0
	559	94	161

1755 - source Letter of Fr. Benito de Moya quoted in Rionegro: Ibid: pp. 100-1, Carrocera: 1979: I: p. 338.

Miamo	1847	146	566
Carapo	1250	138	495
Morocure	1010	57	303
Guasipati	849	26	366
Caruachi	316	26	97
Cumamo	870	-	334
Tupuquen	621	8	312
Guri	283	9	113
	8485	677	1776

1788 - source BL: Add. Mss.: 36348

TABLE II (cont'd.)

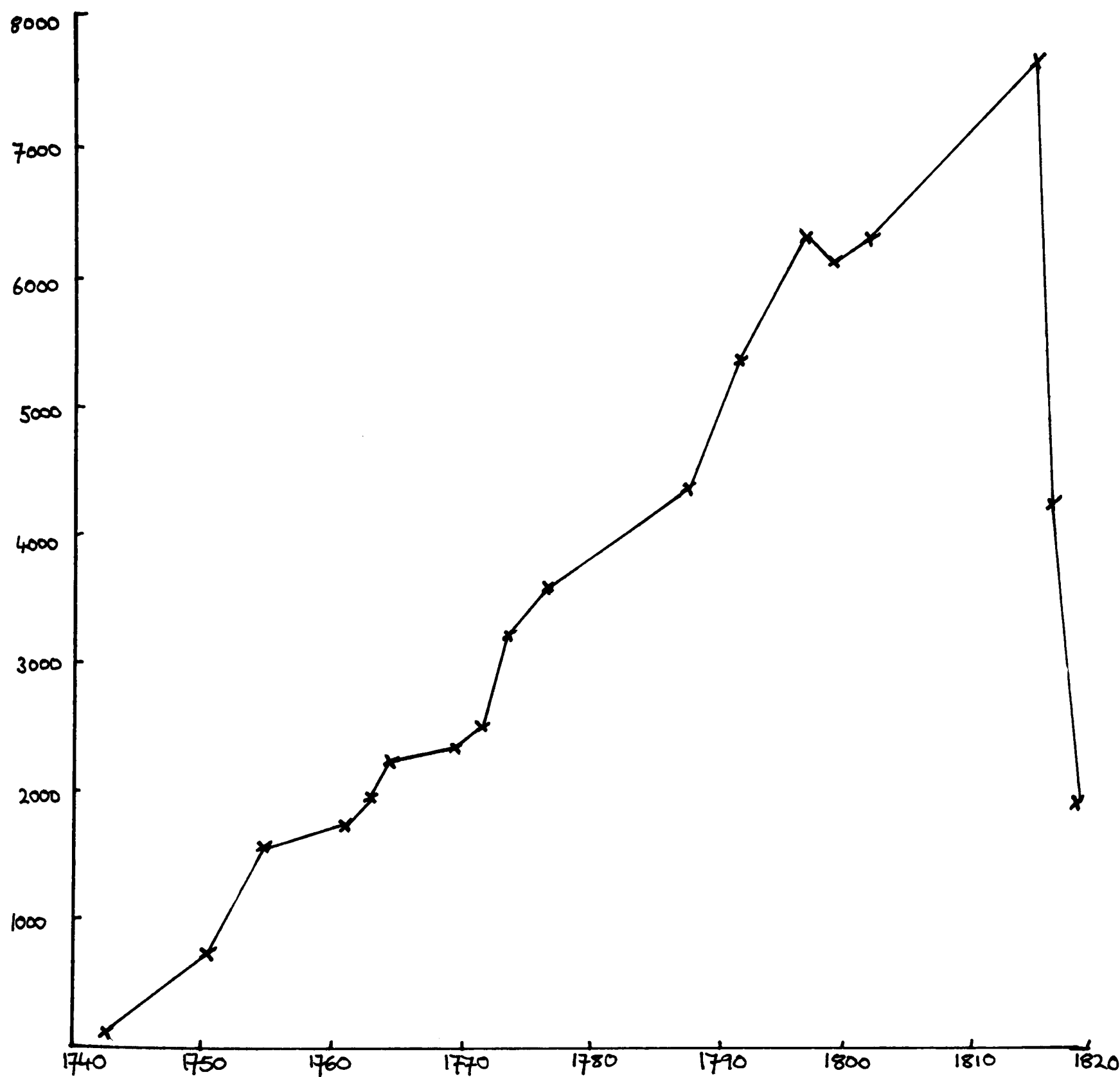
Mission	Baptisms	Marriages	Deaths
El Palmar	1841	302	746
Miamo	2139	177	867
Carapo	1757	196	815
Morocure	1287	94	491
Guasipati	1196	74	576
Puga	1305	196	623
Caruachi	531	61	200
Cumamo	1044	17	496
Tupuquen	1063	16	550
Guri	771	34	334
	12934	1167	5698

1797 - source Humbert:1976:pp.262-3, Lodaes:Ibid:p.269,  
Carrocera:1979:III:pp.162-3

El Palmar	2681	485	1776
Miamo	2580	361	1470
Carapo	2461	404	651
Morocure	1757	240	835
Guasipati	2058	240	1084
Puga	1981	226	1862
Caruachi	1033	163	431
Cumamo	1529	29	866
Tupuquen	1082	46	892
Guri	1744	74	771
	18906	2268	10638

1816 - source Strickland:Ibid:pp.70-1, Lodaes:Ibid:pp.300-1, 322,  
Carrocera:1979:III:pp.314-5

TABLE III

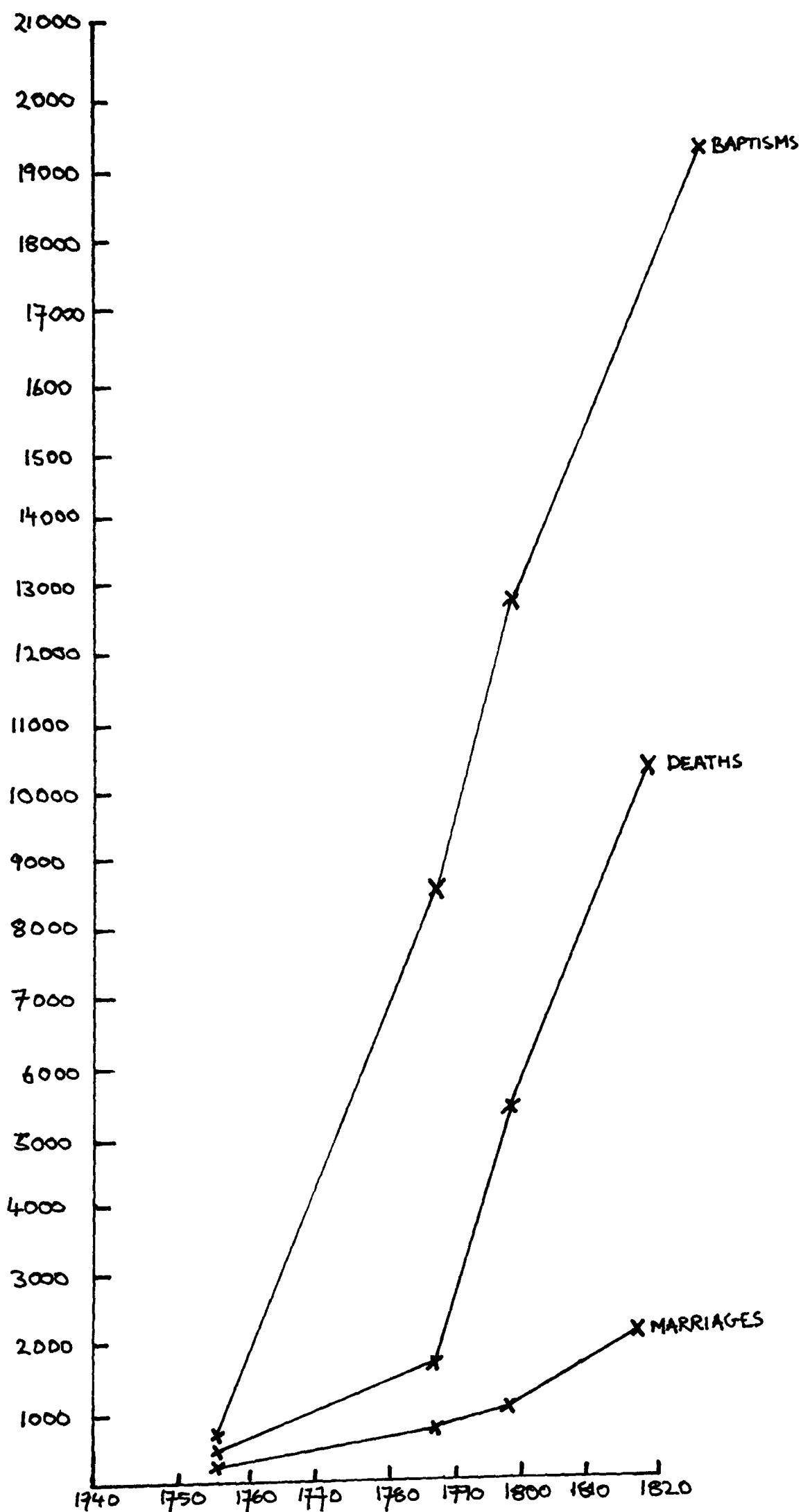


TOTAL CARIB POPULATION IN CAPUCHIN MISSIONS

1740 - 1820

[SOURCE - TABLE I]

TABLE IV

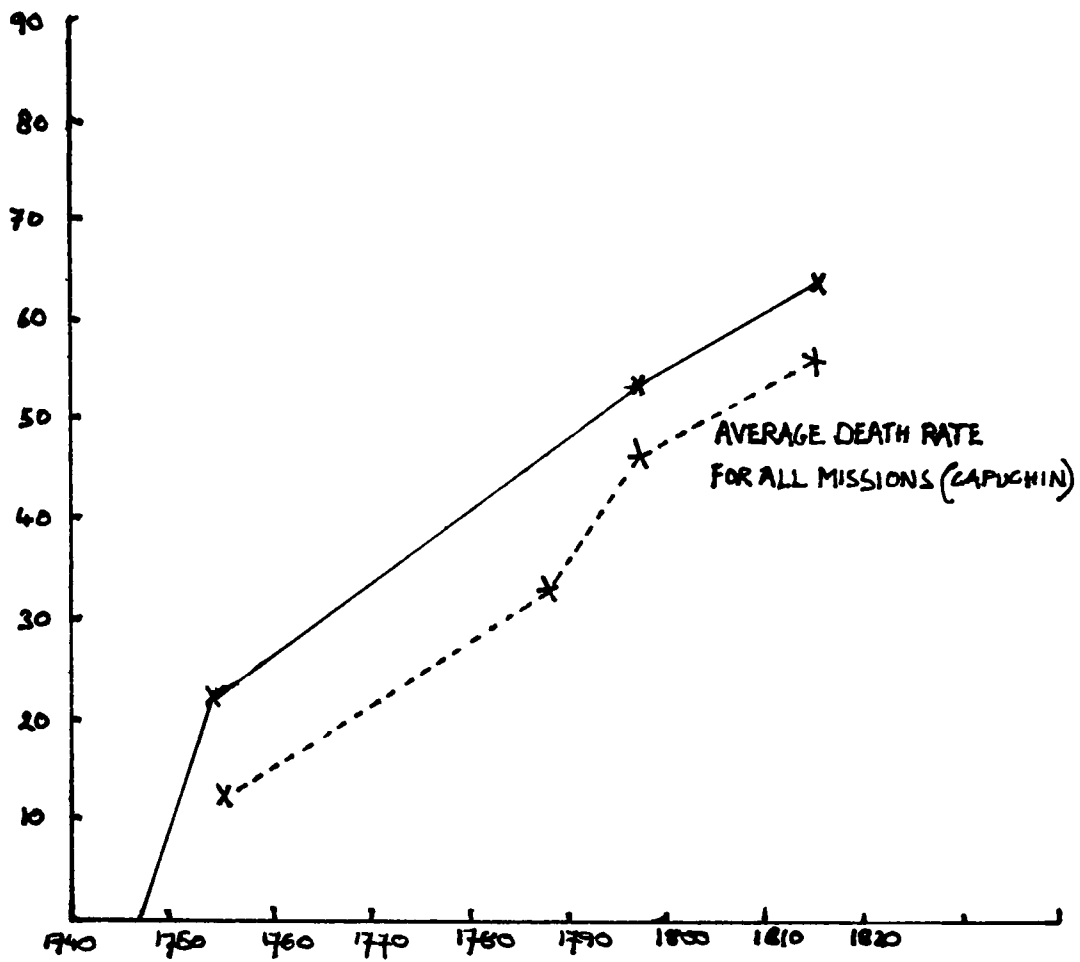


BAPTISMS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS AMONG  
 CARIB POPULATIONS IN CAPUCHIN MISSIONS  
 1740 - 1816

[SOURCE - TABLE II]

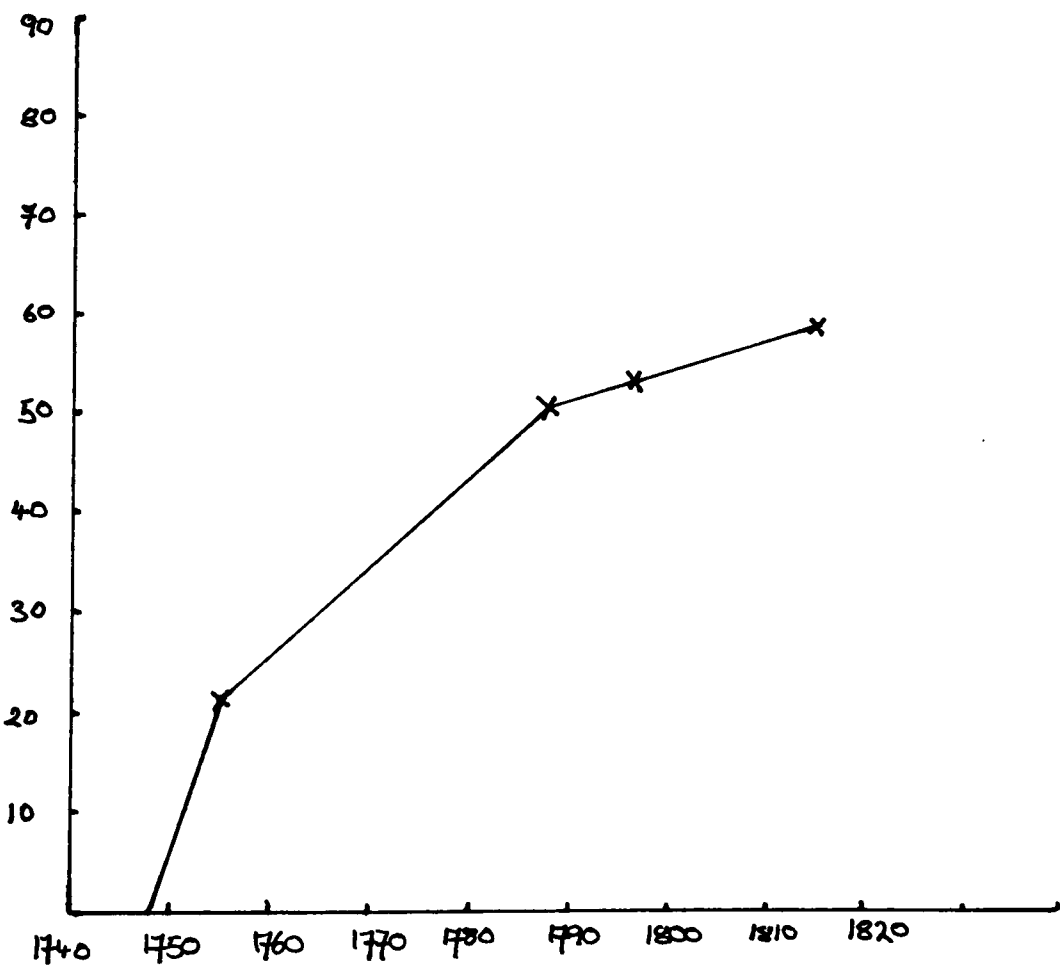
TABLE V

[SOURCE - TABLES I + II]



DEATH RATE (PER 100) PALMAR MISSION

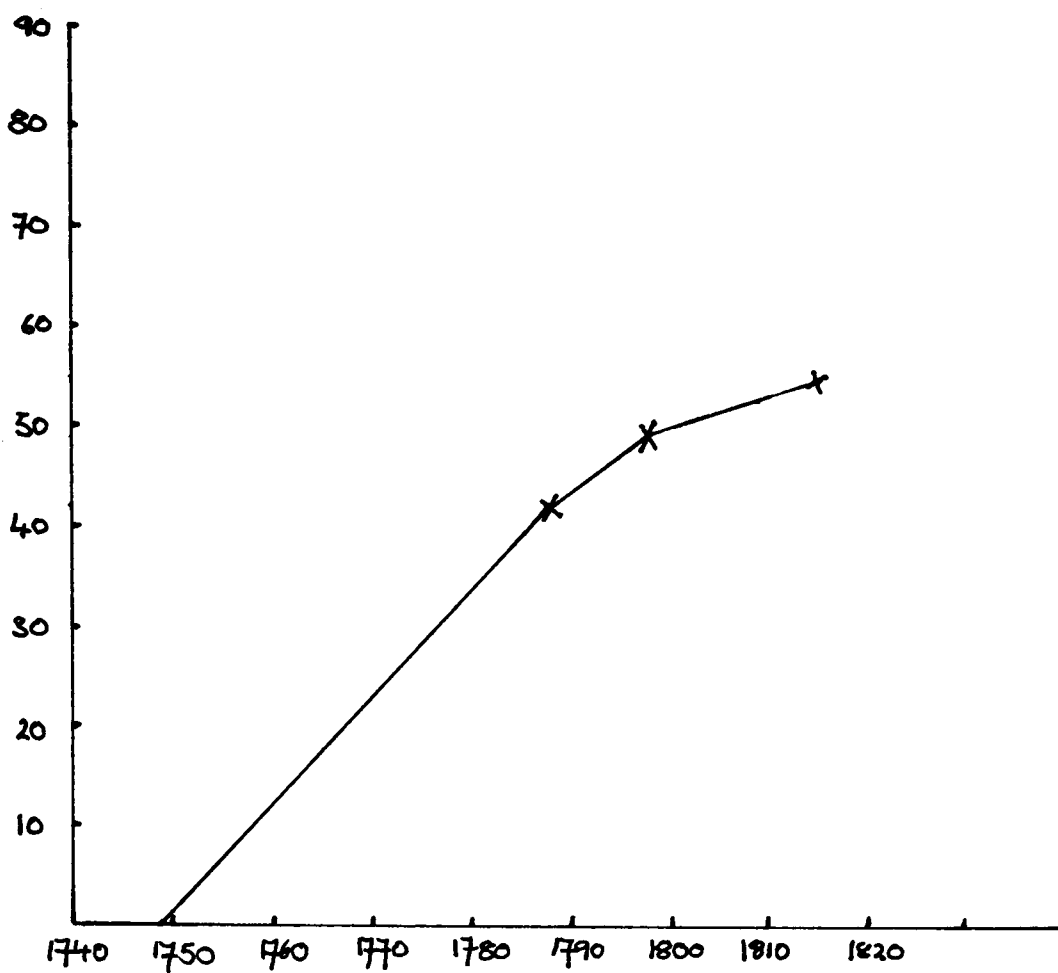
\* CALCULATED AS NUMBER OF DEATHS (AT DATE INDICATED) AGAINST TOTAL POPULATION (AT DATE OF LAST CENSUS).



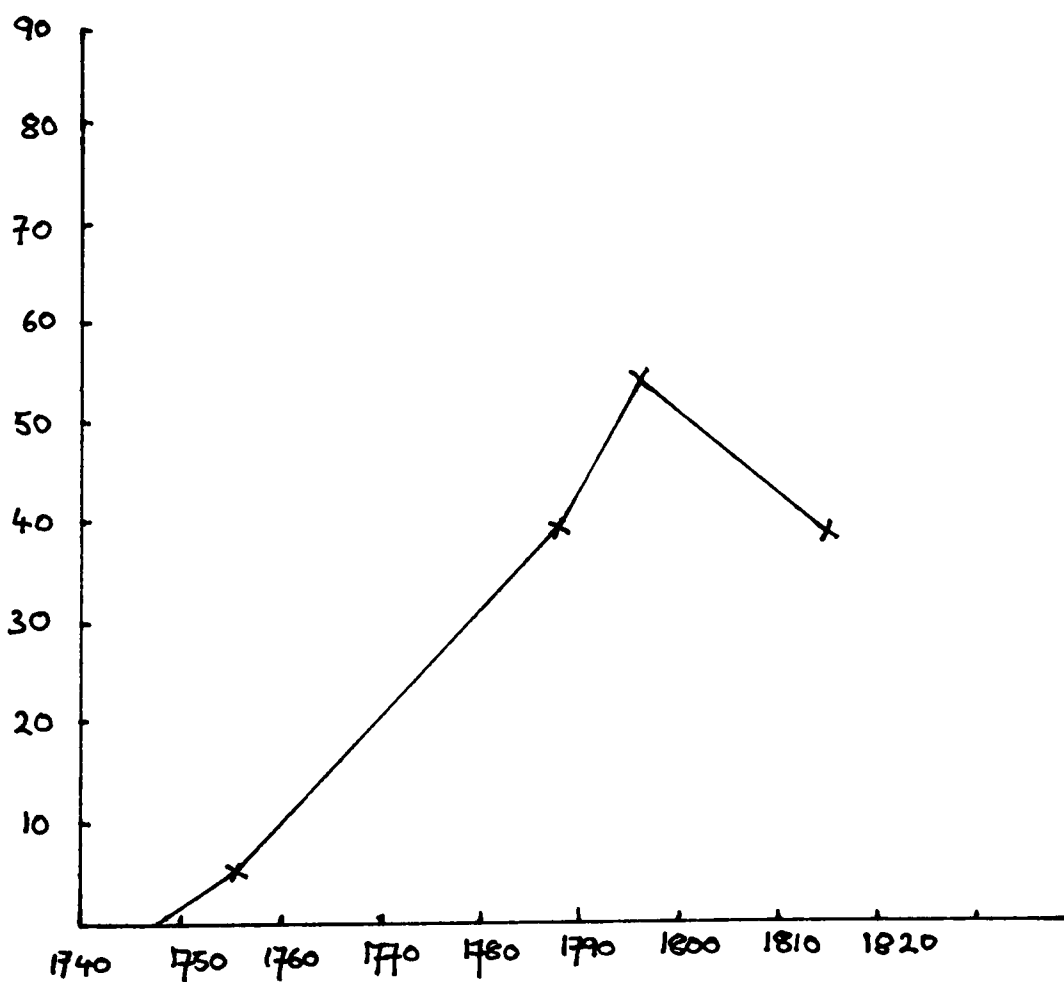
DEATH RATE (PER 100) MIAMO MISSION

CONTINUED OVER

TABLE V  
CONTINUED



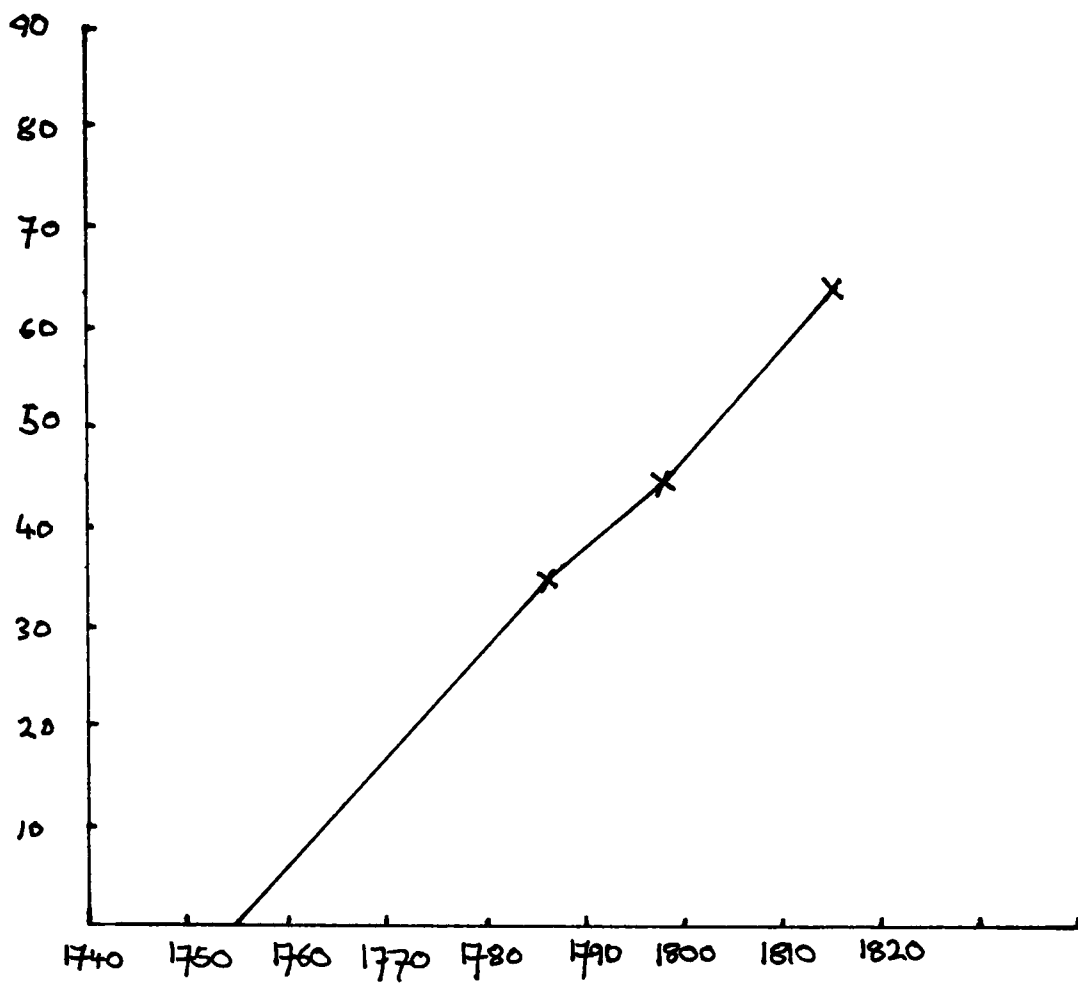
DEATH RATE (PER 100) TUPUQUEN MISSION



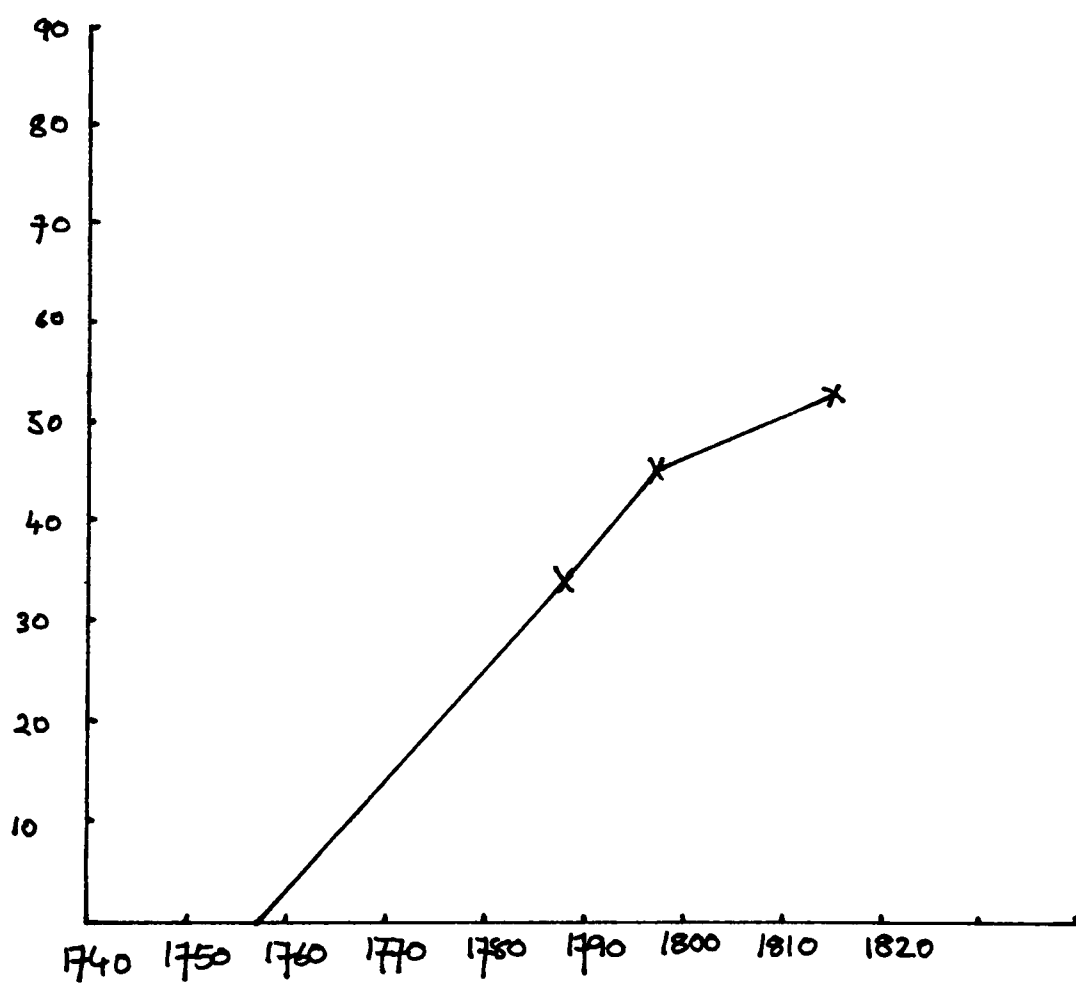
DEATH RATE (PER 100) CURUMO MISSION

CONT.  
OVER

TABLE Y  
CONT.



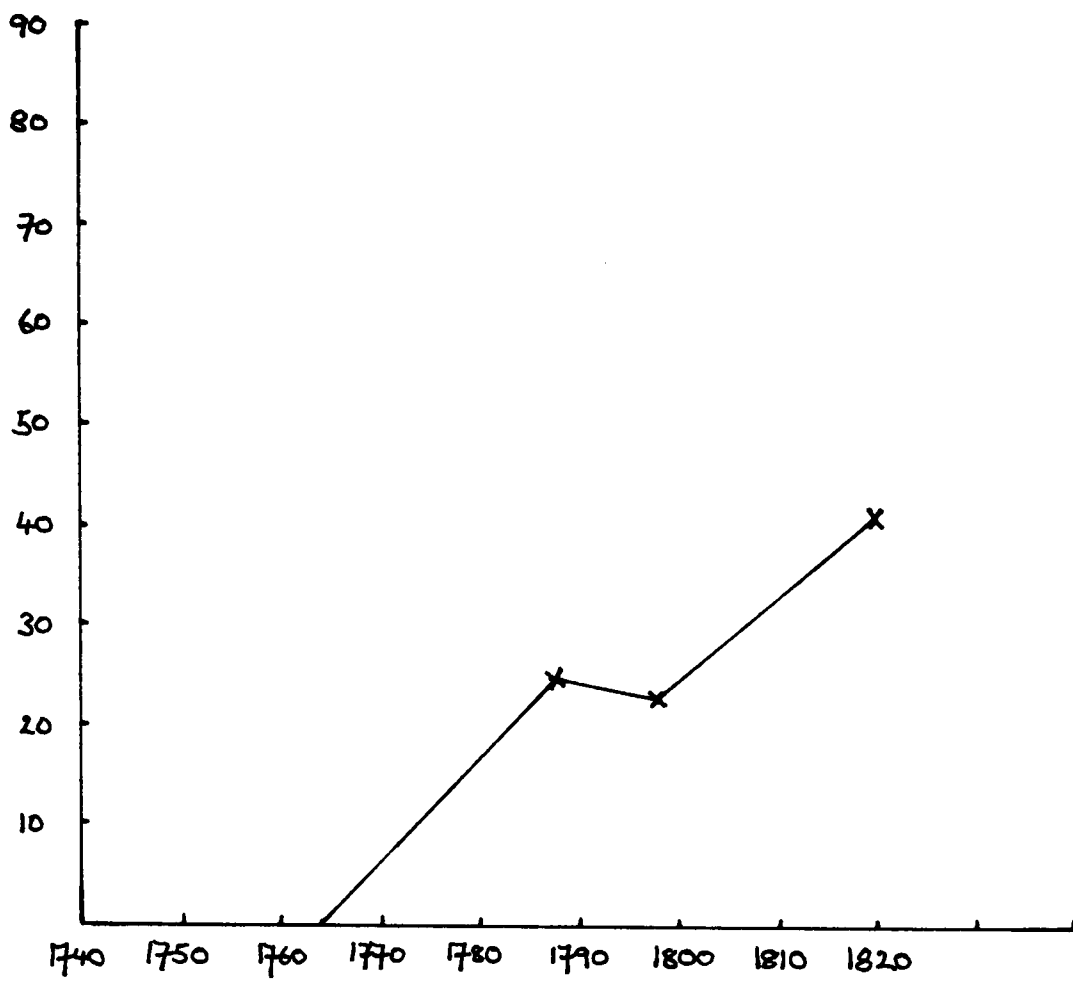
DEATH RATE (PER 100) MOROCURE MISSION



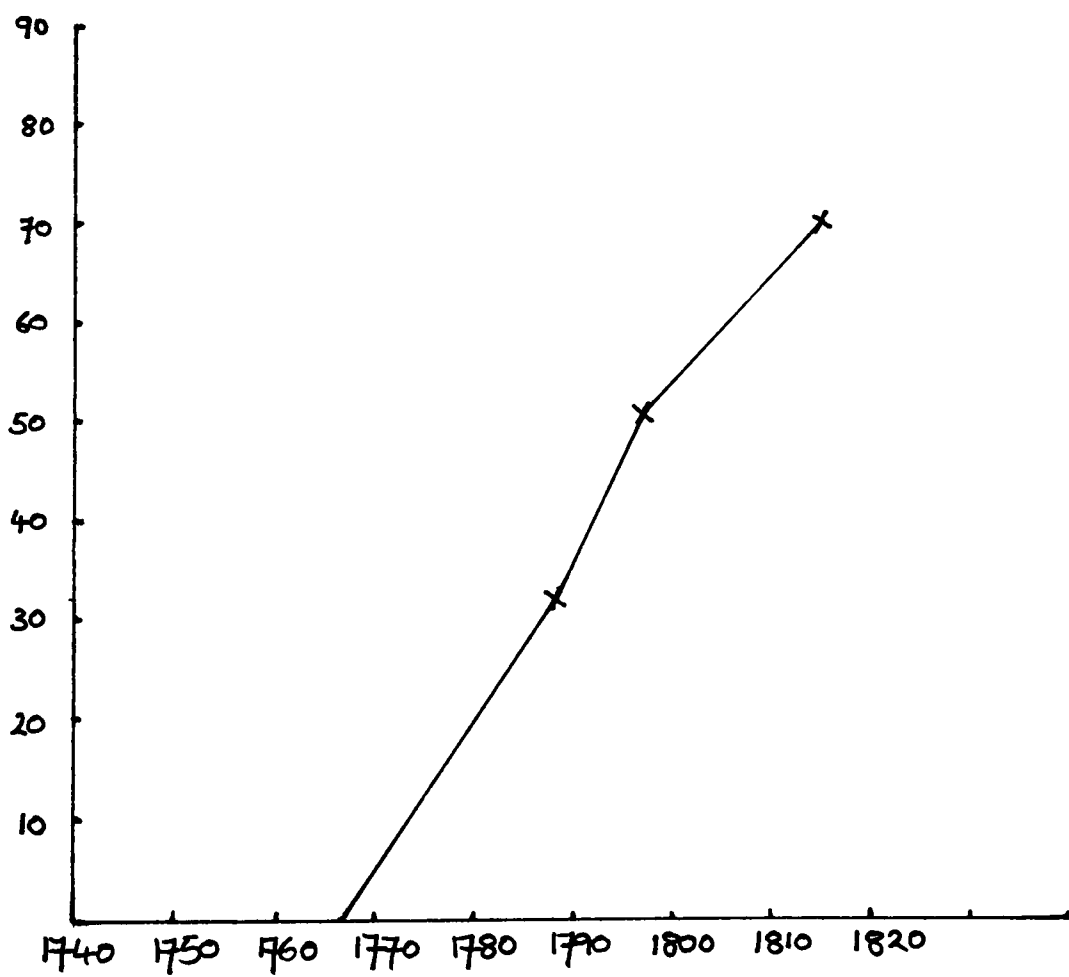
DEATH RATES (PER 100) GUASIPATI MISSION

CONT.  
OVER

TABLE V  
CONT.



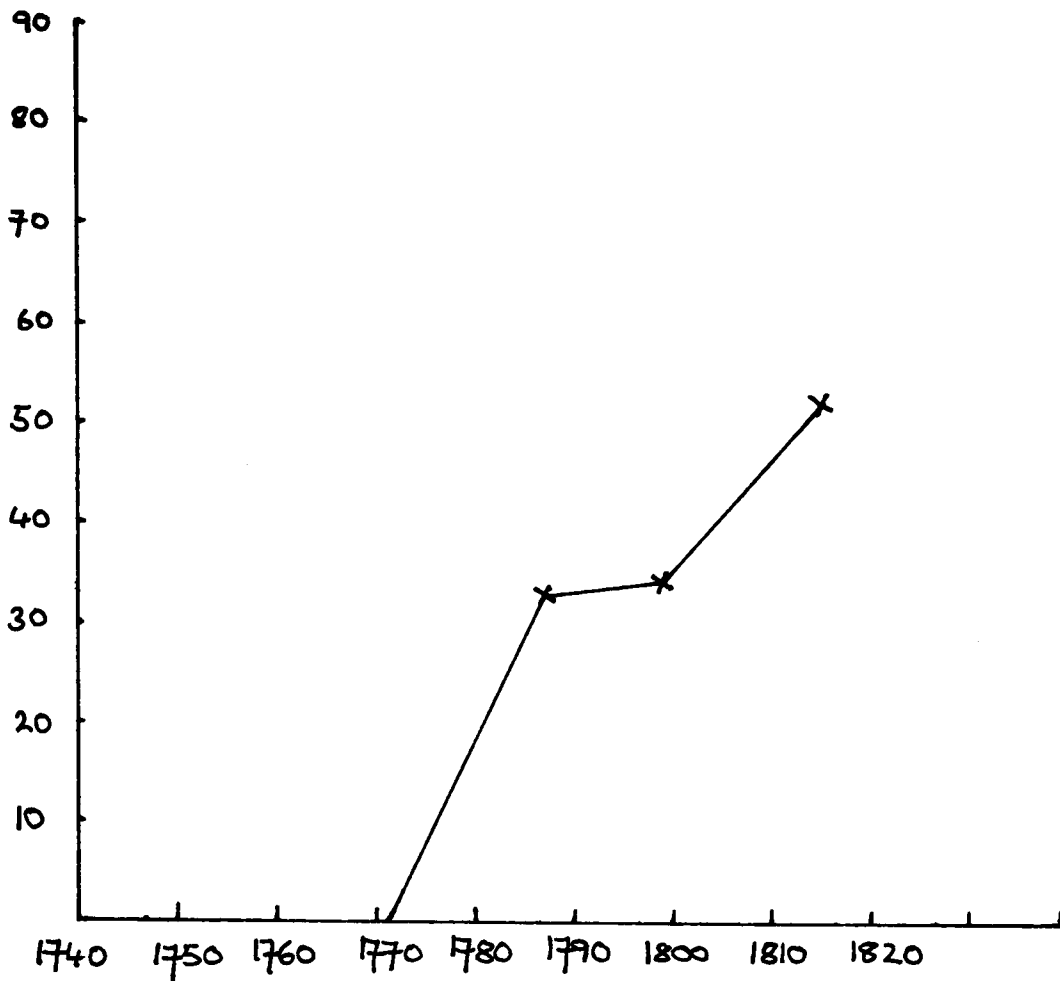
DEATH RATE (PER 100) CARUACHI MISSION



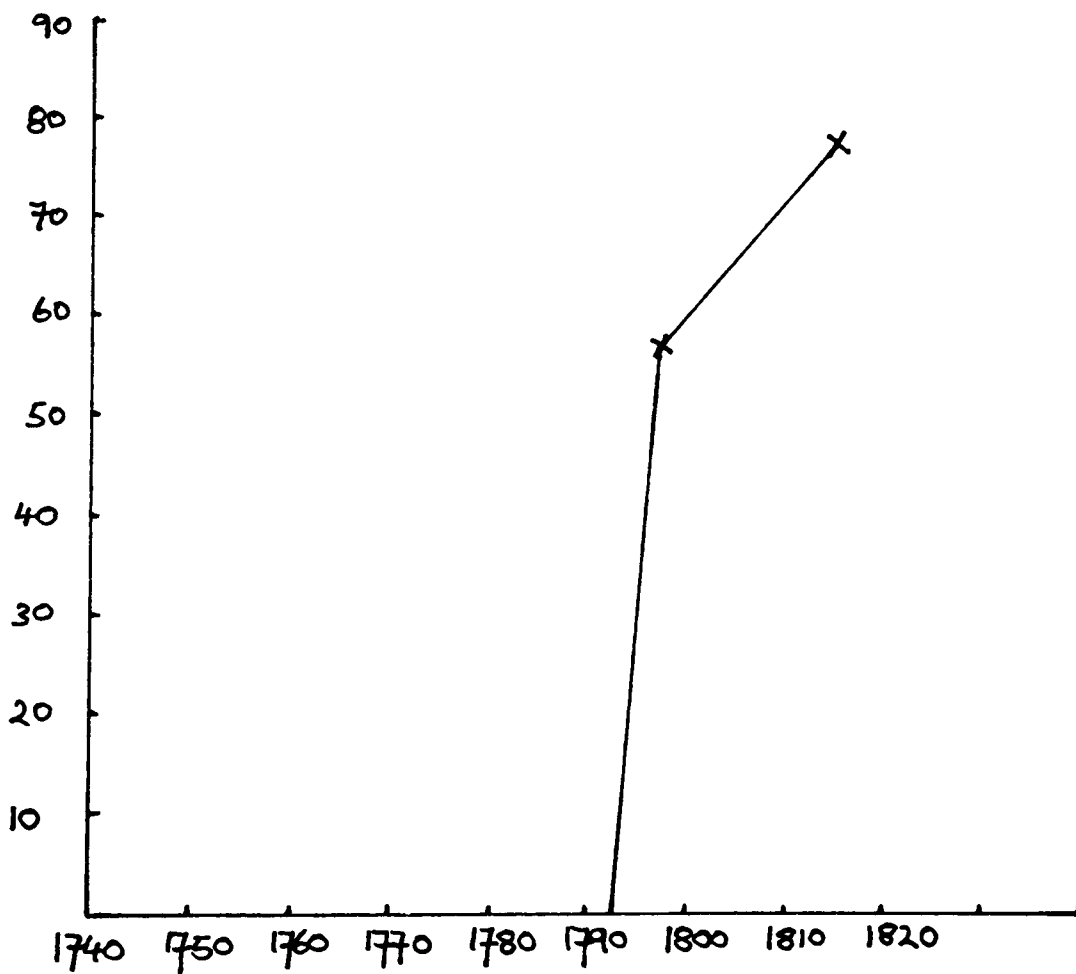
DEATH RATE (PER 100) CUMAMO MISSION

CONT.  
OVER

TABLE V  
CONT.



DEATH RATE (PER 100) GURI MISSION



DEATH RATE (PER 100) PUGA MISSION

TABLE VI: Carib population in the Franciscan missions

Mission	Date Founded	Pop. at Foundation	Pop. in 1736(i)	Pop. in 1741(ii)	Pop. in 1746(iii)
Panapotar	1722	145	202	298	(Palenques)
Pariri	1723	600	548	350	321
Curucay	1734	80	123	173	198
Anaco	1735	220	197	266	135
Chamaripa	1740	250	-	253	163
Pariaguan	1744	40	-	-	40
Quiamare	1746	58	-	-	58
Cachipo	1749	?	-	-	-
Turapa	1753	120	-	-	-
Guaziparo	1753	209	-	-	-
Aribi	1754	246	-	-	-
Tapirin	1754	?	-	-	-
Mucuras	1754	300	-	-	-
Atapiri	1754	180	-	-	-
Platanal	1756	300	-	-	-
Cari	1756	?	-	-	-
Tabaro	1762	194	-	-	-
Guiacupa	1763	63	-	-	-
Tapaquire	1770	224	-	-	-
Guaracuaro	1770	305	-	-	-
Panapana	1777*	(initially non-Carib)	-	-	-
Totals			1070	1340	915

(i) Report to Council of the Indies on the state of the Franciscan missions in AGI:SD:632:1736.

(ii) Letter of Bishop of Puerto Rico in AGI:SD:576:25/10/1741

(iii) Census of Franciscan missions in AGI:C:120:13/2/1746

\* First founded in 1771 with Arawaks and Warao from the Orinoco mouth.

TABLE VI (cont'd.)

Mission	Pop. in 1761(iv)	Pop. in 1767(v)	Pop. in 1773(vi)	Pop. in 1783(vii)
Panapotar	+	+	+	+
Pariri	309	388	?	763
Curucay	99	?	160	?
Anaco	223	283	240	379
Chamaripa	236	257	302	384
Pariaguan	300	307	279	324
Quimare	189	220	270	236
Cachipo	209	273	250	296
Turapa	+	+	+	+
Guaziparo	139	135	96	?
Aribi	132	210	196	279
Tapirin	194	?	246	316
Mucuras	384	350	313	193
Atapiri	222	225	175	281
Platanal	115	121	218	?
Cari	292	310	127	511
Tabaro	-	227	182	319
Guiacupa	-	203	152	129
Tapaquire	-	-	-	224
Guaracuaro	-	-	-	152
Panapana	-	-	-	48
Totals	3043	3509	3206	4786

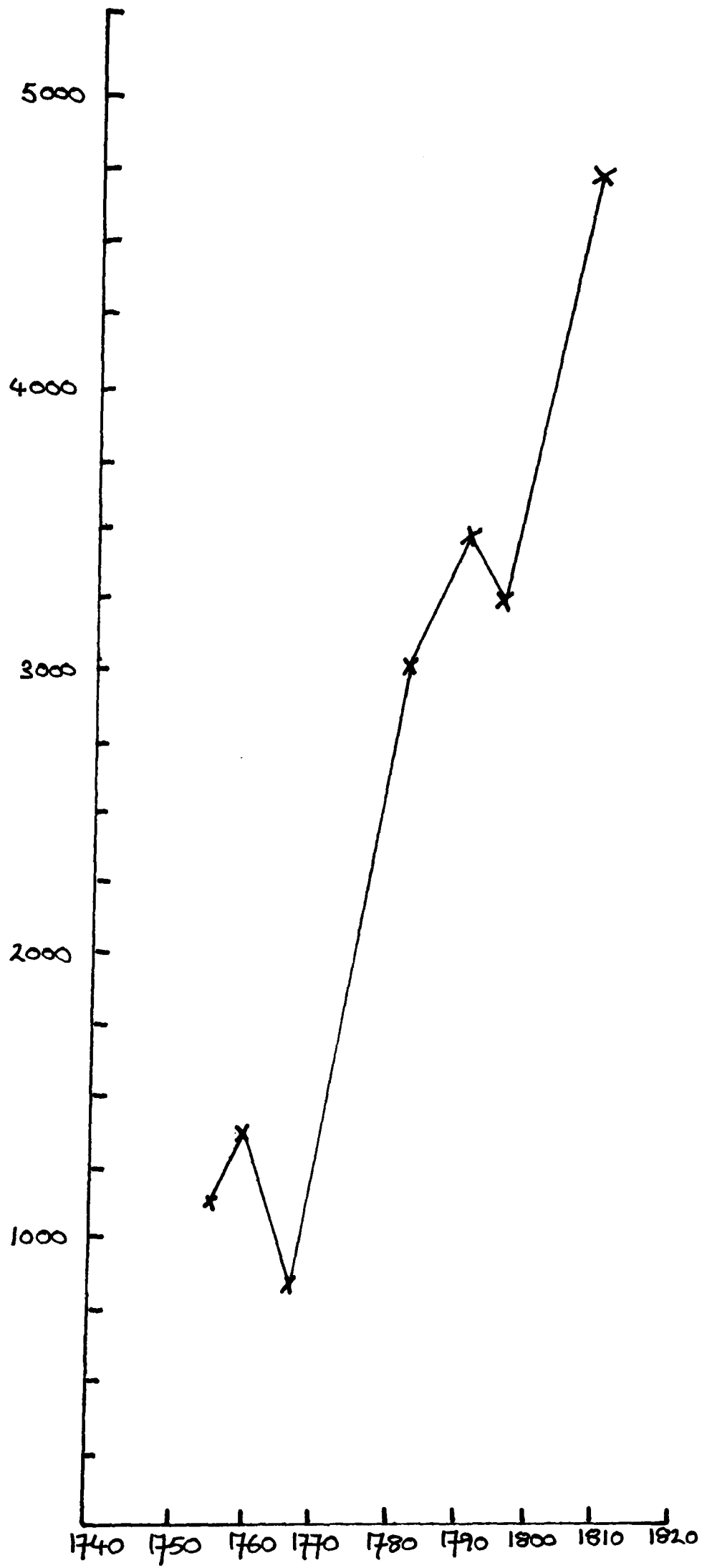
(iv) Report of Governor Diguja, BGB:VC:III:p.348.

(v) Memo of Fr.Alonso Hinistrosa, AGI:C:216:1767.

(vi) Letter of Fr.Inigo Abbad, in Canedo:1967:II:p.122.

(vii) Letter of Simon de Torreslosnegros AGI:C:160:29/4/1780, letter of Fr.Gregorio Mayo in Canedo:Ibid:p.168.

TABLE VII



TOTAL CARIB POPULATION IN  
FRANCISCAN OBSERVANT MISSIONS  
1730 - 1790

[SOURCE - TABLE VI]

TABLE VIII: Reported\* epidemics in eastern Venezuela 1689-1818Cumana' Area:

1689	'epidemias'	(Carrocera:1979:I:p.9)
1692	plague and smallpox	(AGI:SD:189:Governor to King, 10th July)
1694	" "	(AGI:SD:189: " " 19th Sept.)
1695	" "	(AGI:SD:199: " " 24th Sept.)
1737	" "	(Carrocera:1979:I:p.30)
1750-60	smallpox	(AGI:C:391:Governor to King, 31/8/1751 616 " " 2/8/1751 121 " " 18/7/1760 128 " " 7/11/1761)
1765	"	(AGI:C:442:2/10/1767)

Guayana Area:

1728	measles	(Carrocera:1979:II:p.340)
1729	"	(Lodares:1929:p.212, Carrocera:1979:I:p.337)
1731	" and smallpox	(AGI:SD:678:30/9/1732, Carrocera:Ibid)
1738	"	(Carrocera:1979:II:p.340)
1741	" "	(AGI:C:120:13/10/1741)
1742	"	(Carrocera:1979:I:p.33)
1743	"	(Lodares:Ibid:p.212)
1748	" "	(AGI:C:120:1/6/1754)
1755-6	'fevers'	(Ramos:1946:p.175)
1767	smallpox	(AGI:C:442:2/10/1767)
1817	measles	(Lodares:Ibid:p.316)
1818	'fevers'	(Hamilton:1820)

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\* Certainly there would have been many other localised outbreaks of disease, only those which were widespread being considered of sufficient import to be recorded by the authorities. Thus gaps in the documentary record should not be taken to imply the complete absence of disease among the Amerindian population.

CHAPTER IV

THE DUTCH CONNECTION

(i) Development of Essequibo and Demarara:  
ca. 1670 - 1772

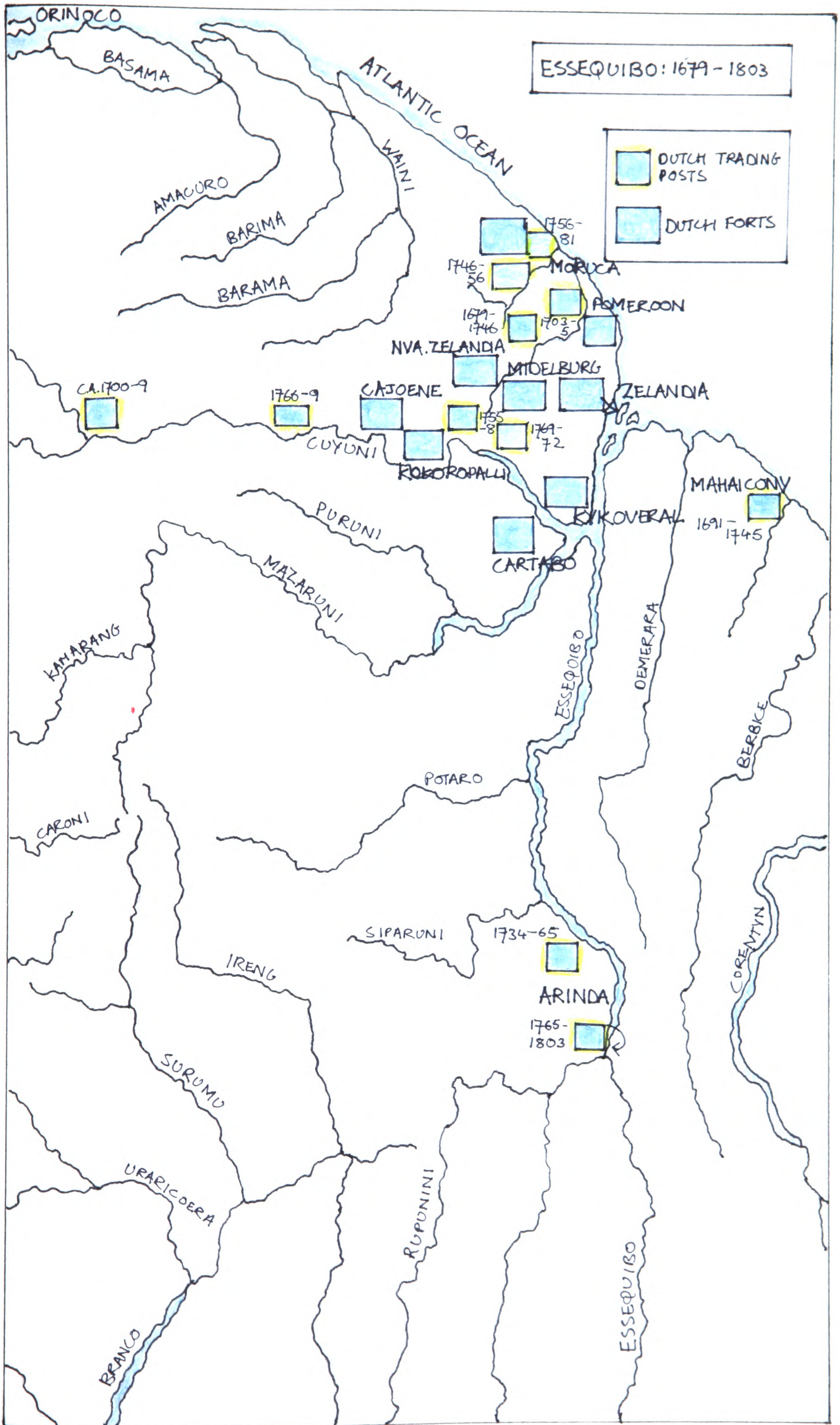
As was explained in chapter II, by the second half of the 17th century the Dutch had firmly established themselves in Guayana, primarily by means of the trading alliances they had developed with the Amerindians, and although they were briefly dislodged from Essequibo in 1665, by the English under Major John Scott<sup>1</sup>, the fact that some 60,000 lbs of sugar and 20,000 lbs of letterwood left the colony, on a single ship, in 1669 (BGB:BC:API:p.171) indicates that the economy was flourishing under Dutch management, despite this setback.

In order to promote the trade with the Amerindians posts were established in the interior and along the coast where they could bring the foodstuffs, woods, dyes and other forest products, including red slaves, which were then exchanged for European goods, especially metal tools. In turn these goods might be traded far to the west, as was done by the Caribs<sup>2</sup>, at least until their poitos were brought under missionary control. Later these trading posts were to evolve other functions (see below p.286) by acting as a rallying point for the Amerindians who were engaged to hunt down the colony's runaway black slaves.

It was also in this period that the Directors of the Dutch West India Company initiated the planting of sugar, since it was seen that the potential profits here were much greater than those that could be generated from the Amerindian trade. As Menezes says, this was:

... a momentous decision, setting a saccharine stamp on the future history of the country. (1977:p.3)

Moreover, since the Amerindians were found to be both unwilling and



MAP 6

unsuitable<sup>3</sup> for field labour, the importation of African slaves began<sup>4</sup>.

In 1670 the Dutch West India Company took direct control of Essequibo<sup>5</sup>, appointing Hendrik Roll as Commander. Roll consolidated the Amerindian trade in the Barima-Pomeroon area by reopening the Wacupe post in 1679 and establishing another on the Barima river in 1683 (BGB:BC:API:pp.172-3, 181,188). He also sent traders along the Mazaruni and Cuyuni Rivers, although persistent conflict between the Akawaio and the Caribs in this region (see below p.292) hindered Dutch access. By 1700 Roll's successors, Abraham and Samuel Beekman, had also established posts in the region of the Demarara and Mahaicony Rivers (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.67).

At the same time the number of Dutch plantations began to increase in the vicinity of the fort at Kykoveral (BGB:BC:Atlas, map 8), and by 1703 had spread up the Essequibo and Mazaruni, as well as towards the sea (BGB:BC:Atlas, map 9):

... cultivation was rather slowly spreading down the lower banks of the Essequibo towards the islands which stud its mouth. To the eastward there was practically no settlement, and the Demerara river was unopened. (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.23)

The beginning of the 18th century marks the point of the furthest extension of Dutch influence into the interior of Guayana for, as well as the establishment of the posts mentioned above, Dutch traders had also been as far as the Rupununi mouth, or crossed overland to a point higher up on this river and from here travelled on the savannahs between Guayana and the Amazon (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.24).

In 1714 the Treaty of Utrecht enshrined these gains in virtue of the formal recognition that the Spanish gave to these achievements<sup>6</sup>, although there had been a de facto recognition of the Dutch presence by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 (see chapter II).

However, as the profitability of the plantations steadily increased, especially after the opening of the Demerara River in the 1740's, so the

economic significance of the trade with the Amerindians declined, such that:

... between 1715 and 1735 the local Government was  
tending to lose touch with the interior ...  
(Harris & Villiers:1911:p.25)

notwithstanding the establishment of Arinda post, near the confluence of the Essequibo and Siparuni, in 1734.

Nonetheless the political significance of the Amerindians living within the Dutch sphere of influence, particularly the Caribs, did not decline correspondingly since the authorities came to rely on the Amerindians, in particular as a bush police to intimidate and hunt down the growing and often rebellious black slave population<sup>7</sup>. This lack of firm control on the part of the authorities is to be related to the very rapid expansion of the sugar plantations after 1746. Thus in this year the Company's post on the Demarara was closed and river opened up for the planters. Economic development was so quick to follow that, by the 1750's, Essequibo had fallen into second place. By 1760 English settlers were a majority in Demarara (Harris & Villiers:Ibid:p.379), foreshadowing the takeover of the colony from the Dutch, at the turn of the 19th century<sup>8</sup>.

As far as relations with the Spanish of the Orinoco were concerned the economic interdependence of the 17th century continued into the 18th<sup>9</sup>, despite the missionaries disruption of the Caribs' trading activities. Thus, although this source of past conflict was of less significance to the Dutch, the commitment of the Dutch West India Company to the planting of sugar meant that now they were more vulnerable to Spanish aggression since they relied, for example, on access to the fisheries of the Orinoco mouth to feed the slave population (see chapter I, note 27), while the mule and horse trade between Essequibo and the Orinoco was crucial to the sugar industry, as the processing of sugar cane was carried out in mills worked with these animals (Bancroft:1971:p.361).

The first indications of the development of this trade are from the

end of the 17th century (BGB:BC:API:p.213), following the discovery by the authorities that non-Company traders were undercutting the price of Company horses and mules, being brought down the Cuyuni from the Orinoco. By 1706 it is apparent that English traders, travelling by the sea route from the Orinoco, had effectively ended the Dutch West India Company's attempts to monopolise the supply coming overland from the interior (BGB:BC:API:p.221, 229,/BCC:p.66). In recognition of this fact the Wacupo post was moved to the Moruca site in 1726, precisely because the horse traders habitually stopped here en route from the Orinoco (BGB:BC:APII:p.5 - see also, Moruca post accounts for 1727-8 in BGB:BC:APII:pp.178-9).

By 1731 the Dutch West India Company was demanding that the purchase of horses from the English cease altogether because, as they informed the Commander:

... the English would bring no horses if you did not also buy from them what they had intended to sell in the river. (BGB:BC:APII:p.12)

and in any case it would be more politic to trade directly with the Spanish.

Despite the reluctance, on grounds of price, of the Dutch colonists to do this, the evidence shows that the trading of horses and mules between the Orinoco and the Essequibo, often now with the Caribs acting as the intermediaries, continued well into the 1750's (BGB:BC:APII:p.16,35,/BCC:pp.182-6), while Eugenio Alvarado, reporting for the Real Expedición des Límites, recorded that in 1758 one Ignacio, a Frenchman and:

... a famous smuggler, in company with an apostate Augustinian monk ... conveyed 200 mules, which they brought from the provinces of Barinas, Caracas and Casanar /in western Venezuela/ ... into the Orinoco by Angostura and through the Caroni and having reached this part of the continent, brought them to Essequibo ... (BGB:BC:APII:p.114, see also Bancroft:1971:p.120).

Once the ranches of the Capuchins had been established, in the 1760's and 1770's, this trade naturally fell into their hands and Hamilton even suggests that they might have deceived the Spanish civil authorities over its

true extent. Thus he says that (1820:IX:p.28) the Capuchins had a secret port on the Orinoco, San Joaquin, and being:

... anxious to keep everything out of sight as much as possible ... preferred this point to a more commodious one on the Orinoco, a league hence.

Indeed the Capuchins even sent envoys to Essequibo, offering to set up a properly regulated trade between their mission ranches and the colony (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.92).

In contrast to this economic interdependence and up until the 1730's, when the Dutch were still able to trade with the Orinoco Amerindians fairly unmolested<sup>10</sup>, the success that the Spanish had in occupying this region after 1740 led to a series of clashes at the frontier of settlement. However, and again in contrast to earlier times, the new economic necessities that had emerged with the decision to initiate the planting of sugar, entailing a consequent decline in the Amerindian trade, meant that the Dutch no longer automatically endorsed all the anti-Spanish activities of their old allies, the Caribs.

The Dutch West India Company's policy of appeasement towards the Spanish in turn dealt a serious blow to Carib resistance to the encroachment of the missionaries since, though not for this reason alone<sup>11</sup>, the authorities flatly refused Carib requests for firearms. Thus by the late 1730's the conditions under which the Dutch-Carib alliance had originally been established had changed and when the most famous of Essequibo's Commanders, Laurens Storm van Gravesande, finally received his appointment in 1743<sup>12</sup>, it was not long before he became aware of the burgeoning power of the Spanish on the Orinoco through Carib requests for guns to defend themselves and the foundation of a Spanish mission-fort on the Cuyuni River<sup>13</sup>, a waterway previously dominated by the Dutch and Caribs. On July 20th, 1746 he wrote:

... a nation of Indians had come down from Orinoco and have attacked the Caribs subject to us in the River Wayni, have killed several and have threatened that they would extirpate

them all, which would entail very bad consequences for this Colony. Wherefore I have ... ordered the Postholder to assist the Caribs aforesaid ... and since I have strong reasons to suspect that the Indians have been sent by the Spaniards of Cumaná, I have ordered him to investigate the matter as far as practicable. (BGB:BC:APII:p.45)

Gravesande's immediate and consistent reaction to such Spanish actions was, as far as the Caribs were concerned, to refuse them firearms and attempt to restrain them from attacking Spanish missions for fear of an overwhelming Spanish response. His letter continues, concerning the Cuyuni mission:

... the inhabitants are very much aggrieved, and the Carib Indians a great deal more so, since it perfectly closes the Slave Traffic in that direction, from which alone that nation derive their livelihood. They have also expressed a desire to surprise the Mission and level it to the ground, which I, not without trouble have prevented, because they belong to our jurisdiction, and all their trade being carried on in Dutch Colonies, such a step would certainly be revenged upon us by the Spaniards. (ibid:p.45)

Again, in 1748, Gravesande wrote to the West India Company that:

The Spaniards were beginning gradually to approach the upper Cuyuni but some weeks ago, a war having broken out between the Carib nation and that of the Warrous ... it will stop their further progress, and possibly, if the Caribs obtain the upper hand, they may even be driven somewhat further on without our having in the least degree to meddle therewith ...

A wanderer of the name of Pinet, having gone up the River Cuyuni to obtain hammocks ... was requested by me to spy out the doings of the Spaniards in that region - a duty for which he was well fitted because he understands the Carib language thoroughly ... and he has made reports to me that the Spaniards had not yet undertaken the building of any forts or missions as had been their intention lower down, but that they cruelly ill-treated the Indians subject to us, continually taking them by surprise in their dwellings and carrying them off, with their wives and children, to send them to Florida; that he had spoken to the Chief of the Spaniards and had placed before his eyes the unfairness of this treatment, as well as the consequences of it, but that the latter had replied that the whole of America belonged to the King of Spain, and that he should do what suited himself without troubling about us.

Pinet also reported to me that the Indians were in the highest state of indignation; that four of the Chiefs were on the point of coming down in order once more to come and complain to me, and that they had already sent knotted cords

to all Indian houses, which is their sign to meet on a certain day. Seeing that all my remonstrances and letters to the Spaniards are of no avail ... I intend to tell the Chiefs that I can provide no redress for them, and that they must take measures for their own security. Then I feel assured that in a short time no Spaniard will be visible anymore above in Cuyuni. I have always, but with great difficulty restrained them ... (BGB:BC:APII:p.57)

By 1750 Gravesande had become so worried about the consequences of not being able to control Carib resistance to the Spanish that he formally forbade traders to sell them, or indeed any other Indians, guns, fearing escalation of warfare within the colony in general (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.269). The extent to which Spanish actions were effecting Gravesande's control, within Essequibo, can be seen from his letter of August 4th, 1752, in which he again advises that no more guns be given to the Caribs:

... in which proposal I now earnestly persist, and now more than ever, because the Spaniards have attacked and driven away the Caribs below the Orinoco, and these have all retreated to our side, and thus their number has considerably increased.

Now they are more than ever incensed against the Spaniards aforesaid: they lately over-ran two missions, and have murdered everyone there, and since my return here, they pityfully murdered a certain B. de Beaumont, as well as six of the men he had with him when on their return journey with tobacco. The other two, although severely wounded, were rescued by J. Smit, who was returning from Orinoco with horses, so that the reasons for not supplying these men with firearms grows weightier as time goes on. (BGB:BC:APII:p.75)

By 1754, the Caribs were under even more intense pressure from the Spaniards. Gravesande informs us that many Caribs from the Barima River had withdrawn to the Waini River, in view of a possible attack by the Spanish, and were angry because attempts to re-establish the Cuyuni mission were interfering with their trade with the Amerindians of this area. As a result the Caribs attacked the expedition sent to the Cuyuni in October, killing the priest and ten Spaniards (BGB:BC:APII:p.96)<sup>14</sup>.

In 1758, the Capuchins retaliated and raided Carib settlements on the Cuyuni, "killing many" (AGI:C:30:3/9/1769). Gravesande further informed

the West India Company:

Nearly all the Carib Indians living on the River Cuyuni came down the stream last week, and informed the Creoles of your Lordships, living just below the great fall of that River, that the Spaniards of the Orinoco, according to their computation of about one hundred strong, had come down the stream, and made a successful raid upon your Lordships' Post: that they had carried off as prisoners the Postholder and his assistant and a Creole and his wife and children: that they had laid waste the Post and all around it and had threatened to come down stream again and serve the whole colony in the same way. (BGB:BC:APII:p.143)

Eleven days later he wrote to the Spanish Commandant of Guayana:

... I have ever tried to cultivate the friendship of the Spanish nation, our nearest neighbours. I have always used all my power to prevent the savage Caribs doing them the least wrong. (BGB:BC:APII:p.177)

Clearly Gravesande felt that the Dutch were not able to resist Spanish military power<sup>15</sup>, notwithstanding the Caribs, and that the Caribs were to be left to defend themselves as best they could. Nonetheless, following the failure of these direct, personal appeals by Gravesande (see also Harris & Villiers:1911:p.366), a formal Remonstrance was sent to the Spanish court by the States-General of Holland, in 1759 (BGB:BC:APII:pp.176-7,182). However, in the wake of the Real Expedición des Límites and missionary advances south of the Orinoco, the Spanish were noticeably less placatory at this time. In 1760 they raided Dutch settlements on the Barima and Moruca Rivers and in 1769 laid waste the Moruca post and the recently re-established Cuyuni post. Another Remonstrance was issued by the States-General in this same year and, although this protest did not receive a reply for another 15 years, in fact such overt incursions by the Spanish ceased, except for an unsuccessful raid on the Moruca post in 1797. Yet, despite the failure of the Dutch to protect the Colony's Amerindians from attack, the Caribs proved faithful allies. In 1753, they aided Gravesande in subduing the Wapishana. Three traders, who had gone to the Upper Rupununi to try and establish commercial contact with the Portuguese on the Amazon, had been killed by the Wapishana. The Caribs and Macusis agreed to help "clear a route" in this area for Gravesande

(BGB:BC:APII:p.173). In 1754, the Caribs were giving forward intelligence of Spanish raids and in 1760, guarding the coast against black runaways (BGB:BC:APII:p.186). Moreover, the Caribs in particular proved staunch allies in the hour of the Colony's greatest need - the Berbice Slave Rebellion of 1763.

During and after the rebellion the Caribs played a vital role in defending the Dutch from their black slaves. Indeed, when one considers that in 1762 the population of Berbice was three hundred and forty six whites, two hundred and forty four red slaves, and three thousand eight hundred and thirty three black slaves, (Rodway:1893:I:p.163) then it is easy to appreciate just how crucial such aid was<sup>16</sup>.

Amerindian patrols were not able to stop all fugitives from reaching Spanish territories, and, even after the rebellion had been put down, a steady trickle of slaves made their way successfully to the Orinoco and beyond. For example, in 1763, the authorities of Caracas sought advice on what action they should take concerning the number of runaways building up in and around the city (AGI:C:11:22/2/1763). In 1767, the arrival of nine fugitives was reported by the Governor of Cumaná (AGI:C:20:9/1/1767) and in the following decade the Governor was still reporting the arrival of runaways in the Gulf of Paria (AGI:C:12:19/8/1774).

Many blacks chose to flee to the forest communities, first founded during the French raids earlier in the century. By 1790, it was reported to the Council of the Indies that there were possibly up to ten thousand of these fugitives in the interior of Essequibo, Berbice and Surinam. The Spanish were keen to make contact with these 'bush negroes' for they could certainly be used as a military force to eject the Dutch if it were possible to organise them to do so. Spanish plans had centred on making contact with the Macusis and Guayacas on the upper Essequibo, who, it was said, had extensive contact with these rebel blacks. However, they were frustrated in

this aim by a Carib cacique, with some fifty men under his command, who had been armed and placed, on the upper Essequibo, by the Dutch, precisely to forestall this strategy (AGI:C:30:4/12/1790).

The Spanish were, of course, perfectly clear as to the economic effect this continual drain of labour would have on the Dutch colony and thus encouraged slaves to desert by refusing to return them once they had reached Spanish territory. As early as 1749, the Dutch had proposed a 'cartel' agreement whereby the Spanish would return runaway slaves if the Dutch would do the same with fugitives from the Missions (BGB:BC:APII:p.61) but it was never operated<sup>17</sup>. Governor Centurion made the reasoning behind this attitude clear:

We should facilitate the escape of Indians who they keep in slavery, and that of negroes as well, for as they would cost more, they would not venture to buy them on account of the great danger of losing them, and for want of both classes of workmen, the Dutch would then be obliged to quit our neighbourhood, seeing how formidable we were, and settle elsewhere. (BGB:BC:APIV:p.73)

Although the Spanish did offer some compensation for the non-return of Dutch slaves this fell markedly between 1764 and 1770. Thus, in 1764 the Governor of Cumaná was offering 2,895 Pesos in compensation for eleven fugitives but by 1770, was only offering 180 Pesos per man; 52 per cent of the earlier figures (AGI:C:11:4/12/1765:258:5/4/1770).

At the same time this labour shortage, brought on by the desertions, was affecting Carib slave hunting, Gravesande wrote:

... I have had a good deal of trouble with the Carib Owls (one of whom was the leader of the expedition against the rebels of Berbice) because they spoke only of killing, and with a great deal of trouble and promises of double payment I got them to undertake to catch the runaways and bring them back alive ... (BGB:BC:APIV:p.82)

It is not surprising that, by the following year, 1772, he was to complain to the West India Company:

The number of our slaves there /Orinoco/ now is very large ... Those belonging to private colonists are

innumerable. The numbers of runaways increasing daily, this matter will end in the total ruin of a great many plantations, unless efficacious remedies be adopted.  
(BGB:BC:APIV:p.101)

Coupled with this drain on labour resources the Spanish had also stepped up their actions against "illegal" Dutch traders, both on the Orinoco and the coast of Venezuela. During the 1750's and 1760's many Dutch vessels were seized and their goods impounded (see AGI:C:30,125,185) and trading posts set up to counter Dutch commercial influence among the Indians (AGI:C:30:24/11/1767).

The net effect of all these Spanish initiatives was to threaten Dutch control within Essequibo as well as the trade and commerce on which the colony depended.

By the 1760's, as the Capuchin consolidated their hold on the Yuruari River valley, more and more Caribs chose to move away from the conflict and settle in other parts of Essequibo. In 1764, he wrote:

This body of Indians (Caribs) is wholly from the River Mazaruni. I had never supposed or been able to suppose that such a number of Caribs lived in that river alone. It is quite true that at the beginning of the last war but one, I once had their number taken "grosso modo", and it then amounted to eleven hundred men capable of bearing arms; but this was the whole jurisdiction of the Company, from Abary to Barima. But now I find that I did not have the fourth part, or else they must have increased extraordinarily ... (BGB:BC:APIII:p.105)

This "extraordinary increase" noted by Gravesande seems to have been due, in part, to refugees fleeing the advance of the Spaniards south of the Orinoco. Certainly there is evidence that the Caribs were deserting many of their traditional locations. In 1767, he wrote:

... after the raid on Cuyuni led by the Spaniards Essequibo swarms with Caribs, who have flocked there after having asked me permission to do so.  
(1911:p.557)

In 1769 Gravesande again wrote to the West India Company on this subject:

The Postholder of Maykouny has reported that a very large number of Caribs had come there and had asked him for permission to come and live in that river. All the

Postholders, having orders to keep on friendly terms with that nation and to favour them as much as possible, he immediately accorded them that permission, whereupon they laid out some plantations and have commenced to make their houses. He says that the Caribs were nearly all dressed and even had some priestly garments and ornaments with them. This made me suppose that they had been ill-treated by the Spaniards to such an extent that they had at last adopted measures of reprisal and had raided some of the Missions. We have, as yet, not had the slightest tidings of this, all communications with the Orinoco being still cut off. (BGB:BC:APIV:p.41)

A Carib Owl from the Barima also reported to Gravesande that:

... the Spaniards ... are in Barima and having been reinforced by another vessel, had at last attacked the Caribs themselves, captured several of the same, carried them off, burnt their houses and ruined their plantations; that they continued to make raids all around and along the sea coast and that they were making preparations to come to Pomeroun and carry off all the Indians ... (1911:p.612)

Again in 1770 Gravesande informed the West India Company:

A report was submitted by Daniel van de Heyden, stating that from the River Mazaruni he had received information that four Carib Owls, with their people, had come from the Spanish missions, stating that they had fled from the Spaniards and would like to remain and dwell in Mazaruni. (BGB:BC:APV:p.78)

However, Gravesande continued his policy of conciliating the Spanish over the question of the Caribs (AGI:C:258:2/8/1769, 5/4/1770) and continued to deny them the means to resist:

I asked the Carib Owl this morning whether the Caribs were no longer men and whether they had no hands with which to defend themselves, whereupon he replied: "Indeed, they have: but the Spaniards have guns and we only bows and arrows. Give us muskets, powder and shot and we will show you what we are." Even had I been inclined I could not have done so, having no further supply of these than just sufficient for the garrison. (1911:p.613)

But in truth it was more than logistics that concerned Gravesande:

I should really shudder to have recourse to such barbarous and unchristian measures, though the Spaniards in the Orinoco must be fully convinced that if we choose to use our power with our Indians we could make the Orinoco too hot for them. (BGB:BC:APIV:p.41)

Whether the Spanish were convinced or not it was the Caribs who bore the brunt of Dutch discretion and Christian ethics, but still the Caribs remained faithful and continued to provide the Dutch with the bush police. They supplied a guard of fifty for plantations on the Essequibo River in 1771, when a new slave revolt was brewing (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.640) and a force of two hundred to crush it in the following year (BGB:BC:APIV:p.103). Gravesande was perfectly aware of his basis of alliance with the Caribs:

... the Indians as a rule are not greatly to be trusted and are friendly towards us rather through fear or by reason of the profit they make out of trading with us than from inclination. (Harris & Villiers:1911: pp.341-2)

Although this statement might be said to adequately summarise the Dutch position in the matter as well, while the

... deep rooted hatred and enmity of that nation towards the Spaniards ... (BGB:BC:APIII:p.131)

persisted, Gravesande clearly felt that the Caribs, perforce, would stop the Spanish overrunning the colony of Essequibo, with or without guns. In the event he was proved correct and avoided an all out military confrontation with the Spaniards which he would have had little chance of winning. From the point of view of the Caribs one cannot help but feel that they were ill served by a man who was so well served by them.

#### The Dutch-Carib Alliance: Its Origin and Character

From the outset, it was the unholy alliance of "rebel Flemings" and "cannibal Caribs" which most worried the Spanish on the Orinoco. From the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards the Dutch had established a sufficiently good relationship with the Caribs of Essequibo to be able to take Amerindian wives<sup>18</sup> and even lead war parties in covert guerilla action against the Spaniards (AGI:SD:179:9/12/1614, 13/6/1618, 4/12/1632, 4/11/1637:

187:20/6/1618 and BGB:BC:API:p.88). So concerned were the Spanish with these developments that in 1662 the Governor of Santo Tomé wrote to the King:

... these foreign nations hold at their disposal all the Indian natives of these Windward Coasts, so that they cause me the greater anxieties in fearing a ruin for this Government. (BGB:BC:API:p.152)

Although the Spanish themselves made use of reduced Amerindians as an auxiliary military force they never evolved an alliance to match that of the Dutch and Caribs. So important was this alliance in the general development of Guayana that it will be considered in full before the final years of Dutch occupation in Essequibo are outlined. Indeed, such colonisation would itself have been impossible without tacit Carib support.

Although the word "alliance" tends to give the false impression that a "Carib-nation-as-a-whole" entered into some kind of agreement with the Dutch authorities, it is nonetheless true that the Dutch did draw up formal treaties with individual caciques. Thus there were treaties made with the Amerindians as early as 1672 promising friendship and freedom from slavery; while at the beginning of the eighteenth century Arawak caciques travelled to the Netherlands to conclude Treaties of Peace (Menezes:1977:p.46). In the case of the Caribs there were special factors to bind further the Dutch and themselves. Spanish propaganda and treatment of Carib groups within their territorial claims, were hardly designed to encourage co-operation and amicable relations. Accordingly the Caribs and Dutch found a particular coincidence of interest on the question of the Spanish, while the size and location of the Carib population eminently suited it to the task of controlling the black slave population who sought refuge in Spanish territory, and keeping open Dutch trade routes into the same area.

In addition to the formal undertakings given by the Dutch authorities to the Amerindians of Essequibo, which included guarantees of territory and freedom from slavery, a system of annual presents was established for services rendered by the Amerindians, and postholders<sup>19</sup> were stationed in the interior

in order to maintain good relations with the Amerindians, attach them to the post, and to lead them in slave catching expeditions and guerilla actions against the Spanish (Menezes:1977:p.46). Together these elements formed a shrewd and consistent policy on the part of the Dutch which forestalled Spanish occupation in this area and preserved the control of the plantation owners over their slave population, most dramatically during the Berbice Slave Rebellion of 1763.

Even after this revolt had been put down there were periodic uprisings among the slaves. For example, in 1772, when the slaves of P.C. Hooft revolted, killing both his wife and himself and other planters, setting fire to houses on plantations, three hundred Caribs came to the rescue (BGB:BC:APIV:p.105). For these and other services presents were liberally shared out among the Amerindians and in 1783 the Directors of the West India Company gave directions on maintaining the favour of the Indians, especially the Caribs. Land was to be given to them so that they might be induced to remain in one place and presents were to be distributed at regular intervals. As desertions among the slaves increased, the Amerindians were more and more utilised in the bush expeditions for their capture. This development led to the adoption of a regular system of presents shared out by the postholders which was continued, somewhat half-heartedly, by the British up to the emancipation of the slaves in the 1830's (Rodway:1893:I: p.110). Some idea of the variety and value of these gifts can be seen from Appendix I, which is a list of the goods to be distributed among one thousand Indians of the colony (BGB:BC:APV:p.180).

#### The Role of the Postholders in Economic Activity

As has been mentioned, Dutch trading posts were first set up in this area in the sixteenth century but it was not until 1678 that the duties

of postholders were explicitly stated. In September of this year the Commander of Essequibo, Abraham Beekman, instructed that:

... the old commander will have to inform his successor exactly of the nature and customs of the natives, especially of the Indians who come and trade there, further the commander must take care that not the least offence is given to them. (Rodway:1893:p.34)

Some ninety years later Article I of the instructions issued to postholders re-affirmed that:

... he shall not molest the Indians but rather encourage them in a friendly manner to serve the colony. (Menezes:1977:p.73)

In the first instance this meant that none of the Amerindians within the Company's territory was liable to be taken as a slave. It was Beekman who also issued the first official statement of this policy on the 23rd August 1686, when he banned absolutely the taking of red slaves from among the local Indians (Rodway:1893:I:p.65).

It should be noted that, liberal as this policy was, it was also required by the fact that the West India Company held a monopoly on the traffic in slaves with the colonies of Essequibo and Berbice. It was this economic fact which gave the Company Directors their political authority amongst the colonists, which a free trade in red and black slaves would tend to undermine (Rodway:1893:I:p.34).

It was also necessary for the West India Company to discourage blackmarket dealing in red slaves from the Orinoco by imposing a system of quotas (six red slaves per white man), a purchase tax (six guilders per slave) and a sales tax; if they were transferred to another owner within the colony (BGB:BC:API:21/11/1708, Rodway:1893:I:p.65).

Apart from the trading of slaves the postholders also dealt with supply of foodstuffs, boats, dyes and woods. Details of some of these transactions for the posts on the Arinda and Moruca Rivers can be found in BGB:BC:APVIII:s.iv. As will be seen, dye forms the single most important item of

trade at the post themselves, while slaves, horses and fish tended to enter the colony as a result of specific trading expeditions. Moreover, the policy of payment to Indians for certain services, mentioned above, is clearly detailed for such things as the hire of boats and pilots and the capture of runaways.

Also given are details of supplies to the posts, it can be seen that scissors, razors, combs, mirrors, linen and, above all, rum were the articles used for payment by postholders for services rendered.

Although there were never more than four posts at any one time throughout the period of Dutch occupation, at Arinda, Cuyuni, Mahaicony and Moruca-Wacupo<sup>20</sup>, their location was not stable but changed according to the vagaries of external military pressure and the movement of Amerindian populations, (see Map 6). Thus, for example, the Cuyuni post, vital for both trade and security, moved three times during the eighteenth century as Spanish advances along this river threatened it. In 1758, as we have seen, the postholder and his family here were actually kidnapped in a surprise Spanish raid (AGI:C:258) and taken to the Orinoco for interrogation. Similarly, the Moruca-Wacupo post was attacked many times in its history (BGB:BC:API:p.225, AGI:C:30:30/0/1769).

These attacks did not entirely prevent the Dutch from trading in Spanish territories, as they were able to infiltrate south of the Orinoco along traditional Carib trading routes. The Spanish were aware of these routes and, as we have seen, tried hard in the late eighteenth century to close them down. In 1747, Iturriaga wrote of the Dutch and Caribs:

For this journey they have, besides the navigation of the Orinoco, and the channels of the Barima a road by land, which, crossing the Caroni higher up than the missions of Guayana, goes to the River Aquire, and they descend it to near its mouth, having arranged beforehand for some vessel to be waiting in the river, and they do not enter the Yuruari, but descend by the River Essequibo. (BGB:BC:APII:p.52)

Fr. Benito Garriga, Prefect of Capuchin Missions, also mentions other favoured routes. One from the Essequibo to the Branco/Uraricoera and thence to the

Orinoco, another via the Paragua/Caroni headwaters and one via the Cuyuni (AGI:C:14:1750, see also map 1).

### Postholders and Colonial Security

Apart from economic functions the postholders were also the lynch-pin of the Dutch system of colonial security. This relied in part on covert actions, encouraged if not led by the postholders, against Spanish settlements in Guayana. This feature of Dutch policy varied over the decades and became less frequent in the eighteenth century as Spanish control of Guayana grew.

More important in this period was the duty of the postholder to organise the capture of runaways from the colonies' plantations. As the Spanish were prepared to offer sanctuary to black runaways and, as Essequibo was invariably starved of slaves (Rodway:1893:I:p.65), this concern over runaways was a question of both political and economic importance of the highest degree. It is from this fact, and the success of the Caribs in intimidating black runaways, for they were only persuaded with great difficulty to return black slaves alive (see above, p.281), that the special value of the Dutch for the Caribs originates.

Dutch covert activity against Spanish settlements has already been referred to and the reasons for, and the course of the decline of, this kind of action has been discussed above. It was the use of Caribs as slave hunters, by the postholders and central authorities, which dominated Dutch policy towards the Amerindians in the 18th century.

As early as 1663 it is clear that the Dutch were using their Carib allies to hunt down runaways, for the rivers populated by the Caribs, between Spanish Guayana and Essequibo, made them strategically more important in this regard than other Amerindian groups. On March 3rd, 1663, the Commander at Essequibo wrote to the West India Company:



A REBEL NEGRO OF THE DUTCH  
COLONIES

A negro belonging to Moses Petaete and a woman named Elsie, having run away together, incited a negress belonging to Jacob de Ruitjer to join them and they all went off, robbing all the plantations they could ... I sent the soldiers with some Indians in pursuit of them ... after I examined them, and they had confessed their crimes, I had them broken upon the wheel by the hands of justice, their heads and hands set up on a pike, and their bodies burnt. (BGB:BCC:p.37)

The Spanish were generally unwilling to return any runaways knowing full well the economic importance that the Dutch placed upon them. Thus the Court of Policy at Essequibo wrote to the West India Company on March 1st, 1727:

At the end of August last year twenty three slaves ran away from the plantation belonging to Pieter la Rivière to Orinoco, and he having sent his son to claim them, but without any results, resolved to go there in person, but on arriving at the usual mooring place in that river he was attacked by a vessel flying the Spanish flag, and was unfortunate enough to be killed. Those with him begged for quarter, whereupon the Spaniards took all their merchandise, and told them that they had orders from the Governor of Trinidad to stop trade in that river. (BGB:BC:APII:p.6)

Again, in 1729, the Directors of the West India Company were informed that:

... for some years past your Lordships' slaves, as well as those belonging to the colonists, run away to the Orinoco as soon as they think they have any grievance. There the Spaniards keep them, and will not give them up when we have claimed them. (BGB:BC:APII:p.8)

But when the Caribs did capture runaways, they were ruthless. On April 3rd, 1744 the Commander of Essequibo informed the West India Company that a party of Caribs, sent out by the Moruca postholder, had:

... attacked and destroyed a negro camp in the forest near Barima and broke their necks and brought their hands here, which I caused to be nailed to a post, as a warning to others. (BGB:BC:APII:p.42)

Again, in 1751:

Three slaves have run away ... The Caribans attempted to capture them, but as they made some defence they were obliged to kill two of them, and brought back their heads. In all places where the Caribs are living in the neighbourhood there is little fear of desertion. (BGB:BC:APIV:p.96)



A "FREE" NEGRO OF THE DUTCH  
WEST INDIA COMPANY

The Berbice Slave Rebellion of 1763 demonstrated the extent to which the Dutch relied on the aid of the Caribs and other Amerindians. Gravesande, foremost administrator of this colony during the eighteenth century, acknowledges this when he writes:

There is no one, your Lordships, who is more convinced how advantageous and necessary the friendship of the Indians is to this Colony, because so long as we are fortunate enough to have them living around us we are quite safe inland and have nothing to fear concerning the desertion of our slaves. (BGB:BC:IV:p.5)

Stedman (1796), an English mercenary captain during the Berbice revolt, also makes many references to the importance of the Caribs in this regard.

Naturally, the blacks came to fear and hate the Caribs. Gravesande wrote that:

... these occurrences (Carib slave hunting) cause a great embitterment between the blacks and them, which, if well and reasonably stimulated cannot fail to be of much use and service in the future to the Colonies. (BGB:BC:APIII:p.105)

Certainly there was profit to be had for the Indians:

The Caribs have come back bringing with them a large quantity of right hands from the rebels whom they killed, for which I paid them this morning, it being the custom in the Colonies to pay as much for a runaway's head or hand as for a slave.<sup>21</sup> (BGB:BC:APIII:p.104)

In using the Caribs as slave hunters the Dutch were, however, wielding a two-edged sword. Thus, on the one hand, if the Caribs were to be effective in holding down the black slaves they had to be armed with some guns, yet, on the other hand, as we have seen, there was an understandable disquiet on the part of the authorities as to the possible consequences of such a situation. In 1750 Gravesande wrote concerning those traders who sold guns to the Amerindians:

... urged solely by an unworthy thirst for gain, they themselves put into the hands of that warlike nation /the Caribs/, who beyond dispute are the bravest and most numerous on this coast, the weapons which in the

future may bring about their own destruction ... the great terror which the tribes formerly had of such weapons has almost disappeared, which in itself is a bad thing. (Harris & Villiers:1911:pp.268-9)

Similarly, as was suggested above, concern over the possible damage that the Spanish might inflict on the highly profitable plantations of Essequibo and Demerara inhibited the Dutch from giving the unqualified support to Carib raiding of Spanish settlements they had done previously.

So too, the fear that the Caribs would destroy relations with other Amerindian groups, as the military advantages of possessing guns led to more bellicose attitudes, persuaded the Dutch authorities to attempt to control their access to these weapons. The following examples of Carib conflicts within the Dutch sphere of influence make clear both the importance the Dutch attached to trying to influence these disputes (see Bancroft:1971:p.376) and serve to underline the key role the postholders had in representing the authorities in the interior.

#### Carib Wars in Dutch Territory: ca.1680 - 1770

On August 13th, 1765, Gravesande wrote:

We are at present in very precarious circumstances, the Acuways and Caribs being now in open war, which will probably bring about a great massacre shortly.

There was a report here that Tampoko and the Caribs had not killed negroes but Indians, and that the hands brought down were the hands of Indians. If such were found to be true I have never seen a rascally trick executed more carefully and clothed with more feasible circumstances, and I think Satan himself might be deceived in this way.

I have requested Mr. Van de Heyde, who lives right amongst the Caribs, to be good enough to carefully examine the matter; he has already had the Owls /caciques/ at his place, who stoutly and emphatically deny the accusation. (I can scarcely believe it myself.) (Harris & Villiers: 1911:p.583)

On July 20th, 1768, he further informed the West India Company

that:

The creole Tampoko, who was apprehended and placed in prison here by my orders on account of a report that he had had Arawaks killed instead of negroes and was to have been tried by the Court, hanged himself as soon as he heard that I had returned from Demarara; I have had him hanged by his legs on the gallows. The Caribs whom I had ordered to be here on that day did not come ... nor did the Arawaks, Tampoko's accusers. (Ibid:p.585)

As is clear from this case, in order to preserve their alliances with the Amerindians of Essequibo, the Dutch had to steer a difficult course between the different groups during periods when they were at war with each other. Although documentation is not available on all these Amerindian conflicts we do know that there was a fierce Carib/Akawaio war in the late seventeenth century and again in the 1760's.

On June 28th, 1680 the Commander at Essequibo wrote:

The trade in hammocks and letterwood has this year not had the desired success, on account of the war between those /Caribs/ of the Cuyuni, Essequibo and Mazaruni, and the Accoways who live up country: and we have repeatedly, with many fruitless arguments, tried to persuade the highest Chief to make peace with the aforesaid nation, to that end offering axes and other wares. They even threatened, if we would not let them continue the war, to depart in great numbers to Barima and elsewhere. These being the most important traders in dye, I was, to my sorrow, compelled to desist: and hereby the River Cuyuni, our provision Chamber, is closed. In addition, we lately have been embittered by the death of Gilles, an old negro of the Company, recently poisoned up in the Cuyuni, as the Caribs pretend, by the Accoways. On that account the aforesaid old negroes have become afraid to have intercourse with that tribe; I shall, however, bethink me of means for conciliating that tribe ... (BGB:BC:API:pp.83-4)

It is interesting to note that, from what the Commander says, the Carib leaders were fully aware of their importance to the Dutch and, equally, that the Dutch were unable to do anything more, at this time, than acquiesce in this situation.

Indeed, peace between the Akawaios and the Caribs was never achieved<sup>22</sup>. The main reason for this was probably the interference of the Spanish, who certainly used Akawaio auxiliaries to assist Capuchin entradas into the Sierra Imataca against the Caribs (see chapter III) and who might be

expected to encourage the Akawaiois in any anti-Dutch ventures. Equally though, Gravesande records (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.251), that the Akawaiois were complaining of ill treatment by the colonists in 1750 and yet helped with the capture of black runaways in 1752, forgetting their differences with the Caribs:

The Chief of the Accuway tribe has come down with two negro girls and three hands of negroes, bringing information that he had made a night attack upon the plantation "De Savonette" and killed fifty five negroes, men, women and children of the rebels; that on the approach of the neighbouring rebels he had been obliged to desist, his party being only twenty seven strong, and that he had, therefore, returned without having one man killed or wounded; that on the journey back he had met a considerable number of Caribs making their way to Berbice, to whom he had given all the necessary information. He asked for nine muskets, powder and shot, to return to Berbice immediately, and join the Caribs in attacking the rebels. These were given him, together with some necessary instructions, which he promised to bear in mind. (ibid:p.439)

In 1755, Akawaiois were reported as having attacked some plantations (Ibid:p.340) and Gravesande, suspecting ill treatment, had the matter investigated (Ibid:p.346), but their leaders were reluctant to come to Kykoveral (Ibid:p.343).

In the following year, 1756, war broke out between the Akawaio and the Caribs from Barima and a Carib cacique from this area, Aretana, was summoned to the fort to explain himself to Gravesande. He told him:

I committed the deed by your advice and killed the Accuways, from whom I brought you four slaves, and, although I am an Indian you do not hear me deny what I have done, as you do. (Ibid:p.346)

Eventually, under Dutch persuasion, the Caribs ceased their raids against the Akawaiois but in the Sierra Imataca region the Capuchins were still very active and kept alive the resentment between these groups. Then, in 1765, under Spanish incitement, the Akawaiois massacred all the women and children of a Carib village on the Mazaruni. Gravesande records:

... I had received tidings from Upper Mazaruni that the Carib nation was at war with that of the Accuways, and that the latter had massacred all the women and children in a Carib village on the Mazaruni.

Not without some reason did I fear that we should again be mixed up in this as we were a few years ago, especially through the indiscretion of some itinerant traders and avaricious settlers, who, without taking any heed of the consequences allow themselves to be drawn into these quarrels upon the slightest inducement of profit, supporting one or other of the parties with arms or advice, which being discovered by the other side always leads to fatal results, and might be a great danger to the Colony itself ... I also impressed upon the planters the desirability of remaining perfectly neutral in this war.

The Report from the Postholder of Arinda states that at present it is ... surrounded by swarms of Caribs who had taken up a position there, and were only waiting for the abandonment of the Post to fall upon the Accuways, against whom they felt very bitter, he had not considered it advisable to remove yet, since, by his doing so, progress up the river would be made unsafe, nay, impossible. Wherefore, he had done all that he possibly could to pacify the two tribes, and had fairly succeeded ... The Creole sent up the river to spy out has also returned. This bold fellow has been as far away as the Spanish Mission /probably Avechica on the Supamo River/ pretending to be a runaway. He stayed there for a few days, and brought some pictures of saints back with him in order to prove he had really been there. He reports that there are swarms of Accuways at the Mission, situated about four hours from Cuyuni on the west, and that the missionaries are the cause of the war between Caribs and that tribe, the natives being incited and provided arms by them. (Ibid:pp.485-9)

In reply to these actions a Carib cacique from the Mazaruni introduced a large number of Caribs from Spanish territory, who were probably also eager to escape Capuchin evangelisation, but Gravesande ordered them out of Essequibo, and they went (1911:p.496). The following year, 1767, he reported to the West India Company that:

... war between the Caribs and Accuways is still proceeding, but in a very half-hearted and sluggish manner, and there is great probability that it will soon be settled: this would have been done if the postholder of Arinda had discharged his duty. (Ibid:p.529)

It would be wrong to assume that the Akawaios were simply tools of the Spanish, they had their own reasons for being fiercely anti-Carib and certainly the Capuchins reduced them without hesitation once the Carib threat was removed. Thus, in the colony of Surinam it was permitted to own Akawaio slaves, Gravesande writes that:

The Postholder of Corentin has provided the Caribs with blunderbusses. What does this mean when an old law still in force, and one that I had always insisted upon being observed, forbids the sale of arms to any Indians? ... I believe that too strong a self interest is at the bottom of the Postholder's unjustifiable conduct, for the Accuways being slaves in Surinam he hopes by that war to get hold of a good number of them and Heaven know whether he did not himself incite the war ... (1911:p.584)

As it can be seen, European interference, both Spanish and Dutch, was prolonging conflict between the Caribs and Akawaios. Indeed competition between the sister colonies of Essequibo and Surinam often disrupted relations between the Indians and the authorities. In 1713, the Commander of Essequibo wrote the following to the West India Company:

I must also briefly inform you that the red slaves have gone up in price fully one half as compared with what they used to be bought for here, ten or twelve years ago. This has been mainly caused by the Surinam people, who have encroached very seriously among the Indians paying them as much as they asked and sometimes even more, trying in this way to get that trade into their hands. (BGB:BC:API:p.26)

By 1737 this situation had created something of a crisis for the Essequibo dye trade. Gravesande wrote:

Post of Wacupo and Moruka, formally the most important trading place for the Company's annatto trade, has these last few years considerably fallen off in this business. I have taken much pains to ascertain the reason of this, ... I have found that, as most Indians who live in that neighbourhood draw more profit from the slave trade with the Surinamers, their wives grow listless about keeping up the heavy work on the dye, notwithstanding continual admonition... (BGB:BC:APII:p.25)

However, as Gravesande indicates above, it was the possibility that individual traders would get drawn into or, for reasons of profit, provoke a conflict among the Amerindians that was the most dangerous feature of the situation (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.269).

A good example of how the Caribs acted to preserve their privileged trading contacts with the Dutch, despite the latter's desire to cultivate as wide a range of such alliances as possible, was their disruption of Dutch attempts to open trade relations with the Manos in the 1720's and again in the 1760's.

The Manoas, or Maganouts as they are sometimes referred to in the Dutch sources, occupied the region of the Rio Negro headwaters. They first came to trade with the colony of Essequibo in 1722, and again in 1723, but were warned off by the Dutch, according to Gravesande writing some forty years later, on account of a '... political dodge of the Carib nation' (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.464):

So far as we have been able to discover they came to trade in slaves ... moreover, not the slightest hostile act was indulged in, although, according to reports /i.e. of the Caribs/, they had previously threatened to come and kill us and eat us, but we saw well enough that they were in no position to do that. (Harris & Villiers: 1911:p.188, emphasis in original)

There is some evidence that, prior to this date, there had already been some trade between the Manoas and the Dutch in the Rio Negro area for slaves. One of their caciques, Ajuricaba, was said to have actually flown the Dutch flag and hindered the Portuguese occupation of this region:

Ajuricaba was of the Manoa tribe, and one of its most powerful headmen ... He had made an alliance with the Dutch of Guayana, with whom he traded via the Rio Branco ... The principal article of this trade was slaves, to which condition he reduced the Indians of our villages, by making formidable raids upon them. He infested the Rio Negro with the greatest freedom, flying the Dutch flag upon his canoes, under the cover of which he made himself universally feared, and was the scourge of the Indians and the whites. (Portuguese Jesuit quoted in: Harris & Villiers:1911:p.25)

The Manoas are not mentioned again in the Dutch sources until 1754, when Gravesande received word that they were now in league with the Portuguese (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.314)<sup>23</sup>. However, in 1763, they expressed the desire, once again, to open direct trade with Essequibo:

... being dissatisfied with the treatment they received from the Portugese of Brazil, /they/ had resolved to come to this Colony to make a Treaty of Commerce with us and a strong body had set out with that object ... the Carib nation, moved by the same spirit /as in 1723/, had now assembled on hearing the news, and had lain in ambush for the Manoas in order to prevent their progress. This caused a sharp fight, in which both sides lost heavily: but the Caribs were totally defeated and put to flight.

The Manoas, feeling themselves too weak after their losses, postponed their journey till this year and sent word to the Postholder /at Arinda/ that they would come down in such numbers as to have no fear of the Caribs. On the other hand, the Caribs are assembling from all sides in order to oppose them, so that it is possible that we shall this year see one of the bloodiest and most obstinate fights that has probably taken place in these parts for 100 years or more.

I hope that the Caribs may get a good hiding<sup>24</sup> because I have always wished to see a few Manoas here, being convinced that it would be of considerable advantage to the colony ... (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.414)

The Caribs, in the event, did manage to prevent the Dutch and Manoas establishing trade links, since in 1764 Gravesande told the directors of the Dutch West India Company that, in the 1720's, the Manoas had been:

... so injudiciously and childishly driven away, badly treated and forever estranged from us that the efforts made to enter into communication with them have proved fruitless. (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.464)

For their part the Caribs seem to have been keenly aware of the threat that a Dutch-Manoa alliance might have posed to their interests. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that Caribs trading Dutch goods and capturing red slaves at the headwaters of the Rio Branco and west along the Uraricoera, towards the Rio Negro, would not have welcomed Manoas operating in the same area. Indeed it is likely that there would have been, by the 1760's, something of a tradition of conflict between these groups, echoing the Carib-Caverre conflict along the Orinoco<sup>25</sup>, since Manoa-Portuguese trading contacts would have given the Manoas their own sources of European goods and markets for their red slaves and, hence, a basis for challenging any Carib influence among the Amerindians of this region.

Clearly the possibility that the Manoas might extend this challenge east, possibly even into the colony of Essequibo itself, was considered a serious threat, as the apparently large scale mobilisation of Carib warriors in 1763 shows.

Moreover, it will be appreciated that in such situations the postholder played a critical role for he controlled, on the ground, the

commerce, and hence political relations, with the local Amerindian groups. In fact, in order to facilitate this latter function and make the relatively acephalous and fluid Amerindian groups more controllable, the Dutch acknowledged Indian 'Owls' or caciques.

Such individuals, presumably chosen for their pro-Dutch attitude and ability to control their fellow Amerindians, were presented with special staves of office, after 1778<sup>26</sup>, tipped with silver and engraved with the arms of the Company. This practice was very advantageously continued by the British in the nineteenth century, as these symbols of office were highly prized among the Amerindians.

Throughout the records of the Colony of Essequibo there are continual references to the summoning of Owls to report on trade, Spanish positions and "bush wars". All of the groupings had Owls appointed and the Caribs were given a "Great Owl, or Common Chief of the Caribs up in Essequibo" (BGB:BC:APIV:p.6). The existence of these Owls may have helped the Dutch to intervene in Amerindian conflicts, such that, even if such disputes could not be entirely prevented, Dutch trading activities might continue. In this manner Dutch traders often received safe passage along rivers where there was heavy fighting. For example, in 1765, Gravesande wrote that:

... the Postholder of Arinda states that all is still well as far as the Post is concerned; that he had intended to proceed up the River Rupununi, but had found the Macoussis and Wapissanes, the two tribes living there, at war, which had stopped him halfway, but that he, having summoned an Owl of each tribe, had told them that he had received orders from me to proceed up the river, and that he should come as soon as his assistant had returned from below, whereupon they had answered that he might do so without any fear... (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.486)

Thus the political acceptance of these Amerindian 'Owls', complementing the duties of the postholder, can be seen as a further refinement of Dutch attempts to influence and control the indigenous population, a

pressing necessity in view of their latter-day role as a bush police, though, as the history of Carib-Akawaio and Carib-Manoas conflicts shows, not always resulting in success.

#### The Final Years of Dutch Occupation: 1772 - 1804

Hendrik Trotz, who was responsible for the first presentation of insignia to the Amerindian Owls, succeeded Gravesande in 1772. In 1773, Demarara, indicating its rapid development after 1746, was separated from the administration of Essequibo and given its own Commander.

Although the Amerindians continued to preserve the Dutch, in the face of a large, often discontented, black slave population as well as rebel black settlements located permanently in the interior, the system of posts and postholders, which had maintained this alliance even as its economic significance dwindled, decayed still further as European rivalries brought a bewildering succession of different authorities to power in the colony. In 1781 the British captured Demarara, Berbice and Essequibo from the Dutch<sup>27</sup> and, in 1782, were ousted in their turn by the French, who gave the colonies back to the Dutch in 1783.

Moreover, when the charter of the Dutch West India Company expired in 1792 and the colony came under the direct administration of the States-General of Holland, the combination of political uncertainty and an end to the detailed economic supervision of the Company's directors led to an almost total neglect of the affairs of the interior. The Spanish, themselves approaching a period of great political upheaval and with the pioneering phase of missionary activity ended, did not take advantage of this situation to extend their frontiers in Guayana, although the Moruca post was attacked in 1797 (BGB:BC:APV:pp.168-9).

In 1796 the British seized Essequibo again, though it was briefly

returned to the Dutch in 1803, by the Peace of Amiens<sup>28</sup>, before the renewal of conflict in Europe brought the British back to power in 1804. From this point on the colony remained in British hands and was formally ceded to them by the Treaty of London in 1814.

The main features of Carib demography under British rule in the 19th century have already been outlined (see chapter III). It can be seen that the British showed no great concern for the fate of the Amerindian population and, although they initially continued Dutch Amerindian policies, it was said that the indigenous population had retired into the interior:

... because they got no encouragement, received no presents, and obtained no sign of that esteem and friendship on which they prided themselves in being held by the Dutch. (letter of Essequibo Governor to Sec. of State, Colonial Office, June 1802: in PRO:C.O.III/4 Vol.2010)

Thus, despite the earnest agitation of such individuals as William Hilhouse (1825)<sup>29</sup>, the British were reluctant to simply take up where the previous Dutch administration had left off. The following incident, cited in various sources (Hilhouse:1825:p.29, Brett:1851:p.134, Menezes:1977:p.182), is a good example of the new political conditions that were to govern relations between the Amerindians and the Europeans in the 19th century. In 1810 the 'Great Owl' of the Caribs, Mahanavra, entered the capital of British Guiana demanding payment for the red slaves he had captured, but:

... on the refusal of a late Governor William Bentinck to accept a fine slave, dashed out the brains of the slave, and declared, for the future, that his nation should never give quarter. (Hilhouse:Ibid)

However, although this action secured from the British the goods that the Caribs had been accustomed to receive from the Dutch, two years later, having ascertained the real seriousness of such threats, the new Governor, H.L. Carmichael, refused to accede to similar demands (Menezes:1977:p.23).

Nonetheless, at least until the abolition of slavery, in 1833<sup>30</sup>, the authorities remained aware of the need for some kind of auxiliary Amerindian

force, a slave rebellion at La Resouvenir plantation, in Demarara, bringing this home forcefully in 1823. However, the erosion of Carib populations, as well as of their political and economic independence, was well advanced by this time and, along with the other Amerindians, they slipped into the backwaters of the national society, which, but for their support and assistance, might never have emerged.

NOTES for Chapter IV

1. The fort at Kykoveral was reoccupied in 1666, although Dutch settlements on the Pomeroon and Moruca Rivers were left abandoned for another 20 years (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.18).
2. Thomas (1972) has described the modern day trade system in Estado Bolivar, Venezuela, in which, apart from the Amerindian products, such as manioc graters and hammocks which are exchanged between the Ye'cuana in the west and the Pemon in the east, involving considerable journeying, the Pemon also travel into Brazil, as far as Boa Vista, for shotguns which they then trade to the Ye'cuana.

This latter trade is only a recent development since, in the 19th century, the Ye'cuana would themselves travel as far as Georgetown, British Guiana, to barter for guns. Indeed, so well established was this trading link with the Ye'cuana that the gunsmiths, Messrs Scholefield, Goodman & Sons Ltd. of Birmingham, England, made a single barrel, smooth bore, muzzle loading, 20 gauge with the name Makiritare, (archaic name for the Ye'cuana)\*, stamped on the barrel. They were also exported to Ciudad Bolivar (Angostura) and Demarara until manufacture ended with the outbreak of World War I (Friel:1924:p.387). \* (SEE ALSO GLOSSARY)

3. Stedman judged that Amerindian slaves:

... are only for show and parade, as they absolutely refuse to work, and if at all ill-treated, or especially if beaten, they pine and languish like caged turtles, even refusing food, till by affliction and want they are exhausted, and finally expire. (1796:p.401)

4. A policy that further recommended itself to the Dutch West India Company since it insured that its own monopoly of the black slave trade would remain profitable, while the Company's control of this crucial economic resource gave them the necessary leverage to be able to maintain a high degree of political control over the colonists (see also Rodway:1893:I:p.34,46ff).

5. As has already been mentioned, the Dutch West India Company first granted its support to the colonists of Essequibo in 1621, under a charter that ran for 24 years. It was renewed again in 1647:

... 2 years having been lost in futile attempts to combine with the East India Company ... (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.106)

and thereafter every 25 years, until 1792, when the colony came under the direct administration of the States-General of Holland.

6. In this same year the Dutch West India Company also launched an expedition, under the command of Peter Van der Heyden Resen, to try and locate Lake Parime, or Eldorado, and also to open trading links with the Manos who were reported to be in the area of the Essequibo-Rupununi-Negro headwaters (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.24). The various attempts by the Dutch of Essequibo to establish links with the Manos, as well as Carib sabotage of these efforts are described below (see p.297).

7. Though they also aided the Dutch against external threats from their European colonial rivals. For example, Rodway (1893:I:p.53) mentions Hartsinck's (1770) account of the Amerindians rallying to the aid of the Dutch during a series of French raids in 1709, the Dutch and English having united against France in the War of Spanish Succession (see chapter III).

Rodway suggests that it was the raids of one of the French privateers, named Cassard, on the plantations of Surinam, that led to the establishment of the first rebel black settlements in the interior. The planters, having ordered their slaves into the bush in order to avoid Cassard's attacks, found that many of them simply failed to return once the period of alarm was over.

8. Though as permission had been given to hold church services in English as early as 1753 (Harris & Villiers:Ibid:p.292) it would seem that they had been in the majority in Demarara almost from the inception of settlement.
9. Equally, however, as had also been the case in previous centuries this economic 'detente' did not prevent military aggression from either side. Thus Carib and Dutch involvement in the Amerindian slave trade (see next chapter) was a constant source of instability within the Spanish sphere of influence, as the testimony of the missionaries shows and as the Dutch were perfectly aware. At the same time, the expansion of the missions south of the Orinoco and the tacit support given by the Spanish authorities to runaway slaves and the rebel blacks, combined to perpetuate the habit of suspicion and hostility between these powers.
10. Thus, in 1724 and 1730 reports to the Council of the Indies (AGI:C:123: 8/1/1724, letter of Governor of Cumaná, SD:809:22/8/1730, letter of Prefect of Capuchin Missions) and a detailed report by the Governor of Cumaná in 1736 all make it clear that Dutch traders were still active up to 30 leagues above Angostura, and that their habit of inter marrying with the Amerindians (see also note 18) had given them a noticeable political influence, which they used to encourage desertion from the recently established missions. However, by the 1750's, following the appearance of the Real Expedición des Límites and the expansion of the missions into eastern Guayana, Rodway judged that:

What with the fears of raid from Spanish-Guiana and the impediments to the journies of the postholders, the Indian trade had dwindled to very little. (1893:I:p.131)

except, as Bancroft observed (1971:p.263), in red slaves.

11. Thus fear that the Caribs might turn against the Dutch and/or disrupt relations with other Amerindian groups deeply concerned the authorities at Essequibo. In view of Carib conflicts with the Akawaio and Manaoas (described below) such fears proved to have been partly justified.
12. The appointment had actually been made in 1738, at which point the title Commander was changed to Director-General.
13. According to Carrocera (1979:I:p.XXVI, 34,68-9) the Capuchins first established a fort at the confluence of the Cuyuni and Curumo Rivers in 1749, converting it, in the same year, to a mission with 180 caribes rebeldes. Local Carib groups, however, destroyed this mission-fort in

mid-1750. The Capuchins tried, unsuccessfully, to restore it in 1754, although it was finally re-built, on the orders of Governor Marmion, in 1788.

The Dutch, even though they do not appear to have known exactly where this Spanish position was located - Gravesande referring to it as Mejou (probably a corruption of the name Miamo, where the Capuchins had another Carib mission) in his despatches (Harris & Villiers:1911:pp.307, 617) - were very alarmed at this turn of events, yet the Dutch West India Company wished nothing done that might upset their trade with the Spanish on the Orinoco. Thus Gravesande wrote:

I feel not the least diffidence as to dislodging them from that place ... but such a step, being one of great consequence, I dare not take anything upon myself ...  
(Harris & Villiers:1911:p.90)

14. Taking advantage of this development the Dutch themselves established a post on the Cuyuni in 1754, but Gravesande's fears as to how the Spanish would react proved justified in view of its destruction in 1758 - see text.
15. The Cuyuni post was only re-established in 1766 because the Berbice Slave Rebellion of 1763 had largely focused the attention of the authorities on the internal problems of the Dutch authorities, leaving little time or resources available to be committed to defenses against Spanish encroachment. Indeed, Gravesande seems to have felt that this trend in Dutch-Spanish relations was apparent as early as 1784, when he wrote:
 

They will try to creep in softly and as far as possible approach and surround us while we are unawares.  
(Harris & Villiers:1911:p.332)
16. Certainly Gravesande proved impartial and fair in administering the legal system within the colony, as far as the Amerindian population was concerned. For example, following the influx of English settlers to Demerara, in the 1740's and after, there was a noticeable increase in cases of abuse of the indigenous population. Thus, in 1748, the authorities prosecuted one John Poole who, it was discovered, had been shipping free Amerindians to Barbados for use as house slaves (Rodway: 1893:p.132). Again, in 1752, the Barima Caribs complained that the local plantation owner had tyrannised over them and seized their children. The Court of Justice in Essequibo found that these accusations were true, fined the planter and forced him to return the Carib children he had taken for domestic service (BGB:BC:APII:pp.72-3).
17. Harris and Villiers (1911:p.100) argue that Gravesande was somewhat deluded as to the real seriousness of the threat from the Spanish. However, in view of the open rebellion of the Berbice slaves, a steady flow of runaways to Spanish territories, the collapse of Carib resistance to Spanish settlement in the Orinoco basin and the fact that rumours of the secret orders issued to the Real Expedition des Limites, concerning the expulsion of the Dutch (see chapter III), had filtered through to Gravesande (Harris & Villiers:Ibid:pp.93-4), his alarm at the Spanish raids of 1758, 1760 and 1769, seems justified enough.
18. Much has been made of the habit of the Dutch of intermarrying with the Amerindians, particularly Caribs. Thus Groenewagen, the founder of

Essequibo, (see chapter II) was supposed to have owed his success in establishing Kykoveral to his marriage with a Carib (im Thurn:1883: pp.60-3), while Bancroft (1971:p.375) recorded that:

The Dutch ... encourage intermarriages with the Indian women, and several of the most considerable families, in rank and fortune in Essequibo, derive their origin from this alliance, by which the Dutch have acquired an ascendancy and influence over the Indians which is of the utmost use and importance.

Hilhouse (1825:p.12) similarly testifies to the importance of such 'broomstick' (i.e. domestic) relations in facilitating Dutch-Amerindian alliances, see also note 10.

19. Not to be confused with uitleggers or outliers, who were traders not under the direct control of the Dutch West India Company. As early as 1645 the Dutch West India Company had been informed that:

Essequibo has now for some time been navigated with small profit for the Company, for the reason that private colonists are permitted to trade there.  
(BGB:BC:API:p.131)

In the 18th century, despite the role these traders had played in extending Dutch influence into the interior, the authorities were still unhappy at their unregulated presence, not least because of their role in fomenting hostilities between the Amerindians through the unlicensed selling of guns and rum, as well as their extensive purchasing of red slaves from the interior, see below and chapter V.

20. There was also an ephemeral post on the Pomeroon between 1703 and 1705. Gravesande, in his Treatise on Posts (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.460ff) gives us some insight into the individual character of these posts. Thus Arinda (established 1734 on the Essequibo-Siparuni confluence, planned move to the Rupununi confluence in 1750, actually moved 1764-5; see - BGB:USC:ATLAS:Map 11,12, Harris & Villiers:1911:pp.26,254,459, 476), tended to trade dye and slaves, from the Akawaio, though not in any great volume, its real value being its possibilities for communication with the Rio Negro area. Cuyuni, (first established ca.1700-9 and again in 1755, raided 1758, re-established 1766: see - BGB:USC:ATLAS:Map 9,11,12, Harris & Villiers:Ibid.p.217, BGB:BC:APVII:p.162, and text above), was said to be useful for similar reasons, i.e. the communication it afforded into the interior and also was of special value in detecting and stopping runaway slaves heading for the Orinoco. The posts of Moruca (established 1679 as the Wacupo post, moved to Moruca site by 1746, 1756 moved nearer to the river mouth: see - BGB:USC:ATLAS:Map 9, 10,11, Harris & Villiers:Ibid:pp.80,219) and Mahaicony-Demerara (established 1691, abolished 1745: see - Harris & Villiers:Ibid:p.67) seem to have been more important economically, than either Cuyuni or Arinda, though the Moruca post was important for the intelligence it could relay as to Spanish activity on the Orinoco. Thus Gravesande observed:

The road to the Spaniards leads past this post, so that no one can go that way without the knowledge of the Postholder, who therefore, if he wishes, can generally get to know what is doing on in Orinoco. (Harris & Villiers:Ibid:p.430)

The Moruca was also useful for:

... i) Keeping possession of that district ii) Stopping and catching slaves who run away from this Colony to Orinoco and who might pass this way iii) Providing Indians who are required both by the Honorable Company's plantations as well as private colonists to go salting iv) Providing necessary boats ... (Harris & Villiers: Ibid:p.468)

There was also a brisk trade with the Amerindians for hammocks, salt fish, boats, slaves, and other 'Indian merchandise' (see also pp.287-8 above), as well as with the Spanish '... who come with mules, cattle, tobacco, hides, tallow, dried meat and stop to refresh themselves and their animals'.

At the Mahaicony-Demerara post the local Waraos:

... support themselves entirely by hiring themselves out to work to the whites ... or by making boats. (Harris & Villiers:Ibid:p.460)

The post also supplied salt fish, though only two men were felt to be necessary to watch out for runaways. Gravesande adds that the post used to be important for the dye trade:

... men supported themselves by making boats and women occupied themselves with the cultivation and preparation of dye, for which they could get what was necessary: but, when this trade fell away, they left off it entirely, and neglected or pulled up most of the shrubs. (Harris & Villiers:Ibid:p.461)

21. However it would be misleading to suggest that all Caribs everywhere were potential slave catchers for the Dutch. There were instances of Caribs being warned against sheltering runaways and, even, occasionally being brought to Essequibo to answer charges for so doing (BGB:BC:APII:pp.70,72-3).

22. During this period the Dutch were also active in trying to lessen the tension that existed between the Arawaks and Caribs of the colony and, on occasion broke out into open warfare. For example, it was reported in 1685 that:

... the Caribs from the Copename River are flying leeward about Barima, Weyni, Amacora, often alarming the coast and sometimes slaying unlucky Arawak Indians ... (BGB:BC:API:p.188)

Several peace missions, usually led by creoles, were sent to the Waini-Barima area at the end of the 17th century and by the first decades of the 18th century the Caribs of this area were said to be at peace with both the Arawaks and the Dutch (BGB:BC:API:p.225).

23. Though Harris and Villiers (1911:p.185) cite Portuguese documents that show that Dutch-Manoas trade also took place in the intervening period.

24. Though Gravesande, somewhat hypocritically, changed his tune before the end of the year as the Caribs came to the rescue of the Dutch during the Berbice Slave Rebellion.

25. Thus it will be remembered that it was because the Caverre were blocking Carib access to the Orinoco headwaters, and presumably the Rio Negro area as well, that a protracted struggle between these two groups broke out at the beginning of the 18th century - see chapter III.

26. Though their award was first mooted in 1774 (Harris & Villiers:1911.p.103).

27. Thus the Dutch West India Company's policy of appeasing the Spanish, also necessitated by the economic situation in this region (see above), had, by this date, led to a formal political alliance between the old rivals of Spain and Holland, with France, against the British.
28. Agreed by Britain, Spain and Holland with France in 1802, it ended the War of French Revolution, during which the protagonists had attempted to influence the outcome of the French Revolution. However, peace was shortlived as France, under Napoleon, sought again to establish its ascendancy both in Europe and the colonial world.
29. William Hilhouse, the "... 'Las Casas' of British Guiana" (Menezes, in Hilhouse:1978:p.(i)) was appointed to oversee the organisation of the Amerindian militia, since he had received clubs of command (see also chapter I:p.86):
- ... from the whole Accuway nation, from the majority of Arawaks and from all the Caribisee within the limits of the colony. (quoted in Menezes:1977:p.59)
- representing a body of around 1,500 warriors.
30. Though not completed until 1838 and even then the blacks were left '...free but not freed' (Menezes:1977:p.66).

CHAPTER V

CANNIBALISM AND SLAVERY

'... fueron llamados Caribes,  
no porque comiesen carne humana,  
sino porque defendian bien su casa.'

(Castellanos: quoted in Salas:1920:p.135)

It will have become clear, from the foregoing chapters, that the Europeans were fascinated by two distinct, though ultimately related, features of Carib life; i.e. the enslavement and ritual cannibalism of captured enemies. However, precisely because of this interest, which in the case of the Spanish might be better termed an obsession<sup>1</sup>, the actual facts concerning these practices, by other Amerindians as well as the Caribs, have become obscured. Accordingly, before the historical sources are examined with a view to establishing the character and scope of these customs, the nature and practical effects of this European fascination must be explored.

European Attitudes

As was suggested in chapter I, it was Columbus who initiated, in the New World, the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' Amerindians which, in the context of the Caribbean area, was related to alleged contrasts between Carib and Arawak cultures. In this schema the 'Carib' is moulded into an image that is at the other extreme from the 'noble savage'<sup>2</sup>.

Some commentators (e.g. Arens:1979) have claimed that Columbus was rather naively misled in this matter by his Arawak informants, who were traditionally hostile to the Caribs, but a close examination of Columbus's writings on his first voyages to the Antilles reveal that he was, at the very

least, keenly aware of the profit and advantages he might derive from his accusations and prepared to vary the emphasis in his evidence accordingly<sup>3</sup> (Delgado:1970:p.75, Salas:1920:p.56, Sauer:1966:pp.31-2, see also thesis introduction). Thus, the interpretation put on Amerindian funerary practices differs markedly in the reports submitted on his first and second voyages to the Antilles, such that the human bones observed in Amerindian dwellings are described initially as revered relics of the longhouse founder (Columbus:1847:p.106) and latterly as the detritus of a cannibal feast (Diego Alvarez Chanca<sup>4</sup>:quoted in Sued-Badillo:1978:p.42).

With little cause to examine the consistency of Columbus's reports<sup>5</sup> and sound economic reasons to accept them, the Spanish Crown soon enshrined his ethnographic judgement in law. In 1503 Queen Isabella issued the following declaration:

... if such Cannibals continue to resist and do not wish to admit and receive my Captains and men who may be on such voyages by my orders nor to hear them in order to be taught our Sacred Catholic Faith and to be in my service and obedience, they may be captured and are to be taken to these my Kingdoms and Domain and to other parts and places and be sold.  
(quoted in Sauer:1966:p.162)

Apart from the direct levy the Crown took from the trade in caribes there were more general economic considerations involved in this issue, principally the supply of a labour force for the new colonies, for Isabella's decree had also specified that only those Amerindians who were cannibals might be enslaved<sup>6</sup>. As we have seen, this resulted in Rodrigo Figueroa being appointed to make an official adjudication on the nature of Amerindian cultures in the New World, with a view to distinguishing between caribes and other groups. The unreliability of this classification has already been discussed (see chapter I), though it is worth emphasising here that Figueroa was by no means the most irresponsible author on this question<sup>7</sup>. For example, Martír de Angleria (1912:I:Book 8:pp.76-8) accused the entire Amerindian population of the Antilles and Venezuelan littoral of cannibalism,

Vazquez de Espinosa (1948:pp.542, 938, 1112) accused the peoples of Mexico, Cólombia and Ecuador without any qualification and, indeed, even Walter Raleigh had cause to comment on the scope of such allegations by the Spanish:

This Arawakan pilot with the rest, feared that we would have eaten them, or otherwise have put them to some cruel death (for the Spaniards, to the end that none of the people in the passage towards Guiana or in Guiana itself might come to speak with us, persuaded all nations that we were cannibals). (in Hakulyt:1972:p.396)

In order to understand why an accusation of cannibalism could be used to justify the enslavement of the Amerindian population it is necessary to briefly examine the theological-juridical thinking that was prevalent in Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The enslavement of those captured in war was a well established principle in the medieval world<sup>8</sup> and, even if the church was unhappy about this practice in the case of other Christian nations, this was not so where Islamic or pagan peoples were concerned. Moreover, the Iberian peninsula had a special role in this context as by the 1460's the Portuguese were already slaving on the Upper Guinea coast (Rodney:1970:p.95) and the Reconquista in Spain, only completed in 1492, had provided a continual source of captives that could be sold as slaves.

Following the discovery of the New World the Church, no doubt anxious to ensure its access to the Amerindians, underwrote Isabella's decree of 1503 by holding that:

... the idolatry of the Indians, their mortal sins and their human sacrifices<sup>9</sup>, provided a sound basis on which to justify the conquest of America. (Delgado:Ibid.p.94)

This doctrine was given its fullest expression by Pope Innocent IV in 1510 and took as its starting point the idea that such acts countered 'natural law', which had been created solely and uniquely by God, as opposed to 'evangelical law', which was the product of imperfect men. On the basis of this distinction such acts as cannibalism, sodomy and idolatry, being

contra naturam, were held to be more criminal than, say, simple homicide or blasphemy. However, this did not automatically mean that such sins could be punished by man, through force of arms, since the Church had neither authority nor jurisdiction in matters of 'God's Law'. Thus Innocent IV argued that cannibalism and human sacrifice, as opposed to idolatry and sodomy, did provide a pretext for human intervention, this being the fact that the 'death of innocents' were involved. This further distinction provided him with the necessary justification to permit chastisement to be carried out, by men, in the name of 'human solidarity'; a line of thought which, at the time, represented a progressive break with medieval concepts (Delgado:1970: p.103).

Nonetheless not all theologians accepted this reasoning, some simply arguing that as these customs were a question of instinct any attempt to punish them would, in practice, be useless (Delgado:1970:p.106), others, following the lead of Las Casas, argued that:

All the Indians made slaves ... from their discovery  
until today, have been made slaves unjustly.  
(Las Casas:quoted in Milhou:1979:p.620)

However, it should be emphasised that Las Casas did not oppose the principle of slavery itself. The Amerindians had been unjustly enslaved<sup>10</sup> because they were not, in fact, cannibals, Las Casas arguing that this misapprehension had arisen precisely because of the sort of ambiguities that have already been noted in the writings of Columbus (Salas:1920:p.72).

Although Las Casas had some success in briefly protecting certain Amerindian populations from enslavement as cannibals, notably that of Trinidad (see chapter I), the pressure on the Crown from the colonists of the New World to widen the scope of slave-taking continued, despite a short period of total prohibition from 1530 to 1533. In particular a series of petitions in the 1540's and 1550's all called for a broader definition of the criteria under which the Amerindians could be enslaved, involving either the revision of

Figueroa's classification (AGI:P:175:April 1554, May 1547. AGI:P:173:May 1557, May 1558), the inclusion of women and children, since they were also observed to take part in 'cannibal feasts' (AGI:P:175:May 1556, June 1557), or as an act of mercy! (AGI:P:173:May 1559)<sup>11</sup>. In the event the prohibition on the slavery of women was only maintained until 1569 when a Royal Cedula of that year accepted their culpability in the matter of cannibalism, although the ban on the slavery of children under the age of 14 years was reaffirmed at the same time (Delgado:1970:pp.120-1, Milhou:1979:p.619).

No further changes were made in the laws relating to the enslavement of 'cannibals' until the beginning of the 17th century when, in the context of increasing Dutch, French and English activity in the Caribbean-Guayana region, a 'final solution' to Carib hostility was sought. In 1608 the Crown granted the first of many licences to make war, '... a fuego y sangre', against the caribes of Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Grenada, St.Vincent and St.Lucia. As a result many Carib prisoners, including their children for the first time, as well as negros, mullattos and mestizos, who had been living with the Caribs '... como delinquentes', were sold off at public auction (Delgado:1970:p.122, Milhou:1979:p.620).

These new provisions concerning Amerindian slavery then remained in force until 1652, at which point the Crown ordered the armed conquest to cease and formally initiated missionary pacification (see chapters II, III).

Thereafter it was the Carib trade in Amerindian slaves, principally with the Dutch of Guayana, that, ironically, provided part of the justification for missionary intervention in the Amerindian communities of the Orinoco basin. Thus, in 1733, the Jesuit José Gumilla, making full use of the vivid associations that the word caribe provoked in Spanish minds, made the following plea to the Crown for soldiers to fight the Caribs:

... in order that so many souls already reclaimed to the service of God and the King may not perish in the clutches of such bloodthirsty Indians, whose glory it is to have the sterns of their pirogues ornamented with the skulls of the innocent lambs who have perished at their hands. (BGB:BC:APII:p.63)

However, as we shall see, there were as many errors and distortions in the European's understanding of Amerindian slavery as there were in the accusations of cannibalism. Indeed, the passage of time and even the development of rigorous ethnographic studies has not completely dispelled these confusions<sup>12</sup> and, as Drummond suggests:

... like the Plains Indian, the Carib is a notion to conjure with, the word calls forth strong associations, vivid images, and, eventually professional opinions in which the Carib is featured as a member of a canoe bound master race that spread itself over a respectable portion of the Continent. (1977:p.78)

It is against this background of powerful ideological forces that an evaluation of the historical material must be made.

### Carib Cannibalism

#### (i) Spanish Accounts:

The first and most enduringly influential reports of Carib cannibalism are Spanish. As has been mentioned, starting with the writings of Columbus, the Caribs became Canibs and hence Cannibals, for he was the first to report the existence of man-eaters in the Antilles, as related to him by his Arawak informants. Once such reports had circulated in Europe the Spanish Crown acted quickly and so almost immediately the identification between Amerindian resistance and the practice of cannibalism was made, a fact, as we will see, which has only served to obscure the issue as to whether or not the Caribs indeed carried out anthropophagic rituals.

Not surprisingly, following the lead of Columbus and the urgencies of rapid occupation, "cannibals" were soon discovered all over Tierra Firme, and recorded by the chroniclers. Vespuccio (1951:p.217) writes of the Caribs of the Guarapiche:

They eat little meat, except human meat ... They eat all their enemies which they kill or take prisoner, women as well as men ....

Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes, referring to the Cumanagotos declares:

The principle sustenance of the Indians of this province  
is human flesh. (1959:II:p.257)

The chronicler of Cristobal Guerra, one of the first expeditionaries on the Orinoco, Fernandez de Naverrette, records that they encountered Caribs who had a captive Amerindian that they were taking back to their village to eat and that six captives had already been eaten (1829:p.12).

Father Pedro de Aguado, writing at the end of the sixteenth century, explains the customs of Eastern Venezuela in the provinces of the Cherigotos and Pariagotos, Carib-speaking groups, as including the eating of human flesh through both custom and habit (1951:I:p.458).

Apart from this agreement as to the prevalence of cannibalism these early chroniclers are also unanimous in suggesting that this was the central motive for inter-tribal wars. In a description of the province of Caracas, written in 1579, Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes informs us:

Those who are killed in war or who are taken alive are  
eaten ... and it is this interest in eating one another  
which is always the main cause of their wars and  
disputes ... (1959:II:p.255)

The chronicler Gomara, writing in the same period, says of the Amerindians:

They eat human flesh and wage continual war against each  
other, the victors eating the vanquished ...  
(1932:I:p.192)

In the west of Venezuela cannibals were also reported. Nicholas Federmann, Conquistador of Venezuela, reported that the Ciparicotos, of Carib affiliation:

... kill and devour all the prisoners that they take,  
both in war and by ambush. (1916:p.63)

Federmann also assures us that cannibalistic practices existed among the Juajuras, Axaguas and Gayones, non-Carib groups living round Lake Maracaibo (1916:pp.30,48,54,57,85). So too, later chroniclers report cannibalism among other non-Carib speakers. Thus Gumilla writes of the Caverre, an Arawak group:

The Caberre are a nation having many villages and people ... the Carib armadas have always taken the best part of them. They are a people not only barbarous, but also cruel, whose usual meat is human flesh of their enemies whom they seek out and persecute ...  
(1745:I:p.250)

Gilij (1782:II:p.45) confirms the cannibalism of the Caverre and also says that it was practised by the Guapuinavis, of the same Arawak affiliation (see also, Lopez-Borreguerro - quoted Chap.III, note 66).

Routine Government reports made to the authorities in Venezuela and Spain are also replete with references to Carib cannibalism. Indeed, the mere mention of Caribs in these documents is invariably followed by the phrase "qui comen carne humana", indicating that Carib cannibalism had become something of an official dogma (see:AGI:SD:71, 1534-75, 179, 1593-1693, 632. 1719-36,592,1745-59, AGI:C:11:1729-65, 12, 1766-1772,13,1733-77,14, 1778-89, 16, 1798-1801)<sup>12</sup>.

However, Spanish authors and chroniclers were prepared to go further than a mere repetition of the fact of Carib cannibalism and have left various descriptions of related practices: e.g. the fattening up and castration of future victims.

Vespucio relates the following incident, concerning some Spaniards who encountered a Carib pirogue off the coast of Tierra Firme:

We were about two leagues from the coast ... In the pirogue there were four young men, they were not from the same group as the others, but had been taken prisoner in another land: and they had been castrated and all were without the male member and with fresh wounds, at which we marvelled much... They said to us that they had been castrated in order to eat them and we supposed that these were the people called cannibals, very fierce, that eat human flesh ... (1951:p.237)

Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes similarly writes:

The Carib Archers, who live from Cartagena along the major part of the coast, eat human meat, and do not take slaves nor wish any who oppose them, or who are strangers to them, to live, and everyone they kill, they eat, and the women who are killed are eaten by the women, and the boys that they want (if by chance one of these Caribs is not with the others) are eaten later. They are then taken castrated, fattened and eaten .... (1959:II:p.260)

Castellanos also mentions the existence of eunuchs among the Palenques and Warao and raises the possibility that that is connected with sodomy, a practice that the Spanish found equally repugnant (1962:p.114). Padre Augustin de Frias further informs us that the Caribs of the Guarapiche/Guanipa area preferred to eat young children and that they also practiced a kind of euthanasia of the old - eating them in order that they might be spared a lingering death (in Armellada:1960:pp.68-9)<sup>14</sup>.

Fantastic as these accounts are, is it possible to discount them? As has been mentioned, Arens (1979) has recently argued that such literature represents nothing more than black propaganda against Amerindian groups, particularly the Caribs, who resisted Spanish conquest. As can be seen, accusations of cannibalism were levelled not just at the Caribs but also a wide range of Carib-speaking groups and even those of Arawak affiliation (see Van Berkel:1925:p.54 - quoted Ch.I, note 44). So too, the charge of cannibalism was made against groups all over South America, the Tupinamba in Brazil being one of the best known examples (see also note 13). All these factors, as Arens suggests, imply that an accusation of cannibalism in colonial South America functioned much as the epithet "terrorist" does in modern Europe: i.e. to place groups of people beyond the normal political process and in this way be able to justify various forms of extraordinary violence against them. However, to suggest that this was the manner in which Spanish accusations of cannibalism may have functioned is not to show that no such practices occurred among the Amerindians. Thus while various accounts of cannibalism may be shown to be self-evidently inaccurate or fanciful, this is not sufficient reason to discount all such reports. In short, are there any good reasons for thinking that there was a factual basis for these reports of cannibalism or should every single one of them be rejected out of hand, as the product of malice and ignorance?

Arens (1979:p.21) has argued that, although there is a very extensive

literature on the topic of cannibalism, world-wide, when it is examined closely it turns out that:

Rumours, suspicions, fears and accusations abound, but no satisfactory first hand accounts.

As far as the Spanish literature is concerned he tries to show that it was based solely on second-hand reports and used only as a means of justifying the violent occupation of the New World.

Certainly, as we have seen above, there is some truth in Arens's assessment but, nonetheless, there are also examples of Spanish reports, in the tradition of Las Casas and Castellanos (quoted above), which attempt to account for Carib cannibalism in its social context, much as the majority of non-Spanish sources do (see below). In these accounts the notion that the Caribs ate human flesh as a means of subsistence is firmly rejected, while the prevalence of endocannibalistic funerary rites and the exocannibalism of war captives, or itotos, is shown to be common among many other Amerindian groups, not just the Caribs.

For example, Jacinto de Caravajal<sup>15</sup>, writing in the 17th century, argued that cannibalism was part of the initiation rites of a Carib warrior, who also had to kill three itotos with his own hands. The heads, arms and ribs of these vanquished enemies were taken back to the village as trophies. Next, following a period of six months, during which the initiate (or initiates) observed a restricted diet of water, manioc and tobacco juice, a big fiesta was organised at which a specially prepared itoto<sup>16</sup> was killed and ritually consumed:

An old woman ... shares out amongst each of the revellers a very small piece of this meat. (quoted in Pereya: 1876:p.22ff)

In apparent acknowledgement of the popular misconceptions of his time, Caravajal continues:

The ordinary food of the Caribs is cassava, banana, fish or game ... they eat human flesh when they are at war and do so as a sign of victory, not as food.<sup>17</sup>

The first Capuchin missionaries on the eastern llanos of the Orinoco reported endocannibalistic practices which they clearly distinguished from the taking, and sometimes consumption of, human trophies as a result of victory in battle (see Carrocera:1964:pp.84,103,186,199,200). Similarly, Lopez-Borreguerro recorded that:

One encounters skeletons in their [the Caribs] villages which on many occasions is on account of their pious custom of preserving the remains of their parents, and this is one reason that it has been believed that they eat human flesh, and while it is not possible to deny that they devour their prisoners, they are no different in this than the many other celebrated cannibals of the Old and New World. (1875:I:p.269)

Such a contrast in the Spanish sources, especially in view of the well chosen disavowals of the uncritical identification of 'Carib' with 'cannibal', only tends to underline the extent to which, as Arens suggests, the Spanish authorities used sensational accounts of Amerindian ritual cannibalism, both of their ancestors and their enemies, to provide a justification for their own excesses.

However, there is still a flaw in Arens's procedure. Thus while it is possible to accept that the Spanish had strong political motives for propagating the idea that the Caribs were cannibals, it is by no means true that similar motives were present as far as the English, French and Dutch were concerned. Accordingly, if the question of Carib cannibalism is to be properly investigated reference must also be made to these alternative sources, for not only were the English, French and Dutch concerned to develop alliances with the Caribs, in order to neutralise the greater Spanish presence, but also, in virtue of their more amicable relationships, they were in a better position to observe the daily life of these people. In short, non-Spanish sources on Carib cannibalism will be harder to discount for the same sort of reason that Spanish sources are so suspect.

(ii) English, French and Dutch Accounts:

Perhaps the most striking contrast between the Spanish and non-Spanish sources on the question of Carib cannibalism is the absence of any detailed pre-occupation with this issue on the part of the latter. However, when the issue is raised the descriptions and explanations for the practice of cannibalism show a remarkable degree of consistency, broadly confirming the opinions of those few Spanish commentators, quoted above, who showed some empathy with Carib culture.

Among the earliest non-Spanish descriptions of the Caribs are those of Walter Raleigh and Robert Harcourt, though neither are particularly illuminating as to the existence of cannibalistic customs by the Amerindians. Thus, as has already been mentioned, the writings of Raleigh (1868) probably inspired Shakespeare's references to 'anthropophagi', but, contextually speaking, Raleigh also discusses men whose heads are in their chests and people whose feet point backwards ('... making them very difficult to track!'), 'facts' related to him by his Arawak informants (1868:p.85).

Harcourt, contemporary with Raleigh's exploration of the Orinoco, wrote in detail of the relations between the Caribs and other Amerindians in the area of the Oyapock River (French Guiana). In particular, and in direct contradiction of the mass of Spanish reports, he cites raiding for women, not the lust for ... carne humana, as '... the greatest cause of war and hatred amongst them' (1928:pp.75-88). In fact he does not mention the practice of cannibalism at all.

The first detailed description of the treatment of captured itotos was made by Antoine Biet (1664), under the chapter heading: 'How they conduct warfare against their enemies and the cruel death which those who are taken prisoner suffer.'. Biet relates that any captured women or children, if not integrated into Carib society as poitos or 'slaves', would be tied to a tree, shot full of arrows and their corpses burnt. Men, who were not to be

taken back to the village alive:

... had the principal parts of their bodies cut off,  
taken away and attached to the pirogues ...  
(1664:p.382 - see also Gumilla: quoted p.313)

Women and children were treated well on their arrival at the victorious village but men, after being washed, dressed and well fed, were taken to the village long-house. Here they were tied up and, after the women of the village had performed a dance, were tortured to death by the application of an inflammable resin to their bodies. Certain parts of the body were then removed, Biet mentions the ears, nose and penis, cooked and eaten, though some of the carcass was kept so that it could be shared with allied villages (1664:pp.383-4)<sup>18</sup>.

The French Jesuit Pierre Pelleprat, also writing in this period, seems not to have witnessed such ceremonies among the Caribs of the Guarapiche River area, but he does confirm a limited practice of cannibalism of their enemies. Perhaps more significant is the tenor of his description which makes it clear that he was well aware of the political implications involved in an allegation of cannibalism against the Caribs:

Some have said that they eat them [their captives], as have others in other parts of America, but I have not seen this practice among the Indians; at times they will cut off just the hand or foot of a dead enemy and cure it over a slow fire in order to preserve it against putrefaction. They do this because they are vainglorious and wish to display their valour, in a better way than by gluttony or cruelty. Afterwards they present the sad relics in their gatherings and offer a tiny piece on the point of a knife, to those people worthy of consideration, but the major part they reject. (1966:p.71)

Moreover, Pelleprat had some personal experience of these events:

One Arot came to me one day, very kindly, in a neighbouring village where I was preparing the baptism of a Carib cacique ... wishing to make me a presentation, which I took to be a personal gift, he passed me a basket, in which there was the hand and foot of an Arawak, and then invited me to eat. I was horrified and told him that God is angered at those who eat their enemies: the obstacle of this basket and its contents was eventually overcome and I will say no more. (Ibid:p.71)<sup>19</sup>

Other 17th century sources make it quite clear that the Caribs were not the only Amerindians to practice cannibalism. Grillet, for example, says that the Acoquas and Nourages, who once lived in the interior of modern French Guiana, ate their enemies. He was told by one of the Nourages:

That he had come down from them /the Acoquas/ four months ago, and then they had just made an end of boiling in their pots, and eating a nation which they had just destroyed. (1968:p.2)

Although, in turn<sup>20</sup>, the Caribs told Grillet that they were very reluctant to navigate up-river:

... because they are afraid of those Nourages that eat human flesh: so that when any of them go into those parts they stay there as little time as possible. (Ibid:p.4)

Grillet was later shown some of the Nourages human trophies and preserved human flesh (Ibid:p.29), which serves to remind us that the Caribs themselves also risked being eaten by the itotos.

Barrere, writing in the first half of the 18th century, observed the continuation of the rituals of warfare among the Caribs that had been recorded by earlier writers; the torture of captured men, the taking of human trophies - especially the head which was displayed in the village long house - and the cannibalism of certain parts of the prisoners' bodies:

... in a spirit of vengeance ... and also to inspire terror in their enemies. (1743:p.172)

He also mentions that children were imbued with a warlike spirit and hatred of traditional enemies by witnessing:

... all these inseparable cruelties of war, which, on the authority of their parents' example are, perpetually, handed down in their families from father to son. (Ibid:p.173)

However, by the second half of the 18th century the situation was changing due to the demographic, economic and political effects of the increased European domination in Guayana. The conditions of aboriginal warfare were altered, not just by the availability of firearms among some of

the Amerindians, but also by more general factors, such as the overall decline in the Amerindian population, the introduction of African slaves in large numbers, the success of missionary pacification in Spanish territories and, on the part of the Dutch, French and English colonists, the encouragement of the trade in red slaves, which could only serve to further loosen traditional constraints on raiding, as the search for poitos increased the incidence of tribal conflicts<sup>21</sup>.

Bancroft recorded some of these changes, especially apparent to the Europeans during the suppression of the Berbice Slave Rebellion, when the Caribs:

... ate the bodies of those Negroes whom they killed on this occasion, an action which is considered as so horrid and unnatural that the very existence of Cannibals has been lately denied by several modern Compilers of History ... I must, however, do these Indians the justice to declare that they never eat any of the human species, except their enemies killed in battle, to which they think they have as good a right as those animals by whom they would otherwise be eaten. (1971:pp.259-60)

Interestingly, and in contrast to 17th century sources, Bancroft adds:

... I have never heard of any other tribes of Indians in Guiana who eat human flesh ... (Ibid)

Moreover, what he has to say concerning the Arawaks in particular also emphasises the extent to which aboriginal patterns of life were changing in the 18th century.

The Arrowak Indians never engage in any wars with their neighbours, nor even the practice of making slaves from among the interior inhabitants to which the Dutch have incited the Caribbee and Accawau tribes. Whether they are sensible that hands were not given them to destroy each other, or whether they are influenced by pusillanimity, I will not determine. they have, however, maintained themselves in a state of perfect independence without wars. (1971:p.336)

Despite Bancroft's misapprehension as to the reasons for the Arawaks' pacification<sup>22</sup> he nonetheless provides a further confirmation, albeit in the negative, of the close interconnection of cannibalism and Amerindian warfare.

Similarly, John Stedman, who commanded Carib auxiliaries against the

rebel blacks of Surinam, says the Arawaks no longer ate their prisoners by this time, unlike:

... the Caribbee Indians, who even devoured the Negroes whom they killed at the insurrection in Berbice.  
(1796:p.193)

and

... whose flesh they tear and devour with the avidity of wolves. (Ibid.p.104)

While Bolingbroke, also a contemporary of Stedman and Bancroft, wrote that:

... they only devour their enemies, and rather to satisfy their revenge than their hunger. (1807:p.150)

noting also the endocannibalism of the Carib dead.

### (iii) Myth or Reality?

If we were to accept the historical sources at face value the conclusion that the Caribs were cannibals, in common with many other Amerindians, would be inescapable. However, so loaded are our views of cannibalism, as the discussion of early European, especially Spanish, attitudes revealed, that one must, perforce be particularly careful in making any final judgements.

Furthermore, if one accepts Arens's argument (Ibid:p.54) which has gone as far as to suggest that even countenancing the possibility of cannibalism amongst the Caribs represents, either, the attempt to '... justify the European destruction in the Caribbean', or, the desire to '... make fascinating reading', there seems little alternative to a wholesale rejection of all the historical evidence presented here.

Certainly, as has been repeatedly acknowledged here, some anthropologists have indeed been uncritical and slipshod in their analysis of reports of Carib cannibalism, but the attempt, by Arens, to 'acquit' the Caribs of this accusation is, itself, badly misjudged. Thus, as was suggested above, by examining only a very limited range of Spanish sources he is left

with no choice but to suppose that Carib 'cannibalism' had no more reality than as a European ideological fiction, to be used to justify a violent occupation of the New World, since the unspoken corollary of his reasoning is that had the Caribs 'really' been cannibals, then their conquest would have been justified.

Nonetheless, since it appears that the Spanish were usually quite indiscriminate in their accusations of cannibalism, and that such accusations tended to be levelled most particularly at Amerindians as yet unconquered<sup>23</sup>, one must agree that political expediency, rather than an attempt at objective reportage, was the most influential factor in Spanish chronicling of this question.

As far as the issue as to what exactly was involved in Carib cannibalism is concerned, one may note that the sources are remarkably consistent in defining it as a limited, ritual act only associated with victory in battle and also as an act that was to be clearly differentiated from the kind of funerary customs, of which Columbus made so much, and which can still be observed today<sup>24</sup>. Undoubtedly, funerary practices which involved the preservation of bones and the consumption of human remains were a fertile source of misinterpretation, as Las Casas quickly observed, and even such sympathetic observers cannot be relied upon to have always fully distinguished these practices<sup>25</sup>, despite claiming to be eyewitnesses to the relevant events.

In sum, a close reading of the sources strongly indicates the existence of cannibalistic practices among the Caribs, as well as other Amerindians, though it would seem that it was the European pre-occupation with this subject, still evident today, rather than its overall sociological significance for Carib peoples that necessitates such a detailed treatment of the topic in this thesis.

### Carib Slavery

Somewhat ironically, following the Spanish conquistadors, who had used the charge of cannibalism to licence their slave-taking, the missionaries, who after 1652 assumed exclusive responsibility for continuing the pacification of the Amerindians, found that their promises to suppress this trade in red slaves, now orchestrated by the Dutch in the Guayana region, gave them a considerable appeal among some Amerindian groups since:

These groups want to know whether the Spaniards can defend them against the slave dealers. (BGB:BC:APII: p.149 - letter of Fr. Garriga<sup>26</sup>)

However, as we have seen, this represented something of a volte-face, on the part of the Spanish, since it was they who had initiated the red slave trade in the New World (see also chapter I, II). Nonetheless, the missionaries were correct in identifying the Caribs and Dutch as the principal protagonists of this trade in the 18th century, for the changes that Carib society had undergone by this time produced a clear contrast with earlier times, as even the missionaries themselves acknowledged:

This trade in Poytos has so completely altered the Caribs that their only occupation is constantly going to and returning from war, selling and killing the Indians ... (BGB:BC:APII:p.148)

Thus it needs to be emphasised that the growth of the Amerindian slave trade between the Dutch and the Caribs<sup>27</sup> really only reached its peak in the 1700's, as the trade in other forest products declined (see chapter IV), following the switch to a plantation based economy in the Dutch colonies. This change, in itself, resulted in a bigger market for red slaves, as did the successful colonisation of the Antilles by the English and French, where the possession of Amerindian domestic slaves became quite the fashion (Rodway:1893:I:p.33)<sup>28</sup>.

Coupled with these factors the Carib themselves found that profits were relatively easily gained as a result of this trade, as the testimony of successive Commanders at Essequibo demonstrates (BGB:BC:API:p.26, APII:p.25 - quoted chapter IV p.296).

Accordingly the aboriginal status of the Amerindian poitos (Arawakan - macos) must first be examined in order that the extent of the European impact in this sphere can be fully appreciated.

#### Poitos and Macos - Aboriginal 'Slaves'

Reference has already been made in chapter I to the relation between trading and warfare in Carib society. It was argued that these activities were not rigidly separated but represented different intensities of the same social relation of reciprocity. Similarly, Amerindian slaving can be understood as an extension of Carib trading activities, for only by trade and intermarriage could those populations from which the slaves were taken be defined as poitos<sup>29</sup>. Thus the Caribs would have stood in an affinal relation to the people they raided in virtue of the fact that they married the women and sold their 'brothers-in-law'. Furthermore the 'slave' status of the poito would have been more pronounced under European influence, both on account of the profit involved in the slave trade and because of the trading advantages that Caribs had developed through their European alliances<sup>30</sup>.

Evidence as to the existence of a limited form of pre-Colombian servitude among the Amerindians of Guayana consists in the continual reference of the historical record to a class of persons, variously referred to as macos or poitos, the former term being of Arawak origin, the latter of Carib.

It should be said at the outset that the nature of such "slavery" bears little relation to the kind of horrific exploitation and subjugation that African peoples suffered at the hands of the Europeans. As Riviere writes:

The term pito, which appears in the literature in various orthographic forms, is found among many different Carib peoples. It has variously been translated as slave, client, brother-in-law, son-in-law and sister's son. This range of meanings covers a continuum from the potential equal (brother-in-law) to the totally inferior (slave) ... (1977:p.40)

It is suggested here that only under European influence might the situation of the Carib poito have come to approximate that of the plantation black and that in pre-Columbian times only where the affinal relation was customarily one of domination and submissiveness would the term poito take on potential connotations of servant or slave.

Among Arawak speakers the term macos seems to have had a similar meaning. Various authorities mention the existence of a group known as "Macos" (Alcedo y Herrera:1788, Humboldt:1908·III:p.302, Codazzi·1940:II:p.46), living all over the Upper Orinoco and Vaupes area. Gillin (1948), for example, identifies four linguistically independent groups among these, one on the middle Auari, a tributary of the Uraricoera, another on the Rio Negro, a Puinave group, another on the Venturái, Saliva speakers and another from the Lago Cuyabeno, in Ecuador, who are of the Cofan language family. The implication here is taken to be that Macos, of whatever linguistic affiliation, are the remnants of hunting and gathering groups destroyed or assimilated by more powerful, agriculturally based societies, such as the Arawaks and Caribs, this process taking place via the killing of adults and the kidnap of children who become assimilated as macos or poitos. The economic features of this situation still pertain today in the Vaupés region of Colombia, Hugh Jones writes:

The relationship between Tukanoan and Maku, besides being one of master and servant, is one of exchange between cultivated products from the Tukanoan and forest products and labour from the Maku. (1979:p.59)

Thus, just as poito may express an ambiguous status between 'captive' and 'son-in-law', so, among Arawak speakers, the term maco is used in the same way (Gillin:1948, Alvarado·1945:p.182). Cassani (1741:p.216) further informs us that maco was the name for workers among the Arawak-speaking Achaguas, while both Gumilla (1965:I:p.11) and Carvajal (1648·p.14) say the name poito was reserved for those groups continually attacked by the Caribs. Gillij (1780:I:p.287) says the word maco was the equivalent of poito in the Casanare and Meta region.

While it seems relatively clear that macos and poitos formed unique, open ended, social categories in Carib and Arawak society, it is far more difficult to tell how important they were on the eve of European discovery. Steward (1949) has argued that both Arawak and Carib societies were not sufficiently advanced to allow the formation of a slave class, while Rouse (1948) and Saignes (1961:p.64) argue that among the Caribs of the Antilles captured women did represent such a class, as with the Caribs and Arawaks of the mainland, but that the scope of slavery was curtailed because of limited productive capacity and that this limitation manifested itself in the fact that the children of "slaves" were free<sup>31</sup>.

Whether or not Rouse is correct in assigning a limited economic capacity as the reason for the underdevelopment of 'slavery' among the Caribs and Arawaks, it does seem to have been the case that, once accepted, captives were well treated. Gilij (1782:II:p.358) says that, among the Caribs, young captives learnt to speak the language and became totally assimilated, being very well treated; while among the Arawaks, Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdes (1959·II:p.267) informs us, macos were similarly well treated being distinguishable only by a particular hair style<sup>32</sup>.

Gumilla informs us that the Caribs would ascend the Orinoco once a year on slaving raids and quotes the myths of the Arawak Achagua and Saliva about their origins to illustrate the fear in which they were held. According to Gumilla the Salivas say that "Puru", a culture hero, sent his son to kill a great snake which was devouring the peoples of the Orinoco. This he did to their great joy, but from the rotting maggoty body of the snake there emerged the first Carib and his wife, "enemies of all other peoples", and for this reason the Caribs were inhuman and cruel. Similarly, the Achaguas say that the Caribs are the descendants of jaguars and have the cruelty of these ancestors (1966:I:p.107). Though Gumilla also suggests that the Arawak slaved Carib groups with equal frequency (Ibid:II:p.72).

It is difficult to be certain about the status of macos and poitos<sup>33</sup> since European presence must have drastically changed the situation, by introducing the spectre of unlimited profit into slaving raids (see note 30), in which case even the earliest chroniclers may have been witnessing an institution already degenerated from the pre-Columbian form.

In this case little more can be said about the aboriginal situation, but examination of the history of European involvement is less problematic and tends to confirm the notion that what once might have been a limited practice became, for the Caribs, an activity:

... from which alone that nation derives its livelihood.  
(Commandeur of Essequibo to West India Company, 1746  
BGB:BC:APII:p.45)

#### The European Transformation

Within two decades of the arrival of the Europeans in South America Indian slavery had become an established, lucrative business, in which all nations were involved (see chap.I). The most important buyers, initially, were undoubtedly the Spanish who used Amerindian labour in the pearl fisheries of Cubagua and Margarita and the mines and plantations of the Antilles. For example Las Casas (1972:p.44) informs us that on the "Shore of Pearls":

... the Spaniards committed most wonderful depopulations: for they gave themselves wholly to their wonted Robberies, enslaving also infinite numbers of men, on purpose to sell them for money, against all the faith and pledges which they had given them for their security ...

Yet there seems little doubt that the European slavers were aided in their efforts by both Caribs and Arawaks of the coastal region. For example, Raleigh informs us that the Spanish bought slaves from Carib and Arawak groups living on the Barima, Pomeroon and Essequibo Rivers:

... as they will for three or four hatchets sell the sonnes and daughters of their own brethren and sisters, and for somewhat more even their own daughters<sup>34</sup>; hereof the Spaniards make great profit, for buying a maid of twelve or thirteen years for three or four hatchets, they sell them again at Margarita for fifty and one hundred pesos. (1868·p.39)

Raleigh also says that there was an important slave market on the Orinoco, between the Cari and Limon Rivers, where there was a large Carib settlement. Apparently Arawak middlemen bought slaves from the Caribs here, and exported them to the West Indies (Ibid·p.87).

Newson (1976·p.77) argues that the main cause of population decline in Trinidad in the sixteenth century was Spanish slaving, though, as she points out, the Spanish hypocritically blamed the Caribs:

... it has been the fault of the Caribs that the Island has been depopulated, having had many more inhabitants than at present. (AGI:C:971, 21/1/1612)

However, as the other European nations created stable enclaves in the areas they too became buyers in the slave trade. For example, it was reported to the Council of the Indies, in 1614, that English and Caribs<sup>35</sup> had been "stealing" friendly Indians on the Orinoco to work the Jamaican plantations (BGB:BC:API:p.35).

In 1686 the Governor of Cumaná wrote to the King of Spain informing him that the Caribs of the Guarapiche:

... sell to the French, like merchandise, the Indians they capture for having tasted this devilish profit, the very Indians of the Missions will no longer be safe from them, nor will anyone else in the country. And in order to fulfil their ambition and that of the French, they will make joint incursions with the latter ... as they have done in other parts, and as the Dutch have also done with some settlements on the River Orinoco in the region of the mainland. (BGB:BC:AP:p.193)

Although initial Spanish slaving was undoubtedly disastrous for the Indian population of the coast of Tierra Firme and Trinidad it was stopped, on the orders of the Crown, in 1652. In terms of Spanish imperial policy this cessation of the armed conquest and initiation of reduction by the missionaries,

represents the attempt of the Crown to bring its colonists firmly under political control; as a strategic resource in the battle for territorial possession the Amerindian population was not to be wasted at the whim of the colonists<sup>36</sup>. Equally, the fact that the Amerindians were felt to be unsuitable for plantation labour and that the mass transportation of blacks from Africa had become economically feasible, meant that Amerindian enslavement was superfluous. Why, then, did other European powers persist in this activity when the Spanish had stopped?

As may be seen from the extracts of the letter from the Governor of Cumaná to the King of Spain, quoted above, an important element in inter-Colonial rivalry was access to, and control of, the Amerindian population. For the Spanish this was to be achieved by destroying the basis for Amerindian existence outside of the Colonial state, i.e. reducing the Amerindians to the mission regime. For other European powers, particularly the Dutch, another method was necessary since they lacked the manpower and religious infrastructure of the Spanish. To this end they sought to establish alliances through trade, including that in Amerindian slaves. By establishing economic links with various Amerindian groups they aimed to counter the Spanish claims to political authority over the population of the New World. In the struggle for the control of Guayana the Caribs were a particularly crucial group in this regard because of their widespread trading links all over the Orinoco region. Indeed, at least until the 1750's, after which time the effects of the work of the Real Expedition des Limites seems to have discouraged Dutch traders from penetrating Spanish Guayana<sup>37</sup>, it was reported by the Prefect of Capuchin Missions that:

... the Dutch are buying Poytos in Cuyuni, for they do not hesitate to carry on that illicit traffic nearer the Missions and, as you well know, Captain Bonalde encountered a Dutchman about a day's journey from the mission of Miamo, buying Poytos, or Indians, which the Caribs were selling him; and although he did not actually find him in the house of the Caribs, nevertheless, three

Indians, or Poytos, some cutlasses and some glass beads were found in his hut and were distributed among the Indians of Miamo<sup>38</sup>. Apart from this we well know how frequently the Dutch go to the Paragua, Caura and headwaters of the Caroni, so that they maintain their position there every year. (BGB:BC:APII:p.146)

Clearly then, it was the political implications of Carib slaving, rather than its moral aspects<sup>39</sup>, which was the basis for Spanish opposition to its practice during the eighteenth century. Although, as has been mentioned, both the French and English dabbled in Amerindian slavery until the end of the colonial era, the involvement of the Dutch was of more importance because of the proximity of Essequibo and the extensive links that they had with the Caribs of the Orinoco. Accordingly, it will be the development and character of Dutch and Carib slaving within Guayana which will be discussed here.

#### Dutch and Carib Slaving

Although the Colony of Essequibo largely owed its existence to the African slave trade<sup>40</sup>, the scope of Amerindian slavery was always severely opposed by the authorities within their territories. Thus it was always Dutch policy to encourage the slave taking of Amerindians among only those tribes living outside the colony, so as to avoid disruption of trade at the Company's posts and instability in their political relations with the indigenous population. This policy was enshrined in law, firstly by treaties made in the 1650's declaring tribes living within the colony to be inalienably free and later by series of ordinances aimed at controlling arbitrary slave taking by individual colonists. For example, on the 23rd August 1686, Governor Samuel Beekman issued a proclamation forbidding the unlicensed taking of Indian slaves (Rodway:1893:I:p.35). Five years later the commission of his successor Abraham Beekman, explicitly emphasised that there was to be absolutely no trade in Amerindian slaves as the Directors of the West India

Company felt that his predecessor had not been strict enough in controlling the export of these Amerindians<sup>41</sup>. Then, in 1717, against a rising tide of disputes within the Colony over the taking of Amerindian slaves, another proclamation was issued. This stated that each colonist was entitled to no more than six Indians, who might be got from the Orinoco by purchase or exchange, for each of whom a tax of six guilders was to be paid in addition to the usual tax on slaves of two hundred and ten guilders. Once within the Colony they were not to be removed from their river of first residence or sold to any other inhabitant of the Colony, without a further tax being due to the West India Company (Rodway:1893:I:p.65).

Although these regulations were certainly disobeyed on occasion (for example see BGB:BC:APII:p.64) there was more than political and economic expediency underwriting Amerindian liberties in Essequibo. Thus these laws were also developed and enforced to protect the West India Company's monopoly on the slave trade in blacks (Rodway:1893:I:p.40). As was mentioned in chap.IV, this was not just a question of economic profit being affected but also a question of political authority since, for the West India Company, the control of the supply of labour to the Colony was the basis of the authority of its representatives: i.e., the Governor and colonial administration. It is in this context that the apparent Dutch concern for Amerindian liberties must be judged.

Yet it is clear that the scale of Amerindian slavery within Essequibo, even if unhindered by the West India Company, would never have matched that of the blacks since it was universally felt that the Amerindians were unsuitable to heavy plantation labour and were better utilised domestically. For example, the Court of Policy, in Essequibo, advised the West India Company in 1731:

the Plantation Belwijk, sometimes buys one or two red slaves in a whole year, but they are mostly children of about eight or ten years old, who are bought for about

twelve or thirteen axes and choppers, together with a few provisions. The red slaves, too, cannot work together with a black slave, and are mostly used on the plantation for hunting and fishing, the women looking after the cassava for all the daily consumption of the plantation. (BGB:BC:APII:p.14)

So too it can be seen that while the numbers of black slaves increased dramatically in the eighteenth century, the numbers of Amerindian slaves kept pace with the small increases in the European population in Essequibo. Thus in 1691 there were forty eight Europeans, fifty eight Indian slaves and one hundred and sixty five black slaves living at the fort of Kyk-over-al, in Essequibo. By 1762 the population of the entire colony had expanded to only three hundred and forty six Europeans, two hundred and forty four Indian slaves but a staggering three thousand eight hundred and thirty three black slaves (Rodway:1893:I:pp.52,63).

Clearly then, considerations of the economic monopoly of the West India Company, the unsuitability of Amerindian labour and the political expediency of maintaining good relations with the Amerindians of Essequibo combined to limit the numbers of Amerindian slaves actually in the colony itself. However, slave taking was not discouraged as an adjunct to other commercial activities among the Amerindians of the Orinoco<sup>42</sup>.

The main trading routes used by the Caribs and Dutch in their infiltration of the Orinoco region have already been described (see chapter IV) as has the Spanish struggle to control them (see chapter III). From the historical record it is clear that the Dutch traders were often prepared not only to travel, with a Carib escort, to the Orinoco, but also to live there to oversee their trade. For example, the Prefect of Capuchins on the Lower Orinoco informs us:

In the River Aguirre there was a Dutchman domiciled with the Caribs more than eight years, buying slaves from them. There were also others in the same traffic in Puruey, Caura and Parava from where they used to send to Essequibo and Surinam parties of twenty to fifty slaves, though they discontinued in alarm at the arrival of the Royal Commission in the Orinoco. (BGB:BC:APIV:p.19)

In 1778 the Prefect again reported:

... the Dutch come overland from Essequibo, accompanied by porters carrying large baskets filled with articles of barter for the Slave Traffic ... numbers of them have lived for more than ten years permanently among the Caribs, carrying on their Slave Traffic: and these without moving send the slaves to their agents in Essequibo, and receive in return merchandise and other articles by which they are enabled to purchase more from the Caribs. The least time they remain in these places is a year, but more generally they reside there for two or three years. (BGB:BC:APII:p.148)

The favoured practice for seizing slaves was the night attack, the following is an extract from the description of the Orinoco, written in 1750:

... the Dutch obtained slaves from this river, for whom the Caribs go up to attack other tribes of Indians, they surround their villages by night, seize the boys (whom they call "Poitos") and sell them for slaves in the colonies, which is a very sad thing. (BGB:BCC:AP:p.190)

Stedman, a mercenary captain in Surinam during the 1760's, also confirms that the siege of a village by night was standard practice for the capture of slaves (quoted chap.I p.86). As does Bancroft, who also emphasises Dutch culpability in the matter of the Caribs' involvement in the red slave trade:

They have, however, usually lived in harmony with the neighbouring tribes, until of late when they have been corrupted by the Dutch, and excited to make incursions on the interior Indians, for the sake of making prisoners, who afterwards are sold to the inhabitants of the Dutch colonies. (1971:p.257)

It is difficult to tell precisely whether all Caribs groups were involved in the slave trade to the same degree. Certainly those within Essequibo were concerned with not only the taking of Amerindian slaves but also with the policing of the black slave population. Spanish accounts tend to emphasise the involvement of Carib groups all along the Orinoco but although this may be judged mere propaganda on their part, given the traditions of taking captives in war, it seems likely that many groups were, in fact, involved, especially during the eighteenth century<sup>43</sup>. Thus slave taking was not necessarily a large scale enterprise but may have been undertaken, sporadically, by quite small groups of men, who relayed their captives, via

central collection points manned by Dutch traders, into the colony of Essequibo.

In particular Spanish sources indicate that there was a slave market on the Mazaruni (AGI:C:30,19/4/1758) and in 1769 two Capuchin missionaries, with an escort from the garrison of Santo Tomé, raided this market and liberated one hundred and forty Indians (AGI:C:30,6/6/1769). Similarly, Dutch documents, captured by the Spanish during a raid on another slave trading post on the Cuyuni River, indicate that slave taking may have been very much a question of the individual initiative of Carib 'big men'. Thus among the captured documents (AGI:C:258,1758) is the following list of transactions:

<u>Name of Indian</u>		<u>No. of Slaves</u>
Tribecco	delivered	8
Tucanaura	"	3
Arimamene	"	3
Uararcicamo	"	1
Aritama	"	2
Carumabare	"	2 (to Gov.of Essq.)
Cumdara	"	2 (for Gov.of Essq.)
Asabue	"	1 (for son of Gov.of Essq.)
Arimamacaca	"	1
Marrarban	"	2
Causamama	"	3
Marrana	"	8
Canarua	"	2

Appended to this document was a note saying that other Caribs, whose names could not be distinguished because of the bad condition of the paper, had delivered the total of thirty seven slaves. This record of transactions being for a period of eight months.

It would thus seem that the numbers of Amerindian captives being brought out of the Orinoco was considerable for if 75 slaves were brought in at this one post over as short a period as eight months, then perhaps up to

100 would pass through in a year. In addition to this one post the Dutch West India Company's posts at Arinda and Moruca were also the focus of a brisk trade in red slaves (see chapter IV, note 20), while the independent 'posts', set up by the slave dealers themselves in the interior, might be expected to have at least matched, and probably have exceeded, the volume of trade at the tightly regulated Company posts (see chapter IV, note 19). In 1769 the Prefect of the Capuchin missions wrote to the Spanish Crown that

In the River Aguirre there was a Dutchman domiciled with the Caribs more than eight years, buying slaves from them. There were also others in the same traffic in Puruey, Caura and Parava, from where they used to send to Essequibo and Surinam parties of from 20-50 slaves ...  
(BGB:BC:APIV:p.19)

Taken together then, and over a period of a number of years, the volume of this trade in Amerindian slaves might easily have been in the thousands.

However, the impression given by the recorded transactions for the post on the Cuyuni is that normal slaving practice was for a few individuals to deliver small quantities of slaves over a long period of time, rather than for armadas of Carib pirogues to appear on the Orinoco and carry off hundreds of people at a single stroke; and impression often conveyed by Spanish authors, although such a phenomenon was not unknown (see chapter II).

There does seem to be a general agreement among all Spanish sources that the volume of Carib slaving was likely to have been around five hundred captives a year. The following extract to the Commandant of Guayana from the Prefect of Capuchin Missions, is typical in this regard:

... it will not be too much to say that the Caribs sell yearly more than three hundred children, leaving murdered in their houses more than four hundred adults, for the Dutch do not like to buy the latter because they well know, that being grown up, they will escape. Indeed, we know this, as some fugitives were seen in the Missions, and could be recognised by the brands of their masters which many of them have on their bodies - for the Essequibo Company have ordered that the Indian slaves shall be branded on pain of losing them. (BGB:BC:APII:p.145)

Other Government reports estimate at maximum seven hundred slaves a year taken

from the Orinoco (AGI:SD:632,26/6/1735), but most agree on some figure between three and four hundred with around twice as many dead as the result of the raids, (Caulin:1966:p.380,AGI:SD:583, 7/4/1733, AGI:C:30, 4/12/1790). In short, it would seem that the number of captives being taken out of the Orinoco was significant and the aftermath of these activities was also very disruptive, costing many lives<sup>44</sup>.

According to Gumilla, Carib and Dutch traders were liable to make a considerable profit on the sale of poitos<sup>45</sup>, paying two hatchets, two machetes, some knives and glass beads for captives on the Orinoco and receiving some ten axes, ten machetes, ten knives, ten bags of beads and other general trade goods from the Dutch buyers (1745:II:pp.324-8). So too he indicates that the seizure of captives might follow previously peaceful trading:

They take their captives on one or two armed pirogues to their territory, and continue their voyage up river, without harming neighbouring people, who may also be an enemy; and to their allies they say they are not to blame for burning and capturing that village, because if the village had received them well and sold them provisions for their journey they would not have harmed them; but that, having removed their weapons with such discourtesy they wished to punish them, for they had not treated them with the same courtesy they had shown other peoples. This is the ruse by which they ensure another attack for the following year, which always succeeds ...  
(1745:II:p.324)

Dutch sources also indicate that, among the Caribs of Essequibo at least, the slave trade had clearly altered the traditional economy, as had other Dutch commercial activities. For example there is the testimony of various Governors of the Essequibo colony that the Surinamese undermined the dye trade because of the high prices they were prepared to pay for red slaves<sup>46</sup> (see chapter IV p.296) and that, fully aware of the number of red slaves that would become available:

... itinerant traders and avaricious settlers, who, without taking heed of the consequences, allow themselves to be drawn into these quarrels /between the Amerindians in Essequibo/ upon the slightest inducement of profit, /were/ supporting one or other of the parties with arms and advice, which being discovered by the other side always leads to fatal results ... (Harris & Villiers:1911:p.486)

While Bancroft (1971:p.263) itemised Carib-Dutch trade, in the 1760's, as being in pirogues, hammocks, wax, balsam, woods but '... chiefly slaves'.

Similarly, in the Spanish territories, at the other end of these Amerindian trade networks, the prevalence of slave dealing was of continual concern to the authorities, who were also eager that the newly founded missions would be able to maintain a steady stream of new converts<sup>47</sup>. For example, it was reported to the King of Spain in 1739 that:

There are twenty leagues of river on which many Caribs are established and especially those of Aguirre, Caroni and Tacorapo, who carry on traffic, the latter sailing up the Caroni ... communicate by land at no great distance with the Indian Caribs, who are established above Angostura, on the Rivers Caura, Rio, Tauca, Puruey, Curumtopo and other places, where they sail up river to seize Indians of other tribes, whom they sell, both males and females, as slaves to the Dutch ... the Dutch in return for these and other products furnish the Indians not only with various kinds of merchandise ... but also with guns, gunpowder, ammunition and other supplies with which they wage war, making their conversion and that of other numberless Indian tribes more difficult. Fearing as they do the power and cruelty of the Caribs, they do not venture to receive, although many would like to do so, the Missionary Fathers. (BGB:BCC:p.185)

Again, in 1750, it was reported by the Prefect of the Capuchins to the Commandant of Guayana that the slave trade had 'completely changed' the Caribs:

... and not only the Caribs of the forests but even those of the Missions, participate in these wars, without our being able to control them in any way and whenever we are making an effort to do so, they immediately desert us in great numbers. (BGB:BC:APII:p.147)

So too, the scope of Carib slave taking seems to have been very extensive<sup>48</sup>, the same document continues:

I am unable to name all the nations which the Caribs pursue with the object of enslaving them. But the tribes dwelling on our frontiers and the most generally known are the Barinagotos, Macos, Amaricotos, Camaracotos, Aruacos, Paravins and Guiacas<sup>49</sup>. And so great is the spite of the Caribs against them on this account /that they work for the Spaniards/ that they call them by no other names than the Guica slaves, Barinagoto slaves, Amaricoto slaves, etc., and they say that they are slaves even before they are seized. (Ibid:p.148)

Gumilla (1966:II:p.314) reproduces the words of a Guayquieri who, "responding

with laconicism which will serve as an epitaph for the Guayquieri nation", told of long wars with the Caribs who finally took all these people off into slavery. Similarly, Gilij (1965:I:p.133) lists over one dozen nations that he supposed to have disappeared as a result of the Carib-Dutch trade in red slaves.

However, it needs to be emphasised that it was not only the Caribs who actively engaged in the slave trade. The case of the Manoas has already been mentioned (see chapter IV), while, within the colony of Essequibo itself, the Akawaio were also heavily involved. Bancroft records:

They frequently make incursions on their interior neighbours, like the Carribbees, for slaves: and the vicinity of their residence particularly exposes them to reprisals from those injured tribes. To prevent this, all the avenues to their houses are guarded by sharp pieces of wood planted in the earth, and poisoned, except only one obscure winding path, which they use themselves, and make known to their countrymen by private marks. (1971:p.268)

The Arawaks at this time, possibly because of a disproportionate decline in their numbers as a result of their proximity to the Europeans and a consequent loss of military strength, were no longer slave takers, according to Bancroft (Ibid:p.336, quoted above p.323). Though, as Saignes points out (1961:p.73), groups as distant from the Dutch and Brazilian traders as the Guahibos and the Guaypuinaves were eventually drawn into this trade.

In sum, the Caribs, although deeply involved in the Amerindian slave trade, were by no means the only group to be so. That, however, it is they who are chiefly associated with it in the literature is eloquent testimony to the endurance of that image which, as we saw in the case of cannibalism, has led to a persistent distortion of the historical and ethnographic record.

NOTES for Chapter V

1. Although in other areas of the world the latter day expansion of capitalism into 'savage' societies has also brought with it an equally sensationalist literature, centred on the topic of cannibalism. On the basis of their alleged cannibalistic practices such societies are presented as morally and culturally bankrupt, thus justifying the advance of 'white civilization'. For example, in the second half of the 19th century just such an outpouring accompanied British attempts to occupy territories in New Guinea and the Western Pacific - see:
 

Lloyd, A.B.	1907	<u>In Dwarf Land and Cannibal Country.</u> London
Romilly, H.	1886	<u>The Western Pacific and New Guinea: Notes on the Native Christians and Cannibals.</u> London
Seaman, B.	1862	<u>Viti - An Account of a Government Mission to ... The Fijian Islands.</u> Cambridge
St.Johnson, A.	1883	<u>Company Among the Cannibals.</u> London
Williams, T.	1870	<u>Fiji and the Fijians: Missionary Labours Among The Cannibals.</u> London
  
2. In just this vein the Puerto Rican historian Coll y Toste wrote:
 

The Island Carib, eaters of fresh meat, of adventurous and warlike instincts, bloodthirsty, cruel man-eater is the antithesis of the Arawak, the aboriginal occupant of the Antilles, eater of cereals, peaceful, hospitable, charming and indolent. (1897:p.3)

Moreover, it should be emphasised again (see also Introduction) that the Caribs of the Antilles cannot be simply equated with the Caribs of the mainland making such prejudices doubly inappropriate.
  
3. Thus Columbus wished to use caribe slaves to pay for the colonisation of the Antilles, the Crown later taking 20% of the value of these sales (Salas:1920:p.56).
  
4. Collaborator with Columbus on the official report concerning Columbus's second voyage to the New World, submitted to the Crown in 1493 and entitled Carta al Cabilda de Sevilla.
  
5. After all the existence of cannibalism among the 'savages' at the frontiers of 'civilisation' had been accepted, in literature, at least since the time of classical Greece, through the writings of Herodotus and Pliny. Indeed, Oviedo y Valdes (1959) often cited the latter as an authority when discussing Amerindian cultures, while the 13th century travelogue of Marco Polo gave a new vitality to such prejudices, since it was republished in almost every European language in the three centuries after his death (ca.1324). For example, he wrote of the Andaman Islanders that:
 

Their dispositions are cruel, and every person, not being of their own nation, whom they can lay their hands upon, they kill and eat. (1904:p.333)
  
6. Isabella had, in fact, forbidden Amerindian slavery the day after Columbus's triumphant return to Barcelona in May 1493.

7. Nor was he the only licenciado sent to adjudicate on this issue. Thus, less well known, probably because the report has been heavily edited and is less specific in its questions than that of Figueroa, is the investigation of Alonso de Zuazo (AGI:J:47·f.59-100, quoted in Delgado: 1970:pp.79-86), though his conclusions are not at variance with those of Figueroa.
8. As, indeed, it was among the Amerindians, though the actual conditions of such 'slavery' were hardly comparable to the fate of Spanish captives (see below p.327).
9. The conquests of Cortés and Pizarro, in Mexico and Peru, had also served to confirm the apparent prevalence of such practices in the minds of European commentators on the Amerindians.
10. Thus it is interesting to note that almost immediately after Las Casas had made his pleas on behalf of the Amerindians, Charles V granted one of his courtiers the right to furnish 4,000 black slaves to the Antilles (Rodney:1970:p.96). Nowhere was Las Casas's voice raised against these events.
11. Thus a rather novel argument is deployed in this petition. The author says that the Amerindians, who were '... friends of the Christians ...', killed their Carib captives because the Spanish at Margarita were prohibited from buying them. The inference is drawn that it is merciful to enslave these caribes under such circumstances, as a means of saving them from certain death at the hands of their enemies (presumably Arawaks), slavery being, in this case, the lesser of two evils. Interestingly, precisely this same argument was used by Hilhouse (1825: p.29) to persuade the British authorities in Guiana that they should be prepared to buy the Amerindian captives that the Caribs had been accustomed to sell to the Dutch (see also p.301).
12. Thus the word caribe is now a standard Castilian-Spanish figurative expression for 'savage' (Cassells Concise Spanish-English Dictionary: 1969:p.36). The Caribs have also been appropriated by English literature as Caliban in Shakespeare's 'The Tempest', while, probably inspired by Raleigh's description of the Caura River Caribs (quoted chapter I p.10), Othello's list of wonders, designed to impress Desdemona with the Moor's wide experience, includes:
- ... the Cannibals, that each other eat,  
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders.
- (Act I:Scene III:lines 143-5)
- More recently the ethnographers Im Thurn (1883:p.163) and Adams (1972: p.72 - see also chapter I, note 28) seem to have continued to labour under the residue of such imagery, since their treatment of this topic remains somewhat ambiguous.
13. Indeed such dogma was employed as far away as the Argentine where, in the 18th century, Amerindian groups were being referred to as '... tan caribe', that they ate human flesh and were, thus, held to be in need of immediate and violent subjugation (AGI:CH:284:28/4/1702, 1710, 20/12/1740).
14. A Carib cacique of this area, Atirama, was also accused of sustaining himself and his family solely on human flesh! (see chapter II, p.166).

15. Dubbed 'un admirador fanatico de los caribes' by the historian Pereyra (1876:VI:p.22), Caravajal claimed, as did Pelleprat (quoted below), to have been offered the cured flesh of an itoto to eat, but refused the offer, in Caravajal's case:

... because I had to admit that I had not killed anyone. (quoted in Pereyra:Ibid)

16. The itoto was placed in a special hammock, which he was never allowed to leave except to evacuate himself, and given plenty to eat and drink. Such an experience was reported by Hans Staden during his captivity among the Tupinamba of Brazil (see Staden:1557). Although Arens (1979) decries the possibility that the Tupi were cannibals, just as in the case of the Caribs, the similarity of such descriptions may amount to more than mere coincidence. Thus Hoff (1968:p.13), on the basis of numerous lexical similarities between the Tupi and Carib languages, has pointed out that there was undoubtedly a great deal of cultural intercourse between these groups of the Atlantic sea-coast in pre-Columbian times (see also note 29).

17. As Salas (Ibid:p.194) has pointed out, simple ignorance of Amerindian language and culture could easily lead to this confusion. As an example of this he cited the following case. He says that the Caribs, as well as other Amerindians in the Orinoco area, had a particular liking for howler-monkey which they called guaribo or guaharibo, a word that might be easily confused with the name Guahibo, an independent language group of the southern Colombian llanos (Gumilla:1966:p.298), as was done by the Spanish Governor on the Orinoco, José Solano. He was personally determined to uncover the 'facts' about cannibalism:

Solano was informed that Caseri, a Guaypuinave cacique, and his tribe had eaten five Guahibos ... rebuked by Solano for having eaten people the Indian replied indignantly that the guaribos were not people but monkeys. (Salas:Ibid)

Ironically it was the Spanish, during the first expeditions into the New World, who were forced to use human flesh as food. It was reported to the Governor of Coro in the 1530's that on an expedition into the Andean foothills:

Some, contrary to nature, ate human meat; one Christian was found cooking a quarter of a child together with some greens ... (in Hemming: 1978(b):p.63)

18. This account is also confirmed by the eyewitness van Berkel (1925:p.54, quoted chapter I, note 44) writing of the Arawaks of the Berbice River, in the 1680's, adding that Carib practices were the same. Dreyfus (1982:p.8) appears not to be aware of van Berkel's account, since she states that there are no references to Arawak cannibalism.

The differential treatment of men and women/children, which all these accounts bring out, suggests that the taking of human trophies and ritual cannibalism were linked to the notion that, thereby, one might gain or inherit the power and strength of one's enemies. Thus women and children were exempted from such practices because there was no kudos in killing them. This idea is supported by modern ethnography. For example, Harner (1972) has shown that the possession of tsanta, or shrunken heads, by the Jivaro of Ecuador, allows the owner to gain

the soul power of the vanquished individual. The heads of tree-sloths are shrunken and prized for analogous reasons; their extreme slowness is felt to indicate extreme old age, which in turn is taken to imply great wisdom. So too this is paralleled by the Carib custom of mixing parts of dead enemies and the jaguar into the warriors drink paiwarri, as well as smearing war clubs with a similar concoction (see chapter I, note 36).

19. Another French missionary, Fr. De La Borde, confirms that the foot of an enemy was a favoured trophy:

A savage of St.Vincent showed me the foot of an Arawak which he had in his basket. They only eat the Arawaks now, savages from the Orinoco. They say that Christians would give them a stomach ache, nevertheless, not a year ago, they ate the hearts of some Englishmen.  
(1886:p.244)

The significance of the ritual consumption of the heart has been discussed in chapter I (note 36 - see also above note 18).

20. Thus it is something of a commonplace finding in modern ethnography that it is always the 'others' who are accused of being the cannibals, just as they are often seen as the source of malevolent spirits or evil spells - see also note 33 below.
21. Thus Bancroft relates that the Akawaios were forced, for the first time, to take elaborate defensive measures round their villages because of their involvement in the capture and selling of neighbouring groups (1971:p.268 - quoted p.341 below).
22. This was more probably related to a steep decline in their population, in the 18th century, as a direct consequence of their noted preference for moving their settlements close to the Europeans (see chapter I, p.14), which, ironically, seems to have been encouraged by their tradition of conflict with the Caribs of this area, against whom they hoped to elicit Dutch support. As can be seen, this strategy proved to be a disaster, in the event.
23. In official government documents the Guaypuinaves, Caberre, Palenques and Cumanagotos all miraculously ceased to be cannibals, once they were under Spanish control.
24. As, for example, Chagnon (1968) has done among the Venezuelan Yanomamo.
25. Thus there are many references to flutes and necklaces being made from the bones of dead enemies - e.g. Stedman:1796:p.401, De La Borde:1886:p.247, Gumilla:1966:I:p.11, Castellanos:1962:p.200 - but Riviere (pers. comm.) has pointed out that the modern Trio, a Carib speaking group, make flutes from deer tibia. However, if questioned, they will insist that these flutes are made from human bones, as was the practice of the culture hero of their mythology (see also Gillin:1936:plate 26 illustrates a Barama River Carib holding a deer bone flute).
26. Associate of José Gumilla. Together they were responsible for finally establishing the Jesuit missions of the mid-Orinoco in the 1730's (see chapter III), in which area the Caribs were traditionally accustomed to

trade and from where many poitos were later taken for sale in the Dutch colonies. As has already been suggested, the attacks of the Barima Caribs on these missions in the 1680's and the 1730's are to be related to precisely this Jesuit interruption of traditional Carib trading patterns.

27. The Caribs naturally traded with other Europeans in slaves but never to the extent that they did with the Guayanese Dutch in the latter half of the 18th century.

28. This time scale for the growth of the Dutch-Carib red slave trade is also further confirmed by the fact that it was not until 1672 that the Dutch West India Company took an interest in the activities of the slave dealers, being the date when the first treaties, declaring the Amerindians within the Essequibo Colony's territories free from enslavement, were drawn up; as a result of the arbitrary taking of slaves, from among the local population, by some of the planters. The obvious inference here would seem to be that before this date such slave taking was not of sufficient volume to warrant the Dutch West India Company's intervention.

29. Until raided such groups might have fallen into the social category of itoto (enemy, foreigner, prospective poito) who, as has been explained, if they were men, would be killed and ritually cannibalised on capture and if they were women or children might be integrated into village life as poitos. This provides a stark contrast with the condition of contemporary European slaves, since these Amerindian 'slaves' were, by definition, part of the domestic kin group. As Godelier has written:

... marriage relations are relations between groups and not individuals and imply at least intercourse, if not aid, between them. (quoted in Sued-Badillo:1978:p.60)

Also, according to Huxley (1956), the words for 'brother-in-law' and 'slave', are cognates in the Tupi language (see also note 16).

30. There is also the point that European notions of profit and accumulation would have encouraged Carib raiding to exceed its traditional constraints. Thus, to the extent that exchange value came to replace use value as the guiding principle of Carib economic activity, the acquisition of poitos would have been expanded beyond traditional needs, as defined by their uses as field labourers and/or wives. A good example of the extremes of accumulation that such a change of priorities might provoke is the report that a certain Barima cacique had over 30 wives, '... each one of a different nation ...' (Gumilla:1966:I:p.135), a situation that seems to have been a product of European involvement in the Amerindian trade network, the more so since its occurrence appears to be unique in the historical and ethnographic records concerning the Caribs. In short, the trade in European manufactures gave poitos an exchange value, above and beyond their aboriginal use value, and hence a rationale for their accumulation as well.

31. However, it may well be that these authors are overdramatising the situation, in the tradition of those commentators who have uncritically assimilated the Spanish propagandists' view of the evil caribes and noble aruacas. Sued-Badillo writes:

These authors have spread the dualistic version of indigenous history in which they use isolated bits of data in order to dramatise the supposed impotence of the Borinquenos /Arawaks of the Antilles/ in the face of the bloodthirstiness of their caribe neighbours. (1978:p.58)

Thus, as we have seen in chapter I, polygamy is a common enough way of expressing status among the Amerindians and to call such women 'slaves' seems more the urge to titillate than perform serious historical and ethnographic analysis. Moreover, by suggesting that it was limitations in economic 'capacity', rather than in the actual needs or wants, of the Amerindians, Steward, Rouse and Saignes also fail to appreciate the contrast in the European and Amerindian political economy and, hence, the full extent of the changes that resulted from the European intrusion into the New World - see also note 30 above.

32. This custom is also confirmed by Barrere (1743:p.173), who writes:

In effect the hair is a mark of liberty and only those who are free let it grow ... and never cut it unless they are in mourning.

and by the 16th century account of one Rodrigo de Navarrette (quoted in Rodway:1895:p.8), who adds that such people were, because of this hairstyle, contemptuously likened to Spanish priests.

33. Menget indicates (1977:pp.87,144) that among the Txicao, an isolated group of Brazilian Caribs, only recently pacified, raiding for poitos was linked to notions of death. Thus Carib deaths were held to be due to the malign activity of neighbouring peoples and the only way that such a loss might be made good was by the capture of individuals from another tribe. In this manner poitos were '... imperative ...', in order to substitute for the death of a group member. Equally, if, as Rouse and others argue (1948), the children of captured women were fully integrated into society, then with them this servile group is terminated. In this case this may be seen as the motive, the '... structural social fact ...' (Sued-Badillo:1978:p.61), that encouraged and sustained raiding. The ability of the social form to reproduce itself thus relied on raiding.
34. Though we may question Raleigh's basis for suggesting that such poitos were actually related to the slave-sellers in the manner he suggests, which implies a callousness that flatly contradicts the ethnographic record concerning Amerindian indulgence of their offspring. Thus although captives might be integrated into the kin-group, such ties of sentiment need not have necessarily followed.
35. Rodway (1893:I:p.19) refers to a regular slave trade between the Caribs of the Amacura River and the English and suggests that, as a result of these trading links, the Amacura Caribs were instrumental in helping Major John Scott capture the Dutch enclaves on the Pomeroon and Essequibo in the 1660's - see also chapter II.
36. This action is comparable to the Dutch policy, from the 17th century onwards (see below and note 28 above), of trying to ensure that only those Amerindians outside the Dutch West India Company's sphere of influence were taken as slaves. Such pragmatism, as we have seen, was prompted by the need to keep the Amerindians friendly in order that trade, as well as the protection and provisioning of colonial settlements, could continue.

37. It will also be remembered that the Dutch West India Company's post on the Cuyuni River was raided and destroyed by the Spanish in 1758 (see chapter IV, p.279).
38. It is not quite clear if the author meant that the poitos were also '... distributed among the Indians of Miamo', though such an action would not have been without precedent. According to Humboldt (1907:II: p.337), entradas made for the 'conquest of souls' along the Guaviare River, an Orinoco affluent, were as much desired by the Amerindians of the missions as by the Jesuits who organised them. Everyone, even women and old men, were said to have taken part in them and, under the pretext of recovering fugitives, carried off children, who were then distributed among the mission Amerindians as poitos (see also chapter III, note 73).
39. As Roth (1924:p.598) points out, Las Casas:  
 From the general principles of the natural liberty of man ... drew the strange conclusion that the slavery of the Indians was a crime while that of the Africans was dictated by necessity ...  
 - see also note 10 and discussion p.312 above.
40. As General Netscher wrote:  
 Only one thing is wanting to make this country an Eldorado, a still more profitable possession than the finest East Indian colonies, and that one thing is men, population, labour. (1888:p.5)
41. The taking and possession of slaves from rivers proximate to Essequibo was forbidden and an inquiry into the red slave trade in Berbice and Surinam initiated. The Amerindians were also to be encouraged in the dye trade, as an alternative means of keeping their economic and political allegiance, but, not only did the falling rate of profit on this activity make it unattractive to the Europeans as much as the Amerindians, but also, as the Dutch West India Company were informed in 1707, the dye trade itself only encouraged the hunt for poitos at least in the short term, as the processing and transport of dye and dye woods were very labour intensive (BGB:BC:APII:p.25, quoted chapter IV p.296).
42. Also, though the number of red slaves in Essequibo may have been relatively low, the trade in red slaves was carried on with the Antilles, Brazil and in the rest of Guayana as well. However, since of necessity such a trade was kept secret from the Dutch authorities, as far as possible, only official Spanish records, hostile anyway to the Dutch, can give us an idea of its scale - see also note 44.
43. Indeed the missionaries were forced to admit that even supposedly reduced or pacified Caribs were still fully participating in the slave trade with the Dutch - see, for example, chapter III note 74.
44. The Portuguese Crown had the Amerindian slave trade officially investigated in the 1770's by the Jesuits Roman and Vega. According to their report (quoted in Morey:1965:p.163), in the 6 years that they registered the Amerindians taken out of the upper Orinoco-Rio Negro region and south to the Amazon, they counted 12,000 persons, but knew

this to represent perhaps as little as one-third of the total, since smuggling was so common. Vega thus suggests that some 36,000 Amerindians were enslaved over this period. The deaths that must have been associated with the raids to procure these captives suggest a picture of the late 18th century in this area as a period of widespread and bloody conflict among Amerindian communities, at the instigation of the European colonialists.

45. Though these slave-dealers, operating outside the control of the Dutch West India Company to a large extent, were less than scrupulous in their dealings with the Carib slave-takers, who Gumilla says were themselves in a form of 'debt-slavery' to these Europeans, since they were always paid in advance to try and ensure a continuity of supply (1966:II:pp.326-7).
46. Though, as has already been explained, part of the overall decline in this trade was also due to a change in the economic priorities of the Dutch West India Company - see also note 41 above and discussion in chapter IV.
47. Thus it will be remembered that, against a background of rising death rates, the missionaries could only maintain, let alone increase, the populations of the reductions by repeated entradas against independent Amerindian groups who once reduced became an obvious target for slavers, since they were conveniently gathered at the mission stations.
48. Though it would appear that it was the missionaries, in accordance with their desire to make the Amerindians 'useful' to both the Church and God, who were often responsible for injecting European style political loyalties into these conflicts by encouraging reduced Caribs to attack independent Caribs who still maintained trading relation with the Dutch. Indeed, by the 1790's, the Dutch authorities were forced to recognise the success of this strategy and their letters and despatches often refer to 'Spanish Caribs' in this period (e.g. BGB:BC:APV:pp.156-7).
49. The Barinagotos, Amaricotos, Camaracotos and Guiacas being of the Carib language family, the Aruacos being Arawakan, the Macos, being the equivalent of poitos in the Arawakan languages, could be from a whole range of different Amerindian groups and the Paravins are of uncertain linguistic affiliation, since they are not identified in the modern standard sources (e.g. Handbook of South American Indians, ed. Steward, J., Fajardo:1971:I).

## CONCLUSION

### Contrast and Continuity

As was mentioned in the Introduction, and has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, there is a sharp contrast between the current plight of the Amerindians and their historic role in influencing the European colonisation of Venezuela and Guyana. Thus it has been the central objective of this study to examine the nature of this transition by providing a narrative and analysis of events from the time of first contact between the Caribs and the Europeans, c.1498, until the point at which they may be said to have effectively lost their independence to the nation-state of Venezuela, by the end of the 18th century.

The fact that this process took nearly 300 years, whereas, for example, the more centralised and hierarchal society of the Aztec and Inca were overcome within a generation of the European intrusion into the New World, may chiefly be explained by two factors. Firstly, that the Spanish did not fully commit their resources to this region until the 18th century (see p.30 ff.) and secondly by a tradition of resistance and antipathy, on the part of the Caribs, which grew out of the first decades of contact, mainly with Spanish slavers, on the Antilles and Venezuelan littoral. Thus it is clear that, despite the lack of any centralised form of political/military organisation, the relatively autonomous Carib groups were able to sustain a high level of intercourse, from which flowed a degree of co-operation between their independent communities no longer observable today, (e.g. see pp.11,92 for examples of such co-operation), but which contemporary observers were keenly aware of (see, for example, Carrocera:1964:p.203).

This may be contrasted with the Inca or Aztec case where the existence of a highly centralised political system, capable of providing a fast military

response to foreign intrusion, in fact proved a weakness when dealing with the Spanish conquistadors who, by knocking out the organisational core of society - the ruling elite - were able to simply move in and take up the reins of power. However, in the lowlands, where the relative independence of each village meant that:

... each cacique waged a separate war of strategem and ambuscade. (Depons:1806:I:p.12)

this strategy was ineffective.

Thus there is the paradox that those Amerindian societies of the highlands which were most capable of offering an effective response to the Spanish invasion failed to do so, while the far less centralised and less authoritarian groups of the lowlands posed the greatest challenge to Spanish imperial designs.

Co-operation between autonomous groups of Caribs was undoubtedly reinforced by the European presence itself. Thus the Spanish notion of the caribe was, in essence, a self-fulfilling prophecy, since under the successive governorships of the Berrío family a modus vivendi, with the Orinoco Caribs at least, was achieved (see Chapter II). Equally the Dutch, in making common cause with the Caribs, not only focused Carib raiding to a degree, but also, in cementing that alliance through trade, passed on some of that kudos and political influence which metal users must necessarily possess among stone-age peoples (see pp.168, 240 for examples of this process).

Nevertheless it would seem likely that such tendencies in Carib society also pre-dated the European intrusion since their highly effective occupation of the eastern Orinoco Basin, generally thought to have been in progress since 400 A.D. (Denevan & Schwerin:1978),<sup>1</sup> would also have required social mechanisms capable of transmitting knowledge and experience from group to group and acting on it. Apart from the more strongly defined patterns of leadership that were identified in Chapter I, the integration of captured

women, traditional keepers of agricultural techniques, and poitos, as well as the role of long-range traders (see Chapters I and V), seem to have been examples of mechanisms by which these results could have been achieved.

This is not to suggest that the Caribs were unique among the Amerindians in these aspects of their sociology but certainly our potential for understanding the importance of these factors in the development of Carib societies is greater, since the longevity of the Carib-Spanish conflict and Carib-Dutch co-operation has left a legacy of documentation which, as this thesis attempts to demonstrate, allows a partial reconstruction of these events.

However, as can be appreciated from the discussion of Carib demography in Chapters I and III, intimately linked to the pattern of relationships between the Amerindians and the Europeans were the dramatic<sup>2</sup> results of the introduction of Old World diseases to the New World. Indeed this 'biological factor' must be considered crucial as regards the conquest of the Caribs since its accelerating effect in the 18th century, pre-eminently as a result of the change in Amerindian settlement patterns, initiated and organised by the missionaries, removed the two main obstacles to European domination of the region, i.e. the sheer weight of Amerindian numbers vis-a-vis the Europeans and the dispersion of ultimate political authority to the level of the household. Again, as was suggested above, comparison with the Inca or Aztec case is instructive as it highlights this structural advantage of Carib society, at least in this particular historical situation, for without, for example, the Inca himself society was incapable of producing an effective response to the tiny Spanish forces. Among Carib groups no individual could exercise such a pivotal role, although the Spanish, keen to repeat their success, persisted in trying to identify such a person<sup>3</sup> (e.g. see p.212).

Nonetheless, though this series of events was radical in its effects on the pattern of Carib life, there are also strong elements of continuity

between the historic and modern Carib. At the most basic level the majority of Karinya village sites existing in Venezuela today were certainly occupied at the time of the first Spanish land survey of the eastern llanos, in 1780, only the present day community of Mamo having been settled in the 1800's.

Denevan and Schwerin write:

... residence for, from 150 to better than 380 years, is in marked contrast to the semi-sedentary patterns of many Tropical Forest tribes. (1978:p.63)

So too the techniques of exploiting this ecological zone can have changed little although the use of metal tools, combined with an end to warfare and long-range trading, have produced changes in the organisation of such activities, most notably an increased role for men in the various stages of agricultural production, as well as a necessarily closer orientation towards the Venezuelan national society,<sup>4</sup> though criollo attitudes and customs have had only limited penetration (Schwerin:1966:pp.224-7).

South of the Orinoco, however, almost all traces of the thousands of Caribs who occupied large areas on both sides of the Sierra Imataca have gone and the remnants of the strategic villages<sup>5</sup> north of the Essequibo are, even now, undergoing what will probably prove to be the final assault of the national state (see Adams:1972).<sup>6</sup>

### An Emergent Debate

Given then that the contrast between the historic and modern Carib is also balanced by some important continuities and that this thesis has provided a framework for understanding part of that transition, how might this analysis be extended and refined?

It would seem inevitable that further research in the archives would be of value, not least because of the sheer volume of documentation available. However, in this context it is possible to identify some priorities,

particularly an examination of the Dutch, and to a lesser extent French and English, sources, since, not only is the type of information they contain liable to be qualitatively different from their Spanish counterparts (see discussion p.319), but also may be used to explore some of the specific problems raised in this thesis which could never be resolved from Spanish sources alone : such as the volume of Dutch-Carib trading and slaving and, especially, the sociology of Carib communities, as these Dutch traders are known to have lived, often for considerable periods of time, and frequently inter-married with their Carib allies (e.g. see p.335). Equally, the less accessible archives of the mission orders and the Venezuelan and Guyanese states, could also provide this kind of highly specific information.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from archival work, archaeological research would seem to be the only way to advance the debate concerning aboriginal Amerindian numbers and since, as was suggested above, this issue is particularly critical in New World history, any development in this field will have extensive ramifications for the basic model that is applied in the analysis, not only of past events, but also, implicitly, in contemporary ethnography.<sup>8</sup>

Equally, ethnography itself, as can be seen especially in Chapters I and V, is vital to the detailed interpretation of the historical and archaeological material. For example, the nature of the social category of poito, common to most Carib speakers, persists as an important feature of social life today. In particular, the relations between the Carib-speaking Ye'cuana and the Yanomami, an independent language group, living in the region of the Orinoco-Ventuari headwaters, might offer further insights into this question and a concentrated investigation of this relationship would be of great value in evaluating the historical data already recovered (see also Chapter V:p.345 note 25, p.347 note 33).

In sum, it is intended that this thesis, by demonstrating the

possibility of a history oriented towards the Amerindian experience and focused on a distinct section of that population, the Caribs, should make a contribution to the discussion of Amerindian history (see e.g. Civrieux:1976, 1980, Dreyfus:1982, Newson:1976, Menezes:1979, Colson:1983, Hemming:1978(b), Sued-Badillo:1978, Forsyth:1983) that has emerged over the last decade.

NOTES

1. In contrast to the Warao who have probably occupied the region of the Orinoco delta for some 5,000 years (Wilbert:1979:p.134).
2. Dramatic, that is, for the Amerindian. 16th century Europe experienced more pandemics than in any other period of history; at this time, typhus, 'pox', and 'sweating disease' in 1529, bubonic plague in 1552-64 and influenza in 1580-92 sent many thousands to the grave and altered the social balance throughout Europe. The Spanish noted that many Amerindians died but death by epidemic disease would have been a more familiar sight to them than to the modern observer.
3. Thus 'El Dorado', the 'Golden One', was expected to deliver Guayana, just as Atahualpa delivered Peru and Montezuma surrendered Mexico.
4. Though such apparently recent developments as the growing of a 'cash crop', may not in fact be so, since the Spanish colonisers often starved when they could not steal, barter or actually direct the production of food (see also Denevan & Schwerin:1978:p.64).
5. The contrast between the situation of the Karinya of Venezuela and the communities of the Barama River area serves to emphasize the way in which different elements of the same people could have widely varying experiences of the national state, (Marx dubbed this feature of social evolution 'the law of combined and uneven development', partly to explain the paradox of progressive political movements arising in economically retarded countries, the birth of Latin American independence in Venezuela being precisely such a combination of these factors - see Chapter III, p.258 note 77). Moreover, as in earlier times, the Amerindian population has remained a strategic element in the political struggle between the Venezuelan and Guyanese for control of this disputed area.
6. See also Kloos (1971) for a discussion of the remnant Carib communities of the Maroni River, which forms the border between French Guiana and Surinam.
7. As, for example, concerning the mission era (see Chapter III, p.252 note 47).
8. For example, the debate over population levels on the Amazon and Orinoco flood-plains (see Meggers:1971), Roosevelt:1980), and indeed of South America generally, before the European intrusion, has seen an increasing acceptance of the notion that these societies were considerably more populous and sophisticated than was once thought (see p.18 ff.). In this context it becomes necessary for the anthropologist to accept that, despite any appearances to the contrary, even the most remote Amerindian groups may have undergone a significant degree of deculturation. Thus Kloos writes of the Akuriyo:

... the nomadic Akuriyo of the 20th century cannot be regarded as a last remnant of the ancient Amerindian migrants who populated the continent as hunters and gatherers before the invention of cultivation in the Western Hemisphere. Rather they represent a case of devolution /orig.emph./, having reverted from a semipermanent, agricultural village existence to a nomadic hunting and gathering way of life. (1977:p.114)

Such drastic alternatives to contact with the Europeans are certainly exceptional but this only serves to highlight how complete European penetration has been, even in their physical absence.

APPENDIX

Extract from the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Court of Policy  
of the Rivers of Essequibo and Demerary  
(22/2/1803:BGB:BC:APV:p.180)

BUCK'S GOODS

18 pieces Buck's cotton	12000	flints
18 pieces checks	4000	pounds assorted shot
18 hats with lace bands	2000	Buck's axes
18 sticks like those used by drum majors in Europe	2000	cutlasses with yellow handles
	48	cassava plates
500 guns	1500	thimbles
2000 razors	1000	round hats
1500 pounds powder	36	chequered shirts
2000 wooden flint boxes	18	silver circular collars, engraved with the lion bearing the inscription, "Batavian Rep. of Essq. & Demerary" around and above it, with the necessary national ribbon
2000 guncaps		
2000 pairs scissors		
2000 jews harps		
6000 bush knives	18	cases of claret, of 18 bottles in each case
2000 looking glasses	1000	fish harpoons, from 4-5 inches long, as per annexed design.
12000 assorted fish hooks	1000	ditto, from 4-5 inches long as per annexed design
12000 ells' salemporis		
50000 needles		
50000 pins		
2000 coarse combs		
10000 beads of all sorts and colours		

This calculation is made for the number of 1,000 Indians, each of whom to receive now and then a certain quantity of each article.

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The most extensive collection of documents relating to the Spanish occupation of the New World is to be found in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville. Documents from this source are indicated in the text by the abbreviation 'AGI', the administrative section under which the document has been classified then follows, i.e. -

SD	Santo Domingo	DI	Docmentos Ineditos
C	Caracas		
P	Patronato		
Ch	Charcas		
SF	Santa Fe		

after which the document bundle, or legajo, number is given. Finally the date and/or author of the document may be cited. Hence;

AGI:SD:582:23/12/1755 - Comisario of the missions of Piritu  
to the Council of the Indies.

Documents reproduced by the British Foreign Office and the Venezuelan Government, at the end of the 19th century, for submission as evidence to the United States Commission of Inquiry on the boundary dispute between British Guiana and Venezuela are indicated in the text by the abbreviation 'BGB'. The abbreviations 'BC' or 'VC' indicate that they are to be found in the British and Venezuelan submissions respectively, 'API', 'APII', 'APIII', etc. indicates the documentary appendix number, after which the page number is given. Hence:

BGB:BC:APV:p.85.

The exact date of the document is given when relevant.

Documents reproduced by the United States Commission of Inquiry in its report on the boundary arbitration are indicated by the abbreviation 'USC'.

A similar collection of documentary material was also made by the Brazilian and British Governments in pursuance of their respective border claims at the end of the 19th century and the same system of reference has been used in citing them as for the British-Venezuelan collections. Documents from this collection may be identified by the abbreviation 'BrC'.

All these collections may be found in the Rhodes House Library, Oxford.\*

A number of miscellaneous documents are to be found in the British Library, abbreviated as 'BL' in the text, and in the Public Record Office, abbreviated as 'PRO' in the text; the name of the collection and the document number are then cited. Hence, for example,

BL:Sloane:3662.

The citation 'HH Collection' refers to the private papers of Hatfield House, Buckinghamshire.

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\* See also: Walne, P. (ed.) A Guide to Manuscript Sources for the History of Latin America and the Caribbean in the British Isles. Oxford, 1973.

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GLOSSARY

alamacen major	-	shop or trading post run by Capuchins
angostura	-	narrow section of a river
aputu / butu	-	Carib name for the war club
armada	-	fleet or flotilla
cacique / capitan	-	Spanish term for Amerindian leader
caribe(s)	-	Spanish for Carib
carne humana	-	human flesh
Chaguana	-	sub-group of the Warao
chacras	-	garden or plantation
conquista	-	conquest or 'pacification'
contabandista	-	smuggler or pirate
criollo	-	person of mixed ancestry
doctrinero	-	Royal official responsible for the religious instruction of Amerindians held in encomiendas
doctrina	-	mission
encomienda	-	grant of Amerindian tribute by the Spanish Crown to colonists (thus <u>encomendero</u> )
entrada	-	expedition to Amerindian villages
estancia	-	farm or estate
fanega	-	Spanish measure of volume (ca.1.6 bushels) or area (ca.1.5 acres)
hato	-	cattle ranch / stud farm
indios de guerra	-	hostile Amerindians
ito'to	-	Carib term meaning enemy, foreigner or prospective captive
kanawa	-	Carib word for canoe or pirogue
karbet	-	Carib word for house (thus 'cabin')
labranza	-	farm land
llanos	-	flat grassland /savanna

maco /moavis	-	Arawak equivalent of <u>poito</u>
macana	-	hardwood sword, (Cumanagoto word)
macquary	-	torch fuelled by pitch
Makiritare	-	Arawak nickname for the Ye'cuana
montones	-	raised earth platforms used in Antillean agriculture
morichales	-	ecological zone of the Orinoco delta
paiwarri	-	Carib warriors ritual drink
peste	-	a plague
piache / piiai	-	Carib shaman
poito /preto	-	Carib term meaning son-in-law, client or slave
quiripa	-	shell money
rancheria	-	hut settlement
reducidos	-	Amerindians accepting Spanish rule
rescates pacificos	-	peaceful trading expedition
sarampion	-	measles
sargento	-	sergeant
teniente	-	lieutenant
Tivitives	-	sub-group of the Warao
vecinos	-	the local population