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“Haven’t We Come To Kill the Spaniards?”
The Tule¹ Upheaval in Eastern Panamá, 1727-8

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This paper investigates a Tule Indian uprising that took place in eastern Panamá in 1727. It aims to throw new light upon that little-studied event by making use of previously unconsulted documentary evidence drawn from Spanish archives. Previous discussions of the uprising, provided by anthropologists and historians who have not examined the full range of relevant source material, have embedded it firmly within a putative narrative of Tule history that is characterized by the group’s staunch, single-minded opposition to outside domination. Eastern Panamá’s Indians, it is assumed, did nothing for three hundred years but oppose the Spanish, carrying out the series of rebellions, uprisings, and oppositions that are thought to comprise an impressive and durable rejection of imperial domination. Under this schematic interpretation, the uprising of 1727 is of minor interest to the historian, since it was simply one of a long series of similar, easily understandable events.

Taking a different point of view, this paper argues that rather than executing predictable responses to Iberian imperial conquest and malfeasance, the Indian actors who propelled the Tule uprising had motivations that were as varied, nuanced, and complicated as those held by the Europeans with whom they interacted. The leaders of the Tule Indians did much more than single-mindedly obstruct, resist, and oppose Spanish imperial designs in the Darién region of Eastern Panamá. In fact, their political interactions with European intruders did much to define the contours of the frontier colonialism that the Spanish attempted to establish amongst the isthmus’s Tule Indians. Spanish-Tule politics, a phrase that previously might have been thought an oxymoron, was in fact central to the uprising, and forms the major theme of the paper. Underlying the discussion is a broader, methodological issue: the manner in which historians examining colonial situations excavate, explore, and understand historical events involving Amerindians.

The Initial Historical Interpretation of the Uprising

In 1774 Andrés Ariza, the governor of the province of the Darién, wrote a detailed report titled “Comentarios de la rica y fertilísima provincia de el Darién” in which he attempted to explain to his superiors why the province over which he held jurisdiction had fallen into such a state of abject decay.² Ariza pointedly cited an Indian uprising as the single most important causative factor in the region's decline. He dated the destructive event to 1727 and claimed that it had been sparked by a mestizo man named Luis García. Building upon this interpretation, Ariza framed the entire text of the “Comentarios” as a plea to Madrid-based bureaucrats to direct more of their resources to the underdeveloped region. In effect, he wished them to take action to reverse the damage that the fifty-year old rebellion had set into motion.

The rebellion, the pivotal event in the region's decline, enabled the governor to offer a single final straw that broke the weak back of Spanish ambitions in the region.³ According to Ariza, the mestizo's destructive uprising had been sparked by a perceived slight and a petty grievance. Luis García, having admirably fulfilled his commission to hunt down a band of French pirates infesting the Gulf of Urabá, returned to Panamá City seeking additional rewards for his service. The presidente of the audiencia, however, was engrossed in other matters when he arrived, and failed to offer the pirate-hunter a private audience, an action that García interpreted as the gravest of insults. The rejected supplicant immediately returned to Indian country and fomented an uprising aimed at nothing less than the ejection of every Spaniard from the isthmus. After sacking every one of the Darién's reducciones, desecrating the churches, and despoiling them of their sacred vessels, García regrouped his forces for a final, cataclysmic assault upon Panamá City and Portobelo. At the darkest hour of the crisis, when all seemed lost, the mestizo was surprised on the march at the Río Bayano by loyal Indian forces under the command, Ariza claimed, of the caciques Bartolomé de Estrada and Juan Rafael de Simancas, and was killed in battle. His rebel army was dispersed.⁴ Panamá City and Portobelo were saved, but as a result of the destructiveness of the rebellion the Darién was forever lost to Spain.

Because of the care with which he selected his evidence in order to address the question of the region's "decline", and the manner in which he constructed a linear narrative out of the disparate information he derived from his various sources, Ariza can be considered the Darién's first historian. The governor provided a wealth of sociological information and included in his report population counts of the region's Christian towns, surveys of the region's useful crops and minerals, and a description of indigenous customs and manners, clearly hoping that a forceful description of the region's natural wealth and strategic importance would not fail to attract imperial resources and official attention.⁵ However exhaustive and well-reasoned the text appears, historians must utilize Ariza's "Comentarios" with caution, and it is best interpreted as a single local official's representation of the status of the Darién in 1774. To cite a single problematic example, Ariza's population estimates are inadequate, since he provided figures only for those Indians who lived in the reduced towns. By his reckoning it might appear that fewer than two thousand Tule souls inhabited all of eastern Panamá in 1774.⁶ If, however, we accept the estimate of 20,000 souls made by officials in 1738 and 1739 as reasonable,⁷ Ariza's count of two thousand Tule living at the reducciones is transformed from a census figure into yet another stark indicator of the Spanish failure to subdue the region.

In the "Comentarios" Ariza provided a narrative of the region's declension from a sixteenth-century paradise into one of the most inhospitable zones and thankless administrative posts in the entire Spanish empire. In addition, the author deployed his considerable rhetorical and narrative skills to fashion a usable past for the troubled province. He pointedly used the name "Santa María la Antigua del Darién" for the region, rather than the more common 'Dariel,' or 'Darién,' reminding his readers that the area had, after all, been the site of the first mainland Spanish settlement in the Americas.⁸ Once known as Castilla del Oro because of the rich deposits of gold that had been found there, by the late eighteenth century the isthmus no longer produced any mineral wealth for Spain. In addition, although the Darién's lands were rich and fertile, other nations now availed themselves of this natural abundance; French and English merchants vied to garner the contraband cacao that the Indians cultivated in the region.⁹ While the Darién had once poured gold and grain into Spanish coffers and comprised an active sector of the

imperial system, by Ariza's time it had become an abandoned no-man's-land, avoided by all but those who had contraband transactions to make or had been assigned to the region by the state.

Ariza's narrative of Spanish failure in the Darién was intended to explain, through a logical progression of facts, the reasons for eastern Panamá's continued underdevelopment after more than two hundred years of Spanish administration. In effect, the question he put to himself was the one that anthropologists and historians have asked for an equally long period, namely, how did one of the core regions of the Spanish system in the sixteenth century become a liability to the imperial system in the eighteenth? Ariza's answer was that the waves of destructive European intruders had tipped a delicate colonial balance and pushed the region down the path to decline. Once that process had begun, unfortunately, only the expenditure of great wealth and military might could reverse it. The attacks of the French and English pirates had dissuaded Spaniards from settling the region, and, more importantly, had emboldened the local Indians to resist the Spanish conquest. In Ariza's formulation, the dormant gold mine at Cana was paradigmatic of the Spanish failure. It had once made considerable contributions to the wealth of the empire, but had long ago been left fallow due to the frequent assaults made against it by the buccaneers.¹⁰ Ariza's analysis, perhaps unremarkably, failed to allow for even the smallest level of Indian agency in the process of colonial decline. European intruders, he argued, had provided the skills, knowledge, and arms that enabled the Indians to oppose the Spanish with such great effect. Ariza's analysis clearly implied that if the Tule had been left to their own devices, they would never have developed the tools to resist the Spanish conquest successfully. For this important reason, the "Comentos," though filled with interesting details regarding the Tule which are not to be found elsewhere, must be treated with care, especially when information regarding indigenous and European actions in the early eighteenth century is being sought.

Several anthropologists and historians seeking, like Ariza, to explain the Spanish failure to subdue the Indians of the Darién, have followed him in placing a large proportion of responsibility for that outcome at García's feet. The mestizo has been presented as the iconic torchbearer of indigenous resistance to the Spanish, and in that sense has epitomized a putative Tule spirit of freedom that utterly

repudiated the attempted Spanish conquest. Several researchers lacking access to Spanish archives have deployed the Ariza document as a much-needed rosetta stone. It has enabled them to discuss the region's post-buccaneer history and to provide information for the murky period following the well-documented Scottish attempt to settle a colony in eastern Panamá between 1698-1700.¹¹ In addition, the source bridges the gap following the Scottish incursion during which internecine struggles in Panamá City conspired with the crown's suppression of the audiencia between 1718 and 1722 to divert official attention from the province until the 1730s.¹²

Previous analyses of the Darién's history have forced the activities of Luis García to carry an inordinate amount of explanatory weight, and have relied heavily on Ariza's writings without attempting to verify his account against available contemporary documentation.¹³ In this paper I follow a different tack, exploring the Darién upheaval of 1727 and 1728 by making use of archival documentary sources independent of Ariza's "Comentarios" in order to provide a fuller examination of the event. The upheaval was much more complicated than Ariza could ever have imagined, and was about far more than a single disgruntled mestizo's need for greater official rewards. The violence which spread across the isthmus revealed the instability inherent in the Spanish colonial policy of tribalization that aimed to pacify a widely-dispersed indigenous population by doing nothing more than selectively coöpting the men who claimed to be their tribal leaders.

The Spanish Frontier in Eastern Panamá

In the text which follows I have taken special care in the use of two sets of terms, specifically “frontier” and “Indian country,” which are linked, and the equally connected “Tule Indian people” and “Darién tribe.” The term “frontier” describes the regions of eastern Panamá in which Spanish administrative forms and institutions had taken hold; indigenous alcaldes officiated over recognizable towns which contained churches, militias, and priests. These frontier areas, due to their geographic remoteness or other important factors, were still in the process of cementing their ties to the regional cores. Indian country, on the other hand, was a place devoid of Spanish settlers and institutions; Spanish officials throughout the early modern period labored to transform the Indian country of the Darién into a manageable imperial frontier. The “Tule Indian people” are the subjects of this study, and the “Darién tribe,” on the other hand, was the polity under which Europeans imagined that these Indians organized themselves. The purported tribal polity, ruled over by paramount chieftains, was also the structure into which the various Europeans worked to mold the Tule Indian groups with whom they interacted. In the text, therefore, Tule men are described as leaders of the Darién tribe, or a portion of that entity, only after they have, of their own volition, accepted a specific relationship to the Spanish administration or to other European intruders. Following the anthropologist Neil Whitehead, I term the process through which indigenous leaders accepted this relationship with the intruders as “tribalization.”¹⁴

The crisis of 1727-8 ignited the Indian country of eastern Panamá, but its effects were made even more serious for the Spanish due to a simultaneous upheaval that took place within the Darién frontier. Spanish officials were familiar with eruptions of discontent in Indian country, and they had always succeeded in sealing off these periodic explosions when they occurred. Chaos at the frontier, however, was a rarer event, and much more dangerous since the frontier region surrounding the town of Chepo was actually quite near to Panamá City. Disorder there required swift and active measures to counteract it before it ignited a conflagration that could engulf the small number of Spanish administrators and soldiers at Panamá City. The eastern Panamá frontier was anchored by the chartered settlements of Chepo and

Palenque, the former led by loyal Indians, and the latter by free Africans. The towns had been established to buffer the central isthmus from the periodic shocks and invasions emanating from the Indian country to their east.¹⁵ Indigenous and African tribalization had taken a firm hold at the frontier communities of Chepo and Palenque; the towns provided men, materials, and intelligence to the central administration in times of danger.¹⁶

Spain's realistic frontier policy on the isthmus took into account the qualitative difference between areas of Indian country which were beyond the conceptual, military, and colonial bounds of their control, and frontier areas in which Spanish administrative forms and influences made themselves felt. The markers of where the frontier ended and Indian country began were easy to spot, and that boundary could therefore be safely navigated. Chepo was inside; it possessed an alcalde, a priest, and a militia unit which it deployed in times of emergency. In Indian country Spanish administrators had fewer options, and placed the management of colonial affairs almost entirely in the hands of officials known as the maestres de campo. For the last two generations, from the late 1630s when the office was first put in place, the maestre de campo of the Darién had been a member of the Carrisoli family. Spanish attempts to impose administrative stability on the Indians of eastern Panamá were utterly intertwined with, and reliant on, the fortunes of the members of that family. In the early seventeenth century the activities of a young man named Julián Carrisoli de Alfaraz were central to the missionizing activities of a band of Dominican friars; and at the end of the century Julián's son Luis provided the local Spanish defense against the incessant incursions of the buccaneers and the audacious imperial project of the Scots.¹⁷ In order to operate in Indian country and establish nodes of Spanish power beyond the frontier, the maestres de campo needed to possess a level of trust amongst the Tule. A close study of the upheaval of 1727-8 reveals a profound shift in the position of the Carrisoli clan. In the seventeenth century the actions of Julián and Luis Carrisoli had earned them that necessary indigenous trust, but by the eighteenth century the clan suffered at the hands of the rebels because its members had injudiciously squandered it.

The later representatives of the Carrisoli clan chose to operate within the frontier region of eastern Panamá, within easy reach of Chepo, although their responsibilities included the management of

affairs within the native zone. While Julián and Luis Carrisoli had made their homes deep within Indian country, in a single generation the family's base of operations shifted. The successors of Julián and Luis made a complete turnaround. They retreated to the frontier region, and this physical shift reflected deeper changes. Although the earlier representatives of the family repeatedly had been forced to convince Spaniards officials of their loyalties to the Crown, by the 1720s Luis Carrisoli's descendants no longer felt the need to rehearse the rhetorical labors of their elders. Rather, it was the Tule, and not Spanish officials, who were unsure of the family's loyalties. The Tule sought assurances not that the family was loyal to the Spanish, but that the clan was loyal to them. After the death of Luis, the Carrisolis had neglected this most important cornerstone of their legitimacy as colonial officials, and the uprising of 1727-8 had at its core a loss of faith by the Tule that the Carrisolis understood, cared about, or would act to address any of their needs. A major lesson of the upheaval on the frontier was that the later Carrisolis had succeeded too well in transforming themselves into traditional Spanish officials. The uprising laid bare the cultural barriers that the clan had gradually constructed between themselves and the Tule. These barriers had become so large that they were judged intolerable even by the tribalized Indians inhabiting the Spanish frontier, some of the very people upon whom the clan's usefulness had long rested.

The Initial Shock

On 3 March 1727 Manuel de Alderrete, the man in command at Panamá City,¹⁸ discovered that he had a problem on the frontier when he got word that two Indians had arrived at Chepo bearing the bodies of Don Bernardo Carrisoli and two unidentified black men.¹⁹ A Tule man named Don Diego de León, who styled himself the chief of Terable, where the murders took place, reported that sixty hostile Indians had come to the town in the middle of the night and made no attempt to hide their determination to settle an argument with Don Bernardo Carrisoli. In an ominous revelation of Diego's lack of coercive power, these men convinced twenty Indians from Terable to join them against the chief's wishes when they continued on their errand.²⁰

In testimony taken a week later, a man named Eufemio de Escaro stated that he and a friend were sitting just outside of Terable when a trio of hostile Indians arrived in a canoe. One of them reportedly announced that they had come to the town to “tie up” Carrisoli in order to repay him for the shameful conditions to which he had lowered the Indians. Bernardo Carrisoli, the men informed Eufemio, was not a good man.²¹ In corroborating testimony, a sixty-year-old Indian named Marzelo, a nephew of the chieftain Diego Caimito of Pitibaí, stated that he had met an Indian named Lucas on the road who informed him of the killings after they had taken place.²² Lucas told Marzelo that he was on his way to advise those Indians who would listen that the killings were a very bad thing, since the Tule were presently at peace with the Spanish. Using the Tule word for outsider, Lucas informed Marzelo that the guacas would, of course, have to enter the Darién to do their work, which was only to be expected now, since they were at peace. Marzelo added that he had not been in the town when the murders took place. He wanted the Spanish to know that he was a great friend not only of the guacas, but also of the “cacique” in Panamá City.²³

These depositions provide a wealth of relevant information about the actual situation on the Darién frontier at the moment of crisis. Marzelo’s statements reveal that the Carrisoli clan had continued its policy of incremental tribalization in the region, and that Spanish efforts to control the Darién had not been entirely dormant. In addition, Marzelo’s wish to make his allegiance to the Spanish known, which he accomplished through his deft acknowledgment of the primacy of the Spanish cacique residing in Panamá City, provided evidence that the new generation of tribal leaders had clearly internalized the Spanish expectations for the place that tribal chiefs occupied in the colonial hierarchy.

Several weeks later testimony was collected at Terable, and Don Antonio Laguna, who called himself the cacique of San Rafael de Terable, corroborated the statement of Diego de León.²⁴ Laguna listed the number of hostile men at precisely sixty-seven; and, yes, he reported, twenty Indians from the town had indeed joined the hostile group. These Indians had in fact taken Laguna prisoner for some time, but they ultimately released him because he had relatives among the hostile men, who protected him from harm. An Indian named Lorenzo, who lived on the Río Cañazas, explained to Laguna that the Indians

were very displeased with Bernardo Carrisoli's most recent public actions. Bernardo and his brother Gaspar had unceremoniously tied up two venerated elders named El Tapacaragua and Cortiquitis after they had done something to displease them. The Carrisolis had verbally abused the Indian notables in public while they were tied and helpless, and physically insulted them by pulling their hair and beards as if they were animals. Not satisfied with what he had done to them, Bernardo Carrisoli had reportedly finished the exemplary punishment by brutally shooting El Tapacaragua at close range, killing the old man in cold blood.²⁵

Antonio Laguna reported that in retaliation for this act two men, Malpela and Bartolo de Maje, had killed Bernardo Carrisoli after he and his brother had let their guard down. On the night of the murders Bernardo and Gaspar were very tired, since they had been celebrating at a festive dance hosted by some of the tribal leaders. Upon returning to their homes the two men had collapsed into a deep slumber beside their Indian women, and their post-revels exhaustion left the Carrisolis particularly vulnerable to attack. In fact, they were so depleted from their exertions that the women proved unable to wake them when the killers arrived. The Carrisoli brothers had been invited to the festivities under the cover of friendship; the pretext for the celebration had been to facilitate and encourage trade.²⁶ This account of the murders, which described the necessity of first weakening the mestizo officials before they could be confronted and slain, has deep resonances in the Tule oral tradition. Before the Tule culture-hero Ibelele could defeat the awesome mestizo sons of Piler, he first had to weaken them by inducing them to over-imbibe the fermented corn drink called chicha at a festive occasion.²⁷ The use of mythohistorical themes in order to exert power on the frontier was not an Indian preserve. In an attempt to overawe the crowd watching the public punishment being meted out to the two Tule elders, Gaspar Carrisoli was reported to have uttered that he was a man very much to be feared by the Indians, since "neither lance nor arrow could pierce his flesh."²⁸

The statements of Diego de León, Eufemio de Escaro, Marzelo, Antonio Laguna, and Lorenzo each provided interesting information regarding the status of Spanish-Tule relationships on the Darién frontier. The Indians who murdered Bernardo Carrisoli may have disguised their intentions, or they may

have been carried away at the crucial moment, but it was reported that they originally intended to bring the errant frontier officials to justice, nothing more. In this scenario, the chiefs were not in rebellion, but were actually acknowledging the paramount tribal authority of the Spanish “cacique” in Panamá City. The hostile Indians claimed that their sole intention was to tie up the Carrisolis and convey them to Panamá City so that they might face discipline there by the presidente. They did not intend, Lorenzo had been told, to harm any of the Spanish or Indian Christians.²⁹ Although the truth of this justification for the killings cannot be definitively established, the testimonies do show that, at the very least, some of the tribal leaders exercising authority on the frontier clearly knew, and could clothe the actions of the killers in, a duty-bound language which might elicit sympathy and understanding from Spanish officials.

While it is impossible to ascertain whether the party of hostile Indians ever actually entertained the option of capturing the brothers and conveying them to Panamá City for judgment before the Spanish cacique, the remarkable use of such a justification by any of the Indians illustrates the particular strides that the tribalization of the frontier had made since the ejection of the Scots. Since neither Bernardo nor Gaspar Carrisoli survived the encounter, this legalistic line of thought was obviously not the dominant one amongst the action’s participants, but the possibility that an appeal to the cacique in Panamá City was on the agenda at all, even rhetorically, deserves attention.

The legalistic argument which claimed that the killings were the accidental outcome of legal actions which the reasonable Spanish cacique must ultimately sanction, was reiterated by a man named Parezio Lazarro, a resident of the Río Bayano who testified that outside of Terable he too had come across three Indians in a canoe who informed him that their quarrel was not with the guacas in general, but only with Gaspar and Bernardo Carrisoli.³⁰ In fact, the men informed him, breaking with the guacas was the furthest thing from their minds. So eager were they to make this point generally known that they urged Lazarro to do them the favor of conveying this information as quickly as he could to the cacique in Panamá City.³¹

Under the force of the leading questions asked by the interrogators, this deposition, and those following it, began to direct blame at a tribal leader from Chepo named Manuel Felipe who, it was

reported, opposed Spanish rule on the frontier and had suggested to the Indians that the actions of the Carrisolis merited death.³² Felipe, it was damningly added, had burned his own crops and fled the region after the killings were carried out.³³ However, this Manuel Felipe was not alone in his discontent with the Carrisolis' management of the economic life of the Indians on the frontier. The brothers' desire to monopolize frontier trade relationships was a point of fierce contention, and some tribal leaders, in spite of their allegiances, insisted that no force could prevent them from trading with whomever they wished.³⁴ Since the medium through which the information was collected was tainted, the testimony cannot provide positive proof of Manuel Felipe's culpability in the killings.³⁵ Clearly, however, Manuel Felipe was a frontier tribal leader whom the Spanish had judged responsible for the actions of the hostile Indians. Alderrete promptly ordered his goods confiscated, and the man, who was now a fugitive, was to be apprehended and arrested.³⁶

Indian Country: A World of Trouble

Manuel Felipe was not found and captured until several months later, at the end of April.³⁷ By that time Spanish officials had lost interest in him, for by then they were confronting a much more dire situation. The killings on the frontier were serious, but they had been limited to a few selected targets, and, most importantly, the instigator of the unrest had been quickly identified and targeted for punishment. This all-too-familiar state of affairs would soon be supplanted, however, by a large-scale disturbance across the frontier in Indian country. Alderrete now faced a difficult crisis in a difficult place, for the threatened mission towns of Yavisa, Tupisa, Tuquesa and El Real de Santa María were so distant from Panamá City that they existed on an entirely different conceptual plane.³⁸

The bad news reached Alderrete in Panamá City during the first two weeks in November of 1727, when Gerónimo García, the teniente of El Real de Santa María, wrote to him that a large band of the region's Indians had risen in open rebellion to the Spanish crown.³⁹ The rebels had killed the missionary priest at Yavisa, and had done even worse than that, if worse could be imagined, by looting the sacred vessels and the religious images of the mission church before burning the sacred temple to the ground.⁴⁰ The teniente of the Darién, Felipe Santiago Cabrejo, informed Alderrete on 10 November that matters were indeed very serious.⁴¹ Yavisa was entirely lost, having been conquered, desecrated, and sacked by the Indians. Cabrejo had fled from Yavisa in a small boat to warn the people of Chepigana, only to discover, to his great consternation, that Chepigana had been destroyed as well.⁴² While there two Indians informed Cabrejo that the rebellious Indians were commanded by Luis García, a piece of news that alarmed the teniente, who wrote pointedly to Alderrete that García was someone whom "you yourself had shown favor towards at Portobelo."⁴³ García had gathered a considerable force soon after his arrival in Indian country. As he ranged across the countryside, towns that would not provide him with recruits or supplies were threatened with destruction, or with the confiscation or destruction of their crops.⁴⁴

Cabrejo was in a very weak position from which to confront the rebels, for the few Spanish troops he had on the ground were ill-equipped, ill-prepared, and ill-suited to the harsh environment. It was the

rainy season, the Darién's many rivers were swollen, and bad news seemed to rise with the waters. In late December a desperate letter reached Alderrete from El Real de Santa María with a request for medicine and munitions.⁴⁵ The garrison's powder had been ruined by the incessant rain, and the detachment of men lacked a proper fort to house them. The note requested medicines and what the writer termed moras, which, he explained patiently to Alderrete, were needed to pay the Indians of the region for what few services they performed for the Spanish on these occasions.⁴⁶

Alderrete reacted to the threat by issuing a decree listing the conclusions of his council of war: it was a long, detailed proclamation which he ordered to be published throughout the northern portion of the Darién.⁴⁷ In the decree Alderrete kept to the established Spanish method of interpreting the Indian situation. Rebelliousness against the Spanish administration was ascribed to the northern band of the Darién's Indians; their hatred, Spanish officials deduced, was derived from that tribe's free intercourse with Protestant outsiders. This deep-seated animosity, left to fester and unattended, periodically burst its bounds, engulfing the maladjusted tribes living in the southern region, and causing upheavals similar to the present one.

The practice of arbitrarily splitting single Indian peoples into separate, discreet entities for the sake of administrative logic or, in this case, in order to provide an explanation for the inability of the barbaric Darién Indians to accept the Spanish yoke, was not unique to the isthmus.⁴⁸ Since similar events were widespread, historians must take great care to avoid the temptation of the neat classificatory schemes of their sources, especially since Spanish officials of the early modern period often found it difficult to accept indigenous realities on the ground. These officials rarely developed policies that realistically accommodated indigenous ethnic classifications, and they almost never understood that converted and reduced Indians viewed their allegiances to the Spanish as provisional arrangements that required constant care and renewal.

Alderrete's decree codified the information that he had received up to that point, and made public his belief that Indians "of the northern band" had killed not only Bernardo Carrisoli, but also Fernando Carrisoli and Gaspar Yañes Carrisoli. In addition, a score of other Spanish subjects lost their lives

in the disorder. The list of the names of the dead makes it clear that rather than fomenting a general rebellion on the frontier, some of the tribal Indians had instead inflicted a precise vengeance upon the Carrisoli family for their perceived misdeeds. The killings were personal acts of retribution carried out on the particular men deemed responsible for the deaths of revered Indians.

The killings, which the actions of tribal Indians suggest were interpreted as retributive acts carried out against corrupt individuals, had, however, occurred on the frontier's colonial stage. They could only be interpreted by the Spanish as having been politically motivated. Alderrete's decree linked the murders of the Carrisolis, acts that had taken place on the tribal frontier, to the rebellious actions in which Luis García was engaged deep in Indian country. The decree also stated that, although the commander of the rebels was García, the mestizo's primary lieutenant was an Indian named Chani, a man also known as the "Negro Tunchile." The pair had directed the sacking of Tuquesa, Urganti, Tupisa, Yavisa, Pirre and El Real de Santa María, proving that the northern Darién tribe was especially dangerous because its peoples had been well trained by the buccaneers in the arts of war and the use of negotiation.⁴⁹ In addition, the decree stated, the actions of García and Chani were personal betrayals of the highest order, since the two men had chosen rebellion as

the reward for the love and solicitation with which they have been treated. They have been honored and been made captains ... and rewarded from the royal coffers when they have provided us with useful information.⁵⁰

The language Alderrete used in his decree illustrated the manner in which the maestre de campo had futilely tried to place himself at the apex of a tribal system in Indian country. The actions of García and Chani make clear that such hierarchical terminology only had meaning if its use was exercised in conjunction with the tribalizing efforts of activist officials working on the ground to hold the allegiances of Tule leaders. Ultimately, Alderrete's decree revealed that the Spanish had ceased providing the assurances and the gifts-- paniquiris, and moras-- that Indian leaders had grown to expect from their interactions with the first generation of Carrisolis.⁵¹

After making note of the purported betrayals carried out by Chani and García, Alderrete stated the real reason for the publication of his decree: to offer a full pardon to those rebels who chose voluntarily to

return to their Christian towns. Rebels who continued their illegal activities and failed to return to the mission towns would be branded as enemies and treated with the crown's utmost severity. The subtext of the decree was clear. Yet, even though the edict was cloaked in the awesome language of colonial omnipotence and promised swift punishment for indigenous transgression, it was in fact nothing more than an admission of Spanish weakness. It pleaded with the tribalized Indians to return voluntarily to the status quo ante.⁵²

Unexpected Good News

The soldiers and militiamen sent from central Panamá to the Darién began to report on their activities in the month of May. The initial batch of reports from Indian country quite anticlimactically revealed that Luis García had already met his death. Juan Antonio Díaz reported that early in May he had met an Indian who informed him of García's demise; the Indian followed a Tule leader named Diego who, he reported, fervently desired to live at peace with the Spanish.⁵³ After initial contacts mediated by Diego's surrogate, Diego himself felt it safe to come forward and manage events on his own.⁵⁴

Capitán Diego Rodríguez of Pirre was eager to prove that he was at that moment, as always, loyal to the Spanish crown. He could not deny, as was surely a matter of record by now, that he had played some role in the uprising organized by Luis García. But he intended to argue that he had done so only under the greatest duress, that he had avoided taking part in any acts of looting and murder, and that he had in fact tried to warn the Spanish of the impending danger whenever he had been out of García's sight or control. As a final proof of his loyalty, Diego offered his full cooperation with the authorities who, once they had his description of the rebellion on file, could use his information to question the other captured Indians about their complicity in the uprising.⁵⁵

On 18 May Diego came to the Spanish in his canoe, accompanied by a woman and child who had been captured at the town of Yavisa.⁵⁶ This return of prisoners, he hoped, would act as a sure sign of his good faith. The Tule leader insisted that he was a loyal, faithful captain of a reduced town of Christian Indians, a useful leader who had been awarded his office of alcalde of Pirre by Felipe Santiago Cabrejo

himself.⁵⁷ During the rebellion he had received orders from Cabrejo to march with fifteen men to the Río Cañasas and exact punishment on the killers of the Carrisolis.

Although Diego's initial instructions from Cabrejo had been issued in reaction to the murders on the tribal frontier, he soon became embroiled in the uprising in Indian country. He immediately met up with Luis García on the road. The mestizo was on the march with two hundred Indians armed with muskets, bows, and arrows. Diego reported that the better armed of the troops were the Indians of the north. García, he realized from the great heterogeneity of his forces, had been gathering Indians as he traveled throughout eastern Panamá.⁵⁸

García exhorted Diego to join the rebellion, and argued that the Spanish could not be trusted since they had already tricked the Indians many, many times. García was said to have argued that Diego could not object to his plans, since he intended to kill only Spaniards and would spare the Indians. Diego accepted García's inflammatory statement, but made clear to his Spanish interrogators that he never would have countenanced any such actions.⁵⁹ Diego claimed that he pretended to go along with García in order to gather information about his intentions so that he could better protect the lives of innocent Spaniards. When García informed him that he intended to advance on El Real de Santa María and from there assault Chepigana, Diego agreed to cooperate with him, but only to warn the Spanish of the impending invasion, and to hide El Real's priest from danger.⁶⁰

Diego claimed that he and four of his men arrived at El Real in advance of García's force, shouting at the top of their lungs that "war was on its way."⁶¹ Interestingly, Diego's statement could be entirely truthful no matter where his loyalties stood at that phase of the rebellion.⁶² He left soon thereafter and headed for his home town of Pirre, where he collected more men, and then rejoined García's forces after they had attacked El Real. Diego stated that he and his men had in fact been fired upon when they found the encampment; the rebels expected an attack by Spanish forces at any moment. Not only had García's force increased in number, but they were also better armed than when Diego had last been with them. A cacique named Francisco Ybarra had joined the movement and the rebels had confiscated the armaments left behind by the fleeing Spanish.⁶³

Diego's testimony went on to describe how he had heroically avoided firing on Spanish troops during the second assault on El Real de Santa María. The capitán's remarkable rapprochement with the Spanish reveals how easily Tule local politics engulfed Spanish administrators as they wrestled with the distressing events in Indian country. Spanish officials and local Indian leaders were all seeking partners in the Darién. While the Spanish were trying to manage the immediate aftermath of a serious crisis, they were also trying to cultivate reliable Tule partners for the long-term colonizing project in eastern Panamá. Diego Rodríguez of Pirre recognized that a close relationship to the Spanish could afford him increased power and prestige, and his calculations were predicated upon the gradual transformation of the Indian country of the Darién into part of an expanding tribal frontier ruled from Panamá City. Unfortunately for Diego, the forces were not in place in 1727 for such a transformation to occur, since peoples cannot learn to act tribally overnight, no matter how much the Spanish hoped or assumed that they would.

If the shift towards a tribal system could be nudged into motion, however, Diego's status and prestige within it could only rise on account of his close relationship to the Spanish officials who would grant the tribal titles, offices, and salaried positions in exchange for reliable support and information: such was the frontier system's foundation. As Diego's approach to the Spanish suggests, their position in the Darién did not appear to be so terrible after all. If prospective allies such as Diego could be found even during a rebellion, opportunities for the Spanish further to manage the gradual tribalization of a far larger cadre of Tule leaders certainly existed. Unfortunately, Spanish officials operating out of Panamá City in 1727 lacked the means, the insight, and the will necessary to convert the Darién from a costa brava on the fringes of a more secure Spanish American system into a fully integrated unit of the empire. Although outcomes remained uncertain, Diego's testimony makes clear that the Spanish strategy for the Darién was not preordained to fail.

The month of May brought Alderrete the good news that Luis García had been killed, the uprising in Indian country had run its course, and Manuel Felipe, who had urged the murders of the Carrisolis, had been arrested.⁶⁴ At this point, only a few loose ends remained for him to tie up. The Indian known as El Negro Tunchile, who had exhibited great personal cruelty towards Spaniards during the uprising,

remained at large. New testimony from one Juan Francisco paints a picture of a rather moderate Luis García surrounded by a party of Spanish-hating firebrands led, in fact, by Tunchile. These men, often without García's knowledge, had allegedly ordered Indians to burn the churches and murder defenseless Spaniards in cold blood.⁶⁵ The newly demonized Tunchile, for example, was said to have instigated the murders of the two Spaniards who had not fled from the sack of El Real de Santa María, Bartolomé Cavello and his wife. Agustín, a captured lieutenant from García's rebel force, reported additionally that Cavello and his wife had actually entertained the rebel leaders at their home. Agustín claimed that while Luis García engaged the old man in conversation during the meal, El Negro Tunchile angrily entered the room, shouting,

“Why have we come here? Haven't we come to kill the Spaniards?”⁶⁶

At this moment, as if on cue, a man seized Cavello from behind and, assisted by another Indian, shot and killed the Spaniard on the spot. Cavello's wife was then also murdered.⁶⁷ With the sources at our disposal, we cannot ascertain the exact role of Tunchile in the uprising, or what he actually did during these events. One can surmise, however, that the testimony relating to his activities which depicts his actions in an entirely negative light may have been made under duress or provided by his enemies. El Negro Tunchile's emergence as the uprising's new frightening, black, Spanish-killing demon may be related to his having remained at liberty after García's death. In this formulation, Tunchile may have served as the rebellion's useful scapegoat, the convenient fictional author of its worst excesses. The most damning testimony of the many rebels' misdeeds could be placed singularly at his feet without real harm coming to anyone, since he remained safely out of the prosecutor's, and the hangman's, reach.⁶⁸

Endgame: Final Family Business

The rebellion's final loose end involved a member of the Carrisoli clan, a twenty-six year old man named Tomás Carrisoli who had been apprehended due to his involvement with the rebels. After the interrogators of the prisoners learned that García had been killed in battle, the judicial process was redirected to ascertain the exact nature of Tomás Carrisoli's involvement in the uprising. Alderrete

placed great importance upon determining Tomás Carrisoli's actions, since if it was proven that one of the Carrisolis had played even a small part in the mayhem that had led to the murder of Spanish men, women and children, special steps would need to be taken. Alderrete would have to mete out exemplary punishment in an attempt to make sure that such perfidy would never occur again. The final questions put to Diego Rodríguez attempted to establish at what point Tomás Carrisoli had joined the column of rebels.⁶⁹ All of the testimony revealed that the youth had only joined the rebel column after the sacking of El Real de Santa María and Yavisa, and had not been a part of the murders, desecrations, or looting of the holy places.⁷⁰ Having dodged the worst bullet, Carrisoli still had to explain his reasons for joining the rebel column at all as it headed for García's headquarters at Calidonia. Still more damning was his alleged presence at a junta there when the rebels planned their next moves.⁷¹

If Tomás Carrisoli's status as a cadet member of the Carrisoli clan had bothered him in the past, he no longer had reason to complain about it, for his peripheral status within the family was what saved his skin in the present crisis. Several deponents established that Tomás Carrisoli had made less than an active contribution to the rebellion, serving as nothing more than a figurehead. García clearly saw an advantage in associating himself with the surviving bearer of a name which still commanded much respect in Indian country.⁷² Carrisoli had in fact lost García's confidence at the midpoint of their association due to the gross mishandling of his musket while he was hunting in the company of García's brother. When the party of hunters closed in upon their quarry, the young man accidentally discharged his weapon and shot off the unnamed brother's nose. Consequently, when the rebels reentered the Darién and re-took El Real de Santa María some time later, Carrisoli was by then armed only with a lance.⁷³

Carrisoli's case required such an extended airing by the Spanish for the same reason which García had thought it necessary to request that the inexperienced cadet join the uprising. The Carrisoli name possessed iconic force even in the late 1720s, after the leading bearers of the name had been murdered for employing strategies and tactics at cross-purposes from those of their forbears. García's recognition of the surviving force of Carrisolian prestige came early in the uprising. García had visited Tomás Carrisoli, promising to make him maestre de campo of the entire province, stating that "when the

Carrisolis had been the maestres de campo the Indians had been well cared for, but that under Felipe Santiago Cabrejo this was no longer the case.”⁷⁴ Possibly García was using the Carrisoli name to extend a nostalgic appeal to the tribalized Indians on the frontier, but it is even more plausible that he wanted to deploy Tomás Carrisoli as a kind of bargaining chip with the colonial administrators in Panamá City. His movement would seem less radical and dangerous to the Spanish if one of its major demands was the installation of a Carrisoli in the office of maestre de campo.

García wished to present himself as the leader of a movement whose goal was to apply pressure on the colonial administration, rather than as a rebel acting solely to satiate his hatred and lust for Spanish blood. When such information is taken into account, the uprising takes on a new level of complexity, and the Carrisolis become once again central to all of its facets. On the frontier, the disorder had been a dagger thrust into the very heart of the family. Bernardo, Fernando, and Gaspar Carrisoli lost their lives because they had taken their situation on the frontier for granted and acted so high-handedly that they had roused even their allies, the tribalized Tule, to rebellion. In Indian country, on the other hand, García calculated that a measure of control over Tomás Carrisoli, the member of the clan whom the Spanish might feel compelled to name as the next maestre de campo, ought to be one of his primary goals. The factor which unified these two quite disparate actions was the almost iconic importance of the Carrisoli family to their evolution.

After García had promised to make him the maestre de campo, Tomás Carrisoli claimed that he immediately consulted with the priest at Yavisa, Fray Ambrosio Gómez. (Since Gómez had been killed during the uprising, Carrisoli’s account could not be verified.) The priest informed Carrisoli that if the Indians wished him to be their maestre de campo, then Gómez himself would make this known to Alderrete, since the friar planned to visit Panamá City after the feast of All Saints.⁷⁵ In addition, Carrisoli stated that teniente Cabrejo himself had informed him that since Don Juan Luis Carrisoli y Pacheco was no longer the maestre de campo, his own turn to hold the position had arrived.⁷⁶ Tomás Carrisoli not surprisingly further presented himself as a moderating influence upon the rebels, a bedrock

of administrative continuity in the midst of the movement's maelstrom. This connected with the fact discussed above, namely that Carrisoli was able to prove that he had not taken part in any actions in which Spaniards had been harmed or killed. Carrisoli had not deemed it a crime to discuss with García the acquisition of a colonial position which had been part of his family's patrimony for two generations. He felt especially secure on this point because, as he argued, he had shared an identical conversation with the ranking Spanish military officer in the province, Felipe Santiago Cabrejo. In the end Carrisoli claimed that he had assumed that García was still in the employ of the Spanish crown at the time of their conversation, since everyone knew that he had recently been commissioned to move to the north with a party of men and clear out the French pirates at the Gulf of Urabá.⁷⁷

Once his youth and ineptitude in handling weapons had been proven, the thorniest issue confronting Carrisoli remained his attendance at the junta which had agreed upon the strategy for the second phase of the rebellion. Carrisoli could not deny his presence at the meeting, but he stated that, contrary to the previous testimonies, the assembly had not in fact discussed the best means through which to destroy the Spanish. Rather, he said, the meeting had been a forum at which the Indian leaders arrived at the wording of a letter which was to be sent to the señor presidente of the audiencia so that he might pardon whatever actions they had performed as individuals up to that point.⁷⁸ In the end, his efforts at self-defense were for naught.

After Carrisoli's testimony had been recorded, a court was convened in June of 1728 and Tomás Carrisoli, the Indians held in custody, and the leaders of the rebellion such as Tunchile who were still at large, were tried together for murder and rebellion.⁷⁹ Capitán Chani was convicted in absentia; those in custody were condemned to death for their part in the conspiracy.⁸⁰ Following Tomás Carrisoli's death sentence a petition urging Alderrete to show clemency was written by Don Orenso Pacheco y Carrisoli, in the name of the maestre de campo Juan Luis Pacheco y Carrisoli.⁸¹ Rather than a direct plea for the life of Tomás, the petition was instead a heartfelt request for Alderrete to remove the blot of dishonor that Tomás' conviction had placed upon the Carrisoli family's name. The writer argued that the judgment of the tribunal had been a grave error because it was utterly unthinkable for any member of the Carrisoli clan

to raise a weapon in anger against the Spanish crown. The family had never been a breeding ground for rebels, having instead fostered several generations of loyal colonial officials. Pacheco made the argument forcefully when he stated that “there has never been on me, or my brothers, the stain of not having done the crown service. This service was performed by our ancestors, fathers, and grandfathers”⁸²

Following the clan’s entreaty, and the cogent arguments of Tibursio de Santillana, who served as the defensor or advocate of the accused, Tomás Carrisoli’s sentence was commuted to permanent exile in the kingdom of Perú.⁸³ Tomás Carrisoli’s conviction, and the later commutation of his sentence, brought to a rather farcical close an important chapter in the Spanish attempt to conquer the Darién. Although Andrés Ariza overstated the case when he argued that the rebellion of Luis García had utterly destroyed the Spanish position in the region, he was correct in picking the event out as a watershed. The murder of the Carrisolis on the frontier and the attacks of the Indians commanded by García underscored, rather than precipitated, Spanish problems in the region. Rather than providing the last straw which collapsed a fragile, though workable, system, the upheavals of 1727-8 instead served to draw back the curtain which had previously obscured the illusory nature of Spanish control over the activities and loyalties of the leaders and people living in Indian country.

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¹The San Blas Kuna Indians, the descendants of the early modern indigenous peoples of Panamá, use the word "Tule" to describe themselves, and this is the term that I shall use for the early modern actors in this paper. ("Tule" is translated as "person" in the Kuna language.) The need to differentiate between the present-day San Blas Kuna and the agents in this paper is more than a semantic distinction. The early modern Indians of eastern Panamá and the present-day San Blas Kuna occupy different physical, political, and temporal places. The Darién's peoples have experienced considerable change since 1600. Confronted by epidemic illness and pressures from the encroaching Chocó people to their east, the inhabitants of the Darién migrated from the interior to the San Blas Islands of Panamá's Atlantic coast during the second half of the nineteenth century. (A small number of Kuna still occupy the area around the Chucunaque River.) In addition to this profound geographical reorientation, the San Blas Kuna experienced deep political changes as well, attaining their autonomy from the Panamanian government in the early twentieth century following an armed struggle and the intervention of the United States. For the Kuna migration, and the group's ideological explanations for their present autonomy, see E. Nordenskiöld, An Historical and Ethnological Survey of the Cuna Indians, (Göteborgs: Comparative Ethnological Studies, 10, Göteborgs

Museum, 1938); and J. Howe, A People Who Would Not Kneel: Panamá, the United States, and the San Blas Kuna, (Smithsonian Institution, 1998). For a well-illustrated collection of articles and photographs relating to San Blas Kuna life, art, and culture, see M.L. Salvador, (ed.), The Art of Being Kuna: Layers of Meaning Among the Kuna of Panamá, (UCLA Fowler Museum of Art, 1997). For studies of the ethnohistory of the Kuna and their ancestors, see M.W. Helms, Ancient Panamá: Chiefs in search of Power, (University of Texas Press, 1979), and the work of R. Torres de Araúz: "Aspectos etno-ecológicos de los grupos humanos del este de Panamá," in Actas del II Simposio Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología, y Etnohistoria de Panamá, (Universidad de Panamá [Centro de Investigaciones Antropológicas], 1971), pp. 291-311; "Datos etnohistoricos Cunas, según documentos (1699-1799) [sic] de la colonia escocesa en Darién," Ibid, pp. 93-111; "La historia de Caledonia o la colonia escocesa en Darién: Analisis de un opúsculo documental," Actas del IV Simposio Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología, y Etnohistoria de Panamá, (INAC, 1973), pp. 497-507; "Etnohistoria Cuna," Revista Lotería (Panamá) no. 221 (1974): 53-79; and "Las culturas indígenas panameños en el momento de la conquista," Hombre y Cultura 3 [2] (1977): 69-97.

²Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Panamá 306 (hereafter this collection is cited as the AGI); a transcription of a copy of the document from the Archivo Histórico Nacional de Colombia is in the University of California, Berkeley Bancroft Library, Mexican MSS, number 258. The "Comentarios" is actually a compendium of six separate documents produced by Ariza in 1774. The first is a "Representación"; the second is a "Detalle de la provincia de Santa María la Antigua del Darién arreglado al Mapa que se dirige al Virrey con fecha de 5 de Abril 1774"; the third is a "Carta al Virrey"; the fourth is a "Compendio del actual estado de la provincia de Santa María la Antigua del Darién, Año 1774"; the fifth is a "Relación de los pueblos de Indios que havia reducidos en los años de 24 a 27 en la provincia de Santa María la Antigua de él Darién antes de la sublevación general por el mestizo Luis García"; and the sixth the "Puntual noticia de los ríos y abundantes minerales que al principio de este siglo se verificaban en la provincia del Darién y de otros que entre los Indios Bárbaros se conservan virgines." The Bancroft Library transcriptions were made in 1869, a product of the cycle of research into the Colombian national archive by readers seeking documents relative to the isthmus in order to establish the most appropriate site for a trans-isthmian canal. Ariza had drawn much attention amongst the canal projectors because he had contended, in a report titled "Testimonio de el expediente Sobre la apertura de el nuevo Camino que atravesza el Istmo en la Provincia de el Darién descubierto por el actual Gobernador de ella Don Andrés de Ariza," (AGI Panamá 307), that he had established a speedy route across the isthmus. For the hunt for a canal route, see Dr. E. Cullen, Isthmus of Darién Ship Canal: with a full history of the Scotch colony of Darién several maps, views of the country, and original documents, 2d edition, (London, 1853); and D. McCullough, The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panamá Canal 1870-1914, [Simon and Schuster, 1977], esp. pp. 19-44. Cullen included in his fanciful compendium the declaration of "a very aged negro" named Santa Anna Ceballos who claimed to have been a corporal in the militia in 1785. The ancient man described his personal memories of Ariza on pp. 75-81. The canal debate of the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and the texts surrounding it, made Ariza's name, claim, and selected reproductions of his writings easily available to ethnographers and researchers of the Kuna.

³AGI Panamá 307; "Comentos," part five, the "Relación de los pueblos de indios..." contains Ariza's most extended treatment of "the tyrant García's" rebellion.

⁴Ariza mentioned the two loyal Indian leaders in part one of the "Comentos," the "Representación," AGI Panamá 307; Bancroft transcription, p.3. Contemporary documents relating to the events of 1727-8, however, failed to mention these two leaders. Since they flourished at the time Ariza was governor in 1774, they clearly would have been too young to have played any part in the rebellion and its suppression. Ariza embroidered heroic roles for the two leaders in a maneuver which had more to do with his contemporary relationship to them in 1774, than it did with the part they may have played in the historical events of 1727.

⁵For the population counts, see the second portion of the "Comentos," in which the towns are broken down by name, AGI Panamá 307; page 10 of the Bancroft transcription. The discussion of the crops and minerals is in part six of the "Comentos", AGI Panamá 307; and page 31 of the Bancroft transcription. The description of indigenous customs and manners is contained in part five of the "Comentos," the "Relación de los pueblos de indios..." AGI Panamá 307; the section begins on p. 24 of the Bancroft transcription. Under the heading "Lere," Ariza provided a brief, yet rare, eighteenth-century description of the religious activities of the Tule religious leaders, which was most probably derived from missionary accounts.

⁶Ariza discusses the Indian populations succinctly and directly in part four of the "Comentos," the "Compendio del Actual Estado..." in which he states that "This province has nine Indian towns of two hundred vecinos each more or less..." (AGI Panamá 307; and Bancroft transcription, p. 16.)

⁷For the population figure of 20,000, see the peace treaty of 1738, AGI Panamá 305, f. 318r; the Protector Balcárcel's diario of his entrada in 1739, AGI Panamá 305, f. 300r, in which he estimated that nearly 10,000 Indians lived in the Darién's "northern band" alone; Antonio de Alcedo, Diccionario geográfico histórico de las Indias occidentales o América, 5 volumes, Madrid, 1786-1789, entry for the "Darién"; and the undated and unsigned "Descripción de la provincia del Darién," in A.B. Cuervo, (ed.), Colección de documentos inéditos sobre la geografía y la historia de Colombia, 4 vols, (Bogotá: Impr. Zalamea hermanos, 1891-1894), vol. 1, pp. 273-281, which estimated, at p. 281, that there were nearly five thousand households (each with an average of four members) in the Darién. The text of this document makes it clear that it was the product of Balcárcel's entrada that followed the signing of the peace treaty of 1738. O. Jaen Suárez, La población del Istmo de Panamá del siglo XVI al siglo XX, (Panamá, 1979), rightly attributed this document to Balcárcel, but, following Alcedo's "Darién" entry in the Diccionario, mistakenly dated the "Descripción" as a document of 1747. The document was written in 1739 or soon thereafter, for it is a companion to the diario of the entrada, and in several places mentioned Juan Sanni as a living Indian leader; by 1747 Sanni had been dead for two years.

⁸Ariza never failed to describe the province by its illustrious Christian name in the reports that comprised the "Comentos." His usage, however, is somewhat faulty, for Santa María la Antigua was the name of a particular Spanish town, and not the name generally used for the province or administrative unit. See K. Romoli, Balboa of Darién: Discoverer of the Pacific, (Doubleday and Company, 1953), pp. 21-61.

⁹For the Tule cultivation of cacao, see part one of the "Comentos," the "Representación," AGI Panamá 307; p. 5 of the Bancroft transcription. See also the listing of the number of cacao trees counted by Antonio de Arevalo in the diario of his 1761 expedition to the Darién, AGI Panamá 306. Arcila Farias, Comercio entre Venezuela y México, siglo XVI y XVII, (Mexico City: Colegio de Mexico, 1950), provides an excellent description of the cacao trade in the Americas. See also C.A. Araúz Monfante, El contrabando holandés en el Caribe durante la primera mitad del siglo XVIII, (Caracas: Academia Nacional de Historia, 1984).

¹⁰The Espiritu Santo mine at Santa Cruz de Cana had been the target of a buccaneer party in 1681, and had also motivated an English attack led by Edward Davis in 1702. For an account of Davis' expedition, see appendix II of L.E. Elliott Joyce, (ed.), A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America, by Lionel Wafer, (Hakluyt Society, 1933; orig. pub. 1699), "The Expedition of a Body of Englishmen to the Gold Mines of Spanish America, in 1702, with the many strange Adventures that befell them in that bold Undertaking. By Nathaniel Davis," pp. 152-165. (Hereafter this edition is cited as Wafer's New Description.) A description of pirate activities in the Urabá region in 1702 can be found in J.D. Alsop, "A Darién Epilogue: Robert Allen in Spanish America, 1698-1707," The Americas 43 (1986): 197-201; and W.F. Sharp, Slavery on the Spanish Frontier: The Colombian Chocó, (Oklahoma University Press, 1976), pp. 31-33. V. Restrepo, Estudio sobre las minas de oro y plata de Colombia, 2d. edition, (Bogotá, 1888) provides a discussion of the Cana mine; his major source of information is the Ariza text.

¹¹I treat the Scottish expedition to eastern Panamá in chapters 4 and 5 of my The "Door of the Seas and Key to the Universe": Indian Politics and Imperial Rivalry in the Darién, 1640-1750, (Columbia University Press, forthcoming). G.P. Insh, The Company of Scotland Trading to Scotland and the Indies, (Scribners, 1932) provides a solid treatment of the imperial endeavor, though the author's energies are directed towards an exploration of the Company as a Scottish institution rather than an investigation of the interactions between Scotsmen and Amerindians in the new world. J. Prebble, The Darién Disaster, (Secker and Warburg, 1969), is a readable popular history centering on the Company's new world activities. This study, unfortunately, lacks footnotes, and has two even greater problems: Prebble in some cases stretches the documents further than they ought to go in order to make his points, and has filled his study with stereotyped images of drunken Amerindians. Two recent articles with a focus on Amerindians have proven thought-provoking: C.H. Langebaek, "Cuna Long Distance Journeys: The Result of Colonial Interaction," Ethnology 30 (1991): 371-380; and B. McPhail, "Through a Glass Darkly: Scots and Indians Converge at Darién," Eighteenth Century Life 18 (1994): 129-147. Langebaek's interesting, though brief, piece is well-annotated and based on Spanish archival sources; McPhail's, though centering on Scottish-Amerindian interaction, is based primarily on pamphlet literature produced after the failure of the Company's efforts. McPhail's study therefore is useful in that it affords a description of some Scottish ideas and images of Amerindians, but it does not provide a documentary-based study of what took place when the Scots and Indians interacted in Darién. On the Scottish ideology of expansion, see two recent articles by D. Armitage, "The Scottish Vision of Empire: Intellectual Origins of the Darién Venture," in John Robertson, (ed.), A Union for Empire: Political Thought and the Union of 1707, (Cambridge UP, 1995), pp. 97-121; and "The Empire of Great Britain: England, Scotland and Ireland, c. 1540-1660." Past and Present no. 155 (1997): 34-63.

¹²For this period of Panamá's history, see M.M. Alba C., Cronología de los Gobernantes de Panamá 1510-1967, (Panamá, 1967; orig. pub. 1935), pp. 107-115; M.T. Garrido Conde, "La primera creación del virreinato de Nueva Granada," Anuario de Estudios Americanos 21 (1964): 25-144, esp. pp. 46-50, 81-2; and R. Terán Najas, Los proyectos del imperio borbónico en la Real Audiencia, (TEHIS/ABYA-YALA, 1988). I treat this period of the Darién's history in my "Door of the Seas," chapter 6.

¹³Several works have made use of Ariza's narrative in order to sketch in the history of the Darién after the ejection of the Scots, see V. Restrepo, (ed.), Viajes de Lionel Wafer al istmo del Darién. (cuatro meses entre los indios), traducidos y anotados por Vicente Restrepo, (Bogotá, 1888), "Apéndice: La vida en el istmo de Panamá y las invasiones de los bucaneros en el siglo XVII," pp. 89-128; Wafer's New Description, Appendix III, "The Cuna Folk of Darién," esp. pp. 168-170; H. Wassén, (ed.), "An Anonymous Spanish Manuscript from 1739 on the Province of Darién: A Contribution to the Colonial History and Ethnography of Panamá and Colombia," Etnologiska Studier 10 (1940): 80-146, esp. pp. 129-133; M. Luengo Muñoz, "Genesis de las expediciones militares al Darién en 1785-6," Anuario de Estudios Americanos 18 (1961): 333-416, esp. pp. 362-366; J. M. Zapatero López-Anaya, "Expediciones españolas al Darién: La del ingeniero militar don Antonio de Arevalo en 1761," Revista de Historia Militar (Madrid) 9[19] (1965): 49-79, esp. pp. 49-50; A. Castellero Calvo, Conquista, evangelización y resistencia: ¿Triunfo o fracaso de la política indigenista? (Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, [Editorial Mariano Arosemena], 1995), pp. 225-232; and, most recently, J. Howe, A People Who Would Not Kneel: Panamá, the United States, and the San Blas Kuna, (Smithsonian Institution, 1998), p. 13.

¹⁴For an analysis of the anthropological concept of the tribal zone, and the ancillary process of tribalization, see Neil L. Whitehead and Brian Ferguson, "The Violent Edge of Empire," in their War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare, (School of American Research Press, 1992), pp. 1-31; Whitehead, "Tribes Make States and States Make Tribes: Warfare and the Creation of Colonial Tribes and States in Northeastern South America," also in that volume, pp. 127-151; and Whitehead, "Ethnogenesis and Ethnocide in the European Occupation of Native Surinam, 1499-1681," in J.D. Hill, (ed.), History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992, (University of Iowa Press, 1996), pp. 20-36.

¹⁵For the Spanish frontier strategy, see Castellero Calvo, Conquista, evangelización, map, p. 241; and chapter 14, "Una colonización fragmentaria," pp. 310-319.

¹⁶Moreover, as evidenced by the Conde de Canillas' reliance on his assets at Chepo during the Scottish incursion of 1698-1700, the town was a central node in the Spanish intelligence gathering activities. (See AGI Panamá 159, ff. 742v-744r.) The starting point for the study of marronage in colonial Panamá is A. Fortune, Obras selectas, comp. y prologo G. Maloney, (Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, 1993).

¹⁷The establishment and operation of the Carrisolis' management of Indian affairs in eastern Panamá is discussed in chapters 2-5 of my "Door of the Seas."

¹⁸Alderrete filled the office from 1724 to 1730, when he was deposed, incarcerated, and forcibly placed on a ship bound for Spain. Alderrete died when the ship was wrecked. See Alba C., Gobernantes de Panamá, pp. 113-114.

¹⁹Archivo Histórico Nacional de España, Madrid; Colección de Consejos Suprimidos, legajo 20647, f. 1r. (Hereafter this collection is cited as the AHNM 20647.)

²⁰AHNM 20647, 13r.

²¹AHNM 20647; De Escaro's testimony begins on f. 16v, the remark regarding Carrisoli is at f. 18v.

²²AHNM 20647, f. 21r.

²³AHNM 20647, f. 22r-22v. For a discussion of the possible etymology of the term guaca, see Castellero Calvo, Conquista, evangelización, pp. 52-53.

²⁴AHNM 20647, f. 23r.

²⁵AHNM 20647, f. 24v-25r.

²⁶AHNM 20647, f. 24v.

²⁷See my discussion of Ibelele's struggle against the sons of Piler, and its importance to the Tule polity, in chapter 1 of my "Door of the Seas."

²⁸AHNM 20647, f. 26v.

²⁹AHNM 20647, f. 26v.

³⁰AHNM 20647, ff. 41v-42r.

³¹AHNM 20647, ff. 44v-45r.

³²AHNM 20647, ff. 30r-33r.

³³AHNM 20647, ff. 34r-36v; and ff. 40r-45r.

³⁴[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 17v.

³⁵A prisoner would be asked, for example, if he was aware that Manuel Felipe had advocated the murder of all of the Spaniards, and had fled his farm after he had ordered the killings, leaving behind all of his worldly goods. When such a question was posed, only the densest of prisoners would not understand what would be the “right” reply. See [AHNM](#) 20647, f. 40r.

³⁶[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 46v; ff. 105v-107v.

³⁷[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 116r.

³⁸[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 24v.

³⁹[AHNM](#) 20647, ff. 55r-59v.

⁴⁰[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 59r.

⁴¹[AHNM](#) 20647, ff. 61r-64v.

⁴²[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 62v.

⁴³[AHNM](#) 20647, ff. 62v-63r.

⁴⁴[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 64r.

⁴⁵Letter of Luis Vásquez 20 December 1727 [AHNM](#) 20647, ff. 65r-67v.

⁴⁶[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 67v. Vásquez’s rather didactic discussion of the meaning of the word *mora* in his letter to Alderrete illustrates the *presidente*’s lack of basic knowledge regarding the customs that needed to be respected in order to operate with any measure of success in Indian country. For a discussion of the colonial meaning of the Tule term “mora”, see chapters 3 and 8 of my *“Door of the Seas.”*.

⁴⁷[AHNM](#) 20647, ff. 70r-77r.

⁴⁸For other instances in the central American region, see the articles in V. Reifler Bricker, (ed.), *Supplement to the Handbook of Middle American Indians*, volume 4, *Ethnohistory*, (University of Texas Press, 1986), esp. R.M. Carmack, “Ethnohistory of the Guatemalan Colonial Indian,” pp. 55-71. Also useful in this regard is S. Martínez Peláez, *La patria del criollo: Ensayo de interpretación de la realidad colonial guatemalteca*, (Guatemala City: Editorial Universitaria, 1970).

⁴⁹[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 70v.

⁵⁰[AHNM](#) 20647, ff. 71v-72r.

⁵¹[AHNM](#) 20647, f. 67v.

⁵²The documents attempt to establish that the home villages of both Luis García and Chani were in the vicinity of Rancho Viejo, a region that had never been cleared of foreign influence; see [AHNM](#) 20647, f. 128r; f. 134v. International tensions had prompted foreign intrusion into the Darién’s Caribbean coast (among other extra-European settings), and tensions in Europe were presently running high. The recent Spanish negotiation of the Treaty of Vienna with Austria had been interpreted by the other European powers as a hostile act, an attempt by Spain and Austria to re-forge the old Austrian-Spanish Hapsburg nexus. Britain reacted with hostility and forced Madrid and Vienna to abandon the effort soon after it was attempted. The crisis in Europe, however ephemeral, did have an impact on eastern Panamá. (For the Treaty of Vienna, see Zapatero, “Expediciones al Darién,” p. 49; and J. Lynch, *Bourbon Spain 1700-1808*, [Basil Blackwell, 1989], pp. 85-89.) Francis Hosier, an English vice-admiral, arrived in the Caribbean in the summer of 1726, anchoring his ships off of the Bastimiento Islands along the San Blas coast. Hosier’s squadron had legal reason to be in the Caribbean; his ships were escorting the English South Sea Company’s vessel licensed to trade at the Portobelo fair under a provision of the Treaty of Utrecht. The goods contained in the Company’s ship were placed ashore under the watchful eyes of Spanish officials, and were ultimately hauled overland to Cartagena and other points. For Hosier’s expedition, see J.W. Fortescue, (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Preserved in the Public Record Office, Colonial series, America and West Indies*, vol. 1726-7, documents #217; #374; and #464. (Hereafter this collection is cited as the *CSPCol.*) With his men in poor condition after their brief stay on the San Blas coast, Hosier’s squadron sailed to Jamaica in December of 1726, where an observer found the squadron “in a very distressed condition for want of men... . [T]here has been a great mortality and sickness among them” *CSPCol.*, vol. 1726-7, document #374. The Council of Jamaica, preparing for hostile action against the Spanish, even conferred upon the Admiral the power to impress men. However, none of these plans came to fruition due to Hosier’s death in early 1727 from a fever he had contracted on the isthmus. Additional information on Hosier can be gathered from S. Lee, (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, (London, 1911), entry for “Hosier, Francis.” Throughout the eighteenth century, rivalries in Europe produced noticeable local effects in eastern Panamá, and especially during times of international stress the region’s strategic importance placed it at the center of events. In the present instance, the enhanced Spanish interest in the region can be inferred from Alderrete’s attempts to establish himself as the *cacique* at the apex of a tribal colonial system.

⁵³[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 125r-125v.

⁵⁴[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 134r-153r.

⁵⁵For Diego's testimony, see [AHNM 20647](#), ff. 130v-152v.

⁵⁶[AHNM 20647](#), f. 130v.

⁵⁷[AHNM 20647](#), f. 134r.

⁵⁸[AHNM 20647](#), f. 134v.

⁵⁹[AHNM 20647](#), f. 135r.

⁶⁰[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 135v-136r.

⁶¹[AHNM 20647](#), f. 136r.

⁶²[AHNM 20647](#), f. 136r.

⁶³[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 137r-138r.

⁶⁴[AHNM 20647](#), f. 125r-125v; and f. 116r.

⁶⁵Blame for the most heinous crimes committed during the rebellion was shifted away from García and onto Tunchile in the testimony of Juan Francisco, [AHNM 20647](#), ff. 154v-175r; and Agustín, [AHNM 20647](#), ff. 176r-193v.

⁶⁶Agustín, at [AHNM 20647](#), f. 183r, claimed that one of Tunchile's accomplices in the killings was Juan Francisco himself.

⁶⁷[AHNM 20647](#), f. 163r.

⁶⁸Upehvals in other American realms support my formulation; see K.R. Mills, "Bad Christians in Colonial Peru," [Colonial Latin American Review](#) 5 (1996): 183-218; M. Ahern, "Visual and Verbal Sites: The Construction of Jesuit Martyrdom in Northwest New Spain in Andrés Péres de Ribas' *História de los Triunfos de nuestra Santa Fee* (1645)," [Colonial Latin American Review](#), 3 (1994): 7-33; and D.T. Reff, "The 'Predicament of Culture' and Spanish Missionary Accounts of the Tepehuan and Pueblo Revolts," [Ethnohistory](#) 42 (1995): 63-90.

⁶⁹[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 141v-143v.

⁷⁰[AHNM 20647](#), f. 141v; f. 161v; and f. 185r.

⁷¹[AHNM 20647](#), f. 142v; f. 162v; and ff. 385r-387r.

⁷²[AHNM 20647](#), f. 170r; and f. 185v.

⁷³[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 185r-185v.

⁷⁴[AHNM 20647](#), f. 141v; f. 185r; and f. 374r.

⁷⁵[AHNM 20647](#), f. 376r.

⁷⁶[AHNM 20647](#), f. 377r.

⁷⁷[AHNM 20647](#), f. 378r.

⁷⁸[AHNM 20647](#), f. 387r.

⁷⁹[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 431r-432r.

⁸⁰[AHNM 20647](#), f. 432r.

⁸¹[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 442r-443r.

⁸²[AHNM 20647](#), f. 443r.

⁸³[AHNM 20647](#), ff. 489r.