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Tigers and crosses: The transcultural dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations in the Río de la Plata: 1516-1580

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**Tigers and Crosses:
The Transcultural Dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní
Relations in the Río de la Plata:
1516-1580**

by

Dorothy Jane Tuer

A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of History
University of Toronto

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Abstract

This is a study of the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata from first contact in 1516 to the emergence of a predominantly mestizo population in Asunción by 1580. The central focus of the study is the period from 1537, when Spaniards founded Asunción in the territories of the Guaraní-speaking Carios, until the establishment of the *encomienda*, a colonial labour system, in 1556. Through a close reading of archival documents and chronicles, the study presents a narrative history of the transcultural dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations, including the convergence of kinship and alliances, cacique and conquistador rivalries, competing spiritual beliefs of shamanism and Catholicism, and the role of castaways, *lenguas* (interpreters) indigenous women, priests, and mestizos as intermediaries. How these transcultural dynamics were dominated by indigenous norms until 1556, and how they shaped the cultural, social, and spiritual dimensions of *mestizaje* (racial mixing) are analysed. The study covers key moments in the conquest and early colonial period. These include Sebastián Caboto's exploration of the Río de la Plata from 1527 to 1529; Pedro de Mendoza's *armada* to the Río de la Plata in 1535 that led to the founding of Asunción in 1537 and the first governorship of Domingo Martínez de Irala from 1539 to 1542; the rule of Asunción by Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca as *adelantado* from 1542 to 1544; and Domingo Martínez de Irala's second governorship of the

region from 1544 to 1556. An in-depth examination of the establishment of the *encomienda* is undertaken to consider how cultural identification, social status, and ethnic distinctions were reconfigured between the Cario and other Guaraní-speaking groups, the Spanish, and mestizos after 1556. The study concludes with an analysis of the Oberá Rebellion of 1579-80 as an example of how kinship and warrior norms, Christianity, and shamanistic practices converged in indigenous resistance to colonial rule.

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Introduction

This is a study of the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata from first contact in 1516 to the emergence of a predominantly mestizo population in Asunción by 1580.¹ The central focus of the study is the period from 1537, when conquistadors from Spain founded Asunción in the territories of a large nucleus of Guaraníes called the Carios, until the establishment of the *encomienda*, a colonial labour system, in 1556.² The historical record I draw on consists primarily of the letters and *relaciones* (reports) written by conquistadors and clerics in the 1500s in Asunción, and published chronicles and histories.³ Through a close reading of these sources, I present a narrative history that accounts for the transcultural dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations, including the convergence of kinship and alliances, cacique and conquistador rivalries, competing spiritual beliefs of shamanism and Catholicism, and the role of castaways, *lenguas* (interpreters), indigenous women, priests, and mestizos as intermediaries. Through the telling of a narrative history, I demonstrate how these transcultural dynamics were dominated by indigenous norms until 1556, and how they shaped the cultural, social, and spiritual dimensions of Asunción's *mestizaje* (racial mixing).

My use of transculturation as an interpretative tool takes as its starting point the coining of the term by the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz in his 1940 *Cuban Counterpoint*. Ortiz employed this neologism to distinguish the historical process of colonization as the violent displacement, mixing, and transformation of radically different cultures from the anthropological concept of acculturation, in which the colonized are absorbed by the dominant culture of the colonizer.⁴ In the example of Cuba, Ortiz focused on the ways in which the racial mixing of African and European in a slave-plantation economy became embodied in and signified by the commodities of tobacco and sugar.⁵ The literary critic Ángel Rama subsequently adopted Ortiz's term to analyse the regional literatures of post-independence Latin America. He argues in *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina*, first published in 1982, that the originality of these regional literatures lies in how a multiplicity of narrations and linguistic cadences evoke the mythic and material dimensions of a colonial past and *mestizaje*.⁶ Following upon Rama, Mary Louise Pratt deployed the term ten years later in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* as an interpretative framework for her

analysis of European travel writing about Latin America in the nineteenth century. She argues that the authors' negotiations with what she terms the "contact zone"⁷ produced heterogeneous representations of the periphery as well as narratives in the service of imperial expansionism.⁸

Both the sociological and literary antecedents of transculturation serve to distinguish the analytical intent of this study from previous investigations of Spanish-Guaraní relations in the early colonial period. Elman Service, Branislava Susnik, and Florencia Roulet, who have made the most significant contributions to the field, argue that Spanish oppression of the Guaraní resulted in their acculturation to Hispanic norms.⁹ From my close reading of the documentation of the era, I posit that a more contested transmutation of cultures occurred. While the historical record of the Guaraní's subjugation by the Spanish is by all measures horrific, I present evidence of the convergences and conflicts between worldviews that make colonial dynamics unpredictable and surprising rather than inevitable. In so doing, I shift the analysis of Spanish-Guaraní relations in the early colonial period from a narrative of domination and victimization to one of multiple social and cultural confluences, in which the identity of the colonial subject is never fixed, but rather, in the terms of post-colonial theorist Stuart Hall, "always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation."¹⁰

To this end, I analyse how the mythic and spiritual as well as material dimensions of the entanglement of indigenous and European worldviews are represented in the historical record. From a transcultural perspective, tales of gentle lions and saintly visions, crosses and tigers, comets becoming jaguars and shamans becoming God, are significant as textual clues for the mixing of identities and beliefs. Narratives of imperial expansion are important for what they reveal of the heterogeneous mixing of Hispanic mores and indigenous norms. Most saliently, the European conquest of the New World becomes inseparable from how cultural differences and affinities were perceived and acted upon by key protagonists. For the conquest of the Río de la Plata, these protagonists included the conquistadors and clerics, the majority of Hispanic origin, who accompanied the two major expeditions to the Río de la Plata led by Pedro de Mendoza in 1535 and Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca in 1541. A second group was the European survivors of earlier expeditions who served as translators and mediators. A third was the Cario, the Guaraní-speaking inhabitants of the lands around Asunción and the initial allies of the Spanish. The fourth was the mestizo offspring of the conquistadors and Cario women

known as *mancebos de la tierra* (youths of the land). The final group was the traditional enemies of the Carios, most notably the Payaguás and Agaces, who dominated the waterways of the Paraguay River until the 1700s, and indigenous nomadic groups who inhabited the Gran Chaco west of the Paraguay River and became known collectively as the Guaycurúes by the 1600s.¹¹

While the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata has attracted scant attention from contemporary scholars, there are several factors that make it a compelling historical study. The initial exploration of the region by Europeans and their interactions with a diversity of indigenous nations were facilitated by the predominance of the Guaraní, who inhabited politically autonomous territories spread over a vast area of tropical and semi-tropical jungle terrain in what is now southern Brazil, northern Argentina, eastern Bolivia, and Paraguay. According to archaeological data, the diffusion of the Guaraní from the Brazilian coast to the Bolivian lowlands originated in migrations inland from the Atlantic coast that began around 1000 AD. These data have led anthropologists to designate the Brazilian Tupí as the linguistic origin of the various dialects of Tupí and Guaraní.¹² By the time of the arrival of the Europeans in the Río de la Plata the Tupí were concentrated along the Atlantic coast from the mouth of the Amazon River to Río de Janeiro. The Guaraní were located along the coast of Brazil south of the island of Santa Catalina (present-day Santa Catarina) and inland along river systems as far east as the Paraguay River.¹³ Estimates for the Guaraní population who inhabited this area in the early 1500s range from 300,000 to over 1,000,000.¹⁴

Modern anthropologists concur that the Guaraní subsisted on hunting, gathering, and slash-and-burn agriculture—in which the jungle was cleared and then abandoned after several years when the soil's nutrients were spent—to grow corn and root crops such as squash, sweet potatoes, and manioc (cassava). Social organization was based on extended kinships that were patrilineal, with each kinship group occupying a large communal dwelling headed by a chief or cacique. Villages composed of four or five of these communal dwellings could reach the size of four thousand inhabitants.¹⁵ This social organization enabled castaways and other Europeans who voluntarily remained from early exploratory expeditions to integrate into Guaraní communities along the southern coast of Brazil in the 1510s and 1520s, and made possible the alliances that the Spaniards forged with the Carios when they arrived in their

territory located along the east bank of the Paraguay River in the 1530s. The shared cultural norms and linguistic base of the Guaraní also enabled Europeans who were living among the Guaraní of coastal Brazil to play an important role as translators and intermediaries in the exploration and colonization of the Río de la Plata.

Another distinctive feature of the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata was the extensiveness of the conquistadors' relations with indigenous women, who provided food supplies and served as kinship liaisons. Justified by the Asunción conquistadors as essential to securing the *amistad y alianza* (friendship and alliance)¹⁶ of the Carios, and decried by scandalized missionaries as the immorality of “Mohamed's Paradise,”¹⁷ these relations have been represented by twentieth-century nationalist historians such as Enrique de Gandía and Julián María Rubio of Argentina and Efraím Cardoso of Paraguay as the Guaraní's voluntary submission to Hispanic culture and laws.¹⁸ This study argues for a more nuanced assessment of the relations between Spanish men and Cario women, one that reflects the necessity of the conquistadors to adapt to indigenous norms in order to survive, the importance of collaboration with Cario warriors in raids against enemy nations to secure kinship alliances, and the shifting power alignments that these kinship alliances produced among the conquistadors.

Unique to the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata was the right to limited self-governance granted to the conquistadors by a *Real Cédula* (royal decree) issued in 1537. This royal decree authorized the conquistadors to appoint a provisional governor in the event of the death of the titular head of the Crown until such time as the Crown nominated a successor.¹⁹ The local autonomy sanctioned by this decree led to fractious power struggles among the conquistadors. The rivalry between the first two governors of the region, Domingo Martínez de Irala and Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca—the former appointed by the conquistadors and the latter by the Crown — set the stage for infighting that lasted for decades. It also generated a corpus of documents, which, despite their partisan biases, provide a valuable record of the evolving dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations in the region from the arrival of Cabeza de Vaca in Asunción in 1542 until Irala's death in 1556. How the sources represent the two governors' differing attitudes towards and interactions with the Cario and other indigenous nations constitutes the narrative framework of this study.

Irala, a minor *hidalgo* and member of Pedro de Mendoza's 1535 expedition, is considered by nationalist historians to be the symbolic father of Paraguay's *mestizaje* by virtue of establishing *amistad y alianza* with Carios of Asunción.²⁰ He reached their territories as a member of an advance party that Mendoza sent upriver from the fort of Buenos Aires in 1536. After Mendoza died at sea while returning to Spain, and Mendoza's appointed deputy failed to return from an inland expedition to the sierra of Bolivia, Irala was confirmed provisional governor in 1539 by Alonso de Cabrera, a royal official who had accompanied Mendoza to Spain and returned with the 1537 *Real Cédula*. For the next seventeen years, with the exception of Cabeza de Vaca's brief rule from 1542 to 1544, Irala exercised control over fractious Spaniards and rebellious Carios through his adaptation to, and appropriation of, Guaraní kinship and warrior norms. In many of the conquistadors' and priests' letters, which were written in support of Cabeza de Vaca, he figures as excessively violent and cruel. This study argues that it is possible to read beyond the denunciatory tone of the colonial sources to glean a valuable glimpse of the complex negotiation and violation of indigenous norms and Hispanic values that occurred during his governorship.

Cabeza de Vaca, better known as the author of *Naufragios*—the *relación* of his eight years spent among indigenous peoples of the south-eastern United States and north-western Mexico after surviving a shipwreck off the coast of Florida in 1528—figures differently in the historiography.²¹ Appointed *adelantado* (conqueror and governor)²² of the Río de la Plata by the Crown in 1540, he arrived in Asunción in March 1542, was deposed by the conquistadors two years later, and returned to Spain in chains. The *Comentarios*, a memoir of his two years spent among the Carios and the conquistadors of Asunción, was published in 1555 under the authorship of his secretary, Pero Hernández.²³ A lengthy narrative intended to secure Cabeza de Vaca an historical legacy as a conqueror, the *Comentarios* emphasizes his efforts to impose just rule on a renegade colony by ensuring the fair treatment of the Indians and halting the immoral and abusive relations of the conquistadors with indigenous women. While as ideologically laden as other colonial sources, the *Comentarios* provides significant insights into the blurring of boundaries between spiritual worldviews that were occurring in the early years of indigenous-European contact. A comparative analysis of the *Comentarios* with letters written by conquistadors denouncing Cabeza de Vaca's brief rule of the Río de la Plata reveals

how his governorship destabilized the kinship alliances established between the Carios and the Spanish before his arrival in Asunción.

Although Irala and Cabeza de Vaca loom large in the narrative history of this study as protagonists, the unnamed Cario women and warriors in the colonial sources are pivotal to my analysis of transcultural dynamics. While women were essential to the survival of the conquistadors and the establishment of kinship alliances, they were also subject to abuse. Within a few years of arriving in Asunción, contemporary accounts denounce that the conquistadors were trading indigenous women among themselves as if they were slaves. After Cabeza de Vaca was deposed in 1544 and infighting among the conquistadors led to *rancheadas*—plundering excursions undertaken to seize women and goods from indigenous villages—this abuse escalated and the Carios rebelled. From the defeat of the Carios' insurrection in 1545-46 to the imposition of the *encomienda* ten years later in 1556, the documentation for the period focuses on Irala's abject subjugation of Cario women who were enslaved and exploited as indigenous labour.

This study suggests how the violence of the era was also a reflection of the predominance of the Guaraní warrior norms of raiding and captive-taking. I analyse how the infighting among the conquistadors was at the same time a power struggle among the Asunción caciques, and how the *rancheadas* were initially joint-raids undertaken in collaboration with Cario warriors. I emphasize the importance of the *entradas*—expeditions entering new lands for conquest or plunder—that the conquistadors undertook from Asunción across the Gran Chaco to reach the sierra and its mines of silver for providing the Carios with opportunity to affirm their warrior norms by raiding and captive-taking. The 1545-46 rebellion, the *rancheadas*, and the *entradas* also altered these warrior norms, intensifying the ferocity of raiding and the numbers of captives taken by the Carios to sell to the Spanish as slaves.

Another distinctive aspect of the early colonial period was the isolation of Asunción from Spanish imperial authority. After Cabeza de Vaca's expedition arrived in Asunción in 1542, no other official of the Crown reached the Río de la Plata until 1555. While Asunción's isolation from the imperial centre of power did not change after 1555, Irala's status as provisional governor did, when a series of royal proclamations arrived from Spain appointing him the

official governor of the Río de la Plata and ordering him to institute *encomienda* grants to the conquistadors. By May 1556, Irala had distributed 20,000 Carios to 320 men, awarding most of the *encomiendas* to conquistadors who had married his mestiza daughters and to his supporters. In October of that same year, he died, bringing to a close the period of the region's history in which transcultural dynamics were dominated by indigenous norms.

The period from 1556 to 1580 is distinguished by the emergence of an identifiable mestizo class in Asunción. At the time of Irala's death, mestizos outnumbered the conquistadors by a ratio of five to one, with more than three thousand mestizos reported living in the city.²⁴ As the heirs of *amistad y alianza*, these mestizos were economically marginalized by the awarding of *encomiendas* to the conquistadors, who in turn designated their mestiza daughters as heirs and married them to Spaniards. Thus, most mestizos were not absorbed into a colonial settler elite. The institutionalization of indigenous labour through the *encomienda* also produced divisions among the Carios. The Cario warriors in the vicinity of Asunción became de facto indentured field hands and the Cario women in the personal service of the Spaniards de facto slaves. A few caciques became the middlemen of the Carios' colonial exploitation, while Guaraní communities in the larger region resisted attempts by the Asunción settlers to extend the reach of *encomienda* tribute through open rebellion.

By 1580, the Cario women and mestizas who were identified as Indian outnumbered the few remaining conquistadors and their mestizo descendants who were identified as Spanish ten to one in Asunción. There was a vast underclass of mestizos, numbering over 10,000, and twice as many Carios subject to *economienda* labour tribute living in the vicinity of the city. Outside of a 150 kilometre radius of Asunción, the Carios and other Guaraní groups still controlled their territories, ambushing and killing Spaniards, mestizos, and baptised Carios. For the decades following Irala's death in 1556, I demonstrate the persistence of a warrior ethos that was demonstrated by a major Guaraní rebellion against the Spanish in 1560, and the increasing role of the Guaraní as intermediaries in a nascent slave economy by raiding the sierra for captives to sell as slaves. I also analyse how a complex reconfiguration of power relations among and between the Carios, the conquistadors, and their mestizo children in Asunción led to a *mestizaje* in which social status and cultural identification were as important as being racially Indian, Spanish, or mestizo. After 1556, Indians becoming mestizos, mestizos

becoming Spanish, and mestizos becoming Indians signalled that porous boundaries between worldviews were central to the process of *mestizaje*. I conclude the study with an analysis of a rebellion led by a Guaraní shaman called Oberá, who declared himself the Son of God. I argue that the convergence of kinship and warrior norms, and Christian and shamanistic rituals in Oberá's rebellion reveal the spiritual dimensions of *mestizaje*.

By ending this study with an analysis of the Oberá Rebellion, I point towards another history that unfolded in the Río de la Plata in the 1600s and 1700s, one that overshadows the earlier colonial period. While the origins and formation of Paraguay's mestizo society provide a fascinating case study in the dynamics of entangled worldviews, it is the Jesuit's evangelization of the Guaraní and the establishment of their famous Paraguayan missions that has attracted international attention and the production of a massive historiography, to a large degree generated by the Jesuits themselves. The contrast between these two sites of historical inquiry could not be more striking.

On the one hand, Paraguay in the 1600s and 1700s remained an impoverished frontier province of imperial Spain that had neither silver nor sugar. Until the end of the colonial period, its economy was based on subsistence agriculture rather than resource extraction, and barter rather than money. In 1617, when the governance of the Río de la Plata was divided into the two provinces of Buenos Aires and Paraguay, Asunción as the *cuña* (cradle) of the region's colonization was eclipsed politically as well as economically.²⁵ Trade networks connecting the region to the Viceroyalty of Peru bypassed Asunción, and instead linked Buenos Aires to Potosí and other Andean towns via Santa Fé, Córdoba, and Salta.²⁶ The cities of Santa Fé (1573), Buenos Aires (1580), and Corrientes (1588), which were founded by the mestizo children of the Asunción conquistadors, lay within the jurisdiction of the province of Buenos Aires. Paraguay's eastern jungle region, which constituted a nebulous border zone with colonial Brazil, was under threat from Portuguese slave-hunters, the *bandeirantes* or *mamelucos*, and their Tupí-mestizo armies seeking Guaraní captives to sell in the São Paulo slave markets.²⁷ The inhospitable Gran Chaco region of deserts and swamps was controlled by indigenous nomads who raided Spanish settlements with alarming audacity and frequency. On the Paraguay River, canoe flotillas of Payaguá "river pirates" attacked without warning.

In contrast, the Jesuits' evangelization of the Guaraní resulted in their control over a vast territory. From 1609, when the Jesuits established their first Guaraní reduction of San Ignacio Guazú south-east of Asunción, to the height of the Paraguayan missions in the 1730s when over 140,000 souls inhabited thirty towns, they worked ceaselessly to establish a linguistic, political, economic, and spiritual hegemony in the Río de la Plata.²⁸ According to Martin Dobrizhoffer, a Jesuit writing on the history of the missions after the Order's expulsion in 1767, there were over 700,000 Guaraníes baptised during the Jesuits' mission activity in the region.²⁹ In the first years of their proselytizing in the Río de la Plata, the Jesuits founded clusters of missions stretching across all of eastern Paraguay and southern Brazil. By 1641, as the result of incursions by the *bandeirantes*, the Jesuits had retreated to an area between the Paraná and Uruguay rivers in the Misiones province of Argentina that formed the core of the Guaraní mission towns. Comprised of fortified towns, agricultural lands, and outlying estancias, these missions harboured over 100,000 inhabitants for most of the 1700s.³⁰ By way of comparison, in 1760 the population of the Guaraní missions numbered 106,554 *almas* (souls), while the total population for the province of Buenos Aires for the same year was 44,474, and for Paraguay 37, 515.³¹

While the historiography of the Jesuit evangelization in the region has focused on the spiritual and cultural aspects of the missions, with their baroque churches and indigenous choirs, they had an important geopolitical function as a frontier institution, providing a line of defence against the expansionist designs of the Portuguese and supplying the Spanish Crown with a reserve militia. Having obtained special dispensation in 1640 from Spain to arm the mission Guaraní, the Jesuits trained and drilled their Indian converts as military units with priests as commanders.³² The arming of the missions enabled the Jesuits to maintain their autonomy from the Paraguayan colonists. It also served the imperial interests of the Crown, which conscripted the Guaraní militia for raids against hostile Indians, attacks against the Portuguese, and the suppression of rebellious Asunción settlers.³³ In 1750, Portugal and Spain signed the Treaty of Madrid, which ceded to Portugal the lands east of the Río Uruguay, including seven populous Jesuit missions with vast estancia lands. The refusal of the Guaraní to accept Portuguese authority or leave the missions led to the Guaraní War of 1754-56, during which the Guaraní militia fought against Spanish and Portuguese troops. It ended with the defeat of

the Guaraní in a battle at the estancia of Caaíbaté on February 10, 1756, in which more than one thousand Guaraní were slaughtered by a joint Portuguese-Spanish force.³⁴

While there is little evidence that the Jesuits encouraged the mission Guaraníes to rebel against Spain or were able to prevent them from doing so, the Guaraní War bolstered claims by anti-Jesuit factions in Europe that the Paraguayan missions had become a state-within-a-state answerable only to Rome.³⁵ In concert with this growing anti-Jesuit sentiment in Europe, political intrigue and conflict between the church and state in Spain led to the Jesuits' expulsion from its colonies, including the Río de la Plata in 1767. During the 1700s, the Jesuits who had worked in the Paraguayan missions produced a large body of writing defending their evangelical aspirations. In these treatises, most of which were written after their expulsion from Spanish America, they described in detail mission life of the 1700s, attributing to the Guaraní a simple-minded natural grace in need of spiritual guidance and material discipline. Conversely, anti-Jesuit tracts written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries portrayed the mission project as pseudo-plantation slavery for profit implemented under the guise of religious piety.³⁶

The first chapter of this study addresses how the influence of the Jesuit mission project and the polemics it generated has framed the historiography of the earlier colonial period. I discuss how the historiography is divided between pro-settler and pro-Jesuit perspectives, and provide an overview of the key works on Spanish-Guaraní relations by Service, Susnik, and Roulet. In turn, I analyse how Jesuit missionary accounts from the 1600s and 1700s inform the ethnohistorical and anthropological interpretations of the autochthonous aspects of modern Guaraní culture. In so doing, I identify specific methodological concerns that are raised for the study of the transcultural dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations, which by necessity draws on ethnographic sources to interpret indigenous agency. I conclude with a brief discussion of the issues raised by the historical record of the 1500s that I am interpreting.

Chapter Two addresses the exploration of the region by Juan de Solís in 1516, and Sebastián Caboto from 1527 to 1529. The focus of this chapter is on the role castaways played as the first agents of transculturation. I also examine the significance of the accounts of a Portuguese named García, who travelled from the coast of Brazil to the Bolivian sierra in the mid-1520s,

for interpreting the dynamics of adaptation to an indigenous worldview. I argue that García's journey to the sierra was contingent on how he was perceived by his Guaraní collaborators, as the same as them or different, which is to say, Indian or European. For Caboto's journey up the Paraná, I evaluate how the alignment of castaways with an indigenous worldview produced shifting power dynamics and antagonisms between the common soldiers, indigenous collaborators, and the Spanish command.

Chapter Three concerns the events that occurred from the arrival of Pedro de Mendoza's armada in the Río de la Plata in 1535 until the arrival of Cabeza de Vaca's expedition in Asunción seven years later. I analyse how the hardships the conquistadors endured during the first few months they spent in the region at the fort of Buenos Aires produced the conditions for their receptivity to an indigenous worldview. I then analyse how the conquistadors who reached the Guaraní territory of the Carios and founded Asunción in 1537 survived by adapting to indigenous norms. The role that Europeans who were living on the coast of Brazil in the 1530s played in the establishment of *amistad y alianza* in Asunción is also addressed. The focal point of the chapter is an analysis of how Domingo Martínez de Irala established his power base by accruing prestige as a war chief among the Carios through leading raids and accepting their warrior norms, including cannibalism. I conclude by examining how the convergence of a European barter system, indigenous norms of captive-taking and raiding, Hispanic social mores, and kinship alliance obligations produced conflict as well as cooperation in the initial years of Spanish-Guaraní relations.

Chapters Four and Five focus on Cabeza de Vaca's rule of the Río de la Plata. Chapter Four analyses how the overland journey Cabeza de Vaca made from Brazil to Asunción, his altercation with two Franciscan priests, and his use of the cross to vanquish the apparition of a tiger during a joint raid he led with the Carios, reveal aspects of the Guaraní's spiritual worldview and the convergence of their beliefs with Christianity. I argue that Cabeza de Vaca's previous experience as a castaway in New Spain, during which he had survived by merging Christian and shamanistic rituals to heal indigenous peoples, enabled him both to recognize the sacred dimension of the Guaraní's worldview and to seek to exorcize its influence over the Spanish and Carios. The chapter also addresses how Cabeza de Vaca's

efforts to ensure just rule violated indigenous norms and disrupted the transcultural dynamics of the kinship alliances established between the Spanish and Carios before his arrival.

Chapter Five analyses how these alliances were further destabilized by the punitive raids Cabeza de Vaca ordered against rebellious caciques in Asunción and the uncontrolled raiding by the Cario warriors during a disastrous *entrada* he led up the Paraguay River to Puerto de los Reyes, which ended in the mutiny of conquistadors against him.

Chapters Six and Seven focus on the governorship of Domingo Martínez de Irala from 1544 to 1556. Chapter Six analyses the regional insurrection of the Carios in 1545-6, and the conquistadors' violations of indigenous norms that provoked it. The chapter focuses on how the Cario caciques initially were implicated through kinship ties in the conquistadors' infighting and the *rancheadas* that preceded the rebellion, and how shifting alliances among the Agaces, the Chaco nomad nations, the Carios, and the Spanish transformed the rebellion into an indigenous war that led to the Carios' defeat. Chapter Seven analyses how Irala's *entrada* to the sierra from 1547-49 provided the Carios the opportunity to re-affirm their warrior norms after their rebellion was brutally repressed and their women seized for personal service as a condition of their capitulation. The chapter focuses on how the necessity of the Spanish to obtain the Carios' assistance in order to mount these *entradas* was central to the transcultural dynamics of Irala's governance and indigenous alliances—with the 1547-49 *entrada* increasing his power base in Asunción as a war chief and the *mala entrada* of 1553 eroding his prestige among the Carios and his authority over the conquistadors. The chapter also addresses how mestizos were increasingly important as the agents of transculturation. Mestizos from Brazil and their children were instrumental in spearheading *rancheadas* against Guarani villages east of Asunción. The mestizo children of the Carios and the conquistadors were central to maintaining kinship alliances, and in the case of Irala, controlling his conquistador rivals by arranging for them to marry his mestiza daughters.

Chapter Eight analyses how shifting power relations that resulted from the predominance of *mestizaje* in Asunción and the imposition of the *encomienda* in 1556 produced widespread indigenous unrest, new hierarchies of cultural identification, and social and gendered dimensions of colonial exploitation by 1580. Chapter Nine concludes the study with an analysis of how Asunción's cultural and racial *mestizaje* was mirrored in the conflation of

Christian and shamanistic worldviews in the Oberá uprising of 1579. It suggests how the study of the transcultural dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations can serve to link the history of the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata to the later Jesuit period. While the Jesuit evangelization project in the Río de la Plata, by virtue of its scale and ambition, dominates the colonial history of the Río de la Plata, it need not do so. Indeed the early colonial period serves an important, and arguably, subversive role in unsettling the internal coherence of the Jesuit historiography. While the Jesuits portray the Guaraní as the passive and spiritually pliable subjects of their evangelization, this study demonstrates that they were a proud and fierce nation, whose warrior ethos was essential to their identity. While the Jesuits claimed their missions were a spiritual refuge free from the contaminating influences of *mestizaje*, this study demonstrates how the entanglement of spiritual worldviews already had occurred before their arrival. In so doing, this study proposes an interpretative framework for analysing the later Jesuit evangelization of the region, one that accounts for a complex site of negotiation between Guaraní and Jesuit that acknowledges rather than elides the earlier history of Spanish-Guaraní relations.

Endnotes.

1. Until 1617, colonial Río de la Plata encompassed present-day Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and south-western Brazil.
2. The *encomienda* system granted Spanish colonists the right to the labour tribute of indigenous males over the age of fifteen within a defined geographical area, usually controlled by a cacique, for a certain number of days a year. It was open to great abuse and often amounted to tacit slavery. For an overview of the *encomienda* and its evolution as a colonial institution, see Charles Gibson, *Spain in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 48-67; and John Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 100-108.
3. For the early colonial period, letters, documents and *relaciones* have been published in various collections. The most significant are *Documentos históricos y geográficos relativos a la conquista y colonización rioplatense* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Casa J. Peuser, 1941), herein referred to as DHG; *Cartas de Indias* (Madrid: Ministerio de Fomento, Imprenta de Manuel G. Hernández, 1877), herein referred to as CI; Blas Garay, *Colección de documentos relativos a la historia de América y particularmente á la historia del Paraguay* (Asunción: Talleres Kraus, 1899), herein referred to as BG; Roberto Levillier, *Correspondencia de los oficiales Reales de hacienda del Río de la Plata con los reyes de España* (Madrid: Est. Tip. "Sucesores de Rivadeneyra," 1915), herein referred to as COR. A large number of letters and documents

transcribed from the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain, are housed in the Colección Gaspar García Viñas in the Biblioteca Nacional de la República Argentina. I worked with the Viñas collection for my research. As a large number of documents have been published, I have made every effort to provide a published citation for the document when possible.

4. In Bronislaw Malinowski's introduction to Fernando Ortiz's *Cuban Counterpoint*, he applauds Ortiz's decision to invent the term "transculturation" to distinguish a process of cultural mixing from the anthropological concept of acculturation, which Malinowski describes as "an ethnocentric word with a moral connotation," Ortiz, viii. For Ortiz's definition of transculturation see *Cuban Counterpoint* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 97-103.
5. Ortiz, *Cuban Counterpoint*, 3-93.
6. Ángel Rama, *Transculturación narrativa en América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno, 1982), 11-57.
7. Mary Louise Pratt. *Imperial Eyes: Studies in Travel Writing and Transculturation*. (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 5.
8. Ibid., 10-11.
9. Elman Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971); Branislava Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay II: Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes* (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero, 1979-1980); Florencia Roulet, *La resistencia de los Guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista Español (1537-1556)* (Posadas, Misiones: Universidad Nacional de Misiones, 1993).
10. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 392.
11. The Agaces (Agaz in the singular) are the same as the Payaguás. Alfred Métraux, "Ethnography of the Chaco," in Julian H. Steward, ed., *Handbook of the South American Indians*. vol. 3. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963), herein referred to as HSAI, 224. For an overview of the indigenous presence of the Guaycurú and related groups in Paraguay and Argentina during the colonial period see Métraux, HSAI I, 197-370 and Branislava Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnología del Chaco boreal y su periferia (siglos XVI y XVII)* (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero, 1978).
12. For an archaeological overview and ethnohistorical data on the Guaraní, see Francisco de Aparicio, "The Archeology of the Paraná River," HSAI III, 57-80; Métraux, "The Guaraní," HSAI III, 73-74.
13. Robert H. Lowie, "The Tropical Forests; An Introduction," HSAI III, 2; Leon Cadogan, *La literatura de los Guaraníes* (México: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1965), 14; Susnik, *Etnohistoria del los Guaraníes*, 9.

14. Julien H. Steward estimated that 200,000 Guaraní-speaking people inhabited Paraguay and Brazil in 1500, HSAI V, 659. Pierre Clastres subsequently argued that there were upwards of one million Guaranies occupying 350,000 square kilometres east of the Paraguay River to the Brazilian Coast, *Society Against the State* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 94-95. Jan M. G. Kleinpenning states that there were never more than 300,000 to 400,000 Guaranies in this same region, *Paraguay 1515-1870: A Thematic Geography of its Development*, vol. 1 (Madrid and Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2003), 113.

15. Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay*, 15; J. M. G. Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870: A Thematic Geography of its Development*, vol. 1, 114-120.

16. I am borrowing this phrase from Florencia Roulet, who notes that the first period of contact from 1537 to 1556 has been “defined various times as one of friendship and alliance.” *La resistencia de los Guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista Español (1537-1556)*, 11.

17. The first reference to Asunción as Mohamed’s paradise is found in Francisco González Paniagua’s letter to the King, dated March 3, 1545. DHG: II, 49.

18. Julián María Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata: Siglos XVI y XVII* (Barcelona: Salvat, 1942); Enrique de Gandía, *Indios y conquistadores en el Paraguay; Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay: los gobiernos de don Pedro de Mendoza, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca y Domingo de Irala, 1535-1556* (Buenos Aires: A. García Santos. 1935); and Efraím Cardozo, *El Paraguay colonial. Las raíces de la nacionalidad* (Buenos Aires- Asunción: Ediciones Nizza, 1959) and *El Paraguay de la conquista* (Asunción: El Lector, 1996)

19. This *Real Cédula*, dated September 12, 1537, was issued by Charles V to ensure that there was a successor to Pedro de Mendoza, the first *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata, who died en route back to Spain in May 1537. Alonso de Cabrera, who was the *veedor* or royal inspector, arrived from Spain with a small supply ship in Asunción in the fall of 1538. The *Real Cédula* is published in DHG II: 149.

20. Efraím Cardoso writes that of the early governors, “Domingo de Irala was the most astute, patient, and persistent in his glorious capacity to discover the secret of the conquest that the Guaraní needed to be conquered not only with force but also with the gentle but irresistible thrust of love,” *El Paraguay colonial. Las raíces de la nacionalidad*, 64.

21. There are many modern editions of the *relación* known as *Naufraios*, first published in 1555. I am using Manuel Serrano y Sanz, *Relación de los naufragios y comentarios Relación de los naufragios y comentarios* vol. 1 (Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez, 1906).

22. *Adelantado* was an official appointed by the Spanish Crown to *conquistar y poblar* (conquer and settle) new lands through a contractual relationship in which he self-financed the expedition in return for an expectation of a share of wealth, usually silver and gold. These contracts were quite specific, outlining how many forts or settlements could be established and

who could engage in trade. During the later colonial period, *adelantado* also referred to the governor of an outpost or frontier province.

23. Pero Hernández, *Comentarios*, in Serrano y Sanz, *Relación de los naufragios y comentarios*, vol. 1

24. An archival document, “*Memoria de la Gente quell dia de oy se tiene por ser y son bibos en las provincias de los rios de la plata, paraguay y parana,*” records the number of conquistadors surviving from the various expeditions from Spain and the population of the Río de la Plata in 1556. It lists 514 names of Europeans residing in the Río de la Plata and 3000 *mancebos de la tierra* or mestizos. Published in R. de Lafuente Machain, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala* (Buenos Aires: Bernabé y Cia, 1939), 525-534. According to Richard Konetzke, there were no more than 300 Spanish at any one time in the 16th century in the Río de la Plata, almost exclusively male. Cited in Louis Necker, *Indios guaraníes y chamanes Franciscanos* (Asunción: Biblioteca Paraguaya de Antropología, 1990), 32.

25. The division of Río de la Plata into two provinces had been advocated by a number of Crown officials in the region since the late 1500s. It was confirmed by royal decree on December 16, 1617, and implemented in 1621. Rubio, *Exploración y Conquista del Río de la Plata*, 573-577.

26. For an overview of trade in the early colonial period, see Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870: a thematic geography of its development* vol. 2, 1323-1338. Also see Adalberto Lopéz, *The Revolt of the Comuñeros. 1721-1735* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1977), 26-27.

27. For an overview of the *bandeirantes*’ incursions into Paraguay, see John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (London: Papermac, 1995), 241-287. For the later colonial period, see Hal Langfur, *The Forbidden Lands: Colonial Identity, Frontier Violence, and the Persistence of Brazil’s Eastern Indians. 1750-1839* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 2006).

28. The Jesuit Martin Dobrizhoffer provides this figure based on census records in *An Account of the Abipones. An Equestrian People of Paraguay*, vol. 3 (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1970), 417. Detailed census records housed in the National Archives of Argentina confirm the validity of Dobrizhoffer’s numbers. Barbara Ganson has published a graph of mission Guaraní demographics in *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 54, based on research by Argentine historian Ernesto Maeder. For an overview of the missions, see Guillermo Furlong, *Misiones y sus pueblos de Guaraníes* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Teoría, 1962). The key primary sources for the mature mission period of the 1700s include Antón Sepp, *Relación de viaje de las misiones jesuíticas*, first published in German in 1691; José Cardiel, *Declaración de la verdad*, first published in Latin in 1758; José Manuel Peramás, *La República de Platón y los guaraníes*, first published in Latin in 1791; José Sanchez Labrador, *El Paraguay Natural* (in manuscript form in the Archivum Historicum Societatis Iseu in Rome) and *El Paraguay católico*, written in the 1770s and first published in 1910; and Martín Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones*, first published in Latin and German in 1784, and then translated into English in 1822. For an

economic analysis of the Jesuit missions see Teresa Blumer, *La Contabilidad en la Reducciones Guaraníes*. (Asunción: CEADUC, 1992). Also see Rafael Carbonell de Masy, *Estrategías de desarrollo rural en los pueblos Guaraníes (1609-1767)* (Barcelona: Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, 1992).

29. Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones. An Equestrian People of Paraguay*, vol. 3, 418. The specific number cited is 702,086.

30. Dobrizhoffer notes that the population of the missions throughout the 1700s was maintained at about 100,000, with small pox and other European diseases the main cause of declining numbers after 1732. Dobrizhoffer, *An Account of the Abipones. An Equestrian People of Paraguay*, vol. 3, 418.

31. Ernesto Maeder and Ramón Gutiérrez. *Atlas histórico del nordeste Argentino*. (Resistencia: Instituto de Investigaciones Geohistóricas de CONICET, 1995), 56.

32. This dispensation was obtained by the Jesuit Antonio Ruiz de Montoya during time spent at the Spanish court in Madrid from 1637 to 1641. C.J. McNaspy, Introduction to Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, *The Spiritual Conquest Accomplished by the Religious of the Society of Jesus in the Provinces of Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay and Tape* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1993), 11-24.

33. As auxiliary troops, the Guaraní were used in the defence of Buenos Aires in 1697 and 1701, and offensively in an attack on the Portuguese fort of Colônia do Sacramento in 1704. Carbonell de Masy, *Estrategías de desarrollo rural en los pueblos Guaraníes 1609-1767*, 355-61. For an overview of economic tensions between the Asunción settlers and the Jesuits see López, *The Revolt of the Comuneros*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1977), 50-57. For the mature period of the Jesuit missions, also see Magnus Mörner, *Political and Economic Activities of the Jesuits in the La Plata Region: The Hapsburg Era* (Stockholm: Victor Petersens Bokindustri, 1953).

34. This treaty was the culmination of negotiations between the two countries resulting from wars of succession fought during the first half of the 1700s. The treaty sought to replace the ambiguous Tordesillas demarcation line of 1494 with recognition of de facto territorial occupation. Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, 89-91. Ganson provides the most comprehensive description of the Guaraní wars in the English-language scholarship, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule*, 91-116. She provides a brief historiographical overview of the subject, of which the most recent contribution is Rejane da Silveira Several, *A guerra guaraníca* (Porto Alegre: Martins Livreiro, 1995).

35. The accusations of the Jesuits' "state-within-a-state" were fueled by rumours that the rebellion was instigated by a seditious cacique who, encouraged by the Jesuits, anointed himself King Nicolás I of Paraguay. According to Felix Becker, news of the exploits of King Nicolás first appeared in a newspaper in Amsterdam in 1755, and was then diffused in pamphlet form by 1756. Becker, *Un mito jesuítico Nicolás I Rey del Paraguay* (Asunción: Talleres de Industrial Gráfica Comuneros, 1987), 34-41. In actuality, King Nicolás was Nicolás Ñenguirú, a cacique from the mission town of Concepción, who sent letters of protest

affirming Guaraní loyalty to the Spanish Crown and led the Guaraní in the last fateful battle at Caaíbaté. See Becker, 95-125, and Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*, 91-116.

Dobrizhoffer, who was based in the Río de la Plata at the time, writes that “at the very same time when the feigned king of Paraguay employed every mouth and press in Europe, I saw this Nicolás Ñenguirú, with naked feet, and garments after the Indian fashion, sometimes driving cattle before the shambles, sometimes chopping wood in the market-place; and when I considered him and his occupation, could hardly refrain from laughing.” *An Account of the Abipones* I: 28. An English translation of one of Ñenguirú’s letters is published in Kenneth Mills, William B. Taylor, and Sandra Lauderdale Graham, eds. *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002), 309-313.

36. For an overview and selection of various interpretations of the missions, see Magnus Mörner, *The Expulsion of the Jesuits from Latin America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965). Jesuits writing in exile after their expulsion from Paraguay whose work addressed the accusations against the Order include José Cardiel, Martín Dobrizhoffer, Florian Paucke, José Peramás, and José Sánchez Labrador.

Chapter One: Settlers, Jesuits, and the Guaraní: Historiographical Considerations.

Overall, the historiography for the colonial period of the Río de la Plata divides along a chronological fault-line of before and after the arrival of the Jesuits, in which the grand sweep of history is animated by either the heroic men of conquest or the Jesuit mission project—as if chronicling the great men and ideal communities of Hegel’s universal world spirit. On one side of this divide are the studies of conquistadors as the founders of nations and cities, exemplified by Paul Groussac’s two-volume biography of Pedro de Mendoza and Juan de Garay, *Mendoza y Garay*, Enrique de Gandía’s *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay: los gobiernos de don Pedro de Mendoza, Álvár Núñez y Domingo de Irala*, and Ricardo de Lafuente Machaín’s *El gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*.¹ On the other side are mission histories produced by Jesuit scholars, and those sympathetic to their evangelical enterprise, of exemplary Christian communities led by priests of exceptional spiritual vision.² Historians of the conquest claim for Asunción the origin of the region’s *mestizaje* and the peaceful fusion of races. Jesuit scholars claim for the missions the protection of the Guaraní from settler exploitation and their salvation as a distinct ethnic identity. Rarely do these two narratives of colonization coincide. The most comprehensive history of the region’s early colonial period, *Exploración and conquista del Río de la Plata: Siglos XVI y XVII*, written by Julián María Rubio and published in 1942, traces in detail the lives and exploits of important conquistadors and governors while devoting a scant sixteen out of eight-hundred pages to the Jesuit missions.³ Conversely, the Jesuit Guillermo Furlong’s encyclopedic inventory of the mission project, *Misiones y sus pueblos Guaraníes*, an eight-hundred page tome published in 1962, sums up the colonization of the region preceding the arrival of the Jesuits with a single line from an eighteenth-century Jesuit source describing the conquistadors of Asunción as “*hombres sin ley y sin rey, sin Dios y sin moral, como paganos o bárberiscos*—men without law or king, God or morality, like pagans or Berber Moors.”⁴

This chapter identifies the issues that arise from a historiography that is either pro-settler or pro-Jesuit in orientation, and locates my study as a departure from viewing the Spanish and the

Guaraní, *mestizaje* and indigenous salvation, in opposite terms. I begin by tracing the ideological and political factors that led to the formation of this historiographical divide, and how it has shaped the regional and nationalist histories of Paraguay and Argentina. Second, I compare the histories of the conquest era by regional historians to anthropological and sociological approaches to the study of Spanish-Guaraní relations. Third, I analyse the influence of the Jesuit historiography in representing Guaraní spirituality. In turn, I trace how Jesuit missionary writings about the Guaraní in the 1600s and 1700s have informed ethnohistorical and anthropological interpretations of the autochthonous aspects of Guaraní culture. This leads to the identification of specific methodological concerns that are raised for my study of Guaraní-Spanish relations, in which I draw on both Jesuit missionary writings and contemporary anthropology to interpret indigenous agency in the historical record. I conclude with a discussion of how European agency is reflected in the historical record.

In part, the origins of the historiographical divide between settler and Jesuit lie in the Asunción settlers' own antipathy towards the Jesuits. Initially welcomed in Paraguay in anticipation of their potential to pacify rebellious Indian factions, the Jesuits were soon resented as they began to appropriate economic resources and gain political influence through their spiritual mission project. Animosity arose over the Jesuits' protection of mission Guaraní from the settlers' demand for indigenous labour, and their negotiation of preferential trading agreements with the Crown.⁵ Conflicts between the Jesuits and the settlers, which led to the Jesuits' expulsion from Asunción on several occasions, also involved the church hierarchy. The first confrontation in the 1620s involved the Dominican bishop, Tomás de Torres, who closed the Jesuits' college in 1622. Subsequently, a Franciscan bishop, Bernardino de Cárdenas, expelled the Jesuits from Asunción in 1649. This led to a pitched battle between the Asunción settlers and the mission Guaraní, who defeated the settler militia.⁶ The most dramatic military confrontation occurred during the Comunero Revolt of the 1720s, in which the Asunción rebels fought Guaraní mission armies on more than one occasion.⁷

By the late nineteenth century, these earlier conflicts were framed historically as a confrontation between religious tyranny and the values of individual liberalism. Blas Garay, who collected and published a substantial number of colonial primary sources, wrote a scathing denunciation of the Jesuits in his 1876 polemic *El Comunismo de las misiones*.⁸

Describing the mission priests as meddling fanatical emissaries of Rome driven by an unbridled thirst for power, he writes:

They who were at first unselfish and humble missionaries became the ambitious rulers of the towns who little by little shook off all the natural laws to which they should have been subject. They concerned themselves with accumulating material wealth to the detriment of their Christian and civilizing mission. They persecuted those who sought to end their abuses or tried to combat their influence. They mastered the wills of the governors and bishops, sometimes the latter owed their position to the Jesuits, then again, perhaps greed and the promise of rich profits converted them to devotees. And finally, they turned their republic into a vast collective society of production. Shielded by the great privileges they had been able to obtain, they ruined the province of Paraguay, to whose worthy inhabitants they owed recognition for so many ideas ...⁹

In 1904, the Argentine writer Leopoldo Lugones wrote in *El imperio jesuítico* that the missions were organized on three fundamental principles: “communism, absolute authoritarianism, and the renunciation of individualism.”¹⁰ Later works by Paraguayan historians such as Efraím Cardoso, while less strident in tone than Garay and Lugones, echo their tirade against the Jesuit *imperium in imperio*, arguing that the Comunero Revolt of the Asunción settlers was an uprising for civil liberties and a blow against a Jesuit theocracy.¹¹

The Jesuits’ segregation of the mission Guaraní from mestizo settlers was another defining factor in shaping the anti-Jesuit sentiment in the historiography of the colonial period. At the same time as the Jesuits prided themselves on protecting the Guaraní from the contaminating influences of *mestizaje*, Paraguay’s dominant narrative of nation-building is one of the Guaraní’s voluntary submission to and racial mixing with the Spanish conquistadors. Argentine and Paraguayan historians writing about a colonial past their countries share stress the exceptional and peaceful nature of the Hispanic-Guaraní *alianza y amistad* in Asunción, and treat rebellions against the Spanish presence as isolated and atypical incidents, if they mention them at all. For example, the Argentine historian Rubio asserts in *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata: Siglos XVI y XVII* that the “truly extraordinary” conquest of Paraguay

owes its source above all to the special psychology of the Guaraní people. By virtue of the Hispanic-Guaraní alliance there emerged a spontaneous indigenous cooperation ranging from an economic one, with constant agricultural contributions, to a personal one, in which a regime of servitude was established through the delivery of Indian women to the Spanish.¹²

Similar to Rubio, the Argentine historian Enrique de Gandía, who published a number of important studies on the sixteenth-century Río de la Plata in the 1930s and 1940s, promulgates the founding ethos of the conquest as the peaceful fusion of races between Guaraní women and Spanish men.¹³ Claiming for the Asunción conquistadors the civilizing role of having “humanized and Christianized these female savages,”¹⁴ Gandía argues that many of the sources for the early colonial period exaggerate the degree and incidences of Spanish violence against the Guaraní.¹⁵ Nevertheless, his case-study on Spanish-Guaraní relations, *Indios y conquistadores en el Paraguay*, ends up serving as an inventory of the abuse and exploitation of indigenous women by the Spanish recorded in the primary sources, while his examples of a humanizing influence are notably absent. Also absent from his studies of the conquest period are the numerous Guaraní rebellions documented in the historical record.

While Argentina shares with Paraguay the legacy of the early colonial experience in Asunción, the political division of the Río de la Plata in 1617 has led to divergent nationalist histories. In contrast to the peaceful mixing of races that became the founding ethos of the Paraguayan nation, Argentina’s narratives of state-formation were marked by an ideological rupture between the colonial and modern eras, in which an urban cosmopolitanism was posited against the rural barbarity of the vanquished and vanishing Indian. The Argentine nation effectively begins with the Independence Wars of the early 1800s and the centralization of power by the port city of Buenos Aires. The dominant intellectual and political class of the nineteenth century — of whom Domingo Sarmiento, the author of *Facundo: civilización y barbarie* (1845) and president of Argentina from 1868-74, is representative — predicated the making of the nation on the civilizing influence of Europe and an antipathy for the Indians, mestizos, gauchos, and their caudillo leaders of the older colonial provinces of the littoral and northern Argentina.¹⁶ Within this Eurocentric conception of *la patria*, Asunción’s *mestizaje* as the

origin of the nation and the transcultural aspects of Argentina's colonial past were relegated to a shadowy historical corner, subsumed by the march of progress enacted through the annihilation of the Pampa Indians in the Desert Wars of the mid-1800s and the massive European immigration to Buenos Aires from the 1880s to 1914.¹⁷

In the current historiography of Argentina, a number of political factors have deflected attention from a critical re-evaluation of the early colonial period and focused it instead on the twentieth century. These include the continuing domination of Buenos Aires to the detriment of the northern highland and north-east littoral provinces; the divisive influence of Peronism as a twentieth-century populist movement; and the tragic legacy of the military dictatorship and state terror from 1976-83.¹⁸ The absence of a revisionist scholarship in Paraguay reflects the turbulence of its own post-independence history, in which cycles of devastating wars and repressive dictatorships have led to its geopolitical isolation, impoverishment, and the stultification of academic research.¹⁹ As a result, the relative scarcity of contemporary scholarly work on the early colonial period of Río de la Plata, whether by national historians or more broadly in the Latin American field, is striking in comparison to the number of recent historical studies on indigenous-European encounters and the dynamics of colonialism and resistance in the Caribbean, Mexico, Brazil, and Peru.²⁰

By seeking to redress the lack of attention paid to the Río de la Plata in the current historiography of colonial Latin America, I am also concerned with countering how the colonial legacy of *mestizaje* is represented by Paraguay's and Argentina's nationalist histories. In response to Rubio's and Gandía's claims for the spontaneous indigenous cooperation of the Guaraní as the origin of Paraguay's mestizo culture, I argue that this cooperation did not reflect submission to Spanish rule, but rather was a consequence of the conquistadors' adaptation to indigenous norms. I further argue that this entanglement of worldviews challenges a historiography that emphasizes the civilizing mission of the Spanish in Paraguay, or in the case of Argentina banishes the Indian from historical purview.

While political and social histories written from the 1930s to the 1960s still dominate the historiography of the early colonial period, recent studies written from an anthropological perspective or about the evangelization of the region challenge their narrative of conquest as a

peaceful fusion of races. Published in 1979, Louis Necker's *Indios guaraníes y chamanes franciscanos* was the first missionary history to enumerate the numerous Guaraní rebellions recorded in the primary documents.²¹ The primary objective of Necker's study is to prove that the Franciscans who came from Peru in the 1580s and founded reductions in the vicinity of Asunción preceded the Jesuits as the first spiritual pacifiers of the Guaraní, and were the first priests to be identified with their shamans. As a consequence, he does not analyse these rebellions, which primarily occurred before 1580, but rather compiles evidence of their frequency to emphasize the success of the Franciscans' evangelization efforts. Following Necker's lead in enumerating these rebellions, Florencia Roulet focuses on their dynamics in her anthropological study of the conquest period, *La resistencia de los Guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista español 1537-1556*, published in 1993. Drawing on virtually the same sources as Gandía, she analyses how the Guaraní resisted the arrival of the Spanish in the region through military confrontation as well as making alliances with them.²²

Branislava Susnik, a self-taught ethnographer who lived in Asunción and wrote extensively on the indigenous cultures of Paraguay during the 1970s and 1980s, also argues that Guaraní-Spanish relations during the early colonial period were conflictive rather than peaceful. Her *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes. Época colonial* presents a dense ethnohistorical panorama of the Guaraní at the time of the conquest in order to analyze their responses to the "colonial models of the Hispanic-Christian domination."²³ Susnik presents the racial mixing that occurred between the Spanish and the Guaraní in the first years of contact from an indigenous perspective of warfare rather than a Hispanic perception of submission. She transposes the *amistad y alianza*, whereby the conquistadors incorporated indigenous women into Spanish culture as concubines and servants, with the ethnographic concept of *mbyá-ización*, in which the Guaraní incorporated the Spanish into their social structures through a female lineage in order to increase their warrior capacity and territorial expansion.²⁴ As Necker rightly notes, Susnik's anthropological focus excludes a consideration of the colonial dynamics of the Europeans.²⁵ In this respect, I draw and expand upon Susnik's anthropological insights to argue that her concept of *mbyá-ización* is equally applicable to an analysis of how the conquistadors adapted to and negotiated indigenous norms.

Whether written from the Eurocentric perspective of Gandía or from the ethnographic viewpoint of Roulet or Susnik, these accounts of the early colonial period share the premise that a racial *mestizaje* was instrumental to the acculturation of the Guaraní and their submission to Spanish rule. As an anthropologist concerned with the fate of autochthonous culture, Roulet attributes the failure of the Guaraní to “preserve their status as warriors, the defence of their liberty, their culture and their way of life,”²⁶ to the defeat of their rebellions, racial mixing with the conquistadors, and the imposition of the *encomienda* system in 1556 that led to the Guaraní’s adaptation of European-style *pueblos de indios* (Indian towns), agricultural techniques, and the colonial exploitation of indigenous labour.²⁷ She dates, as does Necker, the end of Guaraní resistance in the region to “the foundations of the first Franciscan reductions in the 1580s, and above all the Jesuit missions between 1610 and 1630, which had as their end result the definitive pacification of a convulsive space and a population in a permanent state of war.”²⁸ Susnik also claims for both settler and Jesuit a shared objective of pacifying the Guaraní and eradicating their identity as *avá-katú-eté* (true people) with a new Christian civilization that was successful by 1640.²⁹ She argues that the Spanish settlers engaged in violence but condoned some indigenous customs in the *tavá-pueblos* (*encomienda* or Indian towns) while the Jesuits gently conquered with the cross but did not tolerate deviation from Christian norms.³⁰

Distinct from Susnik’s and Roulet’s analysis of acculturation as a dual process of settler exploitation and Jesuit evangelization, Elman Service’s 1954 *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay* identifies the economic institution of the *encomienda* as acculturation’s central mechanism. The “true Paraguayan,” writes Service, “was, and is, a mestizo with a distinctive national language and culture.”³¹ He argues that the colonial dynamics of this mestizo culture have been overshadowed on the one hand by the focus on the “men and events of conquest”³² to the exclusion of cultural and social factors, and on the other by the exaggerated influence of the Jesuit missions in protecting the Guaraní from acculturation.³³ To this end, Service analyses the formative process of *mestizaje* as “concomitant with the mutual adjustments of the Iberian and native people”³⁴ by stressing the importance of the *encomienda* in producing the “rapid loss of Indian social and cultural integrity” and the “rapid amalgamation of the Indian into a colonial society.”³⁵

To support his argument, Service divides the colonization of Paraguay into three distinct phases. The first from 1537 to 1556 is exploratory, demarcated by an initial racial mixing and the formalization of labour relations through the *encomienda* system. The second from 1556-1580 is transitional, distinguished by the ascendancy of the mestizos and the consolidation of the *encomienda* towns. The third from 1580-1812 is colonial, during which the Guaraní were assimilated into Spanish society. In his analysis of this third phase, Service effectively merges the racialist narrative of conquest with a semi-feudal economic paternalism to claim a pacifist lineage for Paraguay's mestizo society. Perhaps what is most striking about Service's assimilationist position is his perception of what constitutes exceptions to acculturation. He asserts that Spanish colonial rule led to the "replacement of much of Guaraní culture, with the exception of language, the role of women, certain food crops and cookery, and perhaps a few miscellaneous items of folklore and superstition."³⁶

Service's "exceptions" to colonial rule are central to my study of transculturation, in which I identify language, the role of women, and superstition as symptomatic of transcultural dynamics shaped by the interplay of signs, gender norms, and spiritual beliefs as well as the racial dimensions of *mestizaje*. While I concur with Service and Roulet that the imposition of the *encomienda* in 1556 marks a shift in Guaraní-Spanish relations, I argue against Service's assessment of the period from 1556 to 1580 as one of consolidation of a mestizo settler society based on the colonial exploitation of indigenous labour. Instead, I demonstrate how the *encomienda* continued to reflect the influence of indigenous norms, and how the Guaraní incorporated elements of a Hispanic-Christian worldview through their resistance to colonial rule. In this respect, while Service views the Jesuit evangelization project as distinct from a process of *mestizaje*, my study of the earlier period addresses how *mestizaje* encompassed the spiritual realm. I analyse how the Franciscans who arrived in the Río de la Plata in the 1540s were the spiritual agents of transculturation, adapting to rather than negating an indigenous worldview. In turn, I analyse the Oberá rebellion of 1579-80 as evidence of an ongoing process of cultural contestation. Here, I explore the ways in which the tactical merger of warrior norms and inversion of Christian spiritual practices was the product of *mestizaje* rather than a rebellion against it. In so doing, I argue against an interpretative framework of acculturation that emphasizes either Spanish domination or Jesuit evangelization, or both. Instead, my use of transculturation as an interpretative lens points toward the possibility that

the Jesuits whom Susnik identifies as the spiritual taskmasters of the Guaraní's oppression may have been more tolerant of a spiritual *mestizaje* than their accounts reveal, with mission towns integrating aspects of the Guaraní's warrior culture and shamanistic traditions.

The most recent book-length study of colonial Spanish-Guaraní relations, *The Guaraní Under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, written by Barbara Ganson and published in 2003, also employs transculturation as an interpretative framework. Ganson's study responds directly to Service's assimilationist position by analysing indigenous agency in the Jesuit missions of the 1700s. Taking an opposite tack to Service, who addressed the acculturation of the Guaraní through the *encomienda* villages, Ganson focuses on the mission towns to argue that "Guaraní native culture did not simply fade away" but "showed great resilience in resisting and adjusting to the encroachment of Europeans."³⁷ In the context of Ganson's concern to highlight indigenous agency, my study of the earlier colonial period complements her analysis of a later period in several aspects, but differs in its engagement with the process of transculturation. Ganson defines transculturation as the process by which "colonized peoples selected and invented new traditions from the materials or elements introduced to them by a more dominant European culture"³⁸ to demonstrate how the active role that the Guaraní played in the Jesuit missions reveals "the persistence of native culture and its alterations by the end of the colonial period."³⁹ In so doing, her concern is both to acknowledge the Jesuit evangelization project as a unique spiritual and social experiment, and to challenge the Jesuit mission historiography in which the Guaraní figure as passive neophytes and the priests as paternalistic protectors. I consider the process of transculturation as a multi-faceted convergence and contestation of European and indigenous worldviews in which all the historical actors—the Guaraní, the conquistadors, castaways, mestizos, and priests—were subject to cultural transformation.

While the scope of my study does not include the historical period of the missions, Ganson's historiographic contribution highlights just how vigilantly the Jesuits guarded the evangelization history in which they participated. To a large degree, the Jesuits have controlled the representation of the Guaraní as spiritual wards whom they sheltered from colonial oppression from the first documentation of their missionary activity in the 1600s to their role as consultants on the 1986 Hollywood film *The Mission*.⁴⁰ This vigilance has resulted in a burgeoning secondary literature that is largely sympathetic to their enterprise. As a separate

field of inquiry, the twentieth-century historiography on the Paraguayan missions ranges from serious archival undertakings by Jesuit scholars, such as Pablo Hernández's 1913 *Organización social de las doctrinas guaraníes de la Compañía de Jesús* and Furlong's already cited *Misiones y sus pueblos Guaraníes* (1962), to narrative accounts verging on hagiography.⁴¹ Graham Cunninghame's *A Vanished Arcadia: Being Some Account of the Jesuits in Paraguay, 1607-1767*, published in 1901, offers an idealized panorama of the missions as a socialist arcadia.⁴² Philip Caraman's *The Lost Paradise*, published in 1975, presents a similar narrative of social and religious harmony.⁴³ More recent publications intended for a general audience range from Sélim Abou's lavishly illustrated coffee-table book, *The Jesuit Republic of the Guaraní (1609-1768) and its Heritage*, to Lucía Gálvez's *Vida cotidiana guaraníes* and Rúben Barbeiro Saguier's *Tentación de la utopía*, which are collections of excerpts from Jesuit colonial sources.⁴⁴ On the scholarly front, the Argentine historian Ernesto Maeder has been central in organizing international symposia on the missions in the 1980s and 1990s, and has produced a number of empirically-orientated studies, including *Misiones del Paraguay. Conflicto y disolución de la sociedad Guaraní* and *Pueblos de indios y misiones jesuíticas*.⁴⁵ What this range of literature shares is an acceptance of the Jesuit archive as an authoritative and transparent resource of information.

While specific case studies by Maxime Haubert and Bartomeu Melià on the Jesuits' evangelization of the Guaraní are more critical of the paternalistic biases of the historical documentation, they do not question the effectiveness of the mission project. Rather, paralleling the historiography of the earlier colonial period that emphasizes how the Guaraní's "special psychology" led to their "spontaneous cooperation" with the Spanish, Haubert and Melià stress the Guaraní's uniquely spiritual nature and receptivity to Christianity. Haubert's *La vie quotidienne des indiens des jésuites du Paraguay au temps des missions*, first published in 1967, is the first study to address the convergence of the Guaraní spiritual beliefs and Jesuit evangelization. Haubert argues that the Guaraní's receptivity to the mission project stemmed from their perception of the Jesuits as powerful shamans whose preaching converted them to the true spiritual path of Christianity.⁴⁶ Melià's scholarship on the Guaraní emphasizes that their religiosity is "the essential form of their identity."⁴⁷ A Spanish Jesuit and specialist in comparative religion and linguistics, Melià has lived in Paraguay since the 1970s except for periods of involuntary exile during the Stroessner regime. His extensive fieldwork with the

Guaraní as well as archival research on the colonial period has opened the field of mission history to an ethnographic perspective. His most important publications include *El Guaraní - conquistado y reducido*, a collection of essays on the Guaraní's relations with the Spanish and the Jesuits during the colonial period; *El Guaraní - experiencia religiosa* (1991), an ethnographic study of contemporary spiritual beliefs and practices; and *La lengua guaraní del Paraguay* (1992), a linguistic analysis of the colonial and contemporary Guaraní language.⁴⁸

Like Haubert, I address the convergences that occurred between the Guaraní's shamanistic practices and Christian evangelization. However, in contradistinction to his analysis of the spiritually receptive Guaraní whose shamanistic superstitions were vanquished by the spirit of God, I account for the possibility of a much more reciprocal and contested site of spiritual power and cultural inversion that occurred long before the Jesuits' arrival. Similarly, I share with Melià a concern with the linguistic and ethnographic dimensions of evangelization, but differ from his assessment of the religiosity of the Guaraní as innate and a priori. Instead, I consider how this spirituality evolved during the early colonial period in relation to the material dimensions of indigenous warfare and the cultural dimensions of *mestizaje* to argue that the Guaraní's warrior ethos is as integral as their shamanistic rituals to an understanding of their spiritual worldview.

While the secondary literature on the missions has shaped a popular perception and scholarly conception of the mission Guaraníes as a uniquely spiritual, the Jesuits' writings from the mission period have had as significant a role in shaping the historical and modern ethnography of the Guaraní. To a large degree, modern anthropology has relied on Jesuit missionary sources for insights into what constitutes the Guaraní's autochthonous culture and pre-conversion cosmology. In part, this reliance stems from the lack of other sources of information. The Guaraní left no pre-conquest Mixtec codices or Quechua *kipus* (or *quipus*) to decipher.⁴⁹ There also exist no post-conquest texts as expansive as Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala's *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno* (1615), which tells the history of the Incas and their submission to Spanish rule in Peru from an indigenous perspective, or the Franciscan Bernardino de Sahagún's encyclopaedic documentation of Aztec culture produced by Nahuatl scholars at Texcoco in central Mexico.⁵⁰ The few archaeological traces of funeral and water urns, shards of pottery and everyday utensils, reveal little of the social norms of the Guaraní

and even less of their cosmology before the arrival of the Europeans. As a result, pioneering anthropologists, such as Alfred Métraux, compared their fieldwork findings with colonial Jesuit sources to identify what constitute the autochthonous elements of modern Guaraní culture least contaminated by European influences.⁵¹ Conversely, scholars such as Melià call upon contemporary fieldwork to establish the veracity of the Jesuit descriptions of the Guaraní in the colonial period.

This convergence of modern anthropology and colonial documentation has led to a methodological tendency to collapse historical time into an ethnographic present, a term used by Sally Price to describe how anthropologists view the culture of indigenous peoples as static in a temporal context, despite the linear irruption of conquest and colonization.⁵² This, in turn, produces a methodological issue for a study of transcultural dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations of the early colonial period, in that drawing on modern anthropology for insights into the Guaraní's spiritual worldview leads back to the Jesuits who had not yet arrived in the Río de la Plata. The conclusion to this study, which analyses the Oberá Rebellion of 1579-80, reflects on how this rebellion reveals a spiritual worldview of the Guaraní in which indigenous cosmology converged with but was not absorbed by Christianity. In order to provide a context for these reflections, what follows is an overview of the modern anthropological studies that I both draw on for this study, and posit my conclusions in dialogue with.

In the context of the tendency of ethnohistorical studies on the Guaraní's spiritual worldview to enfold the past into the present, one of the most striking features of twentieth-century fieldwork on the Guaraní is the "discovery" of a complex cosmology embedded in a secret ritual language of sacred chants. These sacred chants, and the shamanistic ceremonies that conjure them, were first documented and studied by non-professionals who lived in close proximity to small autonomous communities of Guaraníes leading a semi-nomadic, traditional way of life. Located in the border areas of the Mato Grosso province of southern Brazil, eastern Paraguay, and the Iguazú region of the Misiones province in north-east Argentina, these communities are considered by anthropologists to constitute the descendents of the colonial *monteses*, *kaygua* or *kayngua* (meaning forest dwellers) who had evaded *mestizaje* and Jesuit evangelization.⁵³ They are identified by anthropologists and through self-definition as composed of three denominations: the Chiripá or Avá-katú-eté (of which the Apapokúva or

Ñandéva-Guaraní are a sub-group) of Brazil; the Paí-kaiová (also known as Paĩ-Tavyterã or Kayová) of northern Paraguay; and the Mbyá of the Guairá province of eastern Paraguay and northern Argentina.⁵⁴ The anthropologists who study communities view their specific fieldwork findings in relation to a signifying chain of Guaraní beliefs and social practices, whereby, despite local variations, the linguistic-cultural hegemony of the Tupí of Brazil and the Guaraní of the Río de la Plata at the time of the conquest are viewed as continuous to the present day.

The Guaraní's cosmology based on sacred chants was first documented by Curt Unkel, a German labourer who had immigrated to Brazil in 1903 at the age of twenty. Unkel made contact with the Apapokúva-Guaraní in Mato Grosso do Sul through his work as a forester. In 1906 he was formally adopted by the Apapokúva and given the name Nimuendajú, which signifies as “the one who knew how to open his own path in this world and make his place,”⁵⁵ in reference to a house he built near their community. His 1914 study, *Los mitos de creación y de destrucción del mundo como fundamentos de la religion de los Apapokúva-Guaraní*, combined his first-hand knowledge of the traditions of the Apapokúva with a comparative study of their belief systems and those of the Paí-kaiová and Mbyá of Paraguay.⁵⁶

In the 1920s, Nimuendajú introduced the French anthropologist Alfred Métraux to the Apapokúva. After living with and studying them for several years, Métraux was the first of the modern anthropologists to correlate his contemporary fieldwork on the Guaraní cosmology with the ethnographical information found in colonial sources. To establish a framework that distinguished the indigenous traditions and beliefs in existence before European contact from post-conquest syncretism, Métraux undertook a study of the sixteenth-century writings on Brazil by the Jesuit missionaries, Manuel de Nóbrega and José de Anchieta, and the chronicles of Jean de Léry, Claude d'Abbeville, Hans Staden, and André Thevet.⁵⁷ Métraux's classic text, “Les migrations historiques des Tupí-Guaraní,” draws extensively from these sources to identify a number of Tupí-Guaraní migrations that took place during the early colonial period.⁵⁸ Métraux argued that these migrations intensified in reaction to European colonialism and constituted a messianic and nativist quest to reach a mythical earthly paradise—*yvy-marâne'ý*—which roughly translates as *tierra sin mal* or “Land-without-Evil.”

In Paraguay, studies of the Guaraní's cosmology began with the work of León Cadogan in the 1950s. Cadogan, a farmer by profession and ethnographer by vocation, was granted access to the sacred chants of the Mbyá, who describe themselves as *jeguakáva tenonde porãngue-I* (the chosen first ones who wear the crown of feathers), in recognition of his defence of a Mbyá cacique jailed by the Paraguayan authorities.⁵⁹ Through his participation in their spiritual ceremonies, Cadogan learned of a parallel use of language by the Guaraní in which words take on other signification and meanings when spoken in a ritual context, becoming *ñe'ẽ* or *ayvu porã tenonde*: the original beautiful words.⁶⁰ Transcribing and translating into Spanish the sacred chants that tell the story of the Mbyá's cosmological origins and beliefs, Cadogan published *Ayvu rapyta. Textos míticos de los Mbyá-Guaraní del Guairá* in 1959.

Considered a foundational text of Guaraní literature, *Ayvu rapyta. Textos míticos de los Mbyá-Guaraní del Guairá* was undertaken in collaboration with Mbyá shamans and accompanied by Cadogan's etymological research that traced correspondences between the Mbyá's "beautiful words" and the Jesuit Antonio Ruiz de Montoya's *Tesoro de lengua guaraní*, a linguistic compilation of the Guaraní language as it was spoken in the early 1600s.⁶¹ Cadogan's ethnographic studies were incorporated into an academic context through the work of Egon Schaden, who formed part of a Brazilian school of anthropology known as "Tupinology" that was influenced by Métraux's ethnohistorical approach and the structuralism of Claude Lévi-Strauss. Schaden's *Aspectos fundamentais da cultura Guaraní*—published the same year as Cadogan's *Ayvu rapyta. Textos míticos de los Mbyá-Guaraní del Guairá*—constitutes with Métraux's studies the foundational works of an ever-expanding Brazilian field of Tupí-Guaraní scholarship.⁶²

In addition to Cadogan's close working relationship with Schaden, he was also instrumental in introducing Bartomeu Melià in 1969 to the Mbyá-Guaraní and facilitating his fieldwork.⁶³ In both Schaden and Melià's work, Cadogan's transcriptions and analysis of the Guaraní's cosmology have been taken as evidence of the survival of a pre-conquest belief system, contributing to the premise of the Guaraní's essential spirituality that informs their interpretative frameworks. Cadogan also befriended Pierre Clastres, a French anthropologist and student of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and provided him with contacts for his fieldwork study with the Guayaki (a nomad tribe of eastern Paraguay). Clastres' fieldwork was published as

Chronique des Indiens Guayaki; ce que savent les Aché, chasseurs nomades du Paraguay in 1972.⁶⁴ In this literary narrative of his fieldwork, Clastres emphasizes his debt to the sixteenth-century chronicles and in particular to the Jesuit writings of Pedro Lozano in framing his ethnographic perspective.⁶⁵ His reading of colonial sources and his fieldwork observations served as the foundation for his theoretical collection of essays on the Guaraní, *Society Against the State*, in which he speculates on issues of exchange and power, sacrifice and torture, sex and kinship, and the nature of “archaic” societies, such as the Guaraní, that refused state-formation.⁶⁶

His wife H el ene Clastres, who accompanied him on his fieldwork expedition to Paraguay, undertook a study of the messianic and prophetic elements in Guaran ı culture based on colonial archival sources. First published in French in 1975, Clastres’s *The Land-Without-Evil. Tup ı-Guaran ı Prophetism* expanded on M etraux’s ethnohistorical research to address both the Tupinamb a migrations of colonial Brazil and the Ober a rebellion in colonial Paraguay.⁶⁷ Drawing extensively from the Jesuit writings of Lozano and Montoya as well as the Brazilian sources, she argues that the historical migrations of the Guaran ı and their search for *yvy-mar ane ’y*, “the land without evil,” were not a messianic response to colonialism but integral to an autochthonous worldview and the prophetic powers of the *karai*, the wandering shamans first described by the Jesuits in the 1600s.

In my study of the early colonial period, I contend that a reconstruction of the Guaran ı’s autochthonous culture, however alluring, is a methodological impossibility, in as much as it was irrevocably altered by their interactions with the Europeans. At the same time, there remains the necessity of establishing how the Guaran ı’s worldview may have been constituted at the time of first contact in order to demonstrate the transcultural dynamics of their relations with the Spanish. In grappling with this methodological conundrum, I have chosen to integrate a discussion of indigenous norms into an analysis of Guaran ı-Spanish relations during the 1500s rather than to present a separate chapter on the Guaran ı’s autochthonous worldview.⁶⁸ In this context, I draw on the Jesuits’ ethnographic documentation of the 1600s and 1700s and Antonio Ruiz de Montoya’s study of the Guaran ı language, *Tesoro de la lengua guaran ı*, to enhance the interpretation of the evidence of indigenous norms that emerges from the European *relaciones* and letters of the 1500s. In particular, I draw on Susnik’s ethnohistorical

studies as a comparative tool for my analysis of indigenous-European interactions. In so doing, I consider her ethnohistorical framework to be distinct from that of Clastres or Métraux, in that it offers a synthesis of the Guaraní's indigenous norms from a materialist perspective. While Clastres and Métraux draw on descriptions of shamanistic practices from the Jesuit colonial sources to establish evidence of an autochthonous belief system, I draw on Nimuendajú's and Cadogan's modern ethnographic research to analyse the occurrence of cultural slippage, convergence, and inversion of shamanistic practices with Christian beliefs recorded in the colonial sources.

Another methodological issue arising from the ethnohistorical literature on the Tupí-Guaraní that concerns this study is the contentious question of whether the eyewitness reports of cannibalism in the 1500s are empirically reliable. Following the publication of Willian Arens' *The Man Eating Myth* in 1975, a debate emerged over whether such reports were inventions to mark the savagery of the New World for a European reader. Arens contends that they are dubious and unreliable, and analyses the well-known descriptions of Tupínamba cannibalism in Jean de Léry's and Hans Staden's sixteenth-century accounts to demonstrate how they were always second-hand and after the fact.⁶⁹ Anthony Pagden, who analyses the theological debates in the 1500s over whether the natural state of the Amerindians was one of slaves, barbarians, or men in *The Fall of Natural Man* (1982), argues that the "European interest in man-eating savages amounts almost to obsession."⁷⁰ Posing the question "why did Indians and other barbarians eat men?" he concludes that "it is very likely except for survival cannibalism and acts of supreme revenge, the Amerindians at least did not."⁷¹ He does note, however, "that everyone in the sixteenth century, even men like Las Casas, seems to have believed in these stories of Indian cannibalism."⁷²

Twentieth-century ethnographers of the Tupinambá and the Guaraní, like their sixteenth-century predecessors, unequivocally assume that the practice of cannibalism took place. Donald W. Forsyth, an anthropologist who has conducted an extensive review of the Jesuit documentation on Tupinambá cannibalism from the 1500s, refutes Arens's arguments by arguing that they were based solely on published chronicles without reference to a range of primary sources.⁷³ Both Métraux and Susnik call on Jesuit and non-Jesuit sources as empirical evidence of the practice of ritual cannibalism by the Tupinambá and the Guaraní in their

ethnohistories.⁷⁴ For my study of transculturation in the Río de la Plata, the irresolvable debate over whether the narrative details of ritual cannibalism were fantasy or fact is less significant than a consideration of what recorded incidences of cannibalism reveal of the entanglement of indigenous and European worldviews. The references to cannibalism in the primary sources are important to the analysis of how the Europeans adapted to indigenous norms and, conversely, how these norms were transformed by the Guaraní's collaboration with the Spanish conquistadors. At the same time, I consider how the signifying function of cannibalism to mark the alterity of these worldviews provides insights into the conflicting perceptions of radically different cultures.

The final methodological consideration of significance for my study of the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata lies in its use of archival sources and the published narrative chronicles. In his introduction to his book on the eighteenth-century historiography of the Americas, *How to Write a History of the New World*, Jorge Cañizares-Esquerria notes that modern historians — applying the term in the broad and generalist sense of the field — take as their basic methodological premise the distinction between archival documentation and published sources. Rather than dividing their object of study into “primary” and “secondary” sources, they privilege archival materials as yielding evidence, while suspiciously eyeing published texts as “conscious narratives of individuals and communities [which] document forms of self-delusion or artful rhetorical manipulation.”⁷⁵ This suspicion, argues Cañizares-Esquerria, originated in eighteenth-century northern Europe, at a time when eyewitness accounts of the 1500s were read against the emerging paradigm of natural science in France (Buffon) and Sweden (Linneas), while the classificatory systems of philosopher-travellers were being privileged over earlier narrative chronicles. The discursive shift in what constituted a reliable document resulted in the discounting of the credibility of clerical and conquistadores' representations of the lands and peoples they encountered, and ensuing debates over how to write the new history of the New World. This “dispute over the New World,”⁷⁶ as Antonello Gerbi first coined it, was the impetus of Cañizares-Esquerria's impressive and wide-ranging analysis of how Enlightenment texts re-envisioned the Americas by displacing Renaissance humanism.

The documentation for the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata are precisely those representations of the New World beset by the fallibility of the non-scientific eye-witness and the ‘artful rhetorical manipulation’ of the storyteller. As Catherine Julien notes in “Colonial Perspectives on the Chiriguaná (1528-1574)”:

Reaching backward in time to study the first contacts between Europeans and native peoples in South America is like maneuvering a sophisticated obstacle course. Most of the written material that has been preserved from the 16th century was prepared by representatives of the Spanish Crown. These texts are loaded with messages tied to colonial policy. Some are difficult to recognize and can be unwittingly accorded the same value as “unloaded” information.⁷⁷

My approach to this sophisticated obstacle course is informed by a reading of the archival sources that accounts for both their empirical and ideological functions. Whenever possible, and practicable, I interpret what they say in relation to what can be implied about their interactions with and perceptions of the indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata. By comparing discrepancies between the contemporary accounts and the sometimes transparently political intentions of the conquistadors and priests to discredit each other in writing to the Spanish Crown, I extract from the polemics of the documents what can be reasonably ascertained as evidence.

I also draw extensively upon published chronicles, primarily Ulrico Schmidl’s *Viaje al Río de la Plata* and Ruy Díaz de Guzmán’s *La Argentina*. Schmidl, a Bavarian mercenary who accompanied Pedro de Mendoza’s expedition in 1535, composed his chronicle after his return to Europe in 1554.⁷⁸ Guzmán, who was a military soldier by profession, was the son Alonso Riquelme de Guzmán, the nephew of Cabeza de Vaca, and Ursula, the mestiza daughter of Irala. His chronicle, written in the early 1600s, is based on the oral history passed down through the Asunción conquistadors’ descendants.⁷⁹ The histories written by Jesuit missionaries proselytising in the Río de la Plata in the 1600s and 1700s are equally important to my study of the earlier colonial period. The aforementioned Pedro Lozano’s *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay, Río de la Plata y Tucumán*, written in the mid-eighteenth century, is a five-volume synthesis of the first two hundred years of colonization based on archival documentation, including the chronicles and correspondence of the conquistadors as well as

Jesuit *carta anuas* and *relaciones*.⁸⁰ Nicolás Del Techo's *Historia de la provincia del Paraguay*, which chronologically precedes Lozano's history, addresses the region's geography, principal acts of conquest, and Jesuit evangelization.⁸¹ Antonio Ruiz de Montoya's *La conquista espiritual del Paraguay hecha por los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús en las provincias de Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tape*, and the *Tesero de la lengua guaraní*, both published in 1639, provide insights into the Guaraní's indigenous norms and language.⁸²

These texts provide a valuable panorama of the conquistadors' interactions with the indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata. They also contain tall tales of one-breasted Amazon warriors and noble savage kings, European women suckling lions, and divine intervention. In most cases, they are thinly veiled ideological tracts intended to present a narrative favourable to the author; in contemporary parlance, they are "point-of-view" documents. In this study, invented scenarios as well as reasonable testimony constitute an arena of investigation. In choosing to interpret tall tales as evidence of transculturation, I posit that the cultural slippage between worldviews can be discerned from the miracles and the marvels of the New World as well as from the historical record of wars and oppression.

By analysing these chronicles and texts in relation to other colonial sources of the era such as letters and *relaciones* to the Crown written by the priests and the conquistadors of Asunción, Cabeza de Vaca's memoir, the *Comentarios*, and the Jesuit *carta anuas*, I argue that what is central to writing a history of the New World is an interpretation of how primary sources reveal the complexity of the encounter between European and indigenous worldviews. This encounter has been described by the literary critic Stephen Greenblatt as the incommensurability of a radical otherness that is made translatable through wonder and knowable through possession.⁸³ For the Mexican poet and critic Octavio Paz, this radical otherness represents a fourth dimension that reveals an abyss of irreducible difference.⁸⁴ This study forwards a different premise. Through an analysis of how Spanish-Guaraní relations evolved during the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata, I argue that radical otherness is neither an abyss of irreducible difference nor the incommensurability of the not-yet-known, but the starting point of transculturation.

In *The Mestizo Mind*, Serge Gruzinski unravels the paradigms used to describe the process of colonization in Latin America, especially acculturation and syncretism, and he points to the difficulty of conceptualizing the phenomena of *mestizaje*. He argues against static categorizations of culture and identity, positing that an inherent ethnocentrism is at work in how the colonial past is understood as an oppositional struggle rather than as a mixing and becoming within a local context.⁸⁵ For Gruzinski, colonial dynamics engendered disassociations, agglomerations, and disorder that equally affected the worldviews of the colonized and the colonizers, who were as diverse and as destabilized as the indigenous peoples they conquered. In the randomness and uncertainty of the New World context, writes Gruzinski, “the relationships between victors, vanquished, and collaborators — all coming from worlds with such dissimilar trajectories — and the consequences they engendered were of unprecedented complexity.”⁸⁶ This study’s contribution to the historiography of the Río de la Plata is anchored in Gruzinski’s call for an analysis of heterogeneity of colonization, in which “the first wave of conquest occurred under the sign of chaos and *mélange*.”⁸⁷ Through an examination of what the historical record reveals of European-indigenous interactions, I propose to unsettle the boundaries established by previous studies that define Guaraní and conquistador, mestizo settler and mission converts, priests and shamans. In so doing, I argue for a transcultural approach to the writing of colonial history as a means by which to represent, however partially, the complexity of the exchange and adaptation of disparate worldviews that is the legacy of the New World conquest.

Endnotes.

1. Paul Groussac, *Mendoza y Garay*, 2 vols (Buenos Aires: Academia Argentina de Letras, 1950); Enrique de Gandía, *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay: los gobiernos de don Pedro de Mendoza, Álvár Núñez y Domingo de Irala* (Buenos Aires: A. García Santos, 1935); Ricardo de Lafuente Machaín, *El gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala* (Buenos Aires: Bernabé y Cía, 1939). Lafuente Machaín’s other works on the conquest period include *El Fundador: Juan de Salazar de Espinosa* (Asunción: Academia Paraguaya de la Historia, 2004) and a biographical dictionary, *Los conquistadores del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Talleres gráficos de S. de Amarrot, 1937).

2. The Jesuit histories of the missions are exemplified by Guillermo Furlong’s prodigious scholarship, which includes *Misiones y sus pueblos de Guaraníes*. (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Teoría, 1962) and *Los Jesuitas y la cultura Rioplatense*. (Montevideo: Urta y Curbelo, 1933).

3. Rubío, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata: Siglos XVI y XVII*, (Barcelona: Salvat, 1942), 583-600.
4. Furlong, *Misiones y sus pueblos de Guaraníes*, 16.
5. For an overview of economic tensions between the Asunción settlers and the Jesuits, see López, *The Revolt of the Comuneros*, 50-57. For the mature period of the Jesuit missions, also see Magnus Mörner, *Political and Economic Activities of the Jesuits in the La Plata Region: The Hapsburg Era* (Stockholm: Victor Petersens Bokindustri, 1953).
6. López, *The Revolt of the Comuneros* 58-63.
7. *Ibid.*, 65-157.
8. Blas Garay, *El comunismo de las misiones* [1876](Asunción: Instituto Colorado de Cultura, 1975).
9. Cited by Magnus Mörner, *The Expulsion of the Jesuits from Latin America* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), 64. In this book, Mörner provides a range of responses to the Jesuit mission project, which constitutes a historiographical overview of secondary writings on the Jesuit missions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
10. Leopoldo Lugones, *El imperio jesuítico* [1904] (Buenos Aires: Comisión Argentina de Fomento Interamericano, 1945), 266.
11. Efraím Cardoso, *El Paraguay colonial. Las raíces de la nacionalidad* (Buenos Aires-Asunción: Ediciones Nizza, 1959), 134.
12. Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 181.
13. These include Gandía's *Historia crítica de los mitos y leyendas de la conquista americana*. (Buenos Aires: Centro Difusor del Libro, 1946); *Francisco de Alfaro y la condición social de los Indios. Río de la Plata, Paraguay, Tucumán y Perú. Siglos XVI y XVII* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Ateneo, 1939); and *Indios y conquistadores en el Paraguay* (Buenos Aires: Librería de A. García Santos, 1932).
14. Gandía, *Indios y conquistadores en el Paraguay*, 13.
15. *Ibid.*, 78.
16. Domingo Sarmiento, *Facundo: civilización y barbarie* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1988). The first complete English translation was published as *Facundo: Civilization and Barbarity*, Trans. Kathleen Ross (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). For a cultural and ideological analysis of Sarmiento's influence in constructing a nationalist ethos in Argentina, see Nicolas Shumway, *The Invention of Argentina* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). Also see Julio Ramos, *Culture and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Latin America*, Trans. John D. Blanco (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 3-22.

17. For an overview of Argentine history since independence, see John Lynch et al., *Historia de la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2002). For an analysis of immigration, see Fernando Devoto, *Historia de la inmigración en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2003). Frontier wars against the Pampa Indians took place from the 1830s to the 1870s with the final brutal assault occurring during General Roca's Conquista del Desierto of 1879-80. For an analysis of the Indian Wars, see David Viñas, *Indias, ejército y frontera* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1983). Susana Rotker analyses the disappearance of the Indian from the historical trajectory of Argentina in *Captive Women: Oblivion and Memory in Argentina* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

18. The reconstruction of democracy since 1983 and the legacy of the last military dictatorship (1976-1982) have produced an outpouring of testimonial literature, political analysis, and cultural reflection on the role of collective memory in rethinking the past. This process of historical revisionism extends to a consideration of the political influence of Peronism, past and present, as part of a populist movement that the military sought to repress. These historical, sociological, and cultural analyses of the convulsive events and ideological fractures of twentieth-century Argentina are remarkable for their theoretical sophistication and historical insights regarding modernity, postmodernity, and globalization. In contrast, the lack of analyses of the colonial period that interrogate the ideological underpinnings of the historiography is notable. Exceptions to this tendency are Susana Rotker, *Captive Women: Oblivion and Memory in Argentina* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001) and Felipe Pigna, *Los mitos de la historia argentina*, (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2004). The latter addresses the relationship of the colonial period to the myths of nation-making in the context of popular history.

19. After Paraguay declared its independence from Spain in 1811, the dictatorships of the nineteenth century included the regimes of José Gaspar Rodríguez de Francia (*El Supremo*) and Francisco Solano López. The War of the Triple Alliance fought against Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay from 1865 to 1870 devastated the country and annihilated almost all of its male population. In the twentieth century, another disastrous war was fought against Bolivia from 1932 to 1935. From 1954 to 1989, Paraguay was ruled by the repressive dictatorship of Alfredo Stroessner. It is a reflection of the difficulty of undertaking academic scholarship on Paraguay and its geopolitical isolation that there are no good historical overviews for the modern period. The most recent history published in English is by Harris Gaylord Warren, *Paraguay, an informal history* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949).

20. A few examples include Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Nancy Farriss, *Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton, 1984); Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519-1810* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964); Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16-18th centuries*. Translated by Eileen Corrigan (London: Polity Press, 1993); John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians* (London: Papermac, 1995); Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492-1797* (London: Meuthuen, 1986); James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the*

Indian of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Susan E. Ramírez, *The World Upside Down: Cross-Cultural Contact and Conflict in Sixteenth-Century Peru* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996); Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987); Steven J. Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Huamanga to 1640* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

21. Louis Necker, *Indios guaraníes y chamanes franciscanos* (Asunción: Biblioteca Paraguaya de Antropología, 1990). First published as *Indiens Guarani et chamanes franciscains: les premières réductions du Paraguay (1580-1800)* (Paris: Antropos, 1979).

22. Florencia Roulet, *La resistencia de los Guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista español (1537-1556)* (Posadas, Misiones: Universidad Nacional de Misiones, 1993).

23. Branislava Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay II: Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes. Época colonial* (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero, 1979-1980), 9. Other works by Susnik include *Los Aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnología del Chaco Boreal y su periferia (siglos XVI y XVII)* (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero, 1978); *El Indio Colonial Del Paraguay. El Chaqueño* (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero, 1971); and with Miguel Chase-Sardi, *Los Indios del Paraguay* (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1995).

24. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 11-13.

25. Necker, *Indios guaraníes y chamanes franciscanos*, 16.

26. Roulet, *La resistencia de los Guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista español*, 11.

27. *Ibid.*, 271-287.

28. *Ibid.*, 126.

29. Susnik notes that after the colonial acculturation of the Guaraní, a linguistic differentiation was made between the Guaraní as *avá* (people), who included Christians, and the Guaraní as *avá-katú-eté* (true people), who followed traditional ways. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 12.

30. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 123.

31. Elman Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay [1954]* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1971), 7.

32. *Ibid.*, 2.

33. *Ibid.*, 9.

34. *Ibid.*, 2.

35. Ibid., 97

36. Ibid.

37. Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata*, 29.

38. Ibid., 12

39. Ibid., 9.

40. Daniel Berrigan, *The Mission: A Journal* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986). Daniel Berrigan is a Jesuit priest who was assigned by the Order to serve as an advisor on the film, *The Mission* (1985). Winning an Oscar and the Golden Palm at Cannes, *The Mission* is described by Berrigan as the story of how the mission project that “shed light on the civilized world, acted as reproof, exemplar and ideal for Europe and America” came to a catastrophic end. Berrigan, 4.

41. Pablo Hernández, *Organización social de las doctrinas Guaraníes de la Compañía de Jesús* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1913). In addition to these historical investigations, both Hernández and Furlong translated and published primary Jesuit histories and numerous documents from the colonial era that made accessible primary documentation. Furlong also published comprehensive intellectual and cultural histories of the colonial era, *Historia social y cultural del Río de la Plata 1536-1810. El Trasplante Cultural*. 3 volumes: *Ciencia, Social, & Arte* (Buenos Aires: Tipográfica Editora Argentina, 1969).

42. Graham Cunninghame, *A Vanished Arcadia: Being Some Account of the Jesuits in Paraguay, 1607-1767* (London: Century, 1988). Robert Southey, the nineteenth-century British poet and historian similarly idealized the Guaraní in his long poem, “A Tale of Paraguay,” in *Poems of Robert Southey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1909).

43. Philip Caraman, *The Lost Paradise* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1975).

44. Sélim Abou, *The Jesuit Republic of the Guaranís (1609-1768) and its Heritage* (New York: Crossroad, 1997); Jean-Paul Duviols and Rubén Bareiro Saguier, *Tentación de la utopía: Las misiones Jesuíticas del Paraguay* (Barcelona: Tusquets/Círculo, 1991); Lucía Gálvez. *Vida cotidiana Guaraníes y Jesuitas: De la Tierra sin Mal al Paraíso*. (Buenos Aires: Sudamerica, 1995).

45. Ernesto Maeder, *Misiones del Paraguay. Conflicto y disolución de la sociedad Guaraní* (Madrid: Editorial MAPFRE, 1992). *Pueblos de indios y misiones jesuíticas* (Resistencia: Chaco: Instituto de Investigaciones Geohistóricas de CONICET, 1994) was produced in collaboration with Ramón Gutiérrez. This is one of two reference volumes of quantitative data, maps, diagrams, and statistics documenting the historical development of the region and the Jesuit missions. The other volume is *Atlas histórico y del nordeste Argentino and Pueblos de indios y misiones jesuíticas* (Resistencia: Chaco: Instituto de Investigaciones Geohistóricas de CONICET, 1995). The first international symposium on the Jesuit missions was organized by

Maeder in 1982 and the proceedings published as *Primer simposio sobre las tres primeras décadas de las misiones jesuíticas de Guaraníes. 1609-1642* (Posadas, Argentina: Ediciones Montoya, 1986). Subsequent symposia were held in Posadas (1984), Porte Alegre (1986), Asunción (1990), Montevideo (1994), Paraná Brazil (1996), and Resistencia (1998). The proceedings from the Resistencia symposium were edited by Maeder, *VII Jornadas internacionales sobre las misiones jesuíticas* (Resistencia: Chaco: Instituto de Investigaciones Geohistóricas de CONICET, 1998). The publications of the papers from these *Jornadas internacionales* represent a veritable industry in the accumulation of empirical research favourable to the Jesuit mission project.

46. Maxime Haubert, *La vie quotidienne des indiens des jésuites du Paraguay au temps des missions* (Hachette, Paris, 1986). Translated into Spanish by Flor Herrero as *La vida cotidiana de los indios y jesuitas en las misiones del Paraguay* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1991).

47. Bartomeu Melià, *El Guaraní, experiencia religiosa* (Asunción: Biblioteca Paraguaya de Antropología, 1991), 13.

48. Melià, *El guaraní - conquistado y reducido* (Asunción: Universidad Católica, 1986); *La lengua guaraní del Paraguay* (Madrid: Editorial MPAFRE, 1992). Melià organized the *VIII Jornadas Internacionales sobre las misiones jesuíticas* in Encarnación, Paraguay and edited the proceedings, *Historia inacabada, futuro incierto: VIII jornadas internacionales sobre las misiones jesuíticas* (Encarnación, Paraguay: Centro de Estudios Paraguayos “Antonio Guasch,” 2000).

49. The literature on what Walter Mignolo terms the “discursive polyvocality” of non-textual evidence is extensive for pre-conquest Mexico and Peru and I am only pointing here to several key works. Mignolo, “Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse: Cultural Critique or Academic Colonialism?” *Latin America Research Review* 28:3 (1993): 120-134. For an analysis of the quipus (or khipus) see Frank Salomon, *The cord keepers: khipus and cultural life in a Peruvian village* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2004). For an analysis of the codices and khipus see Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo, eds., *Writing without words: alternative literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

50. Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Nueva crónica y buen gobierno* [1615] 3 vols. (Madrid: Historia 16, 1987). An English translation is available as *The first new chronicle and good government: on the history of the world and the Incas up to 1615* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009). Rolena Adorno analyses the significance of this text in *Guamán Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986). Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España* [1590] 2 vols. (Madrid: Historia 16, 1990). For an analysis of Sahagún, see Jorge Klor de Alva, H.B. Nicholson, and Eloise Quiñones, eds. *The Work of Bernardino de Sahagún: Pioneer Ethnographer of Sixteenth Century Aztec Mexico* (Albany: University at Albany State University of New York, 1988).

51. Alfred Métraux’s most significant publications include *La civilization matérielle des tribus Tupi-Guarani* (Paris: Lib. Geuthner, 1928) and *Religions et magies indiennes d’Amérique du Sud* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967). Métraux also contributed essays on the Guaraní to the *Handbook of South American Indians*, (HSAI).

52. Sally Price, *Primitive Art in Civilized Places* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1989).
53. León Cadogan, *La literatura de los Guaranís* (Mexico: Editorial Joaquín Martiz, 1965), 15; Melià, *El Guaraní, experiencia religiosa*, 18; Melià, *La lengua guaraní del Paraguay*, 34.
54. Melià, *El Guaraní, experiencia religiosa*, 20. Melià notes that in 1984 demographic studies numbered the Chiripá at 8000, the Pai-kaiová at 17,000, and the Mybá at 12,000.
55. Egon Schaden, “Notas sobre la vida y la obra de Curt Nimuendajú” in C. Nimuendajú, *Los mitos de creación y de destrucción del mundo como fundamentos de la religión de los Apapokúva-Guaraní* (Lima: Centro Amazonico de Anthropología y Aplicación Practica, 1978), 8.
56. Nimuendajú’s *Los mitos de creación y de destrucción del mundo como fundamentos de la religión de los Apapokúva-Guaraní* was first published in German as “Die Sagen von der Erschaffung und Vernichtung der Welt als Grundlagen der Religion der Apapokúva-Guaraní,” in *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 46:2/3(1914). In 1944, it was translated into Spanish by Juan Francisco Recalde and circulated in mimeographed form. It was not until 1978 that Recalde’s translation was revised and published in Lima.
57. The Brazilian sources Métraux consulted include *Hans Staden’s True History: An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil* [German/1557] Translated and introduction by Neil Whitehead (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008) and Jean De Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America* [1578/French] Translated and introduction by Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). The other text in circulation in Europe in the 1500s was written by André Thevet, a Franciscan friar who spent ten weeks in Brazil. In 1575, he published *La cosmographie universelle*, which popularized the Tupí “noble savage” and contains some valuable ethnographic information. In part, Léry’s text is a refutation of some of Thevet’s claims, and in particular his critique of the Calvinist mission. See Suzanne Lussagnet. *Le Brésil et les Brésiliens* (Paris: PUF, 1953). The other main chronicles were Claude d’Abbeville, *Histoire de la mission des Pères Capucins en l’Isle de Margan et terres circonfinés où est traicté des singularitéz admirables et des moeurs merueilleuses des Indiens habitans de ce pays* (Paris: François Huby, 1614) and Yves d’Evreux, *Voyage fait dans le nord du Brésil, fait durant les années 1613 et 1614*. Présentation et notes d’Hélène Clastres (Paris: Payot, 1985). A good bibliographic overview of Brazilian Jesuit sources can be found in Douglas Forsyth, “The Beginnings of Brazilian Anthropology: Jesuits and Tupinamba Cannibalism,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39:2 (1983): 147-78.
58. “Les migrations historiques des Tupi-Guaraní.” *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris* 19 (1927):1-45.
59. León Cadogan, *Ayvu rapyta. Textos míticos de los Mbyá-Guaraní del Guairá* (Asunción: Biblioteca Paraguaya de Antropología, 1997), 14.

60. Ibid., 15.
61. Ruiz de Montoya, *Tesoro de lengua guaraní* [1639] (Leipzig: B.G. Teurner, 1876).
62. Egon Schaden, *Aspectos fundamentais da cultura guaraní* (Sao Paulo: Educps, 1974). Jonathan Hill's forward to Hélène Clastres's *The Land-Without-Evil. Tupí-Guaraní Prophetism* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995) provides an overview of Brazilian anthropological sources on the Guaraní. In addition to teaching in Brazil during the 1940s, Lévi-Strauss undertook the fieldwork in Brazil that would become the basis of his later theoretical work. This fieldwork was described in journal form in *Tristes Tropiques* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992). In addition to Schaden, the other key anthropologist in the Brazilian field is Florestan Fernandes. His publications include *A função social da Guerra na sociedade Tupinambá* (São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 1970) and *A organização social dos Tupinambá* (São Paulo: Editora Hucitec, 1989).
63. Melià, Introduction to *El guaraní - conquistado y reducido*, unpaginated.
64. Pierre Clastres, *Chronique des Indiens Guayaki; ce que savent les Aché, chasseurs nomades du Paraguay* (Paris: Phon, 1972). In 1998, an English translation by the writer Paul Auster was published as the *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians* (New York: Zone Books, 1998) after his manuscript, which had been lost for over two decades, was recovered. While undertaking fieldwork, Clastres also recorded the myths and sacred songs of the Guaraní. These, however, are not the same as the secret chants recorded by Cadogan, although there are similarities. See Pierre Clastres *Le Grand parler. Mythes et Chants Sacrés des Indiens Guarani* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1974).
65. Clastres, *Chronicle of the Guayaki Indians*, 116.
66. Clastres, *Society Against the State*. (New York: Zone Books, 1989). First published in French as *La Société contre l'état* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1974). Clastres died in a car accident in 1977 at the age of forty-three, cutting short his contribution to the field.
67. Hélène Clastres, *The Land-Without-Evil. Tupí-Guaraní Prophetism*, Translated from the French by Jacqueline Grenez Brovender, Forward by Jonathon Hill (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995). First published in French as *La Terre Sans Mal: Le Prophétisme Tupí-Guaraní* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975).
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69. William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 22-31.
70. Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 80.

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73. Forsyth, "The Beginnings of Brazilian Anthropology: Jesuits and Tupinambá Cannibalism." *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 39 (1983): 147-177.

74. Métraux, HSAI: III: 88, 119; Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 15-21.

75. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 1.

76. Antonello Gerbi, *The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic 1750-1900* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1973).

77. Catherine Julien, "Colonial perspectives on the Chiriguano (1528-1574)." In María Susana Cipolletti, ed. *Resistencia y adaptación nativas en las tierras bajas Latinoamericanas* (Quito: Biblioteca Abya-Yala, 35, 1997), 17.

78. Ulrico Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1997) was written after his return to Europe in 1554. It was published in 1567 in German and by DeBry in Latin in 1599, and was the most widely circulated account of the region in Europe during the colonial period. A bibliographic overview of published and translations, what is known of Schmidl, and annotations to Spanish translations of the text is compiled in Ulrico Schmidl, *Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brazil* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del la Veleta: 1993).

79. Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, *La Argentina*. (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1998). Biographical information on Guzmán is found in Pedro de Angelis's "Discurso Preliminar," *Colección de obras y documentas relativos a la historia antigua y moderna de las provincias del Río de la Plata*, vol. 1. (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de Estado, 1836-37). The Emecé edition is a facsimile reprint of Pedro de Angelis's 1835 edition and includes the "Discurso Preliminar," 13-19. Although *La Argentina* remained in manuscript form until 1835, Guzmán's text was widely circulated in colonial circles and utilized, in some instances verbatim, by the Jesuit historians, Del Techo and Lozano.

80. Pedro Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay, Río de la Plata y Tucumán* 5 vols. [1754-55], Ed. André Lamas (Buenos Aires: Casa Editora "Imprenta Popular," 1873-75).

81. Nicolás Del Techo, *Historia de la provincia del paraguay de la Compañía de Jesús por el P. Nicolás del Techo* [Latin/1673] (Centro de Estudios Paraguayos Antonio Guasch. Asunción: FONDEC, 2005). An abridged English version, *The History of Paraguay, Tucumán, and the adjacent provinces in South America*, is published in *Collection of Voyages*, 3rd edition, Vol. VI (London: Churchill & Awnsham, 1746).

82. Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, *La conquista espiritual del Paraguay hecha por los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús en las provincias de Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tape* [Madrid,

1639]. Reprinted with annotations by Ernesto J.A. Maeder (Rosario: Equipo Difusor de Estudios Historia Iberoamericana, 1989) and translated into English by C. J. McNasby, S.J. as *The Spiritual Conquest Accomplished by the Religious of the Society of Jesus in the Provinces of Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay and Tape* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1993); *Tesoro de lengua guaraní* [1639] (Leipzig: B.G. Teurner, 1876).

83. Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvellous Possessions. The Wonder of the New World*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

84. Octavio Paz, "The Art of Mexico: Material and Meaning" in *Essays on Mexican Art* (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1993), 42.

85. Serge Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 25.

86. *Ibid.*, 40.

87. *Ibid.*, 14.

Chapter Two: Explorers and Castaways: First Encounters. 1516 -1529.

In 1516, Juan Díaz de Solís, who succeeded Amerigo Vespucci as the *piloto mayor* (chief navigator) of Spain in 1512, became the first European explorer to reach the Río de la Plata. Almost a hundred years later, the events of his voyage entered the historical record in the *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos, en las islas, y Tierra-Firme de al Mar Océano*.¹ Written by Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, who was appointed the *Cronista Mayor de las Indias* (historiographer of the Indias) by Phillip II of Spain in 1592, the *Historia General* was published in two installments in 1601 and 1615.² Contemporaneous with the *Historia general* but unpublished until the mid-nineteenth century, Ruy Díaz de Guzmán's *La Argentina* provides an alternative account of Solís's voyage from the perspective of a mestizo settler living in Asunción.³

Herrera's official version relates how Solís, who was commissioned to find a passage to the Spice Islands, sailed to Brazil, continued south along the coast, and entered a large estuary, "that for being so spacious, and not salty, they called it *Mar Dulce*."⁴ There he saw "many Indian houses and people on the shore, who were watching attentively as the ship passed by, and with signs offered what they had by laying it on the ground."⁵ When Solís went ashore in a longboat with some of his crew, the signs turned out to be lures of war. Once they were in reach of shore, the Indians "surrounded and killed them without them being able to get help from the artillery of the caravel, and taking the dead and carrying them along the shore to a point where those in the ship could see them, cut off their heads, arms, and legs, and roasted the bodies whole and ate them."⁶

Herrera's brief narrative, written long after Solís's voyage had taken place, conveyed to his seventeenth-century reader the treacherous nature of first encounters with indigenous peoples whose languages and customs were unknown. His transformation of Indians offering all they had into savages feasting on body parts also encapsulated the tales of man-eating barbarians so integral to European accounts of the New World's inhabitants by the time Solís set sail from

Spain.⁷ Of these accounts, Amerigo Vespucci's letters about his voyages to Brazil provide the earliest descriptions of the cannibalistic proclivity of the Tupí-Guaraní with whom the explorers of the Río de la Plata would subsequently make contact.⁸ *Mundus Novus* and the *Lettera*, which were first published at the beginning of the 1500s, record his impressions of the Brazilian Indians' nakedness, their promiscuity, their lack of private property, laws, and religion, their manner of waging war, and their appetite for human flesh.⁹

Vespucci appears to have directly influenced Herrera's chronicling of Solís's ill-fated encounter with hostile Indians, for it bears a remarkable resemblance to a description in the older *Lettera* of an exchange of signs that led to ambush and cannibalism. Vespucci relates that while his expedition was sailing along the coast of Brazil, Indians gathered on the shore and gestured to the men on the ship to follow them inland. When two crew members did so and failed to reappear, the search party that went ashore to find them was ambushed. Although cannon fire repelled the attack, a Christian who was unable to escape was hacked into parts by Indian women, who roasted him "before our eyes, showing us many pieces and then eating them; and the men indicating by their gestures that they had killed and eaten the other two Christians."¹⁰

In contrast to the cannibal echo of Vespucci in Herrera's *Historia general*, Guzmán's *La Argentina* recasts the story of Solís's voyage as an act of conquest governed by imperial possession and peaceful exchange. While his unofficial version of events is no more empirically reliable than Herrera's, it does offer insights into how the first encounter with the indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata was represented from a colonial perspective. Substituting awe-struck natives for hostile ones and crosses for misleading signs, Guzmán describes how Solís reached the mouth of an estuary, called by the natives *Paraná Guazú* or "river like a sea,"¹¹ claimed the territory for Spain by planting many crosses in the sand banks, and communicated with the natives, "who received him well, amazed at seeing such new and strange people."¹² According to Guzmán, a storm forced Solís to leave the estuary and return to Spain, suggesting that from his vantage point uncharted waters and sudden tempests posed a greater threat to life and limb than cannibals.

Guzmán's account is striking for not only how it alters the events of Solís's voyage but also the way in which the Europeans, rather than the indigenous peoples, figure as a "new and strange people." Equally notable is the absence of the castaways from Solís's expedition who remained behind in the New World. Integrated into Guaraní-speaking communities inhabiting the southern coast of Brazil, these castaways would make signs decipherable and uncharted waters navigable for Sebastián Caboto when he entered the estuary a decade later. They also change the history of first encounters in the Río de la Plata from one of cannibals and conquest to a complex panorama of interactions with, and adaptation to, an indigenous worldview by the "new and strange people" from the Old World.

In this chapter, I focus on the role that Solís's castaways played in determining the course of Caboto's exploration of the Río de la Plata region from 1527 to 1529 and his interactions with the indigenous peoples of the region. I argue, as Alida C. Metcalf does in *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil: 1500-1600*, that castaways served as "transactional go-betweens," whose knowledge of indigenous customs and languages and the geography of the region enabled them to "facilitate between worlds [as] translators, negotiators, and cultural brokers."¹³ In the context of the colonization of the Río de la Plata, I further argue that they were the agents of transculturation, blurring the boundaries of these worlds as well as facilitating links between them. I also examine the significance of the accounts of a Portuguese named García, who journeyed from the coast of Brazil to the Bolivian sierra in the 1520s, for interpreting the dynamics of adaptation to an indigenous worldview. In this respect, García's journey to the sierra was contingent on how he was perceived by his Guaraní collaborators, as the same as them or different, which is to say, Indian or European. For Caboto's journey up the Paraná, I evaluate how the alignment of Solís's castaways with an indigenous worldview produced shifting power dynamics and antagonisms between the common soldiers, indigenous collaborators, and the Spanish command.

The most important source of information about Caboto's voyage is an eyewitness account by Luis Ramírez. Dated July 10, 1528, and written in the form of a long narrative letter addressed to his father, it was first published in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁴ Ramírez, who is identified by historians as either Caboto's cabin boy or personal servant, describes in detail the indigenous peoples the expedition encountered and provides insights into Solís's castaways'

interactions with them.¹⁵ A *relación* written in 1530 by Diego García de Moguer, a pilot who sailed up the Paraná soon after Caboto and whose paths crossed during their voyages, corroborates Ramírez's naming and observations of indigenous nations.¹⁶

The earliest historical record of castaways who travelled to the sierra is found in Ramírez's letter.¹⁷ The first naming of García as a European who journeyed inland from Brazil appears in a letter written by a royal official, Pedro de Dorantes (Orantes), to the Spanish King in 1543.¹⁸ Guzmán's later chronicle provides a narrative account of how García led a large raiding party of Guaraníes from the Paraguay River to the fringes of the Inca Empire.¹⁹ Indigenous testimonies of García's participation in this raiding party are documented in a report that Domingo Martínez de Irala wrote about a voyage he made up the Paraguay in December 1542 and January 1543. Information about García that Cabeza de Vaca obtained from indigenous informants during the expedition he undertook from Asunción to Puerto de los Reyes September 1543 is recorded in the *Comentarios*.²⁰ By drawing upon later colonial accounts and Branislava Susnik's ethnohistory of the Guaraní, I analyse how these testimonies yield insights into the relationships between indigenous nations of Paraguay and Bolivia and their first contact with Europeans who entered their territories before the arrival of Caboto in the region.²¹

Caboto also documented his voyage in a deposition he presented to the officials of the Casa de la Contratación in Seville in 1530.²² Authorized by the Crown and supported by private backers to reach the Spice Islands of the Moluccas, as Solís had been before him, Caboto sailed from Spain in April 1526 with three ships, a caravel, and two hundred men.²³ His decision to abandon his mission once he reached Brazil and instead sail up the Paraná River in search of gold and silver resulted in protracted lawsuits when he returned to Spain. His deposition is one of many documents arising from the investigation concerning his failure to follow the instructions of the Crown and his treatment of some members of his expedition.²⁴ His testimony, while more confused and fragmentary than Ramírez's letter, coincides with the events Ramírez describes and offers insights into the participation of the Solís castaways in the expedition from the perspective of the Spanish command. The lengthy and contradictory *probanzas* (evidence recorded by witnesses) arising from the investigation that followed Caboto's return to Spain reveal how the members of his expedition perceived the internal

conflicts that arose from the expedition's and the castaways' interactions with the indigenous peoples of the region.

When we consider the importance of castaways in the first encounters between Europeans and indigenous peoples in the Río de la Plata, the events of Solís's voyage take on another interpretative dimension. By the time Solís reached Brazil in 1516, there were castaways living among the coastal Tupí. Metcalf notes that castaways were present in Brazil from the first landing of the Portuguese Admiral Pedro Álvares Cabral in 1500. Pero Vaz de Caminha, a nobleman on Cabral's voyage, relates in a lengthy letter he wrote to the king that two *degredados* (criminal exiles) were left behind, and that two seamen jumped ship the night before Cabral set sail from Brazil.²⁵ Metcalf also cites a document known as the "Besicken Letter," which states that one of these *degredados* later returned to Portugal and "spoke their language [Tupí] and gave information about everything."²⁶ Within a few years of Cabral's landing, French and Portuguese traders who had voluntarily remained in Brazil to obtain Brazilwood (a tree that yields a dark-red dye) for European markets were also living along the coast.²⁷ The presence of Europeans in Brazil in the early 1500s raises the question of whether Solís enlisted one or more of them as interpreters and pilots to assist him in sailing south along the coast. If he did so, Herrera's version of events becomes explicable in terms of how the indigenous peoples Solís encountered may have perceived them in relation to interethnic animosities.

While the Indians who attacked Solís are not identified by Herrera, they were most probably the Charrúa, a nomad nation who occupied a large area on the east side of the estuary where the ambush took place and who were enemies of the coastal Guaraní and Tupí.²⁸ If this was the case, Europeans from Brazil who served as interpreters would have proved a liability, for any attempt to communicate with the Charrúa in Guaraní would have signalled that Solís was aligned with their enemies and provoked aggression. That Solís and his crew members were eaten after they were killed is doubtful. Neither the colonial sources nor the ethnohistorical literature report a practice of cannibalism amongst the Charrúa. On the contrary, Guzmán describes in *La Argentina* how "they attack fiercely, fight cruelly and afterwards are very pious and humane with their captives."²⁹ As for Guzmán's account of awe-struck natives peacefully greeting Solís, his story appears to have been a product of wishful thinking and historical

revisionism. When Caboto made contact with the few survivors of Solís's expedition ten years later on the coast of Brazil, he learned from them that Solís and most of his armada had been attacked and killed by Indians in the estuary of the Río de la Plata.³⁰

What role Europeans who had been living along the coast of Brazil may have played in determining Solís's fate is, of course, purely speculative, as they are not present in either Herrera's or Guzmán's accounts. In contrast, Ramírez's letter provides evidence of the essential function the castaways from Solís's expedition served for Caboto's exploration of the region as cultural and linguistic intermediaries. Ramírez begins his letter with a lengthy description of the Indians of Pernambuco, Brazil, where the expedition landed in June 1526 and stayed for several months, during which time Caboto obtained supplies from thirteen Portuguese who had established a *factoria* (trading post) for Brazilwood.³¹ Echoing Vespucci's impressions of the New World's inhabitants in the *Mundus Novus* and the *Lettera*, Ramírez states that the Indians have "no lord except for some captains who are recognized for their dexterity and bravery in war,"³² go naked, sleep in hammocks, and are happy to trade. He also describes in detail their cannibal rituals. He relates how they fatten up their enemy captives, dress them in parrot feathers, and after dancing and singing around their hapless victims for twenty-four hours, kill them with a wooden club, cut them into pieces, and eat their body parts.³³ Once the expedition left Pernambuco and made contact with Solís's castaways further south along the coast, their influence in shaping how Ramírez recorded his impressions of indigenous customs can be detected. Most notably, subsequent mentions of cannibalism in his letter are matter-of-fact observations that serve to identify the differences between indigenous peoples rather than a narrative account of ceremonial feasting to signify the radical difference between Indians and Europeans.

Caboto's first contact with Solís's castaways occurred at the end of September 1526. Sailing south from Pernambuco, he reached a mountainous island (present-day Florianópolis) where his expedition was met by a canoe of Indians and a Christian.³⁴ The Indians were Guarani-speaking Carijós (also identified as Cariós by the Spanish), who inhabited the coastal regions of Brazil south of the 25th latitude and north of the estuary of the Río de la Plata.³⁵ The Christian was most likely Portuguese, although Ramírez does not identify him thus. He informed Caboto that there were up to fifteen Christians who had remained behind from an

expedition to the Spice Islands and were living in the area. He also told him about two survivors from the Solís expedition, “Melchor Ramírez, citizen (*vecino*) of the town of Lepe, and Enrique Montes,”³⁶ who had come from twelve leagues away to find Caboto when they learned of his expedition’s arrival.

Ramírez reports that of these two castaways, Enrique Montes “knew the Indians better than anyone else because he had been raised by them.”³⁷ This enabled Montes to become the economic middleman between Caboto’s expedition and the Indians during the five months that Caboto stayed on the southern coast of Brazil. In an extensive *relación* dated September 30, 1527, Montes documents the barter goods he received from the members of the expedition to exchange for food and wood from the Carijós.³⁸ According to Ramírez, Montes was “informed about many things [of the region] because he spoke the language of the Indians.”³⁹ Of these things, the most intriguing for Caboto was the “great wealth to be found in the river where his captain [Solís] was killed.”⁴⁰ Montes claimed this wealth was easily obtained, for it was brought from the sierra to a river called the Paraná by Indians who were accustomed to crossing overland for more than two hundred leagues to where there were many mines of gold and silver and other metals.⁴¹ His castaway companion Melchor Ramírez, who claimed that he had journeyed to this river after joining a Portuguese expedition as their *lengua* (interpreter, literally meaning tongue or language), also “spoke well about wealth of the land.”⁴²

When Caboto asked Montes and Ramírez for proof of this wealth, they added another dimension to their story. They explained that while they had stayed on the coast, five other survivors from Solís’s expedition had gone in search of the great riches of the sierra where there lived “a White King (*un Rey blanco*), who had a beard and dressed like us.”⁴³ Although the five men did not reach the fabled mines of gold and silver, they traded with the Indians near the sierra and sent back letters and samples of precious metals with twelve slaves. Later, Montes and Ramírez received news “that a nation (*generación*) of Indians that are called the Guaraníes had killed them in order to take the slaves who had been carrying the gold and silver.”⁴⁴ When Caboto asked to see the samples of these precious metals, Montes and Ramírez replied that another expedition had been given the gold and silver to take to Spain, but the boat carrying it had sunk and all the treasure had been lost. However, they did manage to produce some small pieces of twenty-karat gold and offered to go with their families (*casas y hijos*) to

show Caboto the way to the wealth of Solís's river.⁴⁵ The lure of gold was persuasive enough. After spending a few months on the coast, Caboto decided to sail to the estuary where Solís had been killed, taking with him Montes and Ramírez as his guides.

Whether or not any gold and silver had reached the coast only to be lost at sea, the story that circulated on the Brazilian coast about Indians who came and went from the sierra demonstrates the existence of a long-distance travel and communication network that stretched from the Carijó of Santa Catalina to the Guaraní territories along the Paraguay Rivers.⁴⁶ When Montes's and Ramírez's castaway companions had set out in search of the mines of gold and silver, Europeans had not yet reached Incan territories. Francisco Pizarro did not sail south along the Pacific coast until November 1526, and would return to Spain in 1528 before leading an expedition to Cajamarca and entering Cusco in 1533.⁴⁷ Thus, Montes's and Ramírez's knowledge about the wealth of the sierra could only have been learned from the Carijós or from their castaway companions who had travelled there from Brazil. The description of the *Rey blanco* also suggests how Montes and Ramírez had filtered indigenous knowledge through their own worldview. By identifying him as bearded and dressed like the Spanish, they constructed an equivalency between a European conception of kingship and the indigenous ruler of a territory where silver was to be found.

The account in Guzman's *La Argentina* of a Portuguese named García who travelled overland from the coast of Brazil to the sierra is also filtered through an interpretative lens, this one a colonial narrative of conquest that highlights the exploits of an individual European and the villainy of the Indians. Guzmán relates how Alejos García, who was "esteemed on that coast [Brazil] for being fluent in the language of the Carios, who are the Guaraníes, as are the Tupís and the Tamoyos,"⁴⁸ reached the Paraguay River together with three other Portuguese and some coastal Indians. There he made contact with Guaraníes who had undertaken previous forays to the sierra and organized an expedition to return with them to the sierra. According to Guzmán, over two thousand Guaraníes agreed to accompany him as they were "covetous and inclined to war."⁴⁹ With his Guaraní army, García rampaged across the Gran Chaco to reach the area of Charcas (near present-day Santa Cruz de la Sierra), obtaining plunder of "clothes, many cups, bracelets and crowns of silver, copper and other metals."⁵⁰ After returning to the Paraguay River, García sent two messengers overland to Brazil with samples of silver and gold

and remained behind to guard the rest of his considerable treasure. But within a few days of their departure, the Guaraníes killed García and his companions, leaving only García's young son alive, whom Guzmán claims to have met.⁵¹ For Guzmán, the Guaraníes' attack stemmed from the "evil inclination that is natural in them to do harm."⁵² They were, Guzmán writes, "peoples without faith or loyalty"⁵³ incapable of sustaining alliances, and thus ended by robbing García of all he had.

While the account of García in Guzmán's chronicle and the story of five men who travelled to the sierra in Ramírez's 1528 letter are similar, whether García was one of Solís's castaways is disputable. Charles Nowell, who wrote the first English-language article on García in 1946, upholds Guzmán's claim that he was Portuguese but proposes that his three companions were survivors of Solís's expedition.⁵⁴ Catherine Julien's more recent analysis of the primary sources and the secondary literature on García's journey to the sierra concludes that he came with the armada of Francisco García Jofre de Loyasa, who had sailed from Spain in 1525. As this makes it unlikely that García could have reached the sierra before the arrival of Caboto in Brazil, Julien argues that Solís's castaways made a separate journey to the interior.⁵⁵

Although García's identity and when he travelled to the sierra remain historically murky, indigenous testimonies obtained by Domingo Martínez de Irala during his river voyage up the Paraguay in December 1542 and January 1543 confirm his existence. Irala, who made this voyage on the orders of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, was charged with obtaining information about the topography of the lands leading to the sierras, the indigenous nations inhabiting them, what they knew of the precious metals of these lands, and whether they knew of any Christians who had travelled to them. The report of his findings, which were based on indigenous testimonies obtained with the assistance of two interpreters from Brazil, Pedro de Brasil and Antonio Correa, corroborates some aspects of Guzmán's account of García's journey. Where Irala's report differs is in how his indigenous informants describe García in relation to Guaraní warrior norms of raiding and captive-taking, rather than in value-laden terms of covetousness and evil inclinations.

The initial reference in Irala's report to García's presence in the region comes from a cacique of the Guajarapos (also spelt Guaxarapos), canoe fisherman and hunters who inhabited the

west bank of the Paraguay near the junction of the Negro River.⁵⁶ Communicating through the cacique's slave, a youth from a Guaraní nucleus called the Itatines whose territories lay east of the Paraguay between the Aquidaban and Apa Rivers, Irala learned that "a Christian called *maratya* had entered the sierras with many Indians a long time ago."⁵⁷ The next interrogation was conducted with another Itatín-Guaraní slave living among the Guajarapos. When asked if he knew which nations were the "true lords of the metal—*los señores verdaderos del metal*,"⁵⁸ he replied that he only knew that the Chanés, the Payzunos (*Payçunos*), and the Caracaraes had white metal, including large sheets (*planchas*) of silver and smaller pieces they wore on their arms and fingers. Of these indigenous peoples named by the Itatín slave, the Chanés are described in the anthropological literature as sedentary farmers belonging to the Arawakan linguistic family, who served as vassals of the Mbayá-Guaycurú and were enslaved by the Guaraní.⁵⁹ The Caracaraes were vassals of the Incas who inhabited the Bolivian sierra near present-day Potosí.⁶⁰ The Payzunos do not figure in the anthropological literature as a distinct nation, but were probably related to the Chanés.⁶¹ At the very end of the interrogation, the cacique of the Guajarapos told Irala that living among the Chanés and Payzunos in a large lagoon were "two Christians like ourselves [meaning the Spanish] except that they do not have muskets or arquebuses, nor do they dress like us, nor do they have beards."⁶² When asked if he had seen them, he replied yes, and that the Indians of those territories and others called them Christians.

The final interrogation that mentions García took place with Guaraní-speaking Indians on January 5, 1543. The Guaraníes had come to see Irala at Puerto de los Reyes, the name he gave to a natural harbour in a lagoon with an island situated in the Pantanal of Mato Grosso, north of Corumbá, Brazil. Without any prompting, an Indian, "who called himself Xagoani and whom the Guaraníes called Maraana,"⁶³ told Irala that he was from a Chané nation inland, and that he had been a slave of García, whom they called *maratya*. When asked how he had learned Guaraní and where he had met García, he related that

in past times, before García came from Brazil and to the territory of the Guaraní, the said Guaraníes organized a large war party in the port they call Itatín, in order to look for metal. Passing through their land [of the Chané] at night, they entered their houses, killing many of them and taking as captives their women and children, who

they brought back to the port of Itatín where they stayed as slaves. When García came, he and two of his brothers went with him and the Guaraníes in search of metal.⁶⁴

When asked how far García went inland and from where the metal came, he explained that García had “reached a nation called the Payzunos, and that the Chanés and Payzunos gave him the said metal, and from there he returned when he found out that a nation called the Crocotoquis [Gorgotoquíes] had made a large war party against the said García and those who went with him.”⁶⁵ Asked if he knew of the Christians of whom the Guajarapos spoke, he explained how “they were called Christians because they had been slaves of García.”⁶⁶ While the Chané did not describe what happened to García, he confirmed his demise, relating that “after the Guaraníes knew of García’s death, they ate some of his companions and several women, and as they [the Chanés] were present they decided to flee and this was how they came fleeing to the Guajarapos.”⁶⁷

In this final interrogation, evidence emerges of Guaraní warrior norms at the time of their contact with García. The Chané’s account of the Itatines’ war parties to the Bolivian sierra provides an example of long-distance travel that was integral to the Guaraní’s territorial expansion.⁶⁸ His testimony confirms that the Itatines were the intermediary procurers of metals from the sierra and knew the routes inland toward the Andes, while his focus on the taking of captives reveals that one of their objectives of raiding the sierra was to secure slaves to integrate into their communities. In the case of García, the Chané offers some enticing, if elusive, insights into his relationship to an indigenous worldview. Of particular interest is the naming of García as *maratya*, which identified him in an indigenous language. Such a naming suggests that García was not only fluent in Guaraní, as Guzmán claimed, but also had adapted to the Guaraní’s “way of being” or *tekó*, translated by the Jesuit missionary Ruiz de Montoya in his 1639 dictionary as “to be, a state of living, condition, costume, law, habit—*fer, estado de vida, condicion, estar, costumbre, ley, habito*.”⁶⁹

Of equal import is the Chané’s identification of himself as García’s slave. Colonial accounts describe how the Guaraní regarded all other indigenous nations as inferior and subject to enslavement, which suggests that the Itatines had accepted García as an equal by virtue of his

possession of slaves. An anonymous description of Río de la Plata (circa 1570s) states that “they call the Indians of this land Guaraníes, which is to say in their language a warrior people ... and it is their custom to always be at war against other nations who are not of their language, whom they call slaves.”⁷⁰ The correlation between the Spanish use of the term slave to identify war captives and the Guaraní word *tapíi* that signifies ethnic inferiority is made explicit in colonial sources from the 1600s. In a report issued by Juan Arias de Saaverdra in 1658, Manuel Cabral, testified that the Guaraní “despised all other nations, calling them *Tapys*, which is the same as slaves.”⁷¹ In his 1639 dictionary, the Jesuit missionary Ruiz de Montoya translated *tapíi* as “slave nation, as the Guaraní called all other nations— *generacion efclauo; y afsi llama el Guarani a las demas naciones.*”⁷²

In the context of the hierarchical distinction the Guaraní made between themselves as warriors and other indigenous nations as slaves, García’s participation in the Itatines’ raid to the sierra and his possession of Chané slaves meant that the Itatines must have initially perceived him as an equal. That he achieved the prestige to lead two thousand Itatines as Guzmán claimed is highly unlikely. From the Chané’s testimony, it is more prudent to deduce that he joined a large raiding party already in the process of organization. Why the Itatines had accepted García as an equal or how he came to possess his Chané slaves is more difficult to conjecture. The *Comentarios*, which describes an encounter a year later between Cabeza de Vaca and Chanés who told him that they had accompanied García to the sierra, suggests that barter may have been involved. It reports that

many of them [Chanés] came to see and to know us, saying that they were very happy to be good friends with the Christians because of García’s good treatment of them when he had taken them from their land. Some of these Indians brought beads, pearls, and other things that they said García had given them when they went with him.⁷³

However, trade with either the Chanés or the Itatines is not mentioned in the other accounts about García, and is it likely that he and his companions would have carried barter goods overland from Brazil. In any event, barter or not, García’s demise and the cannibalism of his companions following his death point to the deterioration of his relations with the Itatines during his return journey to the Paraguay River.

As the Chané's testimony does not describe the circumstances of García's death or make clear whether his companions who were eaten were Europeans or Indians, the impetus for the Itatines' cannibalism is obscure. It is also puzzling. Similar to Ramírez's description of ritual cannibalism among the Tupí Indians of Pernambuco, the *Comentarios* describes how the Guaraní only ate enemy warriors, while women and children were kept as slaves.⁷⁴ Thus it appears that, unless there were extraordinary circumstances of which we are unaware, the Chané's testimony was false, confused, or misunderstood by the interpreters. In light of this discrepancy, Susnik's ethnohistorical study of the Guaraní's social and political organization and their deployment of cannibalism to affirm the territorial boundaries and social cohesion of each village or *tekó'á* provides an interpretative framework for analyzing the possible motives for the Itatines' cannibalism.

According to Susnik, the *tekó'á* were composed of several or more *teýy-ogá*, large communal structures that housed an extended kinship lineage, the *teýy*, which was composed of ten or more single families. Translated by Ruiz de Montoya as “flock, family, kinship group, genealogy, many—*manada, compañía, parcialidad, geneologia, muchos,*” the *teýy* was headed by a *teýy-rú*, father of the community, or *tuvichá*, the chief.⁷⁵ Susnik argues that the social cohesion of the *tekó'á* was precarious, dependent on the control exercised by the *tuvichá* over the *teýy* of the communal *teýy-ogá* or long house, and subject to power struggles between the *tuvichás* to become the *mburuvichá*, translated by Montoya as “great chief, he who is in his greatness a prince, master—*tubichá grande, el que contiene en fi grandeza Principe, Señor.*”⁷⁶ These great chiefs united the *tuvichás* in times of warfare and facilitated alliances between the *tekó'ás*. They also granted permission to enter their territorial boundaries or *guára*, translated by Ruiz de Montoya as ““patria, group, countries, region—*patria, parcialidad, paifes, region.*”⁷⁷ In the context of these power dynamics, Susnik states that ritual cannibalism was deployed to punish warriors of the *teýy* who refused to obey the *tuvichá*.⁷⁸ She also states that it intensified in times of disturbances or threats to the well being and integrity of the *tekó'á*. These included drought, rivalry between *tuvichás*, the violation of the territorial boundaries, attacks by enemy nations, and raids against non-Guaraní groups to expand territory and take captives.⁷⁹

Many of the factors that Susnik identifies as contributing to the intensification of cannibalism were present during García's participation in the Itatines' war party to raid the sierra. Ritual cannibalism could have occurred in response to the external threat of the large war party that the Crocotoquis mounted against the Itatines. It may also have been prompted by a rivalry between García and other *tuvichás*, or between *tuvichás* after his death, serving the function of punishing warriors who refused to obey a new *tuvichá*. Guzmán's reference to Indians accompanying García from the coast of Brazil raises the possibility that there were Carijós among his indigenous collaborators. As Guaraní from a distinct *guára*, the Carijós would have been perceived as belonging to García's *teýy* and hence more vulnerable to cannibalism.

While Susnik does not speculate on the circumstances of García's death, she views his trek westward as a significant violation of the territorial boundaries of the Guaraní's *guáras* and their migratory norms. She posits that this violation initiated among the Guaraní a "warring psychosis of an ethnocentric nature"⁸⁰ that increased over the course of the 1500s. Although Susnik does not substantiate her hypothesis, the core element of *mara* in García's indigenous name *maratya* is translated by Montoya as "sickness, contemptible, affliction, offense, adversity, calamity—*enfermedad, ruindad, aflicion, delito, aduerfidad, calumnia,*"⁸¹ which suggests that García's naming had negative associations. In light of Susnik's hypothesis, the puzzling reference in the Chané's testimony to the cannibalism of "several women" becomes comprehensible, if not verifiable, as a transgression of the Guaraní warrior norm of only eating male captives precipitated by García's violation of their territorial integrity. It also may have been directed specifically against Carijó women, with whom García appears to have had intimate relations, as evidenced by Guzmán's claim that García had a young son whom the Itatines spared.

During Irala's second interrogation, the mention by the Guajarapos' Itatín slave of two Christians living among the Chanés and Payzunos is also curious. As Irala was conducting his interrogations many years after García's journey to the sierra took place, it is unlikely that other Europeans who may have accompanied García and had not been eaten by the Itatines would have survived that long. Most probably, they were the survivors of an inland expedition from 1537 led by Juan de Ayolas, a captain in Pedro de Mendoza's armada that had arrived in the Río de la Plata in 1535. Ayolas and his men had travelled overland from the Paraguay

River to the sierra in search of silver and gold and were killed by their indigenous collaborators, the Payaguás.⁸² A letter written by Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre in 1545 states that a few Christians from Ayolas's *entrada* had remained in the interior in a *casa fuerte* (fortified village), and named them as "Iazaro, Salvago/ Cuñiga/ mendoça/ lançarote piloto etc."⁸³

From a transcultural perspective, what is most significant about the indigenous reports of Christians living among the Chanés and the Payzunos is how Irala's Chané informant identifies them as the slaves of García. The Chané's perception of them as both slaves and Christians points to a shift in García's status among his Itatín collaborators from being equal to becoming inferior, or *tapíi*. In this context, García's ability to integrate into the Itatines' warring party can be understood as more than simply his adaptation to an indigenous worldview. It was also contingent on the Itatines' acceptance of him as Guaraní or *avá* (literally *hombre* or man). Susnik argues that at the time of the arrival of the Europeans, *avá* was an ethnocentric conception of identity based on the affinity of shared language and affirmed by wars against non-*avá* nations.⁸⁴ She also notes that while being *avá* united different *tekó-ás* in opposition to those who were not *avá*, it was tempered by the distrust and hostility between *tekó'ás* and the autonomy of different *guáras*, which led to wars and cannibalism among the Guaraní. Hence, the *Comentarios* describes the Guaraní as a people "who occupy great territories and are of one language; they eat the human flesh of their Indian enemies with whom they are at war, and of the Christians, and even among themselves they eat one another."⁸⁵ In García's case, this distrust appears to have led from the Itatines accepting him as *avá* to perceiving him as non-*avá*, and, to those associated with him, whether Guaraní collaborators, mestizos or Chané slaves, as Christians.

In this regard, Susnik states that by the late 1500s the name García-Maratya had become a synonym for "white man" in the Guaraní territories of the upper-Paraguay region.⁸⁶ While she provides no citations from the primary sources as evidence for this claim, Martín González, a priest who accompanied the expedition of Cabeza de Vaca, provides an example of the mutability inherent in being *avá*. In a letter dated March 3, 1559, he relates how non-baptized Guaraníes would not permit baptized Guaraníes to travel through their territories, and that this prohibition extended to killing Christian Guaraníes.⁸⁷ The hostility between Christian and non-

Christian Guaraníes that had developed by the 1550s points to a complex and shifting perception of being *avá* or becoming non-*avá* that was integral to the process of transculturation in the region. This hierarchical distinction between *avá*, *tapií*, and Christian was pivotal to the incorporation of the conquistadors from Pedro de Mendoza's *armada* into the Carios' kinship networks in Asunción and the relationships that evolved between the Spanish, the Carios, and their mestizo offspring. During Caboto's earlier expedition up the Paraná and Paraguay Rivers, the ambiguous position Solís's castaways held as simultaneously being *avá* through a shared language, non-*avá* by virtue of their European origin, and belonging to another *guára* through their association with the Carijós was central to their interactions with indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata. Their role as translators for the expedition further complicated this position, making them the intermediaries who facilitated interactions and brokered the exchange of barter goods with the non-*avá* Europeans.

In Guzmán's *La Argentina*, such nuances of sameness and difference are elided by a binary representation of the Guaraní as either treacherous or friendly. In the case of García, the Guaraní figure in his chronicle as "a people without faith or loyalty." For Caboto's voyage, they are transformed from bellicose warriors into amiable traders, who "agreed to peace and friendship and provided him [Caboto] with all the food he lacked"⁸⁸ in exchange for presents and barter. As Guzmán tells the story, Caboto entered the estuary of the Río de la Plata and fought the Charrúas. He then rowed upstream to found a fort, Sancti Spíritus, at the mouth of the Caracaraña River, where the Indians came of their own volition in friendship. Sailing further north, he traded with the Indians at the confluence of the Paraná and Paraguay Rivers for food. He then continued up the Paraguay, battling the Agaces, until he reached the Guaraní territories where the Spanish would subsequently found the fort of Asunción. Here he was able not only to negotiate peace and friendship and replenish his food supplies, but also to obtain from the caciques "some silver pieces, gold bracelets, copper sheets (*manzanas*) and other things that they had taken from Alejo García."⁸⁹ Thus, writes Guzmán, "Caboto was very happy and pleased, with the hope that the land was very rich,"⁹⁰ for the Indians had persuaded him that the metals came from their own territories. With evidence of these riches in hand, Caboto returned to the fort of Sancti Spíritus, where he left behind a garrison of one hundred and ten men. He then returned to Spain and renamed Solís's river the Río de la Plata, the river of silver.⁹¹

In his 1528 letter, Ramírez provides a less disingenuous and more conflicted account of Caboto's encounters with the Guaraní and other indigenous nations of the Río de la Plata, one that enables us to discern the mutual entanglement of European and indigenous worldviews. He relates how Caboto sailed south along the coast of Brazil with his castaway guides and reached the mouth of the estuary, where he weighed anchor at a harbour he called San Lázaro. Here the castaways learned of the existence of a Christian named Francisco del Puerto, who had been taken captive by the Indians who had killed Solís. Puerto came to meet Caboto and confirmed that there were indigenous peoples living further upriver who had quantities of precious metals.⁹² After incorporating Puerto into his expedition, Caboto sailed up the Paraná River and founded the fort of Sancti Spíritus where he began inquiries through his interpreters about how to reach the mines of gold and silver.

According to Ramírez, many indigenous nations who spoke diverse languages came to see Caboto at Sancti Spíritus. These included the “Quirandies” (Querandíes), nomad hunters who knew of the *Rey blanco* and told of a sea on the other side of the mountains, and also the “*carcarais y chanaes y beguas y chanaestinbus y tinbus*.”⁹³ Of the carcarais and the tinbus (Timbús), Ramírez writes that they “grow corn, squashes, and beans” while “all the other nations do not plant but live on meat and fish.”⁹⁴ He also describes a nation, “called Guarenis, and for another name Chandris,”⁹⁵ who were “friends” of the expedition. He reports that they practiced cannibalism and were

the enemies of all these other nations, and of many more that are spoken of further on. They are treacherous people; everything they do is by treachery. They rule a large part of these Indies, and they have the confidence of those who live in the sierra [from where they] bring gold and silver of plates and ear ornaments, and of hatchets with which they clear the forest.⁹⁶

From this description, Ramírez appears to have made a correlation because of shared language between the Chandris, who were the delta Guaraní living along and on the islands of the lower Paraná River south of present-day Santa Fe, and the Guaraní who inhabited the upper Paraguay region and raided the sierra.⁹⁷

While Ramírez does not mention the presence of the castaways in Caboto's negotiations with "all these other nations" at Sancti Spíritus, Caboto acknowledges their role as intermediaries, stating that he "sent out interpreters to the neighbouring nations, asking them to come and see him and tell him about the things of the country."⁹⁸ The most likely reason that these diverse nations congregated at Sancti Spíritus was the opportunity to obtain barter goods from the expedition. For although neither Caboto nor Ramírez mentions that trading occurred, Ramírez relates that the expedition suffered great hunger and hardship until it reached the Carcaraña River, where fish and meat were plentiful.⁹⁹ The abundance of food that the expedition was able to procure indicates that trading must have taken place. Most probably, barter was also the inducement for "all these other nations" to provide Caboto with information.

A subsequent exchange of corn for barter goods that Ramírez describes reveals the limits of barter as a negotiating tool and the inherent hostilities between these indigenous nations. This exchange took place after Caboto had begun his ascent of the Paraná from Sancti Spíritus, having learned from the interpreters that the best way to reach the mines in the mountains was by river. Leaving behind a rearguard of thirty men under the command of Gregorio Caro, he sailed northward until he reached an island on New Year's Day, 1528.¹⁰⁰ There he was met by a group of Timbús who, according to Ramírez, "were against (*contraria*) the Indians we had brought with us."¹⁰¹ When Caboto offered the Timbús barter goods in return for a small amount of corn, they complained that they should have received better things and threatened the expedition.¹⁰² In retaliation, Caboto ordered a raid on their village. Ramírez describes how "we killed many of them and captured many more, took all the corn in the village and loaded the brigantine with it, burned the houses, and the Indians who had come with us took the Timbús as slaves."¹⁰³

While Ramírez's account of the altercation with the Timbús and Caboto's subsequent attack on their village pivots on the dissatisfaction with paltry trinkets, it also provides insight into how the Indians who had come from Sancti Spíritus implicated Caboto's expedition in the region's interethnic hostilities. Although Ramírez does not identify these Indians, most likely they were the Chandris, who were the "friends" of the Spanish. As they also were the "enemies of all other nations," this would explain the Timbús' animosity towards the expedition. In turn, the opportunity to obtain slaves was most certainly a motive for the Chandris' participation in the

retaliatory attack on the Timbús' village. Their desertion of the expedition soon afterwards indicates that their willingness to collaborate with Caboto in the first place was predicated on the potential for raiding their enemies. Ramírez relates how “the canoe Indians who had accompanied us and caught fish for us now left us and returned to Sancti Spíritus with the slaves they had taken from the Timbús.”¹⁰⁴ Presumably they also took the corn, for Ramírez describes how after their desertion the expedition suffered a hunger so great that “when we arrived at some island we leapt onto it and like starving wolves ate the first grasses we found.”¹⁰⁵

A claim made by Caboto in his deposition that a mutiny was brewing while he was ascending the Paraná from Sancti Spíritus also hints at how the collaboration of these canoe Indians, however fleeting, had begun to alter the internal dynamics of the expedition. He testified that he had “hanged one Francisco de Lepe, a servant (*criado*) of the accountant Montoya, as the principal conspirator in a mutiny of thirty men who wanted to join the Indians against the deponent.”¹⁰⁶ While Caboto does not address the motives for this conspiracy, his testimony reveals his fear that alignments had begun to form between the Indians and the lower-ranking members of his expedition. Whether the mutiny was planned when the men realized that the Indians intended to desert the expedition and take with them not only the slaves but also the food obtained in the raid, or after the Indians left is unclear. The witnesses who testified for and against Caboto in the investigation held after his return to Spain address the hanging of Lepe but are divided on the cause. Some claim that Caboto arbitrarily punished Lepe; most explicitly state that he was plotting against Caboto to flee the expedition with other crew members, presumably to join the Indians as Caboto claimed.¹⁰⁷ What is certain is that Lepe and his fellow conspirators would not have been able to join the Indians without the assistance of the castaways as linguistic intermediaries. That Lepe was identified as the principal conspirator and punished for sedition rather than the castaways suggests how dependent Caboto was on them for the survival of his expedition. As Caboto continued his exploration of the region, the ambivalent position the castaways occupied between European and indigenous worldviews and the divided loyalties this produced became the determining factor of the expedition's negotiations and confrontations with the indigenous peoples of the region.

Caboto's next encounter with indigenous peoples of the region occurred when he reached the junction of the Paraguay and Paraná at present-day Corrientes. After continuing to sail east along the Paraná, the expedition was met by Indians whom Ramírez describes as eating human flesh and belonging to the same nation of the Indians [Chandris] at Sancti Spíritus.¹⁰⁸ Ramírez also observes for the first time since Pernambuco the existence of "captains who are recognized for their dexterity and bravery in war," stating that the Indians took them to "a chief they called Yaguarón, [who was] captain of all the villages in the area because he was always at war with other Indians of the same nation who were seven or eight leagues upriver."¹⁰⁹ Ramírez's identification of these Indians with the Chandris meant that they were a Guaraní-speaking nation, while the many villages Yaguarón controlled and the wars he was waging meant that he must have been a powerful *mburuvichá* (great chief) who was exerting his authority over other *teko-ás*. Yaguarón proved receptive to the arrival of the Europeans, presumably because of the barter goods they were able to offer. Ramírez relates that Caboto established a fort named Santa Ana in Yaguarón's territory and that the Indians of the surrounding villages brought the expedition many provisions, including "corn, squash, root vegetables such as mandioca and sweet potatoes, and bread made from the flour of the mandioca root."¹¹⁰ Ramírez also notes that in the course of these transactions, the Spanish noticed that the Indians had "many earrings and plates of good quality silver and gold."¹¹¹

While Ramírez omits any mention of interpreters facilitating communication and trading, or even that barter goods were exchanged, he does report that Caboto sent the *lengua* Francisco de Puerto to villages further upriver to find out from where and from whom the Indians had obtained the gold and silver.¹¹² From this point in Ramírez's narrative, Puerto assumes a significant role in influencing how the course of events unfolded. According to Ramírez, Caboto could have acquired ample amounts of these metals from Yaguarón's Indians. However, when he learned from Puerto that the gold and silver came from Indians who lived seventy leagues up the Paraguay, Caboto decided to go in search of them instead. Ramírez identifies these Indians as the Chandules, and states that they belonged to the same nation as Yaguarón's Indians, which meant that they were Guaraní-speakers. Ramírez also states that Caboto avoided trading with Yaguarón for gold and silver in order that his decision to leave his territories would not appear as overtly covetous (*codicia*) of these metals.¹¹³ That Ramírez felt it necessary to include an explanation of Caboto's need to dissimulate suggests that his

relationship with Yaguarón was becoming increasingly tenuous. The encounter with the Chandules proved even more so, with the expedition's attempt to trade with them through Puerto as an intermediary ending in ambush.

In Ramírez's account of how this ambush transpired, Caboto backtracked along the Paraná after leaving Yaguarón's territory and entered the mouth of the Paraguay, where he made contact with numerous Guaycurú nations of hunters and fishers and sent a brigantine captained by his lieutenant, Miguel Rifos, with thirty men to explore the river.¹¹⁴ This advance party first made contact with the Agaces (an enemy nation of the Guaraní) and then reached the territory of the Chandules, who initially "received them well and brought them many supplies"¹¹⁵ but then ceased to offer provisions. In a surprising development, the Chandules' previous encounter with Europeans became the reason Ramírez gives for their reluctance to trade. He relates that Puerto, whom "Rifos always sent to their houses to talk to them and with good words tell them that we had come as friends and to give to them what we had brought,"¹¹⁶ reported that the Chandules no longer came to meet them because they greatly feared that the Spanish would take revenge on them for killing other Christians. Ramírez identifies these other Christians as the Solís castaways whom Melchor Ramírez and Enrique Montes claimed had journeyed overland from Brazil to the sierra. He states that the Chandules had killed them in order to seize the gold and silver they were carrying on their return from the sierra.¹¹⁷ The Chandules' reported fear of the Spanish did not restrain their aggression. A few days later, they came to the brigantine, lured the men to their houses with promises of food, and ambushed them.

While Ramírez attributes the Chandules' ambush to their "maliciousness and evil intention,"¹¹⁸ more intriguing is Caboto's allegation in his deposition that the *lengua* Francisco was to blame as he had "sold them out to the Indians"¹¹⁹ Similar to his accusation that Lepe was conspiring to mutiny against him with the Indians, Caboto provides no justification for his claim, except to state that Puerto "had certain words with the treasurer Gonzalo Núñez,"¹²⁰ who was a member of Rifos's advance party. However, his suspicion that Puerto was more aligned with the Indians than the Spanish does not appear to be unfounded. Puerto figures in Ramírez's account as communicating with the Indians independently of the expedition—travelling to villages further upriver on a solo reconnaissance mission in Yaguarón's territories and serving as the

go-between in Rifos's negotiations with Chandules. His ability to move so fluidly between European and indigenous worlds raises the question whether Puerto, whom the expedition found living as a captive among the Indians who had killed Solís and Ramírez identifies as Christian, was a baptized Carijó from the coast of Brazil. This would explain how he was able to communicate in Guaraní, for if Solís's Indians were the Charrúa, they would have spoken a distinct language and a European castaway would not have learned Guaraní from living among them. A decade later, when Cabeza de Vaca was travelling overland from the coast of Brazil to Asunción, he met an "Indian called Francisco, who had been raised by Christians and lived on the bank of the Paraná River."¹²¹ Cabeza de Vaca also reports that Francisco was in communication with an Indian chief called Yguaron whose village was located on the Paraná.¹²² As the village of Yguaron and that of the Yaguarón with whom Caboto had made contact were in the same vicinity, most likely they were the same chief, and Francisco the Indian and Francisco de Puerto were the same person. In this respect, Puerto must have fled Caboto's expedition after the Chandules' ambush and settled in Yaguarón's territories. Whether Puerto had betrayed Rifos and his men as Caboto claims depends on one's confidence in the truth of his desposition. On the one hand, Caboto's allegation raises doubts as to the veracity of Puerto's explanation that the Chandules refused to trade because they had killed the castaways from the sierra. On the other hand, if Puerto's information was accurate, it should have served as a warning that the Chandules were intent on killing Rifos and his men as other Christian intruders who had entered their territories.

The Chandules' ambush of Rifos and his men was a portent of the growing hostility of the indigenous peoples in the region toward the Europeans that culminated in an attack on Sancti Spiritus. This attack occurred after another expedition, led by the Spanish captain Diego García de Moguer, arrived in the region. News of ships sighted on the Paraná had first reached Caboto after he had left Yaguarón's territories and returned to the mouth of the Paraguay, although Ramírez relates that Caboto discounted this news because "the Indians had said many things that turned out to be lies."¹²³ A few days later, Caboto made contact with Indians who had come from Uruay (the Uruguay River?) to trade with the Chandules, and who also spoke of these ships.¹²⁴ By now it was clear that the Indians were telling the truth. Caboto sailed down the Paraná River to find the expedition, which he initially assumed was Portuguese, while Moguer was sailing upriver from Sancti Spiritus. After the two men met, they returned together

to Sancti Spíritus, where conflicts escalated between them over who had the right to claim the wealth of the region. They then began to ascend the river again to the Chandules' territory.¹²⁵ At this juncture, Caboto learned of a conspiracy of the Guaraní-speaking nations to mount an offensive against him, testifying in his deposition that “a slave of this deponent warned of treachery that was being prepared against him, saying that the Chandules living around the said house and ships [Sancti Spíritus] had agreed with the Chandules higher up the Paraguay to kill them.”¹²⁶

Caboto's testimony about the warning he received from his slave is revealing on several accounts. While Ramírez distinguishes between the various Guaraní-speaking nations, Caboto's collective identification of them as Chandules suggests how the expedition's commanders were less aware than the low-ranking crew members of the territorial integrity and potential hostility between different Guaraní *guáras*. His reference to his “slave” indicates that he may have violated the Guaraní's distinction between *avá* and *tapií* by treating his Chandris allies as inferiors rather than as warriors and equals. The slave's warning that the Guaraní-speaking Indians were plotting against Caboto also suggests that they had begun to perceive the Europeans as non-*avá* intruders rather than as potential allies with whom to trade. In response to this warning, Caboto turned back to Sancti Spíritus but was too late to save his outpost. As he sailed downstream, he was met by “Gregorio Caro with fifty men in a brigantine, all naked, who gave him the news that the Indians had burned down the house that they were in.”¹²⁷ With the fort destroyed, Caboto abandoned his intention to return upriver and obtain metals from the Chandules. Instead, he set sail for Spain with a few pieces of silver and gold as proof of the riches to be found in the region.

Whether the assault on Sancti Spíritus was a result of an alliance between the Chandris (the delta Guaraní) and other Guaraní-speakers further upriver to expel the Europeans from the region, or a localized skirmish is unclear. Guzmán, who dates the attack after Caboto departed for Spain, blames it on the Timbús.¹²⁸ His account, which pivots on the relation of a Timbú cacique with a Spanish woman, is apocryphal. The historical evidence clearly demonstrates that the attack took place during Caboto's journey and there is no record of a rearguard being left behind as Guzmán claims in his chronicle. Ramírez does not refer to the confrontation. His letter, which was dated and signed at the port of San Salvador (located on an island in the

Paraná) on July 10, 1528, was completed before it occurred. He is presumed by the historian Toribio Medina to have perished at Sancti Spíritus.¹²⁹ The *probanzas*, which address at length the circumstances of the attack, do not resolve the issue of whether it was the Timbús or the Chandules who attacked the fort as both are identified as the perpetrators. What the witnesses called to testify do reveal is that Caboto's relations with Yaguarón's Indians may have not have been as peaceful as he and Ramírez claimed, and that the divided loyalties between worlds extended to more of his men than mutinous servants and castaways who sided with the natives.

The *probanzas* concerning the attack on the fort centre on a dispute over whether Caboto or Gregorio Caro, who was in charge of the fort, was responsible for the Indians' aggression against the expedition. In a deposition presented by Caro during his criminal proceedings against Caboto in Spain, he testified that he had maintained a friendly relationship with the Indians of Sancti Spíritus and that it was Caboto's maltreatment of Yaguarón's Indians that had provoked the Guaraníes of the region to unite and attack the fort.¹³⁰ In a separate legal dispute, two witnesses testified that an altercation had occurred between Caboto and Yaguarón in which Caboto had stabbed the cacique in the shoulder.¹³¹ Whether this incident took place or not, the witnesses' allegations suggest that there indeed was more to Caboto's reluctance to trade with Yaguarón's Indians for gold and silver than his concern to feign disinterest in their metals.

A report Caboto prepared about the attack on the fort while he was still in the Río de la Plata not address his relations with Yaguarón. Instead, it focuses on Caro's negligence in maintaining an adequate guard over the fort, arguing that this provided the opportunity for the Indians to attack it in the middle of the night.¹³² While the witnesses who contributed to Caboto's report were divided over whether Caro's negligence was the cause of the attack on Sancti Spíritus, the one thing that most of them agreed upon was the fate of those who had managed to escape. They testified that while Caro was able to flee the burning fort to a brigantine with some of the men, he left others abandoned on the shore, the reason being that there was no more room in the boat because of the Indian women he had taken with him.¹³³

The appearance of these indigenous women in the historical record at the very end of Caboto's voyage adds another dimension to the dynamics of first encounters in the Río de la Plata, one that anticipates the relations between the conquistadors who arrived with Pedro de Mendoza's

subsequent expedition and the Cario-Guaraní women in Asunción. In the context of Caboto's exploration of the region, the presence of indigenous women at the ambush of Sancti Spíritus hints that not only barter goods and the intermediation of the castaways had facilitated the establishment of a fort in indigenous territory. The description by several witnesses in the *probanzas* of the women as Caro's "slaves" suggests that his treatment of them as inferiors may have provoked the ambush, while Caro's decision to bring them with him and leave his men behind after the fort was burned indicates that he perceived them as essential to his survival. The historical evidence that relations with indigenous women occurred during Caboto's voyage also provides insight into why a woman figures as the catalyst for the Timbús' aggression in Guzmán's apocryphal tale of the attack on Sancti Spíritus.

Guzmán's tale, which takes many turns and twists, begins by describing how Lucía de Miranda, who together with her husband, Sebastián Hurtado, had been members of the rear-guard left behind at Sancti Spíritus by Caboto when he returned to Spain, became the object of desire of a cacique named Mangoré.¹³⁴ A frequent visitor to the fort, Mangoré gave her "many presents and helped her by bringing her food; she, in grateful return, gave him affectionate attention."¹³⁵ According to Guzmán, Mangoré invited Hurtado to visit his village in order "to honour him, and give him proof of his friendship."¹³⁶ When Hurtado refused Mangoré became enraged, and planned an attack on the fort with his younger brother, Siripo. Waiting until a time when Hurtado and most of the soldiers were absent from the fort, Mangoré and his warriors arrived with provisions and were invited by the Spaniards to spend the night inside the fort walls. Once the soldiers were asleep, four thousand Timbús assaulted the fort. Although Mangoré died in the ensuing battle, the Timbú warriors were able to destroy the fort, kill all the male Spaniards, and take as slaves "the five women and some children who were there."¹³⁷

Upon returning to his village, Siripo, the brother of the slain Mangoré, made Miranda one of his wives. When Hurtado returned to the charred remains of the fort and discovered that Miranda's body was not amongst the dead, he allowed himself to be taken prisoner by the Timbús. Although Siripo ordered him executed, Miranda begged for his life. Siripo agreed to spare Hurtado on condition that he did not have carnal relations with Miranda, and gave him an indigenous woman to serve him. When an Indian woman, who had once been Siripo's lover, discovered that Miranda and Hurtado were illicitly meeting, she became "incensed by raging

jealousy.”¹³⁸ She informed Siripo about their trysts and he ordered them killed. Lucía was burnt at the stake, “suffering in the flames that ended her life like a true Christian.”¹³⁹ Sebastián Hurtado, in an echo of his namesake saint, was tied to a tree and shot to death by arrows “with his eyes fixed on heaven.”¹⁴⁰

This tale, which evokes in equal parts the epic siege of Troy and medieval narratives of Christian martyrs, has little relevance as empirical historical evidence. However, as a colonial narrative it is significant for our understanding of the initial dynamics of transculturation in the Río de la Plata. Translated for the first time into English as part of a collection of excerpted texts in *The Argentine Reader*, Guzmán’s account is characterized by the editors as a classic example of “colonial fiction” in which the captive white woman “is an object of dispute and negotiation between two antagonistic cultures.”¹⁴¹ When considered from the perspective of transculturation, Guzmán’s “captive” story also contains elements — apocryphal or not — that suggest how the Timbús perceived the Europeans in relation to their worldview. Most saliently, it is not Mangoré’s lust for Miranda that provokes his ambush on the fort but the refusal of Hurtado to recognize his prestige as a cacique. However dubious the historical veracity of Guzmán’s tale, Mangoré’s actions correspond rationally to indigenous norms of reciprocity, with the offerings of food to Miranda accompanied by an expectation that Hurtado would honour him. When Hurtado did not respond in the expected fashion, Mangoré had no choice but to declare war in retaliation. After Mangoré died in battle, Siripo’s taking of Miranda as his wife and providing Hurtado with an indigenous woman to serve him signaled his willingness to incorporate both of them into indigenous society. In turn, the captive Europeans’ secret meetings that led to their deaths marked their refusal to adapt to indigenous norms and their repudiation of Siripo’s authority as the chief of the village.

In *Captive Women: Oblivion and Memory in Argentina*, Susana Rotker devotes a chapter to the story of Lucía de Miranda, which she analyses as an allegory for the “rape at the very origin of Argentina.”¹⁴² She traces the genealogy of the Miranda tale as it reappears in Argentine literature, noting that by the nineteenth century Hurtado’s taking of an indigenous wife had been excised from the narrative. With her disappearance, Rotker argues, the exchange of wives as a union between indigenous and European cultures was displaced onto the violated body of the captive white woman in order to represent “the virtues of loyalty,

Christianity, friendship and chastity while condemning the savage.”¹⁴³ In the context of the history of first encounters, Guzmán’s account has a different ideological function. By making a Christian woman rather than indigenous women the object of dispute— at once desired, enslaved, made a wife of a cacique, and killed by the Timbús— Guzmán’s tale of Mangoré and Miranda serves to elide the divided loyalties of the Europeans produced by their interactions with the indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata. By embedding the binary opposition of Indian and European in a sexually inflected conflict between lascivious warriors and martyred Spaniards, it reinforces the colonial imperative of the Spanish to hold steadfast to a European worldview, and for their relations with indigenous women to transform savages into vassals and Christians.

This chapter has sought to demonstrate what Guzmán’s tale of Mangoré and Miranda serves to mask. I have argued that the “very origin of Argentina” is neither one of rape nor a binary opposition between Indian and European but rather a series of first encounters predicated on the shifts in perception, affinities, and loyalties among the indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata and Europeans who arrived on their shores. By focusing on what the historical record reveals of the castaways’ and Puerto’s role as intermediaries, I identify them as the third term that disrupts binary oppositions and enables us to understand the dynamics of first encounters as the Europeans’ adaptation to and negotiations with an indigenous worldview. In my analysis of García’s overland trek to the sierra, the Itatines’ willingness to integrate him into their raid to the sierra can be seen as an acceptance of him as one of them; in turn, his demise can be attributed to a series of factors related to the rivalry between *tekó-ás* and his violation of indigenous norms. This mutual entanglement of worldviews suggests that the cultural perceptions of sameness and difference are as important in shaping Spanish-Guaraní relations as the racial mixing identified by Elman Service and Florencia Roulet in their studies of the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata.

Like García’s relations with the battle-bound Itatines, Caboto’s interactions with the Guaraní-speaking peoples who dominated the large tracts of the lands he passed through were conditional on the relations between the Guaraní’s autonomous *tekó’ás*, their hostility towards non-*avá* peoples, and their shifting perceptions of the Europeans who appeared in their midst. In Caboto’s case, the incorporation of Solis’s castaways and the *lengua* Francisco de Puerto

into his expedition was pivotal to his ability to negotiate with the indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata and how they received him. The ambiguous position they held in straddling two worlds also provoked internal conflicts within the expedition and shifting alignments with the Indians, resulting in Caboto's allegations that Lepe had conspired to unite with the Indians against him and Puerto had betrayed the Spanish. By the end of his voyage, Caro's carrying away of Indian women from the burning fort of Sancti Spíritus and leaving Spanish men abandoned on the shore reveals the importance of indigenous women for producing divided loyalties between worldviews. In the next chapter, I analyse how the conquistadors' relations with indigenous women facilitated their integration into the Guaraní's *tekó-ás*. I argue that the Guaraní's "offering" of women to the conquistadors, which has led historians to characterize the foundation of Spanish-Guaraní relations as one of racial mixing, was contingent on the conquistadors' adaptation to and violation of their warrior norms. As I have shown in this chapter, it was the Europeans' alignment with an indigenous worldview and the indigenous peoples' perceptions of them as the same or different that was the defining dynamic of their interactions. During the next expedition of Pedro de Mendoza, this dynamic would challenge the social mores of both the Guaraní and the Spanish, resulting in a blurring of boundaries between worlds and the contestation of cultural affinities and differences.

Endnotes

1. Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos, en las islas, y Tierra-Firme de al Mar Océano* [1601/1615], Edición y estudio de Mariano Cuesta Domingo, 4 vols. (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1991).
2. Mariano Cuesta Domingo provides a chronology of Herrera's life and writings in his introduction to *Historia general*, vol. 1, 25-26.
3. Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, *La Argentina* [1612] (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores: 1998), 29.
4. Herrera, *Historia general*, vol. 1, 657. *Mar Dulce* translates as Fresh Sea.
5. Ibid. "muchas casas de indios y gente en las riberas que con mucha atención estaba mirando pasar el navío y con señas ofrecían lo que tenían poiéndolo en el suelo."
6. Ibid., 658. "rodeando los mataron sin que aprovechase al socorro de la artillería de la carabela, y tomando a cuestras los muertos y apartándolos de la ribera hasta donde los del

navío los podían ver, cortando las cabezas, brazos, y pies asaban los cuerpos enteros y se los comían.”

7. The earliest mention of cannibals is found in an account of Christopher Columbus's second voyage, as related by one of his crew members and rendered into Latin by Niccoló Scillacio. Addressed to Duke of Milan and dated December 15, 1495, Scillacio's *De insulis meridiani atque Indici maris nuper inventis* told of islands “inhabited by Canabilli, a wild, unconquered race which feeds on human flesh.” Quoted from Samuel Eliot Morison, *Journals and Other Documents on the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Heritage Press, 1963), 233. The first published overviews of voyages to the New World include Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's 1504 *Libretto di tutta la navigazione de re Spagna de le isole et terreni novamente trovatti* and Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 *Cosmographiae introductio*. Anghiera's *Libretto di tutta la navigazione de re Spagna de le isole et terreni novamente trovatti* is the first of eight decades of *De orbe novo* decades published between 1504 and 1530. A facsimile Latin/Italian version of *De orbe novo* was published by the Università di Genova, Facoltà di lettere, Dipartimento di archeologia, filologia classica e loro tradizioni in 2005. An English translation by Francis Augustus MacNutt (New York, London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1912) is posted on Carnegie Mellon's website.

8. Luciano Formisano provides English translations of Amerigo Vespucci's published and unpublished letters and a bibliographic overview, and addresses the controversies concerning their authenticity in *Letters from a New World: Amerigo Vespucci's Discovery of America* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1992). The Indians Vespucci made contact with are identified as the Tupinamba in later sixteenth-century colonial accounts, most notably in Jean Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America*, 122-124 and Hans Staden's *True History: An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil*, 129-137. Alfred Métraux notes that the designation Tupinambá was used in the early colonial sources to refer to all of the coastal Brazilian Indians speaking a dialect of Tupí-Guaraní. However, the Tupinambá were only one of many distinct nations scattered along the coast, many of whom were enemies of the Tupinambá, such as the Tupinakin, who occupied the southern coast around Santos; and the Tupinikin, clustered around Espírito Santo; and the Carijó (Guaraní) of Santa Catalina and Lago de los Patos. Métraux, “The Tupinamba,” HSAI III, 95-97.

9. *Mundus Novus* was written as a letter to Vespucci's patron Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco de' Medici about his voyage to Brazil in 1501-2. It was first published in late 1502 or early 1503 and famously declared the existence of a “new world.” The *Lettera* describes all four voyages Vespucci claimed he had undertaken. It was published in late 1504 or early 1505 and addressed to Piero di Tommaso Soderini, head of the Florentine Republic. A Latin translation was included in Martin Waldseemüller's 1507 *Cosmographiae introductio*. In *Mundus Novus*, Vespucci describes a multitude of “well-formed and well-proportioned” people, who go naked and live to one hundred and fifty years of age. The women are lustful and the men take “as many wives as they wish.” When they go to war, “the elders deliver orations to the young to sway their will,” and in battle they take captives as the “victors eat the vanquished.” Formisano, *Letters from a New World*, 49-50. In the *Lettera*, Vespucci emphasizes their cannibalism and explains their manner of waging war, in which they paint and plume their bodies in anticipation of battle. He tells how they live in communal dwellings (with a single house holding up to six hundred people in villages of four thousand souls) where they sleep in

hammocks, and he describes their food, medicine, and burial rites. Formisano, *Letters from a New World* 61-66.

10. Vespucci, *Lettera*, translated in Formisano, *Letters from a New World*, 89.

11. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 29. “*que quiere decir Río como mar.*” Ruiz de Montoya translates the Guaraní word Paraná as “*pariente del mar,*” literally “relative of the sea.” *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 262.

12. *Ibid.* “*le recibieron con buen acogimiento, admirándose de ver gente tan nueva y extraña.*”

13. Alida C. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 47.

14. There are several transcriptions of Luis Ramírez’s 1528 letter, which is housed in the Biblioteca de Real Monasterio de El Escorial, Spain. The first transcription by F.A. Varnhagen was published in *Revista del Instituto Histórico y Geográfico do Brasil*. Vol. 15, 1852: 14-41. It is posted online at www.ihgtb.org.br/rihgb. The most recent is published as an online document by Juan Francisco Maura, *Carta de Luis Ramírez a su padre desde el Brasil (1528): orígenes de lo ‘real maravilloso’ en el Cono Sur* (Col. Textos de la revista *Lemir*, 2007, Edición electrónica: <<http://parnaseo.uv.es/Lemir/Textos/Ramirez.pdf>>). Maura compares previous transcriptions with the original manuscript and provides both a literal transcription and a modern orthographic version. Other transcriptions are published in Toribio Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España* (Santiago de Chile, 1908), vol. 1, 442-457; Eduardo Madero, *Historia del Puerto de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la nación, 1902), Appendix 8; and DHG I: 91-106. A partial English translation of Ramírez’s letter is available in John H. Parry and Robert G. Keith, *The Iberian World: A Documentary History of the Discovery and Settlement of Latin America to the Early 17th Century: Coastlines, Rivers, and Forests* (New York: Time Books and Hector & Rose: 1984), vol. 5, 249-252. However, this translation takes considerable liberties with the original text, including abridging sections. I am translating directly from the transcription published in DHG I: 91-106.

15. Maura notes that the name Luis Ramírez appears several times in the lists of “Pasajeros a Indias” during the 1520s but proposes that it is not possible to discern precisely what position Ramírez held in the expedition. Parry and Keith state he was Caboto’s cabin boy. Medina’s comprehensive study of the expedition’s participants distinguishes between Juan Ramírez as Caboto’s page, and Luis Ramírez, son of Juan de Tordesillas, whose position as a crew member is not identified. Maura, *Carta de Luis Ramírez a su padre desde el Brasil (1528): orígenes de lo ‘real maravilloso’ en el Cono Sur*, 7; Parry and Keith, *The Iberian World*, vol. 5, 249; Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 1, 282-3.

16. *Relación de Piloto Diego García* (Diego García de Moguer), 1530. DHG I: 47-52. For example, García lists by name the Guaraníes, Querandís, Chuarrás, Mepenes, and Agaces. DHG I: 51-52.

17. *Carta de Luis Ramírez*, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 94-95.

18. Carta de factor del Río de la Plata D. Pedro de Orantes, al Rey, La Asunción, circa 1542. *Correspondencia de los oficiales reales de hacienda del Río de la Plata con los reyes de España*, ed. Roberto Levillier (Madrid: Est. tip. "Sucesores de Rivadeneyra", 1915), 59. Herein referred to as COR. In Catherine Julien's English-language manuscript of "Alejo García en la historia," she notes that the date at the end of the letter was overwritten, and concludes that in accordance with the chronology of events documented in the letter it must have been written in 1543. While I have not had access to the original document, I concur with Julien's 1543 dating of the letter, as it makes reference to Irala's exploratory voyage to the upper Paraguay River that occurred from December 1542 to January 1543. In this regard, I use her re-dating of the letter in subsequent citations. I would like to thank Julien for sharing the English manuscript version of "Alejo García en la historia" with me. The Spanish version is published in *Anuario de estudios bolivianos, archivísticos y bibliográficos* 11 (Sucre: Ediciones Archivo y Biblioteca Nacionales de Bolivia, 2005), 223-266.
19. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 50-54.
20. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Relación de la jornada al Norte, Dec. 1542/Jan. 1543. DHG II: 317-318; *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 276-277.
21. Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay II: Ethnohistoria de los Guaraníes* (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero, 1979-1980), 15-21.
22. Caboto's deposition, dated July 29, 1530, is published in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 158-164. It is translated in Parry and Keith, *The Iberian World*, vol. 5, 252-257. I am translating from Medina.
23. Deposition de Caboto, July 29, 1530. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España* II, 158.
24. The *probanzas* (evidence of merits and services) relating to Caboto's voyage are published in the second volume of Medina. The original documents are housed in the Archivo General de Indias, Seville.
25. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, 34-37. An English translation of Pedro Vaz de Caminha's Letter to King Manuel, May 1, 1500, is published in *Colonial Latin America: A Documentary History*, eds. Kenneth Mills, William B. Taylor and Sandra Lauderdale Graham (Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 2002), 45-58.
26. Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600*, 38.
27. John Hemming, *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians*. (Revised edition. London: Papermac, 1995), 8-11.
28. See Métraux, "Ethnography of the Chaco," HSAI I: 191-195.

29. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 36.

30. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 94. Maura 45.

31. Ibid., DHG I: 92. Maura, 43.

32. Ibid., 93. “*no tienen ningund señor saluo algunos yndios q los tienen por sus Capitanes por ser muy diestros e mañosos en la Guerra.*” Maura, 44.

33. Ibid. The full description is as follows: “When they go to war they take some of their enemies and bring them as slaves and treat them very well, fattening them up and giving them one of their daughters to serve them. When they are very fat and ready to eat they call together their relatives and friends who are in the lands and they decorate the slaves in parrot feathers of many colours and take them tied by the neck to the middle of the plaza. For a day and a night they do nothing but dance and sing, women as well as men, and after this they gather to tell them [the slaves] why they want to kill them, reciting all that their relatives have done to them. Then they hit the slave over the head with a wooden club they have until they kill him, and having killed him they cut him into pieces, and eat him. The daughter who has served the slave eats his kidneys and no other thing, and if she has had a child by him, they give her the child to eat, saying it is an enemy like the father.” “*Quando van a la Guerra tomoan algino de sus contraries traenlo por esclauo y atanlo muy bien y engordanlo y danle vuna hija suya pa q se sirba y aprobeche della y de questa muy gorda e se les antoxa questa muy bueno para comer llaman sus parientes e amigos avnquesten la trra a dentro empluman al dho esclauo muy bien de muchas colores de plumas de papaguayos t traenlos con sus cuerdos atado en medio de la plaça y en todo aquel dia y noche no hazen syno vaylar y cantar anso ombres como mugeres con muchas danças aquellos vsan y después desto hecho levantase y le dize la causa por q le quiere matar diziendo q tambien sus parientes hizieron otro tanto a los suyos y alçase otro por detras con vuna maça q tienen ellos de mad^a muy aguda y danle en la cabeza fasta que lo matan y en matandole le hazen piezas e se le comen e sy la hija queda peñada del hazen otro tanto de la criatura por q dizen q la tal criatura tambien hes su enemigo como su padre y a la mujer danle a comer la natura y con panones del esclauo q ha tenido por marido e no otra cosa.*”

34. Ibid., 94. Maura, 45.

35. Carijó was the name given by the Jesuits Manuel de Nóbrega and José de Anchieta, who evangelized in Brazil in the 1500s, to the Guaraní-speakers who inhabited the island of Santa Catalina and the coast south of the island. Susnik notes that the Spanish called these Guaraní-speakers the Cario. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 45. For a discussion of the Jesuit writings on the Carijó see Douglas W. Forsyth, “The Beginnings of Brazilian Anthropology: Jesuits and Tupinamba Cannibalism,” 152.

36. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 94. “[*mel*]ehor Ramirez. v^o de lepe y en Riq^o montes.” Maura, 45.

37. Ibid., 96. “*por saver la calidad de los yndios. mejor. q. otro por ser aver criado. entre ellos.*” Maura, 48.

38. Enrique Montes made an extensive *relación* dated September 30, 1527, of the barter goods he received from members of the expedition and what he procured from the Indians, which is published in Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 1, 437-442.
39. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 94. “*por estar muy ynformado. a cavsa de su lengua de los yndios de la tierra. de muchas cosas.*” Maura, 45.
40. Ibid. “*la gran Riqza q en aql. Rio donde mataron. a su capitan.*”
41. Ibid. “*por ql dho Rio de parana y otros q a el bienen. a dar y ban. a confinar con vna Sierra. a donde muchos yndios. acostunbraban hir y benir y q en esta Sierra abia asimismo mucha manera de metal y q en ella abia mucho oro y plata ... y questa esta Sierra atrabesadapor la tierra mas de duçientas. leguas. y en la alda della. abia asimismo muchas minas. de oro y plata y de los otros metales.*” Maura, 45-46.
42. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 94. “*tanbien dixo mucho bien de la Riqza de la tierra.*” Maura, 45. *Lengua* was used in the sixteenth-century sources to identify interpreters. Most *lenguas* were European or mestizo, although the term could also refer to Indians who had knowledge of the Spanish language and served as translators.
43. Ibid., 95. “*un Rey. blanco q traya bar[ba] y ... bestidos. como nosotros.*” Maura, 46.
44. Ibid. “*vna generacion de yndios q se dizen los guarenis los avian. muerto. por tomarles los esclavos q trayan cargados. de metal.*” Maura, 46.
45. Ibid. It is unlikely that the gold they gave to Caboto came from the sierra. It may have been obtained from the interior of Brazil through indigenous trading routes.
46. The shared language base of this communication network enabled the castaways to travel overland to the sierra; it also meant that Solís’s castaways were able to serve as translators for Caboto and negotiate with a wide range of Guaraní-speaking nations during his exploration of the region. By the later 1500s use of the term Guaraní to identify these indigenous nations in the colonial accounts reflects the linguistic similarity of their local dialects. However, for the first years of contact Guaraní-speaking peoples are as often identified by territory — such as the Carijós, Chandris, Chandules, Carios, Tobatines, Guarambarenses, Itatines, Mbaracayúenses, Mondayenses, and Paranáes — or by the names of caciques, as they are by the more generalized designation of Guaraní. Susnik provides a breakdown and description of the distinct groups of Guaraní-speakers inhabiting the Paraguay region in *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 22-44. Catherine Julien argues that “when the documents for the Río de la Plata region are read for information about locally meaningful organization, a pattern of alliances and regional networks emerges that suggests these forms of organization—and not linguistic affiliation—are a more productive framework for writing the history of these peoples.” Cited from the English manuscript version of “Alejo García en la historia.” In this respect, I endeavour to distinguish between Guaraní as a shared language base and the territorial autonomy of various Guaraní-speakers in relation to the sources I am analyzing.

47. James Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca: A Social and Biographical Study of the First Conquerors of Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), 3-16. Also see John Hemming, *Conquest of the Incas* (London: Penguin Books, 1983 revised edition), 24-25.
48. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 50. “*estimado en aquella costa por hombre práctico así en la lengua de los Carios, que son los Guaranís, como los Tupis y Tomoyos.*”
49. *Ibid.*, 51. “*como gente codisiosa é inclinada á la guerra.*”
50. *Ibid.* “*vestidos, y muchos vasos, manilas y coronas de plata, de cobre y otros metales.*”
51. *Ibid.*, 52.
52. *Ibid.* “*por su mala inclinación que es en ellos natural de hacer mal.*”
53. *Ibid.* “*como gente sin fé ni lealtad.*”
54. Charles Nowell, “Aleixo Garcia and the White King,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 26:4 (1946), 454.
55. Catherine Julien, section “García in reports and letters” in the English manuscript version of “Alejo García en la historia.” Julien’s article provides an important corrective to the scholarship on García. She notes that while “I am critical of the way documents have been read by others, my purpose is not to demolish all of what earlier scholars have written, but to help others navigate a course through this literature.” Her article has greatly facilitated my own navigation of the literature on García and my interpretation of the primary accounts.
56. Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnología del Chaco boreal y su periferia, (siglos XVI y XVII)* (Asunción: Museo Etnográfico Andrés Barbero, 1978), 22-24. Guajaparos is also spelt Guaxaparos in the primary sources and is identified as the Guasarapos by Susnik.
57. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Relación de la jornada al Norte, Dec. 1542-Jan. 1543. DHG II: 316. “*que mucho tienpo ha que por entre las syerras que estan entre las dichas generaçiones, paso vn xristiano que se llama maratya, con munchços yndios.*”
58. *Ibid.*, 317.
59. Métraux, “Tribes of the Eastern Slopes of the Bolivian Andes,” HSAI III: 467.
60. Métraux identifies the Caracaras as Quechua-speaking Indians of the Charcas, HSAI III: 76. Julien specifies that they inhabited the Potosí region of Bolivia. “Alejo García en la historia,” (page 11 in the English-language manuscript).
61. Julien states that they may have been thought of as the same people as the Chanés. Endnote 10 in the English manuscript version of “Alejo García en la historia.”

62. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Relación de la jornada al Norte, Dec. 1542-Jan. 1543. DHG II: 317. “entre los quales estavan dos xrisptianos como nosotros saluo que no thenien escopetas no arcabuzes ni bestydos como los nuestros no tanpoco thenian barvas.”
63. Ibid. “que dixo que se llamaua xagoni y los guaranys le llamavan maraana.”
64. Ibid., 318. “En tiempos pasados, antes que garçia viniese del brasil a los dichos guaranys, se hizo vuna grand junta de los dichos guaranys en el puerto que llaman de ytatyn, para yr a buscar el metal y pasando por su tierra dellos de noche, dieron en sus casas y mataron muchos de los suyos e prendieron a sus mujeres e hijos y a ellos y los truxeron al dicho puerto de Itatin, y queseando ellos en el dicho puerto por escalvos de los dichos goaranys, paso por alli el dicho garçia, con el qual el y otros dos hermanos fueron en busca del dicho metal con los dichos guaranys.”
65. Ibid. “llego hasta la generaçion que llaman paçunos, y que los chanes y los dichos payçunos le dieron el dicho metal y que desde ally se bolvyo por que supo que vna generaçion que se llama çoro cotoquis hazian grand junta contra el dicho garçia y los que con el fueron.” Julien identifies the Corocotoquis as the Gorgotoquíes, who inhabited the area near present-day San José de Chiquitos, Bolivia. Endnote 12 in the English manuscript version of “Alejo García en la historia.” Métraux similarly identifies the Corocotoquis as the Gorgotoqui, “Tribes of the Eastern Slopes of the Bolivian Andes,” HSAI III: 382, 384.
66. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Relación de la jornada al Norte, Dec. 1542-Jan. 1543, 318. “a ellos llaman xrisptianos por aver sydo escalvos del dicho garçia.”
67. Ibid. “despues supieron de la muerte de garçia, los guaranys comieron algunos conpañeros suyos y algunas mujeres, y como estuvieron, se detereminaron de huyr e asi vinieron huyendo a los guajarapos.”
68. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 11-13.
69. Ruiz de Montoya, *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 363.
70. Descripción del Río de la Plata (anonymous & undated). BG: 38. The mention in this document of Ortíz de Zarate, who obtained the position of *adelantado* of Río de la Plata in 1569 but did not arrive in Asunción until 1575, would date this document as being written in the 1570s. “por los undios de quella tierra y se llaman guaranis que quiere dezir en su lengua gente guerrera ... su costumbre destes es andar siempre a la Guerra contras otras generaciones que no son de su lengua alos quales todos llaman escalvos.”
71. Informe del Maestro de Campo Juan Arias de Saaverdra. Ciudad de Santa Fe, April 13, 1658. Published in Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro y la condición social de los indios. Río de la Plata, Paraguay, Tucumán y Perú. Siglos XVI y XVII* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Ateneo, 1939), 543. “desprecian a las demas naciones llamandolas Tapys que es lo mismo que escalvos.”
72. Ruiz de Montoya, *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 355.

73. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 291. “*que muchos de ellos vinieron a ver y conocer, diciendo que ellos eran muy alegres y muy amigos de cristianos, por el buen tratamiento que les había hecho García cuando los trujo de su tierra. Algunos de estos indios traían cuentas, margaritas y otras cosas, que dijeron haberles dado García cuando con él vinieron.*”

74. *Ibid.*, 198-199. The *Comentarios*' extensive description of the Guaraní's cannibalism rites is as follows: “they give to him everything that he wants to eat, and their own wives and daughters in order that he may have every pleasure with them. These women take charge of fattening him, sleep with him, and adorn him in various ways as is their custom, placing on him feather works and necklaces that the Indians make of bone and white beads, which are greatly valued amongst them; and when he is fattened the pleasures, dances, and singing increases. Together the Indians adorn and make ready three boys of the age of six or seven, placing in their hands hatchets of copper, and bring him to the plaza, and an Indian considered the most valiant among them now takes a wooden sword in his hand, called in their language *macana*, and leads the captive to a place where he is made to dance for one hour; the Indian then advances, and with both hands deals him a blow in the loins, and another on the spine to knock him down. . . . And finally, when he is knocked down the three boys come with their hatchets, and the eldest among them or the son of the chief begins striking blows on his head until the blood flows; and while they are striking him the Indians exhort them to be brave and to learn and have the will to kill their enemies and to go to war, and to remember that this victim has killed many of their own, so they should take revenge upon him.” “*le dan todo quanto quiere a comer, y sus mismas mugeres e hijas para aya con ellas sus plazerres, y engordallo no toma ninguno el cargo y cuydada sino las proprias mugeres de los indios, las mas principales dellas, las quales los acuestan consigo y lo componen de muchas maneras como es su costumbre y le ponen mucha plumeria y cuentas blancas que hazen los indios, de huesso y piedra blanca, que son entre ellos muy estimadas; y en estando gordo son los plazerres, bayles e cantos muy majores, y juntos los indios componen e adereçan tres muchachos de edad de seys años hasta siete y danles en las manos vnas hachetas de cobre, y vu indio, el que es tenido por mas valiente entre ellos, toma vna espada de palo en los manos, que la lamman los indos macana, y sacanlo en vna plaça y alli le hazen baylar vna hora y desque ha baylado llega e la da en los lomos con ambas las manos vn glope, e otro en las espinillas para derribarle, ... y en fin, al cabo lo derriban y luego los niños llegan con sus hachetas y primero el major dellos o el hijo del pincipal y danle con ellas en la cabeça tantos golpes hasta que hazen saltar la sangre. Y estándoles dando los indios le diseñ a bozes que sean valientes y se enseñen y tengan animo para matar sus enemigos e para andar en las guerras, y que se acuerden que aquel ha muerto de los suyos, que se venguen del; luego como es muerto, el que le da le primer golpe toma el nombre del muerto y alli delante se nombra del nombre de assi mataron, en señal que es valiente. Y luego las viejas lo despedazan y cuezen en sus ollas y reparten entre si, lo comen y tienenlo por cosa muy buena comer del. Y de alli adelante tornan a sus bayles e plazerres, los quales duran por otros muchos dias, diziendo que ya es muerto por sus manos su enemigo que mato a sus parientes.*”

75. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 18-19. Ruiz de Montoya, *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 363. Montoya translates *tekó-á* (*tecóá*) as “to hold on to one's customs—*cogerle fu coftumbre*,” and *tuvichá* (*tubichá*) as “*grande en calidad, y cantidad—great in quality and quantity*,” 400. *Teyý-ogá* does not appear as a distinct word, but “og” is defined as “the thing that covers, thatched roof of the house, and means, house, taking the part for the whole—*cofa*”

conque fe tapa, paja de la cafa, fignifica, cafa, tomando la parte por el todo,” 255. Thus, as a compound word *teýy-ogá* roughly translates as “the house that holds many.”

76. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 16. Ruiz de Montoya, *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 217. Susnik states that in exceptional instances alliances between *tekó-ás* could reach large numbers of four or five thousand, such as the territory of Cario-Guaraníes with whom the Spanish reached an alliance in the founding of Asunción. *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 22.

77. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes* 17. The full definition Ruiz de Montoya provides for *guára* is “vitality, belonging to things, and people, and times, constant in material and form, for the person, times, and things; patria, territory, country, region—*vitalidad, pertenecer a cofas, y perfonas, y tiempos, confar de materia y forma, para de perfona, tiempos, y cofas, patria, parcialidad, paifes, region.*” *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 129.

78. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 21.

79. *Ibid.*, 15.

80. *Ibid.*, 47. “*cierta psicósis del “guerrear,” con expression etnocéntrica.*”

81. Ruiz de Montoya, *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 208.

82. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 99-100; Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 420.

83. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoas de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 451.

84. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 12.

85. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz, 170. “*tienen ocupada muy gran tierra, y todos es vna lengua, los quales comen carne humana, assi de indios sus enemigos con quien tienen Guerra, como de christianos, y aun ellos mismos comen vnos a otros.*”

86. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 47.

87. Relación de Martín de González, (early 1570s). GGV 83: 28. Roulet dates the document as 1572 and Service cites it from other authors as dated 1574. In the Colección Gaspar García Viñas at the Biblioteca Nacional de Buenos Aires, it is dated as 1559, which I have taken as incorrect based on other citations.

88. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 58. “*y con dádivas y rescates, que díó á los caciques que le vinieron á ver, asentó paz y amistad con ellos, los cuales le proveyeron de toda la comida que hubo menester.*”

89. *Ibid.* “*algunas piezas de plata, y manillas de oro, manzanas de cobre, y otras cosas que á Alejos Garcia habian quitado, y él habio traído del Perú, de la jornada que hizo á los Chracas, cuando le mataron los indios de aquella tierra.*”

90. Ibid. “*con esto, Sebastian Caboto estaba muy alegre y gozoso, con esperanza de que la tierra era muy rica.*”

91. Ibid. 59.

92. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 97; Maura, 49; Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol 2, 158.

93. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 98. Maura, 51. Lothrop argues that the Timbú were people of Guaycurú origin who had been acculturated by the Guaraní, as evidenced by their agriculture and their permanent buildings. The other nations mentioned by Ramírez are considered by Lothrop to be related in language and culture to the Timbú. HSAI I: 186-190.

94. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 98. “*sienbran abati y calabazas y habas ... y todas las otras naçiones no sienbran ysu manten^o es carne ypscado.*” Maura, 51. Those who lived on fish and meat included the Querandies.

95. Ibid. “*esta otra jeneraçion. q son. nros amigos los quals. se llaman. guarenis y por otro nonbre. chandris.*” S. K. Lothrop identifies the Guaraní or Chandris that Ramírez describes as the delta Guaraní. He notes that little is known of them although they are mentioned in the early sources, but that they grew maize and squash, marking the southern limit of agriculture along the Río Paraná. Lothrop, “Indians of the Paraná Delta and La Plata Litoral,” HSAI I: 179. Catherine Julien also identifies the Chandris as delta Guaraní, but states that they did not practice agriculture. Endnote 1 in the English manuscript version of “Alejo García en la historia.”

96. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 98. “*a cavsa de ser enemigos de todas estotras naçiones y de otras muchas q aldelante dire. son. jente. muy traydora. todo q azan es con traycion estos señorean gran parte. dsta yndia. y confinan, con los. q abitan en la Sierra estos traen mucho metal, de oro y plata. en muchas planchas y orejeras. y en. achas con q. cortan, la montaña (?) para senbra.*” Maura, 51.

97. Julien suggests that the Guaraní Ramírez refers inhabited the region of the Paraguay River. For the purposes of my analysis, I am accepting Ramírez’s understanding of Chandris as Guaraní in terms of their language affiliation. Julien, “Colonial perspectives on the Chiriguana (1528-1574)” in María Susana Cipolletti, ed. *Resistencia y adaptación nativas en las tierras bajas Latinoamericanas* (Quito: Biblioteca Abya-Yala, 35, 1997), 25.

98. Deposition of Caboto, July 29, 1530. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, Vol. 2, 160. “*envió las leguas á las naciones comarcanas para que le viniesen á ver y dar relación de las cosas de la tierra.*”

99. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 99; Maura, 51.

100. Ibid. Caboto spent four months at Sancti Spíritus before proceeding up the Paraná.

101. Ibid. “*hera contraria, a estos yndios, q con nosotros trayamos.*” Maura, 52.
102. Ibid. “*algo enojados diciendo q ls abian dar otra cosa mejor.*”
103. Ibid. “*q matamos muchos dellos y otros se pendieron, y, ls tomamos todo el millo q en casa tenian, e cargamos el vergantin qmamosls las casas, los yndios y con. nostrosos yban. binieron. cargados deselfabos] de los dhos Timbús.*”
104. Ibid, 100. “*por qlas canoas q con nosotros benian pescando. se abian buelto. a Sants pritus. con los. esclabos q llebaban de los tinbus.*” Maura, 53.
105. Ibid. “*quando la galera llegaba alguna isla. de saltar della y como lobos. ambientes comer de las primeras hierbas q allabamos.*” Maura, 54.
106. Deposition of Caboto, July 29, 1530. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 161. “*é a asimismo ahorcó á un Francisco de Lepe, criado del contador Montoya, por principal movedor de un motín de treinta hombres que se querían juntar con los indios contras este declarante.*”
107. Acusación de Fiscal de Su Majestad contra Sebastián Caboto, February 4, 1532. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 181, 191, 195, 199, 202.
108. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 102; Maura, 55.
109. Ibid., 101. “*las heran de vn yndio principal qse deçia yaguaron capitan qs detodas. estas caserías. q en esta comarca estan. por q sienpre tienen [gerra] con otros yndios. qstan. siete. y ocha leguas el Rio aRiba. de su msma naçion.*” Maura, 54.
110. Ibid. “*nos traxeron. mucho bastimiento. ansi. de abati, calabazas. como Rayzs de manidoca patacas e pans hechos de arina de las dhas Rayzs.*” *Abati* is the Guaraní word for corn. The breads made of manioc are the first written record of *chipas*, a biscuit that is a staple food in Paraguay and Corrientes.
111. Ibid. “*muchas orejeras y planchas. de muy buen oro y plata.*” Maura, 55.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid., 103; Maura, 57.
115. Ibid. “*los quals. los Reçibieron muy bien e ls truxeron mucho bastimiento.*”
116. Ibid. “*en ql teniente migel Rifos hacia yr siempre a franc lengua a las dhas casas pa qls. ablase y con buenas palabras les dixese. q nosotros beniamos. q ser sus amigos. e larls. de lo q llebamos.*”

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid. “*la maliçia y mala yntençion qtenian.*”

119. Deposition of Caboto, July 29, 1530. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 160. “*los vendió á los indios.*”

120. Ibid. “*había habido ciertas palabras con el dicho Gonzalo Núñez.*”

121. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 188. “*el indio llamado Francisco, que fue criado entre christianos.*”

122. Ibid.

123. Carta de Luis Ramírez, July 10, 1528. DHG I: 102. “*abian dicho muchas cosas q nos abían salido mentirosos.*” Maura, 55.

124. Ibid. Maura, 56.

125. At Sancti Spíritus conflicts escalated between the two men over who had the right to claim the wealth of the region, which resulted in accusations in the litigation in Spain against Caboto that he had sought to undermine García. They are detailed in Medina’s narrative account of the two expeditions. *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 173-218.

126. Deposition of Caboto, July 29, 1530. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 160. “*un esclavo deste declarante les avisó de cierta traición que estaba armada en que tenían concertado los chandules que están sobre la dicha casa y naos con los chandules de arriba que confinan con el dicho Paraguay, que los matasen.*”

127. Ibid. “*vino el capítan Gregorio Caro con fasta cincuenta hombres en un bergantín, desnudos, é le dieron nueva como los indios habían quemado la dicha casa con lo que en ella estaba.*”

128. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 60-66. Guzmán appears to have conflated the attack with another raid by the Timbús after the fort was re-established during Pedro de Mendoza’s expedition to the region. The second attack on Sancti Spíritus (renamed Corpus Christi) occurred on San Blas Day, February 3. Guzmán does not state the year but it can be dated as 1539. Guzmán, 93-96.

129. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 1, 283. Diego García de Moguer, whom Caboto claims was with him when the survivors of Sancti Spíritus made contact with the expedition, does not refer to the assault in his *memoria* of the voyage. *Relación de Piloto Diego García (de Moguer)*, 1530. DHG I: 47-52; Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 160.

130. Deposition of Gregorio Caro. August 7, 1530. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 260-267.
131. Acusación de Fiscal de Su Majestad contra Sebastián Caboto, February 4, 1532. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 182, 212.
132. Información sumaria hecha en el Puerto de San Salvador, presentada por el capitán general de la armada Sebastián Caboto, par hacer constar á S. M. cómo se perdió la Fortaleza de Sancti Spíritus que levantó en el Río de la Plata. October 12, 1529. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España*, vol. 2, 105-148.
133. Ibid. 110, 115, 126, 137, 141, 144.
134. An English translation of Guzmán's account of Lucía de Miranda is published in Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo, eds. *The Argentine Reader* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), 30-33. All quotes are taken from this translation.
135. Ibid., 30
136. Ibid., 31
137. Ibid., 32
138. Ibid., 33
139. Ibid., 33
140. Ibid., 33
141. Ibid., 30
142. Rotker, *Captive Women: Oblivion and Memory in Argentina* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 98.
143. Ibid., 101.

Chapter Three: Women and Warriors: The Founding of Asunción. 1535 -1541.

In 1530, Sebastián Caboto returned to Spain with the remnants of an expedition that had suffered hunger, Indian attacks, and internal strife. By his own account, he obtained on his voyage “about an ounce of silver and certain earpieces and moons (*lunas*) of the metal weighing a pound,”¹ and fifty or sixty slaves purchased from the Portuguese in São Vicente, Cape Verde Islands. As well, he brought back with him

a chief of the tribe of the Chandules and three sons of other leaders so they could see things here [in Spain] and, after returning to the said land, could be interpreters and mediators to make peace. They are from one hundred leagues this side of the said river of Solís [estuary of the Río de la Plata].²

While there is no historical evidence of the Chandules returning to the Río de la Plata as Caboto had intended, efforts were made to locate them before the next expedition to the region led by Pedro de Mendoza departed from Spain in 1535. A royal decree, which was issued on August 22, 1534, to all the authorities and justices in the Spanish kingdoms, commanded them to ascertain the whereabouts of these Indians in order that they could “return to the said land to serve as interpreters.”³ An earlier decree signed by the Queen (Juana) on March 20, 1532, had ordered the officials of the Casa de la Contratación to seek information concerning two Indians named Pedro and María, whom Caboto had brought back to Spain at their request and who had been given to people who treated them like slaves. She states in this decree that as these Indians were Christians, the children of chiefs, and knew Spanish well, they should be given their liberty, and that if an expedition were to be sent their lands they would prove useful as interpreters.⁴

While the Queen may have been genuinely moved by the Indians’ plight and concerned about their welfare, the silver that Caboto had brought back from the Río de la Plata region was of greater interest to the Crown. By the 1530s, there was growing proof of the immense wealth to be found in the Americas. In 1521, Hernán Cortés had laid waste to Tenochtitlán (present-day

Mexico City), the heart of the Aztec empire, and shipped significant plunder back to Spain.⁵ In 1526, Francisco Pizarro reached the territories of Inca tribute nations in northern Ecuador where signs of the wealth of Tahuantinsuyo (the Inca Empire) were evident.⁶ In 1529, Pizarro negotiated a *capitulación* (contract) from the Crown granting him the right to conquer the lands that lay south along the Pacific coast from Panamá, thus setting into motion the defeat of the Incan emperor Atahualpa at Cajamarca on November 16, 1532, and the fall of Cuzco in 1533.⁷ His half-brother, Hernando Pizarro, returned to Spain with the ransom treasure obtained from Atahualpa in January 1534.⁸ Thus, Caboto's discovery that mines of silver and gold might be reached by Solís's river held out the promise of another route to the source of the Inca's wealth.

On the basis of this promise, Pedro de Mendoza, a Spanish nobleman, negotiated from the Crown the title of *adelantado* for the Río de la Plata on May 21, 1534. His *capitulación* contained a number of specific stipulations, including the number of slaves he was permitted to bring from Spain and which officials of the Crown were permitted to trade with inhabitants of the lands he conquered.⁹ It also gave him the right to bring women, one of whom, Isabel de Guevara, left the sole record of the expedition's travails from a feminine perspective.¹⁰ Setting forth from Castile in August of 1535, Mendoza arrived on the shores of the Río de la Plata in February 1536 and founded the fort of Buenos Aires. A year later, with his expedition decimated by starvation and continual indigenous attacks, Mendoza set sail for Spain in order to seek reinforcements. He died at sea on the return voyage, leaving behind the conquistadors who would found Asunción.

In this chapter, I analyse how the conquistadors who remained in the Río de la Plata survived by adapting to the indigenous norms of the Guaraní-speaking Carios who inhabited the east banks of the Paraguay opposite the mouth of the Pilcomayo River. I also consider the role that the men from Caboto's expedition who had remained on the coast of Brazil when he returned to Spain played in facilitating the conquistadors' adaptation to an indigenous worldview. I argue that the conquistadors were integrated into the Carios' kinship networks through their relationship with indigenous women and consolidated their alliance with the Carios through their collaboration in indigenous warfare. How the transcultural dynamics of this alliance produced shifting power alignments among the members of Mendoza's expedition is the focal

point of the chapter. Specifically, I analyse how Domingo Martínez de Irala, a low-ranking conquistador, became the provisional governor of Asunción and accrued prestige as a war chief among the Carios through leading raids and accepting their warrior norms, including cannibalism. I conclude by examining how the convergence of a European barter system, Hispanic social mores, and the Carios' kinship obligations resulted in disputes over indigenous women, revealing how the transcultural dynamics of the Carios' alliance with the Spanish produced conflict as well as cooperation between worldviews.

The principal documentation for Mendoza's expedition and the founding of Asunción consists of letters penned by the conquistadors and missionaries who accompanied him. The chronicles of Ulrico Schmidl and Ruy Díaz de Guzmán provide a narrative overview. Schmidl's *Viaje al Río de la Plata* is an eyewitness account written from the perspective of a Bavarian mercenary who participated in the expedition.¹¹ Ruy Díaz de Guzmán's *La Argentina* records the early colonial history of Río de la Plata from the perspective of a mestizo settler living in Asunción in the early 1600s. Although at times historically inaccurate, both chronicles offer insight into how the conquistadors established an alliance with the Carios, and, in the case of Schmidl, how Indian attacks and famine devastated the expedition's ranks during the first months Mendoza spent in the region. Of particular significance for understanding the role of intermediaries in Mendoza's expedition are a letter by Hernando de Ribera, a sailor from Caboto's expedition who had remained behind on the coast of Brazil, and an *información* by Gonzalo de Mendoza, a captain who first made contact with Ribera.¹² A 1545 *relación* written by Pero Hernández, the royal *escribano* (notary) for Mendoza's expedition who subsequently became the personal secretary for Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, attests to the jealousy produced by the conquistadors' relations with indigenous women.¹³ Branislava Susnik's ethnohistory of the Guaraní provides a comparative framework to analyse the contemporary accounts of the period.

When Pedro de Mendoza landed on the shores of the Río de la Plata in February 1536, he was the commander of the largest single enterprise in the colonial history of the region. In contrast to Caboto's previous expedition, which numbered two hundred men and approximated the size of a Guaraní *teyy-ogá* or long house, Schmidl states that Mendoza's was comprised of fourteen ships, sixty-two horses, and over 2500 hundred men, including Spanish *hidalgos* (lower-rank

nobility) and 150 foreign soldiers of German, Dutch, Austrian, and Saxon origin.¹⁴ While historians agree that the expedition was smaller than Schmidl claimed, numbering approximately 1200 men, it was still six times as large as Caboto's flotilla.¹⁵ The indigenous peoples who witnessed the fleet of ships sailing up the estuary of the Río de la Plata must have found it threatening. Schmidl relates that when the expedition disembarked on the eastern bank of the estuary, the Indians, whom he identifies as Charrúas, fled.¹⁶ Mendoza then crossed the river and established the fort of Buenos Aires—which he named after the Virgin whose advocacy protected mariners—and made contact with the Querandíes.¹⁷

Schmidl's account of the first months that Mendoza spent at Buenos Aires focuses on the Querandíes' hostility toward the expedition and the futile search for provisions to stave off the famine. It reveals how quickly the conquistadors faced a situation of desperation and unforeseen circumstances that would necessitate relinquishing the conviction of conquest for the uncertainty of seeking any means possible in order to survive. Schmidl relates that the Querandíes, whom he numbers at about three thousand and describes as subsisting by hunting and fishing, brought the expedition food for several weeks and then ceased to appear, presumably because of the daunting numbers of men to be fed. When Mendoza sent messengers to their encampment, located about twenty kilometres from where the expedition had landed, the Querandíes assaulted them. In response, Mendoza ordered thirty mounted men and three hundred lancers to attack their encampment. Schmidl tallied the Spanish losses from the ensuing battle at twenty lancers and seven cavalrymen, including Mendoza's brother. As for the Querandíes, Schmidl claims that of their four thousand warriors, whose numbers he attributed to the augmentation of their forces with allies, one thousand were killed.¹⁸

While Mendoza was able to defeat the Querandíes militarily, his victory only worsened the logistics of feeding so large an expedition. Schmidl relates that after the battle the Querandíes fled into the countryside, and the soldiers who entered their abandoned encampment found "nothing more than some otter skins, many fish, fish grease, and fish flour,"¹⁹ and some nets that they could fish with to augment their small ration of flour. When Mendoza sent an advance party upriver to barter for food with other Indians, they also fled, "making the bad move to burn and destroy their supplies as this was their way of making war."²⁰ With nothing but biscuits to eat, half the men died. Those who survived and returned to the fort found the

soldiers reduced to eating shoes and leather, and finally people. Schmidl describes how the “hardship and disaster of hunger was so great that there remained neither rat nor mouse, snake nor lizard”²¹ in the fort. When three soldiers stole a horse to eat, they were hanged as punishment, and then others came in the night to cut off and eat pieces of their flesh.²² To add to the devastation, the fort was assaulted by 23,000 indigenous warriors uniting four nations, the Querandí, the delta-Guaraní, the Charrúa, and the Chana-Timbú.²³ They burned the fort and four large boats anchored several kilometres away with flaming arrows, forcing Mendoza to retreat to the remaining ships armed with cannon. In the wake of this attack, Schmidl reports that of the men who had set out from Castille, only “some 560 remained alive, the rest dead from hunger or killed by the Indians.”²⁴

While Schmidl’s account of the expedition’s confrontations with vast armies of indigenous warriors makes for a gripping tale — one that rivals Cortes’s and Pizarro’s battles with the Aztecs and the Incas — it is highly improbable that nomad hunters would have amassed such numbers or the Spanish survived such an onslaught. More likely, Schmidl embellished his account to dramatize his adventures for his European readers.²⁵ Nor does it seem plausible that distinct indigenous nations would have united in alliance. Rather, Schmidl’s list of the Querandíes’ allies identifies the nations living along the Paraná River that would prove hostile to the Spanish during the early colonial period.²⁶ Another member of Mendoza’s expedition, Francisco Villalta, writing a letter from Asunción to an unidentified recipient in Spain in 1556, makes no mention of the Querandíes’ attack with their allies on the Buenos Aires fort or of the large numbers of casualties Schmidl claimed they sustained. Instead, Villalta relates that when the Querandíes refused to bring food to the expedition, a skirmish took place between them and the Spanish in which the Querandíes killed a number of the cavalry and routed the rest.²⁷ “Indeed,” writes Villalta, “if it had not been for the infantry that was coming behind and aided them, they would all have been left in the field, because the Indians were so dexterous and skillful in lassoing the horses with the *bolos* (balls tied to strings) they had.”²⁸

Where Villalta does concur with Schmidl is in describing the hunger the expedition endured and the cannibalism that transpired. Accompanying the fleet sent in search of food, Villalta reports that he returned to Buenos Aires to find “the necessity and hunger were so horrifying that some would keep a dead companion for three or four days, taking his ration in order to

maintain their own lives with it. Others were so starved that they ate human flesh. Thus it was seen that two men who had been executed were eaten from the waist down.”²⁹ During the voyage itself, he relates that “a third of the people who went in the ships died, there being two hundred in all.”³⁰ However, he also notes that although the soldiers were close to starvation, “the captains and those close to them were never in any need.”³¹ This glimpse of the unequal distribution of rations underscores that the cannibalism occurring at the fort was an act of desperation on the part of Mendoza’s rank and file. It also alerts us to how the expedition’s hierarchy would affect subsequent interactions with the indigenous peoples of the region. The starvation facing the lower ranks explains in part why they were more receptive than the captains to adapting to the norms of indigenous culture.

The other contemporary account that describes the conquistadors’ experience in Buenos Aires is Isabel de Guevara’s 1556 letter. While she does not mention any incidences of cannibalism, she does address how gender roles were altered by the extremity of the situation. Writing to Princess Juana of Spain to protest her failure to receive an *encomienda* (a grant of Indian tribute in recognition of service to the Crown) and to petition for a *repartimiento perpétuo* (perpetual assignment of Indian labour) as compensation, she pleads her case by noting the essential role Spanish women played in the expedition. Although there is no evidence that more than a handful of women accompanied the expedition, she relates that

when the armada arrived at the port of Buenos Aires with fifteen hundred men, they lacked supplies and the hunger was so great that at the end of three months a thousand had died. The men arrived so skinny and weak that all the work fell to the poor women, such as washing their clothes, healing their sicknesses, making meals with what little that there was, cleaning, serving as sentinels, guarding the fires, arming the crossbows (*vallestas*), and, when at times the Indians came to make war, getting the soldiers up, putting them in order, and even helping fire the artillery. For as women we needed little food, and were not as famished as the men.³²

Her description of what occurred at the Buenos Aires fort, as well as Schmidl’s and Villalta’s reports of cannibalism, have been met with skepticism by historians such as Enrique de Gandía and Paul Groussac.³³ While it is not possible to verify whether these accounts were fact or fiction, they do serve to alert us to a perception on the part of the conquistadors that the world

as they knew it was radically changing. Cannibalism as a marker of savagery had penetrated the ranks of the expedition, while an inversion of gender roles had taken place as the women assumed the work of men, including assisting in warfare.

In the context of this overturning of the established order, a curious story that Guzmán tells, and the Jesuit missionaries Del Techo and Lozano retell, of a woman named La Maldonada becomes an allegorical expression for this dissolution of social mores. In Guzmán's version of the story, a Spanish woman from the expedition left the fort in hungry desperation to look for Indians who could feed her. Seeking refuge in a cave, she found a lioness in the painful process of giving birth to two cubs. She assisted the lioness in her labour and thus was saved from being devoured. By feeding on the meat brought to the den by the other lions, she was able to stave off starvation. She resided with the lioness until one day, while drinking water from the river, she was taken captive by the Indians. Some months later, the expedition's men found her in the company of these Indians and punished her desertion to the savages by condemning her to death. Exiled outside the fort's walls, she was tied to a tree and left there to be eaten by wild beasts. Symbolically cast out of the *polis* — the Aristotelian marker of civilization — and into the wilderness, she was saved by the lioness and her cubs who came to her rescue and fended off the predators attacking her. When the men of the expedition discovered that she was miraculously still alive, they brought her back to the fort and pardoned her.³⁴

As in the tales of cannibalism and women firing the artillery, Guzmán's story of La Maldonada — with its displacements and inversions of the mythic founding of Rome — marks the disorientation of conquistadors' worldview in a *tierra incognita*. In the original myth, the twin babies Romulus and Remus were ordered killed by their great uncle, who had dethroned their grandfather as king. Placed instead in a cradle on the banks of the Tiber River by a servant who was supposed to execute them, the twins floated down stream until a wolf found them. Suckled by the wolf and cared for by a shepherd, they were later re-united with their grandfather and founded Rome on the Palatine Hill.³⁵ In Guzmán's retelling of the myth, his transformation of the twins into a woman, the wolf into a lioness, and the shepherd into nomad Indians becomes a recuperative tale of transculturation that anticipates the founding of Asunción.

Written from the perspective of one of Asunción's mestizo elite, Guzmán's transposition of the shepherd with nomad Indians acknowledges the presence of the indigenous peoples in the lands that the Spanish sought to conquer and rule as an empire rivaling that of the Romans. The lioness, a regal old world beast, is more puzzling in a New World context. Perhaps she served as a stand-in for the *yaguareté* or jaguar, the American tiger who terrified and devoured men.³⁶ Bartolomé García, who came with Mendoza's expedition and stayed in Buenos Aires until it was abandoned in 1541, refers to the presence of jaguars in the environs of the fort in a 1556 petition outlining his services to the Crown. He describes how "there were jaguars that came inside the palisade and killed men; and once, I waited outside the palisade in a tree for one that was doing great damage ... and killed it."³⁷ In the 1600s and 1700s, Jesuit missionaries in Paraguay described how both the Guaraní and the Guaycurú believed that their male sorcerers had the power to transform into jaguars. These sorcerers were perceived by the Jesuits as the work of the devil, and feared by the indigenous people as invisible and unassailable.³⁸ While it is improbable that Guzmán as a mestizo Christian would have given credence to such a belief, he may have had knowledge of its existence, as did the Jesuits. In the context of these sorcerers' ability to assume the guise of jaguars, the lioness can be read as the inversion of gender and power of an indigenous worldview, whereby the male shaman's capacity to "become" animal is appropriated to transform a wild beast into the motherly protector of La Maldonada. In so doing, Guzmán's tale can be understood as a double narrative in which the dynamics of transculturation are reflected in the convergence of both worldviews through the association between human and dangerous beast. First, Guzmán rehearses a Classical origin myth, and second, he re-codes it through indigenous values, in which shape shifting is a sign of prowess as a hunter, and hence of political power.

La Maldonada similarly embodies a complex representation of the transmutation of worldviews. Saved by savage beasts and adopted by nomad savages, she serves as a signifier of the porous boundaries between animal and human, European and Indian. Condemned to die by her own people only to be saved again by the lioness, she represents the inversion of civilization's values in a *tierra incognita*. Thus Guzmán writes that the lioness's actions demonstrated "more humanity than the men,"³⁹ and Del Techo relates how "this being observed, lest men should seem more cruel than tigers, she was pardoned."⁴⁰ One of the most

striking aspects of Guzmán's story is La Maldonada's reintegration as an Indian captive into Spanish society. The founding of Asunción was predicated on the opposite logic of incorporation, with the conquistadors surviving by integrating into indigenous society through their relations with Indian women. As in his tale of Lucía de Miranda, Guzmán inverts the dynamics of these relations to mask the degree to which the Spanish were dependent on indigenous collaboration. Only this time, the blurring of boundaries between worlds is tacitly condoned. Instead of being martyred by the Indians, La Maldonada is saved by the wild beasts and pardoned by the Spanish to acknowledge the necessity of acquiescing to indigenous norms.

In Mendoza's first months in the Río de la Plata, the absence of Indians who were willing to collaborate with the Spanish threatened his men with the same hunger that had forced La Maldonada to flee Buenos Aires into the lair of a lion and the arms of nomad Indians. In order to feed his expedition, he had threatened to deplete the limited resources of the Querandí, who subsisted on hunting and fishing. In turn, their mobility as nomads favoured flight as a form of resistance to his appropriation of their food supplies. Thus, Schmidl observed that "when the Indians saw us they fled, making the bad move to burn and destroy their supplies," while Villalta's description of the Querandíes' fighting techniques revealed their ingenuity in defending themselves. For semi-agricultural nations, such as the Timbú who had traded with Caboto, flight as a form of resistance was not as advantageous. To abandon their villages meant abandoning their fields of corn and manioc, while to collaborate with the Europeans provided the opportunity to barter for iron tools, such as axes. Thus Mendoza, facing the spectre of famine in Buenos Aires and sporadic attacks by the Querandíes, sent another advance party to find Caboto's Indians. Villalta states that he ordered "Juan de Ayolas to sail up the river with three ships to look for the Indians at Sancti Spiritus or on the islands, and [that] he took ninety Christians with him in each ship."⁴¹ At the same time, he sent another captain, Gonzalo de Mendoza, back to Brazil to seek supplies from the coastal Carijó.⁴²

As Ayolas's advance guard sailed upriver to find Indians willing to barter for food, the soldiers were already dying or dead from starvation. Schmidl recounts how "if the journey had lasted ten days more, we would have all died of hunger; as it was, fifty of the four hundred men died during the voyage."⁴³ Villalta's description of this journey is even more dire. He tells how

more than a hundred men perished, weakened by rowing and towing the ships against the current for fifty days and eating nothing more than “snakes, lizards, mice, and other reptiles that they found in the fields.”⁴⁴ Nor did they have anything to drink, except, as Villalta is careful to note, “the captains, since, as I have said, these got on very well.”⁴⁵

When the famished men finally made contact with the Timbús, they found the indigenous collaboration they were seeking. The Timbús gave them fish and corn and Ayolas “arranged with the Indians to give him half a house they had in which everyone could stay, because we were in such a condition that we could all fit well in a small space.”⁴⁶ The Timbús’ willingness to accommodate the expedition most likely reflected their interest in the trading goods Ayolas had to offer. Schmidl states that “the Captain gave their chief Cheraguazú a shirt, a red hat, an axe, and other barter goods”⁴⁷ in return for food and shelter. In contrast to the Timbús’ previous discontent with Caboto’s trinkets, the chief must have been pleased with this exchange, for Villalta claims that Ayolas received so much food that he was able to take provisions back to Buenos Aires.⁴⁸

Unfortunately for the weakened soldiers, the respite provided by the Timbús’ village from a harsh and hostile environment was short-lived. After Ayolas departed for Buenos Aires with the supplies he had obtained from the Timbús, Villalta recounts that

those in command were so experienced that they soon ordered all the men to move out of the house of the Indians and to go to establish a settlement and town at a distance from the Indians ... In this settlement and town, great hardship and need were suffered because of being at a distance from the Indians and depending on barter. Many times the Indians did not go to fish [for us], which is what they live from, and when they did not fish we did not eat.⁴⁹

When Ayolas returned to the Timbús from Buenos Aires with Pedro de Mendoza and most of the remaining men in the expedition, the situation only worsened. Villalta relates that the Timbús could not provide enough food for their increased numbers and that the captains, upon seeing how the “Christians were adopting the local manner of living,”⁵⁰ advised Mendoza to found a second town, Buena Esperanza, at a greater distance from the Timbús.

While no mention is made in the contemporary accounts of interpreters who facilitated Ayolas's initial negotiation with the Timbús, Villalta reports that after Ayolas departed with provisions for Buenos Aires, "a Christian came to us who had remained in that country from the armada of Caboto"⁵¹ named Jerónimo Romero. His sudden appearance may explain how the Christians were "adopting the local manner of living" despite their separation from the Timbús' village. Villalta, however, does not attribute such a role to Romero. Instead, he relates how his "long and copious report of what he had seen and heard from the Indians about the riches of the country"⁵² encouraged the soldiers to organize an *entrada* overland to the sierra from the Timbús' territory. When Ayolas and Mendoza arrived back from Buenos Aires with Mendoza, they opposed this plan. Instead, Mendoza appointed Ayolas deputy commander-in-chief and ordered him to proceed up the river in search of the riches Romero spoke of.⁵³ Soon afterwards he set sail for Spain with the royal official Alonso de Cabrera, leaving behind Francisco Ruíz Galán in command of Buenos Aires and a rearguard in the town of Buena Esperanza that he had founded at a distance from the Timbús.⁵⁴

As Pedro de Mendoza, whom Schmidl claims was gravely ill with syphilis, was preparing to return to Spain, Gonzalo de Mendoza arrived back from the coast of Brazil with provisions and Christians who had been living among the Indians to serve as interpreters.⁵⁵ One of these Christians was Hernando Ribera, a sailor from Caboto's expedition, whose letter together with Gonzalo de Mendoza's *relación*, provides insight into how the Europeans who were living on the coast of Brazil were integrated into the expedition. In his letter dated February 25, 1545, Ribera writes to Emperor Charles V outlining his service to Spain after remaining behind on the coast of Brazil when Caboto returned to Spain. While he portrays himself as a loyal subject of the Crown, he cannot completely mask that he had become more Indian than Spanish. He begins his letter by explaining that he had remained behind on the island of Santa Catalina after Caboto returned to Europe in order to gather supplies for future explorations. He then states that he was able to act upon his good intentions when he made contact with Gonzalo de Mendoza. Upon learning from Mendoza of the terrible dangers and great hunger the expedition had endured, Ribera explains that "with great diligence I filled the ship with supplies from the land and other necessary things; and with my wife, children, slaves, and servants, and with my debtors and friends, I went to Buenos Aires."⁵⁶

What is immediately striking about the opening passage in Ribera's letter is the extensiveness of his entourage, the size of which suggests that he had accrued a degree of prestige among the Carijós (the Guaraní-speaking Indians of Santa Catalina). His matter-of-fact description of his entourage raises the question of how many other *lenguas* traveled with extended indigenous families—such as Melchor Ramírez's and Enrique Montes's offer to join Caboto's expedition with their "*casas y hijos*"—and how this affected the conquistadors' interactions with indigenous nations. It also raises the question of how the large numbers of coastal Carijós accompanying Ribera affected his interactions with Guaraníes from other regions and the conquistadors. In part, these questions are answered in Gonzalo de Mendoza's 1545 *información*.

In his *información*, Mendoza emphasizes the importance of obtaining the services of translators and guides for the expedition. He states that upon reaching Brazil and finding there were "certain Christians, who lived and resided with their wives and children, and were sufficient in trading and communicating with these Indians,"⁵⁷ he convinced them to return with him to Buenos Aires, as "there was a great lack of interpreters in order to trade with the Indians and understand their manners and customs."⁵⁸ While Ribera highlights the voluntary nature of his assistance, Mendoza emphasizes in his *información* that "it is public and notorious knowledge that he procured with great diligence and care through good words and treatment, barter, and promises the agreement of the Christians to accompany him to the said province (Paraguay) to serve his Majesty."⁵⁹ Mendoza's claim that it was necessary to entice the Christians to leave Brazil demonstrates how they were able to bargain from a position of relative power. They also must have added considerable numbers to the depleted ranks of the expedition, for Mendoza relates that they brought with them their "women and children and many female and male slaves and a large quantity of supplies."⁶⁰

Mendoza's description of these entourages, which echoes Ribera's, confirms that many of the Europeans who had integrated into the Carijós's coastal communities had achieved enough prestige to have slaves rather than being slaves or *tapíi*. In Ribera's case, he used this prestige to negotiate a shift in status from common sailor to captain. First, his adaptation to indigenous norms provided him with access to food supplies and the interpretive skills that secured a passage for him and his entourage of Carijós to Buenos Aires. Second, he used his

understanding of the “manners and customs” of the Guaraní to assure himself a role in the conquest and colonization of the region. Ribera relates that he travelled with Gonzalo de Mendoza to Buena Esperanza, where he learned that Juan de Ayolas had been sent upriver to look for silver. In Ribera’s opinion, this placed Ayolas in grave danger, and he was able to convince Pedro de Mendoza to send him with Gonzalo de Mendoza and another captain, Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza, in search of Ayolas, thus assuring himself a role in the founding of Asunción.⁶¹ By 1543, he had achieved sufficient rank among the conquistadors to be entrusted by Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca to lead a reconnaissance party during his *entrada* to the Gran Chaco.⁶²

Mendoza’s *información*, with its emphasis on the importance of the knowledge of indigenous customs held the Christians living on the coast of Brazil, and the imperative of securing their co-operation, also sheds light on the conquistadors’ negotiations with the Timbús of Buena Esperanza. In his *información*, Mendoza states that when he accompanied Salazar upriver in search of Ayolas, he left behind at Buena Esperanza some of the Christians he had brought from Brazil. He did so in order that “they reside there to aid and sustain and secure that said land through the pacification of the Indians that lived there.”⁶³ Together with their entourages, the presence of these Christians not only secured the co-operation of the Timbús as Mendoza desired but most likely also facilitated their re-integration into the Timbús’ village. Villalta, who was among the men remaining in Buena Esperanza, recounts that “we suffered so many hardships that I cannot begin to tell until we moved again to the village and land of the Timbús.”⁶⁴ The men stayed in their village, which became known as Corpus Christi, until the Timbús attacked them in February 1539.⁶⁵ In the end, the dependence of the captains on *lenguas* to secure indigenous cooperation, and the disarray of Mendoza’s expedition, meant that they were unable to prevent the rank and file from adopting “the local manner of living” that so concerned them. In turn, these factors would contribute to the dissolution of the Spanish command in Asunción, enabling low-ranking conquistadors, such as Irala, to assume a leadership position through his adoption of “the local manner of living.”

As Ribera prepared to sail up the Paraná with Mendoza and Salazar, Ayolas had already begun an ill-fated overland march to the interior from the upper reaches of the Paraguay River. On October 14, 1536, he had left Buena Esperanza to sail up the Paraná River with one hundred

and seventy men, including Schmidl, who chronicled their interactions with different indigenous peoples. According to Schmidl, the first group the expedition encountered was the Corondá, whom he identified as being of the same nation as the Timbús. In exchange for barter goods, the Corondás gave the expedition fish and meat and two Cario-Guaraní Indians they had captured to serve as interpreters and guides.⁶⁶ These captives help explain how Schmidl was able to identify by name the various groups with whom the expedition traded as the Quiloaza, Mocoretá, Chaná-Salvajes, and Curé-maguás.⁶⁷ Once Ayolas reached the junction of the Paraguay and Paraná Rivers, the expedition encountered overt hostility. Schmidl describes how the Mapenis, “who had more canoes than any other nation that they had seen before,”⁶⁸ attacked them. Further upriver, the Agaces blockaded their passage with a flotilla of small boats. After battling the Agaces, Ayolas and his men continued up the Paraguay until they reached the Carios’ territory around present-day Asunción.⁶⁹

Both Guzmán and Villalta describe the expedition’s first contact with the Carios as amicable, which may have been facilitated by the Cario captives Ayolas had with him. Guzmán tells how the Guaraní, “who later became our allies, furnished the ship with supplies necessary to continue forward.”⁷⁰ Villalta relates how Ayolas and his men arrived at “the country of the Caribes (Carios) where we are now. These Indians came in peace to the Christians and gave them many supplies of corn and sweet potatoes, and some beans in return for barter, for they are an agricultural people accustomed to cultivating and raising [crops] from which they live.”⁷¹ The importance of the Carios’ agricultural production to the conquistadors’ survival is underscored by the detailed description of their crops and livestock in Schmidl’s chronicle. He writes how

among the Carios or Guaraní we find Turkish wheat or corn (*maíz*) and manioc (*mandiotín*), sweet potatoes (*batatas*), sweet manioc (*mandioca-poropí*), bitter or poisonous manioc (*mandioca-pepirá*), peanuts (*maní*), palm tree nuts (*bocaja*) and other foods such as fish and meat, deer, wild pigs, ostriches, Indian sheep, rabbits, hens and geese, and other wild animals that I cannot describe right now. There is an abundance of honey with which they make wine, and in the land there is much cotton.⁷²

He also notes, as Ramírez had before him about the Guaraníes, that there was “no nation better at war or as proud as the said Carios”⁷³ who dominated a large territory and ate their enemies.

In Schmidl’s account of Ayolas’s encounter with the Carios, their prowess as warriors resulted in confrontation rather than a welcoming reception. He describes how Ayolas reached the Cario village of Lambaré, a settlement of four thousand inhabitants fortified by palisades and trenches, and attacked it to obtain supplies.⁷⁴ After this initial skirmish, the Carios approached the expedition’s boats to offer food in return for leaving their territories. Refusing their offer, Ayolas attacked again. This time a fierce and lengthy battle ensued, with the conquistadors’ gunpowder terrifying the Carios. Schmidl reports that

when they heard and saw that their people were falling and they did not see any arrows but only holes in their bodies without arrows, they were unable to maintain their ranks and fled, tripping over one another like dogs while they were fleeing to their village... We wanted to immediately enter their village, but the Indians there resisted as best they could and valiantly defended themselves for two days. When they saw that they could not sustain their defences and feared for their women and children who were with them, the said Carios came to us to ask for our pardon and [told us] that they would do everything we wanted.⁷⁵

What the conquistadors wanted were provisions; what they also were offered were women. Schmidl relates that the Carios

brought and gave as a present to Juan de Ayolas six girls, the oldest of whom was eighteen years of age; they also made a present of seven deer and other venison. They asked us to stay with them and gave as a present to each soldier two women to care for us, cooking, washing, and attending to all our needs. They also gave us food that we were greatly in need of at this time. With this, peace was made with the Carios.⁷⁶

In addition to food and women, Schmidl claims that the Carios assisted in constructing the fort where Ayolas and his expedition stayed for six months. He also states that they provided Ayolas with eight thousand warriors in a war against the Agaces, and gave him an abundance of provisions when he decided to continue his search for silver.⁷⁷

Whether Ayolas obtained his provisions through force, or by virtue of the Carios' spontaneous cooperation as the historians Gandía and Rubio maintain, there is no evidence that a fort was built by Ayolas or assistance provided to fight the Agaces.⁷⁸ Rather, Villalta states that Ayolas proceeded with the expedition directly upriver to the territories of the Payaguás and weighed anchor at a natural harbour he named Candelaría, located near present-day Bahía Negra at the border junction of Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil.⁷⁹ From this harbour, Ayolas marched inland towards the Andes, leaving behind Domingo de Irala with a few men to guard the ships and await his return. By Irala's own account, Ayolas's decision to mount an *entrada* was influenced by making contact with a slave of the Payaguás who had been with the Christian García. The slave offered to guide him to where García had obtained precious metals, and the Payaguás supplied thirty men to carry the cargo.⁸⁰

The Payaguás' willingness to assist Ayolas in his *entrada* suggests that they initially perceived him as a potential ally. Information provided by Irala and Hernández indicates that the Payaguás sought to negotiate with Ayolas through the exchange of food and women. Hernández relates in his 1545 *relación* that Ayolas received from the Payaguá chief a woman to serve as his concubine (*mujer*), whom he placed in the custody of Irala when he departed inland.⁸¹ While Irala does not mention this arrangement in his 1545 letter, he does report that Ayolas gave him "six or seven *fanegas* (ten bushels) of corn, telling me to get the rest from the chief, whom he left me as a friend."⁸² According to the *Comentarios* (the memoir of Cabeza de Vaca's rule of the Río de la Plata in the early 1540s) the Payaguás were nomadic fishermen and hunters who only obtained corn through raiding the Carios.⁸³ Thus the corn in the chief's possession must have been from a previous raid or from the provisions Ayolas had brought with him. In the latter instance, the chief's willingness to cooperate with Ayolas may have been based on the opportunity to trade for this corn. His offering of the woman also suggests that some kind of kinship alliance had transpired. Yet, despite this exchange of food and women, once Ayolas departed inland, the Payaguás turned hostile. In his 1545 *relación*, Hernández blames the breakdown of friendly relations on Irala's betrayal of Ayolas's confidence by sleeping with his Payaguán concubine, claiming that, "he was all day in bed with her in the brigantine."⁸⁴ He also accused Irala of abandoning his watch at Candelaría and

descending the river to a port of the Carios named Tapuá, where “in keeping with his sexual vice”⁸⁵ he took as a concubine the chief’s daughter.

In Irala’s 1545 letter to the Emperor Charles V, which was written in part to defend himself against accusations that he had deserted his post, he makes no mention of his relations with the Payaguá and Cario women. Rather, he provides a convoluted account of his various comings and goings from the port of Candelaría to prove that he had followed Ayolas’s orders as best he could despite adverse circumstances. First, Irala claims that he stayed at Candelaría after Ayolas departed inland on February 15, 1537, and survived on corn and fish until Juan de Salazar arrived with reinforcements on June 23.⁸⁶ Then, he blames Salazar for the necessity of temporarily abandoning his post, relating that when the Spanish ships appeared, the Payaguás fled, and thus “being short of food, and because my ships were in such bad condition that they could hardly be kept afloat, we agreed that I would retreat from these Indians, both to restock my supplies of food and to repair the ships in order to return upriver to the said port.”⁸⁷ Finally, he states that although he returned to Candelaría and was able to re-establish contact with the Payaguás, they fled again after twelve days and he was forced to descend the river.⁸⁸

While Irala takes great care in explaining how he kept watch at Candelaría until Salazar’s arrival, Gonzalo de Mendoza contradicts his version of events. In his 1545 *información*, Mendoza states that he and Salazar found Irala in a port of the Carios repairing his ships. He reports that he gave Irala provisions and “the *lengua* Juan Pérez, whom the said captain Gonzalo de Mendoza had brought from the coast of Brazil, in order that he go with him to secure supplies and to advise him as a man knowledgeable in the language of the Cario Indians and their customs.”⁸⁹ From Mendoza’s account, it appears that Irala had gone down river to Tapuá, as Hernández claimed, and most likely had obtained the Carios’ collaboration through his relationship with the chief’s daughter. It is also possible that Pérez facilitated this kinship alliance, as it is not clear whether it occurred before or after Irala’s meeting with Mendoza. If the Payaguás perceived these Carios as enemies, then Irala’s alignment with the Tapuá chief explains in part their hostility towards him.

After the meeting with Irala, Mendoza and Salazar sailed down river and founded the *casa fuerte* (fort) of Asunción in August 1537.⁹⁰ For the next two years, the fort would provide a

precarious base in the Carios' territories as the captains came and went from Buenos Aires. Initially, Salazar placed Mendoza in charge of the fort and returned to Buenos Aires. He arrived back a few months later accompanied by Francisco Ruíz Galán, the commander of Buenos Aires, and most of the remaining expedition.⁹¹ In his 1545 letter, Irala states that Ruiz Galán, "upon seeing the great shortage of food in the land, on account of the locusts that had destroyed everything, went back down river, leaving Salazar and fifty men in the port [Asunción] and giving me a ship so I could return to Candelaria."⁹² According to testimonies cited in Gandía's *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay*, the situation was aggravated by Irala's refusal to give food supplies to Ruiz Galán, who then ordered Irala jailed. After the royal officials intervened, Irala was freed and given a ship to go in search of Ayolas.⁹³ In his 1538 *información*, Ruiz Galán does not refer to the animosities between him and Irala, but states that he survived for a month by going to the Indians who lived around the fort and taking "against their will all the food I could."⁹⁴ After Ruiz Galán's departure, Irala made his final journey to Candelaria in August 1538. He reports that the Payaguás attacked rather than hiding or fleeing, and that after four of his men were killed and the rest wounded, he was forced to return to Asunción.⁹⁵

In June 1539, Ruiz Galán again arrived in Asunción, this time in the company of Alonso de Cabrera, who had sailed with Pedro de Mendoza to Spain and returned to Buenos Aires at the end of 1538. Not only did Cabrera's arrival herald the first communication with the Spanish Crown since the conquistadors had landed on the shores of the Río de la Plata estuary three years earlier, he also carried with him a royal decree (*Real Cédula*) that provided Irala with the opportunity to assume a leadership role in an official capacity. This decree, which granted the conquistadors an unprecedented degree of self-government in early colonial America, stipulated that they had the right to appoint a provisional governor in the absence of an appointed representative of the Crown.⁹⁶ According to Guzmán, a dispute arose between Irala and Ruiz Galán over who had the legitimate right to rule Asunción. Ruiz Galán argued that by virtue of his rank as captain and because Pedro de Mendoza had placed him in charge of the Buenos Aires fort, he should be the provisional governor. Irala countered Ruiz Galán's claim by arguing that because Pedro de Mendoza had appointed Ayolas his commander-in-chief, who in turn had designated Irala as his deputy before he departed on his *entrada*, he should assume the leadership of Asunción until Ayolas's return.⁹⁷ Over the objections of Ruiz Galán,

Cabrera sided with Irala and issued a proclamation declaring him *teniente general* of Asunción on June 20, 1539.⁹⁸

After Ruiz Galán failed to obtain control of Asunción, he returned to Buenos Aires, which was still under his command, and Irala took steps to ensure that his authority as provisional governor could not be challenged. First, he sought to ascertain the fate of Ayolas. In February 1540, he led an inland march from below the harbour of Candelaria, during which he obtained testimonies confirming Ayolas's death from a Chané slave who had accompanied Ayolas and several Payaguás whom he took captive. The Chané slave told Irala that the Payaguás had killed Ayolas and his men after they returned to Candelaria. Under interrogation, the Payaguás confessed that this was the case.⁹⁹ With this evidence of Ayolas's demise in hand, Irala faced no further legal impediments to his provisional governorship. He then removed any residual threat Ruiz Galán posed by ordering the fort of Buenos Aires to be abandoned. His order was registered in a *requerimiento* issued by Alonso de Cabrera on April 16, 1541, and in June of that year, a boat was sent to bring the conquistadors who had remained in Buenos Aires to Asunción.¹⁰⁰

In a few brief years, Domingo Martínez de Irala had risen from obscurity to become the most powerful conquistador in the Río de la Plata. When he joined Mendoza's expedition in Spain in 1535, he was a young man in his early twenties who was listed without rank in Mendoza's *Relación de la gente que va en el armada* (Report of the people who are in the armada).¹⁰¹ Until his election as governor in 1539, he did not figure in the chain of command of the expedition's captains, with the exception of his unverifiable claim that Ayolas had appointed him deputy commander at Candelaria. In Asunción, Salazar had left Mendoza in charge of the fort and, in turn, Ruiz Galán appointed Salazar its commander. Nor did Irala have the power invested in the royal officials appointed by the Crown.¹⁰² Gregorio de Acosta, a Portuguese who had come with Mendoza's expedition, described Irala as a "Biscayan of little quality, authority or importance."¹⁰³ Yet, by 1541 Irala reported in a *relación* he wrote as the provisional governor:

It must be known that in the town we have founded in Paraguay there are presently four hundred men. We have in peace and as vassals the Guaraní Indians or Carios,

who live within thirty leagues of this port and serve the Christians in their persons, providing their women and all necessary things. There are seven hundred women who serve the Christians in their houses and fields. For their work, there is an abundance of supplies that sustains not only the people who reside here but also more than three thousand men who live above [north of Asunción]. When we make war, one thousand [Cario] Indians always go in our company in canoes and on land. With the help of God and their service, we have destroyed many other nations of Indians who have not been our friends, especially the Agaces, who have brought us a great quantity of gold and silver.¹⁰⁴

This passage from Irala's 1541 *relación*, which Irala left at the Buenos Aires fort when it was abandoned to inform future expeditions arriving in the Río de la Plata about the existence of a settlement further upriver, provides evidence of the conquistadors' adaptation to indigenous norms. That the four hundred men Irala governed had obtained the personal service of seven hundred Cario women indicates that the conquistadors had integrated into Carios' *teýys* (extended kinship lineages) through conjugal and, for some, polygamous relations. Irala's reference to how these women produced enough supplies to sustain not only the Christians but also three thousand Carios in the vicinity of Asunción links their personal service to kinship networks. The Cario Indians whom the conquistadors were able to call upon to make war against the Agaces also implicates the Spanish in the Carios' practice of raiding non-*avá* nations. In turn, Irala's claim that the Agaces brought gold and silver most likely was a ruse to mask the indigenous nature of these raids, as no other mention is made in the contemporary accounts of the Agaces trading silver and gold.

While Irala's *relación* does not address how the conquistadors obtained the services of seven hundred women and the collaboration of a thousand warriors, Schmidl's flamboyant chronicling of Ayolas's battle with Lambaré and his offering of women, together with Hernández's scandalized denunciation of Irala's sexual vice, hint at how the conquistadors' relationship with indigenous women was the result of a complex intertwining of indigenous and European mores. The task of analyzing the role this relationship played in the evolving power dynamics of the conquistadors and their Cario allies, and in Irala's rise to power, is

complicated by how it is represented in the contemporary accounts as licentiousness, de facto enslavement, or expediency. Francisco de González Paniagua, a cleric who came with Cabeza de Vaca's expedition, denounced it as immoral concubinage. He writes in a letter dated March 3, 1545, that "the brothers any Christian has from having relations with Indian women are not called the Christian brothers of my maids or servants, but the brothers of my wives and my brothers-in-law, mothers-in-laws and fathers-in-law. This is done with such a lack of modesty, as if by uniting with the daughters of the Indians and calling them in-laws they have a legitimate marriage."¹⁰⁵ He also was scandalized by the polygamous nature of these relations, describing how

Mohamed and his Koran did not permit more than seven wives, and here some have as many as sixty. The Christian who has four Indian women is only content because he does not have the means to have eight, and he who has eight only because he does not have sixteen, and so from here upwards... To have two or three is something very poor, and there is no one who does not have less than five or six. Most have fifteen or twenty, thirty or forty.¹⁰⁶

For his part, Schmidl, whose observations about indigenous women in his chronicle border on the prurient, understood the Carios' offering of women in mercenary terms. He describes how "fathers sell their daughters the same way that husbands sell their wives when they no longer like them, or brothers their sisters; a woman costs a shirt, a knife, an ax, or any similar barter."¹⁰⁷ When Cabeza de Vaca arrived in Asunción in 1542, he viewed the personal service of Cario women as both sexual promiscuity and de facto slavery. He denounces in his 1545 *Relación general* that Irala, the royal officials aligned with him, and their friends

had carnal relations with mother and child, two sisters, aunts, and female cousins and other relatives, and they sell, trade, and exchange free Christian women among themselves as if they were slaves. Especially the said Domingo de Irala did this, and signed bills of sale before a notary of the women who were sold. And more than this, they were in concubinage with thirty, forty, or fifty women.¹⁰⁸

Francisco de Andrade, a priest who came with Mendoza's expedition, had a more practical attitude towards these carnal relations. In a letter to the King dated March 8, 1545, he writes:

We find in this land the bad custom that the women are the ones who plant and care for the crops. As we wished to sustain ourselves here and on account of the poverty of the land, each Christian was forced to take Indian women and satisfy the women's parents with barter in order that we could eat. The Christians also increased their power by having so many children with the Indian women.¹⁰⁹

As early as the 1600s, the conquistadors' relations with Cario women, whose primary role in indigenous food production had enabled them to survive, were enshrined in the historical record as the founding principle of colonial society. In *La Argentina*, Guzmán identifies the importance of Guaraní women and their mestizo children for the consolidation of Spanish rule, writing how the Indians of Asunción:

gave to the Captains and soldiers their daughters and sisters to serve them. Holding in great esteem the Spanish as relatives (*medio deudos*), they called them brothers-in-law, which has remained until now the term they use among themselves. The women given to the Spanish by the Indians had many children, who were raised in a sound Christian manner and government, and who have served the King with honour, becoming *encomenderos* and occupying preeminent and honourable positions in this province.¹¹⁰

In a report issued by Juan Arias de Saavedra in 1658, Captain Bernabe Sánchez testified:

When the first settlers and conquistadors entered the Province of Paraguay, they founded the city of Asuncion, the capital of these provinces, because they found a people of reason in the Guaraní, who were based in villages and whose chiefs were respected as superiors and masters. As the conquistadors had brought very few women from Europe, many noble men married the daughters of caciques, and for being noble men, secured and facilitated the conquest of the Spanish. For this reason the Guaraní nation continues to call the Spanish in their language brothers-in-law and nephews.¹¹¹

Similarly, Manuel Cabral testified in the same report that the Carios still called “the Spanish *cherobayá*, which is the same as brothers-in-law.”¹¹² An anonymous Jesuit *relación* from 1620

notes that the Guaraní “call all nations slaves except the Spanish. However, they do not want to call the Spanish master (*señor*) but rather brother-in-law or nephew because they say only God is their *Señor* and as I have said, they permitted the Spanish to enter their lands and assisted them through familial relationships.”¹¹³

What these later accounts of the 1600s share with the earlier accounts is an understanding of Spanish relations with Cario women in European familial terms. Andrade’s mention of the Carios accruing power by offering their daughters to the conquistadors also hints at the conflation of a European conception of the family, albeit a polygamous one, with kinship obligations. Of the contemporary accounts in the 1500s, only Andrade refers directly to these kinship obligations. In his 1545 letter, he takes note of the relationship between a husband and his wife’s younger sisters, describing how

each one [Cario] lives with his or her parents together in one house and they have no temples and until now, from what I have been able to understand, they worship no idol. However, they eat the human flesh of their enemies that they take and kill in war. They have in their debt the younger sisters of their wives.¹¹⁴

Susnik’s analysis of Guaraní kinship networks at the time of conquest provides a context to analyse Andrade’s reference to this “debt” in relation to the Carios’ offering of women to the conquistadors. Susnik argues that the Carios’ offering of young girls from one *teýy* (kinship lineage) to the young men of another *teýy* produced a “debt” or reciprocal obligation that facilitated the social cohesion between the *teýy-ogás*, the communal longhouses that housed the *teýy*. As kinship was matrilineal, the young men went to live with the girls’ families, whose female members planted and gathered food and whose male members cleared the fields and fought with their sons-in-law’s *teýy* in times of war.¹¹⁵

Susnik also addresses these reciprocal obligations in relation to polygamy and the prestige of the *tuvichá* (chief). She posits that while at the time of the conquest most Guaraní men lived with one woman, the *tuvichá* achieved his power by attracting multiple women through his oratory skills displayed during feasts and war councils. Polygamy enabled the *tuvichá* to unify the *teýy* through the debts owed to him by the families of his wives and their sisters. He was entitled to the agricultural labour of his wives’ relatives, who produced food surpluses and

enabled him to hold large feasts. These feasts were fundamental to maintaining the loyalty of his followers or *mboyá-secuaces*, the male members of his wife's extended family of maternal aunts and their cousins. Polygamy also gave the *tuvichá* the authority to call upon the young warriors of the *tekó'á* (a village comprising several or more *teýy-ogás*) in raids against non-*avá* nations. According to Susnik, the specific function of young warriors in raids against other nations was to take young women captive to facilitate the expansion of the Guaraní through the absorption of non-*avá* peoples into their villages.¹¹⁶ In this regard, she echoes Manuel Cabral's testimony that the Guaraní subjected other nations by force, "obliging them to contribute by giving their daughters for service as if they were slaves."¹¹⁷

In the context of the functions that kinship obligations and polygamy served in Cario society, the offering of women to the conquistadors incorporated them into the *teýy* (kinship lineage) as the "sons-in-law" of the women's fathers. If the conquistadors were offered a daughter of the cacique, they became aligned with the most powerful kinship lineage in the *teýy-ogá* or longhouse. As a son-in-law, the conquistador had the responsibility to provide protection and barter goods for the extended family of the women in his service. In turn, he was entitled to the food produced by these women and their maternal relatives. In this respect, Cabeza de Vaca's denunciation of Irala having "carnal relations with mother and child, two sisters, aunts and female cousins and other relatives" reveals as much about Cario kinship mores as it does about his sexual promiscuity. As fathers-in-law, the Carios could call on the conquistadors' male children and male relatives of their wives to fight with them in raids. Thus, the number of women the conquistadors had in their personal service and the children they had by these women determined their capacity to supply warriors for raids, and increased their prestige among the Carios. Hence, Andrade notes that "the Christians increased their power by having so many children with the Indians."

While Susnik's ethnohistorical framework enables us to consider the transcultural dynamics of the conquistadors' relationship with Cario women, the question still remains: why did the Carios choose to integrate the conquistadors into their kinship lineages? Not only were the conquistadors intruders in the Carios' territories, but they also had brought with them entourages of Carijós who were from another *guára*. In the case of Ribera, his extensive entourage corresponded to the social organization of the *teýy-ogá*, including slaves and

servants who would have been *tapií*, debtors who would have been relatives, and “friends” who might have been young male warriors. This positioned him as a rival *tuvichá* and increased the potential for confrontation. In *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay*, Gandía includes a partial transcription of a testimony by Juan de Salazar, recorded on June 11, 1543, in Asunción, that documents just such a confrontation. Salazar states:

A few days after this witness founded this city [Asunción] in the name of your Majesty to ensure the success of this conquest, certain persons who had lived and been on the coast of Brazil and who knew and understood well the language of the Indians fled secretly to the coast of Brazil and the Indians of this land killed some of these said Christians. As a result, the Indians rebelled and I was on the verge of losing the city. Although those Indians who remained were very few I was able to stop them from rising up through good words and by giving presents to their chiefs, who took the names Pedro de Mendoza and Juan de Salazar.¹¹⁸

In his summary of Salazar’s testimony, Gandía observes that “we do not know for what motive the Indians killed some of them [the Christians from Brazil].”¹¹⁹ By taking into account the Guaraní’s hostility towards other *guáras*, we can identify a motive. If the Carios perceived the Christians from Brazil and their indigenous entourages as a territorial invasion of their *guára* by other Guaraníes, then they would have killed them as a declaration of war. Hence, the Christians from Brazil were fleeing the region precisely to avoid this aggression. The willingness of two Cario caciques to remain with the conquistadors and take the names of Mendoza and Salazar indicates that they differentiated between the Brazilian Christians, who were distinguished by their Carijó entourages, and the Spanish conquistadors. Salazar’s testimony also makes clear that the caciques’ collaboration was contingent on receiving barter. As this exchange of goods and names took place in the context of the threat of the conquistadors’ annihilation by rebellious Carios, most likely the barter was substantial and the “good words” included the promise of guns and gunpowder for raiding against enemy nations.

Villalta, who described the first encounter of Ayolas and the Carios as one of peace and cooperation, also makes clear that Salazar and Mendoza were dependent on barter to obtain the Carios’ cooperation. He reports:

After coming to this land of the Carios, they [Salazar and Mendoza] decided to build a fort where they all could stay. Thus they decided to seek food among the Indians, but the latter did not wish to provide it except in trade; nor did they want to provide any service to the Christians. For this reason the Christians built the fort I have mentioned with great hardship, carrying the logs on their own backs.¹²⁰

In her 1556 letter, Isabel de Guevara echoes Villalta's claim that the Carios were reluctant collaborators:

Thus we arrived in Asunción, and although now it is very fertile in provisions, it was then lacking in food. And so it was necessary for the women to return again to their work, clearing the fields with their own hands, tilling and planting and harvesting the supplies, without the aid of anyone, until the soldiers recovered from being so skinny and began to rule the land and acquire Indian men and women for service.¹²¹

Once the conquistadors acquired these "Indian men and women for service," the other question left pending is: how did Irala obtain the prestige of a war chief? As a son-in-law, he initially would have been subject to the authority of his father-in-law in the *teyy* and to the *tuvichá* in the longhouse in matters of warfare. Yet, by 1541 Irala claims that under his leadership "one thousand [Cario] Indians in canoes and on land" accompanied the Spanish to make war on the Agaces. In the context of indigenous norms, this would have positioned him as a chief-of-chiefs or *mburuvichá* who united a large number of *tuvichás* in the face of threats from non-*avá* nations.

In this regard, it is Schmidl's and Guzmán's accounts of the Carios' resistance to the arrival of the conquistadors in their territories that provide plausible answers to these questions. In both instances, their chronicles link the offering of women and the conquistadors' military defeat of the Carios. Schmidl, as already noted, dates the offering of women to Ayolas's attack on Lambaré's village. Guzmán first refers to it in the context of a dramatic story he tells of a failed uprising by the Carios during Semana Santa (Holy Week) after the founding of Asunción. He relates that eight thousand Cario warriors planned to enter the fort and catch the Spanish by surprise during the Easter procession. Their ambush was foiled when the cacique's daughter in the service of Juan de Salazar told him of their intention to attack the fort. Irala

responded to the Carios' conspiracy against the Spanish by deploying divide-and-conquer tactics to favour some caciques and hang and quarter others.¹²² In the wake of these summary executions, Guzmán contends that

the Carios began to fear and esteem the Spanish, and considered the General [Irala] a man of great valour, a judge who punished the wicked and rewarded and esteemed the good. Thus he gained their great love and obedience as was just; and in gratitude offered their children and sisters to serve the captains and soldiers.¹²³

As no contemporary accounts mention the Semana Santa uprising, when and if it actually occurred is not verifiable. Nor do Gandía or Rubio refer to it in their histories of colonial Río de la Plata. Guzmán's story could be viewed as a tall tale spun from Juan de Salazar's testimony of the Carios' initial rebellion. However, this rebellion occurred during the first days of Salazar founding Asunción in August, not in late March or early April when Easter Week takes place. During that time, Irala was returning to Candelaría to wait for Ayolas and was not present. Moreover, the fort was not yet built, and barter rather than kinship obligations secured the Carios' cooperation. If we accept that a second confrontation took place separate from the rebellion Salazar describes, the most likely date of the Semana Santa uprising was in the early months of 1538, when a rump of only fifty men remained to guard the fort and a plague of locusts had created food shortages.

While Irala makes a brief reference to this locust plague in his 1545 letter, other eyewitness accounts are more explicit about the calamitous consequences of its devastation of the crops. Andrade describes how in

the first year that we arrived, there were in this land so many locusts that the sun was obscured and all of the land covered and destroyed by them. Not one green thing was left and there were no crops harvested or very little. Many indigenous people and the majority of the Christians died of hunger.¹²⁴

An anonymous *relación* from 1545 links this scarcity of food to Irala's raids on Cario villages. Its author states that Irala returned to Asunción from Candelaría to find

that locusts had assaulted all of the land and there was so much hunger that many Indians had died. Because of the lack of food, he [Irala] was forced to go to war against certain Indians who were the same [nation] as our allies as [these Indians] were nearby and had food.¹²⁵

This reference to Irala's raids with the Carios against other *tekó-ás* demonstrates that far from peaceful cooperation, the first several years of contact between the conquistadors and the Carios of the region were marked by aggression and scarcity. It also provides a motive for the Semana Santa rebellion as a retaliatory ambush for Irala's raiding of outlying Cario villages.

Irala's ability to undertake these raids likely originated from his relationship with the cacique's daughter at the port of Tapuá, which would have enabled him to collaborate with the cacique and his warriors in pillaging other *tekó-ás*. The scarcity of food in Asunción and the efficacy of the Spaniards' gunpowder, which as Schmidl points out made holes in bodies without arrows, were incentives for the caciques living near the Asunción fort to join the Tapúa cacique and Irala in assaulting other villages. In turn, the success of these raids consolidated Irala's status as a *tuvichá* in his own right by providing him with food to distribute among the Asunción Carios. In the aftermath of the retaliatory ambush on the fort, his dispensing of justice further increased his power base among the conquistadors and the Carios. As befitting a general he jailed, tortured, and killed the perpetrators. As befitting a chief-of-chiefs or *mburuvichá*, his tactics to favour some caciques and hang and quarter others enabled him to establish alliances with *tuvichás*, who offered their daughters as wives for himself and his allies among the Asunción conquistadors.

Because Guzmán's story of the Semana Santa uprising is unverifiable, the significance of Irala's consolidation of his power base through his role in suppressing this ambush and obtaining the personal service of Cario women is necessarily speculative. What is verifiable from the eyewitness accounts is Irala's participation in joint raids with the Carios against the Agaces. Schmidl describes one led by Irala as a scorched-earth affair. He relates how eight thousand Guaraní warriors and a few Spanish soldiers ambushed the Agaces in the middle of the night, indiscriminately slaughtering them, burning their encampment, and taking their boats.¹²⁶ Hernández and Ribera also refer to Irala's raids against the Agaces. Their accounts

are significant for the instances of ritual cannibalism they report and the complicity of the royal officials in condoning the practice. In his 1545 *relación*, Hernández charges that, “Domingo de Irala, with the approval of Alonso Cabrera and Garcí Venegas, went to the villages of a nation called the Agaces, taking with him the Cario Indians. They attacked at night killing large numbers of Agaces and the Carios ate many of them in the presence of the captain and officials.”¹²⁷ Ribera echoes his accusation, relating how Irala had “gone to make war with the Agaces, in which great cruelties were enacted upon children and women, and the Cario Indians ate them (Agaz warrior captives) cooked and roasted in the presence of Captain Vergara (Irala) and officials of your majesty.”¹²⁸

From these scandalized denunciations of cruelty and cannibalism, it appears that Irala deployed the same divide-and-rule tactics among the conquistadors as he had among the Carios. By calling on the authority of the royal officials to sanction these raids at the same time as he accrued prestige among the Carios from leading them, he was able to convince Cabrera to appoint him provisional governor and displace the expedition’s chain of command of captains, such as Ruiz Galán. Although Hernández’s and Ribera’s accusations of cannibalism are ignored in Gandía’s and Rubio’s histories, it is highly probable that this frenzied anthropophagi did take place. Plagues of locusts, raids on other Cario *tekó-ás*, and wars against the non-*avá* Agaces had produced the conditions for the ritual cannibalism that Branislava Susnik argues intensified in times of drought, rivalry between *teýy*, and attacks on enemy nations. In turn, the collusion of the royal officials in condoning the eating of captives enabled them to affirm their own kinship relations with the Carios. As this practice functioned to unite the *tuvichás* in their raids against non-*avá* adversaries, condoning it also signalled to the Carios the royal officials’ support for Irala as the *mburuvichá* of the region.

Similar to the initial raids against the other *tekó-ás* during the locust plague, the Asunción caciques’ willingness to collaborate with Irala would have depended on his prowess as a warrior and the access he provided to gunpowder technology. This access meant that the Cario warriors were able to slaughter large numbers of their enemies, take numerous women captives to integrate as *tapí* slaves in their *teýys*, and obtain male captives to ritually kill and eat. Hernández’s charge in his 1545 *relación* that Irala had sold “an Indian and Indian woman of the Agaz nation to a brother of the Merced Order for a red cloak and a quilt”¹²⁹ also indicates

these captives were bartered as slaves. As long as the convergence of captive-taking and a European barter economy was limited to the exchange of *tapíi* slaves, both the Cario caciques and their Spanish allies benefited. The Carios were able to trade their female captives for *cuñas* (wedges of iron) and other European goods, while the conquistadors were able to obtain additional women for personal service and to trade them amongst themselves. However, Hernández and Cabeza de Vaca claim that Cario women also were being traded among the Spaniards. While it is possible that they misunderstood the offering of young women from one *teýy* to another as a form of slavery, or mistook the bartering of *tapíi* women for Carios, both are emphatic in their condemnation of Irala's role in condoning the selling of women. Hernández echoes Cabeza de Vaca's accusation that Irala "signed bills of sale before a notary of the women that were sold" by describing how before the arrival of Cabeza de Vaca, Irala had given "his consent to sell a great number of free Christian women who were vassals of Your Majesty in exchange for capes and other clothing."¹³⁰

In the context of Asunción's isolated location in a region without viable commodities, this exchange value was determined by the scarcity of European goods and a lack of silver to procure them. In an *ordenanza* dated October 3, 1541, Irala established set equivalencies between *maravedis* (a Spanish coin made from a mixture of silver and copper) and fishhooks, knives, and *cuñas* (iron wedges) to compensate for the lack of any other goods except "pigs, maize, beans, manioc, fowl, and other things collected as tithes or fifths belonging to His Majesty."¹³¹ As these agricultural goods collected for tithes depended on indigenous women who planted and harvested the fields, economic wellbeing became equated with the number of Indians each conquistador had in his possession. Hence, Paniagua argued that "to have two or three (Indian women) is something very poor," while the bartering of an Agaz woman for a red cloak and a quilt demonstrates the lack of European clothing and other trading goods.

While Irala and the royal officials aligned with him were able to become "rich" in women through the prestige they accrued in collaborating with the Carios' raids against non-*avá* nations, the common soldiers' access to indigenous women was limited by the caciques' offering of their daughters to conquistadors whom they perceived as powerful. Schmidl's tale of the battle of Lambaré and the subsequent offering of women suggests how the Carios recognized the hierarchical equivalence between their *tuvichás* and the Spanish captains, with

six women given to Juan de Ayolas, and only two to each of his soldiers. In a 1545 letter written by Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, who had come with Mendoza's expedition, the inequality produced by the Carios' integration of the conquistadors into their kinship networks is made explicit. He describes how after Irala returned from his *entrada* to search for Ayolas

more than fifty Christians died of those who had entered inland. They were the poorest ones, as they did not have even one Indian woman to carry their food or even a hammock to sleep in, while others such as the Captains and their friends had taken ten, twenty or thirty women, who by sleeping in the swamps on the ground became sick and arrived back dying.¹³²

The deaths of these Christians and of the indigenous women who served the captains reveal one of the more dire consequences produced by the conquistadors' adaptation to indigenous norms.

On the other hand, an anonymous report of 1545 that describes the conquistadors' lives under Irala's rule as the difference between freedom and slavery, suggests the degree to which the common soldiers preferred their coexistence with the Carios, despite its inequity, to the hierarchy of Hispanic social mores. Writing about Cabeza de Vaca's assumption of the governorship of Asunción in 1542, the author laments:

It weighed heavily on most of the men that he had dispossessed Captain Domingo Martínez de Irala, as they were well treated by Irala and he was well liked by everyone. Before he [Irala] commanded them, they were treated like slaves, and they were free during the time he was in charge.¹³³

This distinction between freedom and slavery is revealing on several counts. It hints at the dissolution of the expedition's military rank during Irala's rule, and by inference, the dissolution of Hispanic social mores in favour of indigenous norms. Its echo of the Guaraní's ethnocentric distinction of other nations as *tapíí*, or slaves, also suggests the degree to which the conquistadors not only had adapted to the Carios' norms but also internalized their cultural values, whereby to be free was in effect to become *avá*.

The freedom to be *avá*, however, did not mean that the conquistadors were able to completely shed the influence of Hispanic mores. During Irala's provisional governorship, the conquistadors' jealous and abusive behavior towards the Carios and each other revealed negative consequences of the "freedom" Irala had granted them. In his 1545 *relación*, Hernández lists numerous incidents of violence relating to the possession of Indian women that occurred before Cabeza de Vaca's arrival in 1542. He relates that "the *lengua* Juan Pérez cut off the member of a Christian Indian of the household of Moquiraç because he was jealous of him,"¹³⁴ and "the locksmith Antonio Pineda treacherously killed his companion Valle, a fellow citizen of Madrid, out of jealousy over an Indian woman, and he was never punished for this."¹³⁵ He also reports that Irala "ordered that no one should be so bold as to sleep with an Indian woman not belonging to him, under grave penalties."¹³⁶ This proclamation suggests that in his dual role as the *mburuvichá* and provisional governor of Asunción, Irala sought to stem the abuses of the conquistadors in order to protect the social cohesion of the *tekó-á*, in which women were central to maintaining kinship obligations. On the other hand, the generalized lawlessness that Hernández describes, even if it was exaggerated to vilify Irala's governorship, points to the limits of his authority in preventing the conquistadors' abuses against their Cario allies.

Hernández's denunciation of the abusive behaviour of the royal treasurer Garcí Venegas demonstrates how such violations drew the conquistadors, priests, Carios, and interpreters into a web of brutality and betrayal. He relates that when Irala went to Buenos Aires in 1541 to bring the remaining conquistadors to Asunción, he placed Venegas in charge of Asunción and that Venegas

made great damages among the people and the Indians, sending them to kill and especially to take women. He sent Pedro de Mendoza, an Indian, to hang two other Indians, and they were hanged together in the town. He took the wife of another Indian from Lorenzo Moquiraç and gave her to Andres Hernández of Cordoba. The Indian went to the *lenguas*, crying and begging for them to plead with the said Garcí Venegas to exchange his wife for his twelve-year old daughter. Venegas refused, as the Indian had been speaking against him and had complained to Francisco de Andrade, saying that it was publically known the Indian had been sent to beat to

death Lorenzo Moquiraçe, who was the father-in-law of Garcí Venegas. After which, he was never seen again.¹³⁷

In this passage from Hernández's 1545 *relación*, the inherent violence embedded in the interpersonal dynamics of Carios and the Spanish becomes evident. His accusation that Venegas sent Pedro de Mendoza to hang other Indians points to how the royal officials were deploying a vigilante justice that pitted the Carios against each other. In the case of the Indian's wife taken by Venegas from his cacique father-in-law and given to a Spaniard, the violation of his kinship obligation to protect the female members of his wife's extended family transformed the roles of all the protagonists. The Indian's attempt to offer his daughter instead of his wife, in accordance with expected norms of reciprocity, implicated him in the human trafficking of his children. His pleading with the *lenguas* positioned them as the mediators of conflict rather than as facilitators of collaboration. Venegas's knowledge that the Indian had complained to Andrade meant that the priest had contravened the sanctity of the confessional. Most ominously, the Indian became the first recorded case of a *desaparecido* (disappeared person) in the history of the Río de la Plata.

As Hernández's litany of abuses is not repeated in the published *Comentarios*, and the other eyewitness accounts provide no explicit examples of the conquistadors' brutality towards the Carios and each other during Irala's provisional governorship, it is probable that Hernández exaggerated the degree of violence that occurred. Nevertheless, his account alerts us to the cultural differences embedded in the convergence of indigenous and European worldviews. In essence, it demonstrates that the conquistadors' integration into the Carios' kinship networks was neither a process of becoming *avá* nor the voluntary submission of the Carios to colonial rule. Rather, it was a complex negotiation and violation of indigenous norms and Hispanic values that was irrevocably altering both the worldviews of both the Carios and the conquistadors.

Hernández's account also serves to add another layer of significance to Guzmán's tale of Miranda and Mangoré, in which the promiscuity and jealousies attributed by Hernández to the conquistadors are displaced onto indigenous warriors. In the context of the Carios'

incorporation of the Spanish in their *teýys*, Guzmán's tale serves to foreshadow how the conquistadors' adaptation to indigenous norms exacerbated cultural differences as well as facilitated integration. With the arrival of Cabeza de Vaca as the new *adelantado* in 1542, the violence inherent in the process of transculturation would become apparent. While Irala had governed by adapting to indigenous norms and permitted the conquistadors to do the same, Cabeza de Vaca sought to re-impose Hispanic values on Mohamed's Paradise gone sour, which would intensify the nascent conflicts brewing in the fledgling Spanish outpost of Asunción.

Endnotes.

1. Deposition of Caboto, July 29, 1530. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España* II, 163. “una onze, poco mas o menos de plata, e ciertas orejeras e lunas demetal en cantidad de una libra.”

2. Ibid. “un mayoral de la nación de los chandules é otros tres fijos de mayores para que vean las cosas acá para que, vueltos en la dichas tierra, sean leguas e medianeros en la paz, los cuales son cient leguas más acá del dicho Río de Solis.”

3. *Real Cédula*, August 22, 1534. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España* II, 98.

4. *Real Cédula*, March 12, 1532. Medina, *El Veneciano Sebastián Caboto al servicio de España* II, 102.

5. The siege and fall of Tenochtitlán is described by Cortés in his Third Letter, published in Anthony Pagden, *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 192-265. Cortés reports that “when the gold and other things had been collected they were melted down with the agreement of Your Majesty's officials and valued at more than 130,000 castellanos.” He sent these and “gold collars, plumes, feather headdresses and things so remarkable that they cannot be described in writing nor would they be understood unless they were seen” back to Spain. Pagden, 265-66. Bernal Díaz del Castillo also wrote an important eyewitness account, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*. For a recent abridged English translation see David Carrasco, ed., *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Díaz del Castillo* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008).

6. For a concise chronology of Pizarro's conquest of Peru, see James Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca: A Social and Biographical Study of the First Conquerors of Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), 4-16. Also see John Hemming, *Conquest of the Incas* (Revised edition. London: Penguin Books, 1983).

7. Lockhart, *The Men of Cajamarca*, 10-15. A *capitulación* was a contract issued by the Crown for the right to conquer and govern a specified region and a share of its wealth in return for financing the expedition.

8. Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: his account, his life, and the expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*, (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), vol. 3, 385.

9. The *capitulación* of Pedro de Mendoza, dated May 21, 1534, is published in DHG II: 41-35.

10. Carta de Doña Isabel de Guevara a la princesa gobernadora Doña Juana. July 2, 1556. CI: 619-621. The name Guevara does not figure in Guzmán's partial list of the conquistadors who came with Mendoza. *La Argentina*, 75. Nor does it appear in a *memoria* that lists all the men who arrived with different expeditions, "Memoria de la Gente quell dia de oy se tiene por ser y son bibos en las provincias de los rios de la plata, Paraguay y parana," 1556. Published in R. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala* (Buenos Aires: Bernabé y Cia, 1939), 525-534. Guzmán does state that Carlos Guevara, who was possibly her husband, accompanied Juan de Ayolas, a captain in Mendoza's expedition, in his journey up the Paraguay River. *La Argentina*, 86. In a report by Pedro de Dorantes, a witness testified that Don Carlos de Guevara went inland to the sierra with Ayolas. As the Payagúas killed Ayolas and his men after they returned to the Paraguay River, presumably Carlos de Guevara died at this time. Información hecho por Pedro de Dorantes, July 20, 1544. COR: 137. Lucía Gálvez devotes a chapter to Isabel de Guevara in *Mujeres de la conquista* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Planeta, 1990), 63-71. However, she provides no additional information or analysis about Guevara aside from what is contained in the letter.

11. Schmidl's chronicle was first published in German in 1567 and translated into Spanish in the nineteenth century. It has been published in a Spanish translation under slightly different titles. I am translating from Ulrico Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1997), which is a reprint of Edmundo Wernicke's twentieth-century translation of the Stuttgart manuscript, published as *Crónica y Viaje a las Regiones del Plata, Paraguay y Brasil* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Peuser S.A., 1948). A bibliographic overview of published editions and translations, what is known of Schmidl, and annotations to Spanish translations of the text, are compiled in *Ulrico Schmidel. Crónica del viaje a las regiones del Plata, Paraguay y Brazil* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones del la Veleta: 1993).

12. Carta del Hernando Ribera, February 25, 1545. DHG II: 409-114; Información del Gonzalo de Mendoza, February 15, 1545. GB: 200-249.

13. Relación del Pero Hernández, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 393-409. Hernández subsequently became Cabeza de Vaca's secretary, and authored Cabeza de Vaca's account of his brief rule of the Río de la Plata as *adelantado*, which was published as the *Commentarios* in 1555.

14. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 16.

15. Enrique de Gandía provides a corrective footnote to Schmidl's figures in *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay: los gobiernos de don Pedro de Mendoza, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca y Domingo de Irala, 1535-1556* (Buenos Aires: Librería de A. García Santos, 1935), 13. He cites Paul Groussac's calculations that the number of ships was eleven and the men twelve hundred. Groussac, *Mendoza y Garay* (Buenos Aires: Academia Argentina de Letras, 1950), vol. 1, 93-97. *Probanzas* presented by Cabeza de Vaca after he returned to Spain in 1545 number Mendoza's expedition at fifteen hundred men. Serrano y Sanz, *Relación de los Naufragios y Comentarios de Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 2, 110, 220.

16. Schmidl, *Viaje el Río de la Plata*, 22. Schmidl identifies these Indians in the original German as *zechuruass*. In the first modern translation of Schmidl in Spanish, Lafone Quevedo matched Schmidl's phonetic orthography to Spanish equivalents found in other primary texts in his "Prólogo del Traductor," which is reprinted in *Ulrico Schmidl, Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brasil*, CXXV. He identifies the *zechuruass* as the Charrúas, the Guaycurú nation who had previously attacked Solís and Caboto.

17. Schmidl, *Viaje el Río de la Plata*, 22-23. In the original German *Carendies*. While it is reasonable to presume that these were the same Querandíes who had come to see Caboto at Sancti Spíritus, Groussac makes an argument that they were delta Guaraní. Lafone Quevedo argues they were a Guaycurú nation who subsequently became known as the Pampa Indians. Groussac, *Mendoza y Garay*, vol. 1, 174-183; Lafone Quevedo, "Prólogo del traductor" in *Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brasil*, CXXV. Also see HSAI I: 180-181. In his geohistorical study of the region, Kleinpenning notes that the original shrine of this Virgin, "Nostra Signora de Bonaria," was located in Cagliari, Sardinia. The name of the fort was derived from the Spanish equivalent, Nuestra Señora de Santa María del Buen Ayre. Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870*, vol. 1, 154.

18. Schmidl, *Viaje el Río de la Plata*, 23-24.

19. *Ibid.*, 25. "encontramos nada más que algunos cueros de nutria, mucho pescado, harina de pescado y manteca de pescado."

20. *Ibid.*, 28. "cuando los indios nos veían huían ante nosotros, y nos hicieron la mala jugada de quemar y destruir sus alimentos: éste es su modo de hacer la guerra."

21. *Ibid.*, 27. "fue tal la pena y el desastre del hambre, que no bastaron ni ratas ni ratones, vívoras ni otras sabandijas; hasta los zapatos y cueros, todo tuvo que ser comida."

22. *Ibid.*, 28. In his later chronicle, Guzmán repeats this grisly tale, relating that the hunger was so extreme that the soldiers ate each other's excrement, and finally, "sustained themselves from the corpses of those who had died, and even those who had been hanged for crimes, leaving nothing more than the bones" dangling from the gallows. *La Argentina*, 84. "se sustentaban de la carne de los que morían, y aun de los ahorcados por justicia, sin dejarles mas de los huesos."

23. Schmidl, *Viaje el Río de la Plata*, 29-30. In the original German *Carendies, Barenis, Zachuruas, Zechaneis Diimbus*. Lafone Quevedo, "Prólogo del traductor" in *Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brasil*, CXXVI.

24. Schmidl, *Viaje el Río de la Plata*, 31. "de los mil quinientos hombres quedaban con vida unos quinientos sesenta de entre la gente de guerra; los demás habían hallado la muerte por hambre o habían sido muertos por los indios." Men from Mendoza's expedition who returned with the next *adelantado*, Cabeza de Vaca, to Spain in 1545, and testified for his *probanzas*, stated that one thousand men died in the first months of Mendoza's expedition from hunger and Indian attacks. Serrano y Sanz, *Relación de los Naufragios y Comentarios de Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 2, 110, 179, 193, 221.

25. The Jesuit historian Lozano argues that the Spanish lied about their initial victories and the number of casualties they sustained; nevertheless, his figures for various battles do not vary widely from the chronicle sources. *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 2, 90. The defeat by small groups of Spaniards of the massive armies of the Aztecs and Incas remains part of the historical legacy to this day. Matthew Restall critically assesses this legacy in *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

26. There is no record in the contemporary accounts of the Timbús attacking the Spanish until 1539. In his 1541 *relación*, Irala reports that the Querandíes and the Guaraníes of the Paraná (delta-Guaraní) were mortal enemies of the Spanish. *Relación de Domingo Martínez de Irala*, June 1541. DHG II: 299.

27. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Cabaut y Cía, 1903), 304-5. Villalta's letter is published as Appendix A: 303-316. Parry and Keith have translated this letter in *The Iberian World*, vol. 5, 257-263. I am translating from Lafone Quevedo.

28. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 305. "i sino fuera por la infanteria que atrás benia que los socorrío, todos quedarán en al Campo por ser como heran los Indios tan ligeros I tan diestros en atar los caballos con bolas que traian." *Bolas* refers to two balls attached to ropes that were used by the indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata for hunting. The gauchos adapted them to lasso horses and cows.

29. Ibid. "hallamos que hera tanta la necesidad i hambre que pasaban hera espanto, pues unos tenían á su Compañero muerto 3 i 4 días i tomaban la racion por poderse pasar la vida con ella, otros de berse tan Ambrientos les aconteció comer carne humana, i así se bido que asta 2 ombres que hicieron justicia se comieron de la cintura para abaxo."

30. Ibid., 305. "murío la tercia parte de la Gente que en los Nabios iba que serían hasta 200 hombres."

31. Ibid. "los Capitanes i allegados á ellos estos nunca pasaron necesidad."

32. Carta de Isabel de Guevara, July 2, 1556. CI: 619. "como la armarda llegase al puerto de Buenos Ayres, con mill é quinientos hombres, y les faltase el bastimento, fue tamaña el

hambre, que, á cabo de tres meses, murieran los mill. .. Vinieron los hombres en tanta flaqueza, que todos los trabajos cargavan de las pobres mugeres, ansi en lavarles las ropas, como en curarles, hazerles de comer lo poco que tenian, alimpiarlos, hazer sentinela, rondar los fuegos, armar las vallestas, cuando algunas vezes los yndios les venien a dar guerra, hasta cometer á poner fuego en los versos, y á levantar los soldados, los questavan para hello, dar arma por el campo á bozes, sargenteando y poniendo en orden los soldados; porque en este tiempo, como las mugeres nos sustentamos con poca comida, no aviamos caydo en tanta flaqueza como los hombres.” In Lucía Gálvez’s chapter on Isabel de Guevara in *Mujeres de la conquista* she lists the presence of María Dávila, the mistress of Pedro de Mendoza, and states that no mention of the names of other women who accompanied the expedition can be found in the documentation. Neither Groussac nor Gandía addresses the presence of Spanish women in their respective histories of the Mendoza expedition. Gálvez, 64.

33. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay*, 31; Groussac, *Mendoza y Garay*, vol. 1, 214.

34. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 84-85, 89-90. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 2, 42. Nicolás del Techo, *Historia de la provincia del paraguay de la Compañía de Jesús por el P. Nicolás del Techo* (Asunción: Centro de Estudios Paraguayas Antonio Guasch, 2005), 47. Lozano and Del Techo must have had access to a copy of Guzmán’s manuscript, as passages from it appear verbatim in their texts. While the story of La Maldonada is patently a flight of fancy, one element of it may have had some basis in fact. In a footnote in *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay*, Gandía quotes from a *Real cédula* issued in Madrid on July 16, 1540, which recorded that Ruiz Galán, the captain whom Pedro de Mendoza had placed in charge of the fort of Buenos Aires upon returning to Spain, had ordered Antonio de la Trinidad without just cause to be tied to a tree with chains and left in the countryside to be eaten by tigers: “*por odio y enemistad que con él ha tomado sin causa alguna le hizo atar con un arbol con una cadena y echarlo en el campo a los tigres que lo comiesan.*” Gandía, 48.

35. Antony Kamm, *The Romans: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 2-4.

36. Anthony Pagden has argued that “pumas were lions, jaguars, tigers, and so on” to the first European observers in America,” (emphasis in the original) *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 38. While this makes it possible that the lion was a puma, Guzmán’s familiarity as a mestizo living in Asunción with the Guaraní worldview makes it probable that the lion would also have been understood to refer to a jaguar. Ramírez notes in his letter that jaguars were terrifying animals. Carta de Luis Ramírez, DHG I: 99, “*tigrs, estos son muy temerosa.*” Maura, 51. *Yaguareté* is translated by Montoya as *tigre* (tiger) in the *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*. It is a compound word composed of *yagúa*, translated by Montoya as “*perro, y tambien lo dizen a la cometa,*” (dog and also what a comet is called), 185; and *eté*, “*bueno, verdadero, recio, honrado, antiguo, fuperlatiuo* (good, true, vigorous, honourable, ancient, superlative), 125.

37. Carta de Bartolomé García al real consejo, June 24, 1556. CI: 602. “*bien supo que los los tigres que entravan en la paliçada y matavan la gente, yo aguardé vno que hazia mucho daño, dende vn arbol, fuera de la palisada ... y lo maté.*”

38. A description of the Guaraní belief in jaguar-shamans is found in “Relación de lo sucedido en las Reducciones de la Sierra y en special en la de Jesús María,” dated January 29, 1655. *Jesuitas e bandeirantes no Uruguai (1611-1750)*, ed. Helio Vianna (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, 1970), 278. It relates how a sorcerer “prophesized that he would transform into a tiger. This illusion appeared to be true for the devil had persuaded him that he could transform into a tiger. Thus at the time to attack he began to growl like a tiger and gestured with his hands and arms and jumped like one—*el ortro embustero que percicaba que se avia de convertir en tigre. Este parecia verdaderam.^{te} que estava illuso y el demonio le avia persuadido q se convertiria en tigre, porq al tiempo del acometer començo a bramar como tigre y a hacer con los manos y bracos ademanes de tigre y a saltar u a saltar como el.*” Martin Dobrizhoffer describes the Guaycurú belief in tiger-shamans in *An Account of the Abipones, an Equestrian People of Paraguay*, vol. 2, 77. Also see James Schofield Saeger, *The Chaco Mission Frontier: The Guaycuruan Experience* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000), 142.

39. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 90. “*mas humanidad que los hombres.*”

40. Del Techo, *Historia de la provincia del Paraguay de la Compañía de Jesús*, 47. “*habría perecido si por la misericordia del Señor la leona, de la que había sido partera, acudiendo la primera la defendiese contra los ataques de las fieras. Observose esto, y a fin de que los hombres no pareciesen más crueles que los tigres fue absuelta.*”

41. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 305. “*Vista la necesidad que tenían y la Gente que habíamos venido de causa que todo no se acabasen mandó el Gobernador á Juan de Ailos con 3 nabios fuese á buscar Indios á Santispiritus ó de las Hullas (Islas), con los quales llebó 90 Christianos en cada uno.*”

42. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 87; Información de Gonzalo de Mendoza, 1545. BG: 205.

43. Schmidl, *Viaje el Río de la Plata*, 33. “*si este viaje hubiera durado diez días más, todos nos hubiéramos muerto de hambre. Así y todo murieron, durante este viaje, cincuenta de los cuatrocientos hombres.*”

44. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 306. “*algunas Culebras, lagartos, Ratones y otras Sabandijas que á dicha por los campos se topaban.*”

45. Ibid. “*sino fueron los Capitanes que estos como dicho tengo lo pasaban mui bien.*”

46. Ibid. “*hizo con los indios que le diesen la mitad de una casa que tenia en la qual cupieron todos, porque estabamos tales que en poco espacio podiamos muy bien caber.*”

47. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 33. “*Nuestro capitán regaló entonces al indio principal de los timbús, que se llamaba Cheraguazú, una camisa y un birrete rojo, un hacha y otras cosas más de rescate.*”

48. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 307. In Schmidl and Villalta's descriptions of the expedition's negotiations with the Timbús, no mention is made of the other indigenous groups with whom Caboto had traded, including the Chandris (delta Guaraní). This suggests that the Chandris retained their hostility towards Europeans from their interaction with Caboto and did not make contact with Mendoza's expedition.
49. Ibid. "los Capitanes y personas que mandaban heran tan pláticos que luego mandaron que la Gente saliese de casa de los Indios i fuésemos á hacer un asiento i pueblo se pasó artos trabajos i necesidades porque de causa destar algo desviados de los Indios i vivir por Rescate muchas veces no hiban á pescar porque desto viven, i como no mataban pescado no lo comiamos."
50. Ibid., 308 "tomavan ia el modo i vivir de la tierra."
51. Ibid., 307. "vino á nosotros un Cristiano el qual hera y havia quedado que en aquella Tierra de la Armada de Sebastian Gaboto." Although the historian Mendina claims that Melchor Ramírez returned to the Río de la Plata with Mendoza's expedition, he does not figure in any of the accounts, so it seems likely that he had already perished from hunger or in the Querendíes' attacks on Buenos Aires.
52. Ibid. "dío muy larga i copiosa relacion así de vista como de oidas de Indios de la riqueza della."
53. Ibid., 309; Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 86.
54. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 309; Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 88.
55. Schmidl describes how Mendoza was so ill from "el malatía francés" that he could not move his hands or feet. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 33.
56. Carta de Hernando Ribera al Emperor, Asunción, February 25, 1545. DHG II: 410. "con gran diligencia le hize cargar dha nao dbastimientos dela trra y otras cosas neçesarias y con mi mujer hijos esclavos y criados y con mis debdos y amigos qstaban enla dha trra me embarq enla dha nao y vine al puerto de buenos ayres."
57. Información de Gonzalo de Mendoza, 1545. BG: 202. "hallo en la dicha tierra ciertos cristianos que en ella vibian y Residian con sus mujeres y hijos civiles y suficientes en la dicha contratacion y comunicacion con los yndios." Gandía states that Mendoza had been a member of the previous expedition of Diego de García Moguer. In this case, his familiarity with the region would have assisted him in negotiating with the men from Caboto's expedition who had remained behind in Brazil and were living in Santa Catalina. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 33.

58. Información de Gonzalo de Mendoza, 1545. BG: 202. “*aver muy gran falta de personas ynterpretes para contratar con los yndios y para entender sus maneras y costumbres.*”
59. Ibid. “*es publico y notorio procuro con muy gran diligencia y cuydado con buenas palabras y tratamientos dadivas promesas que los critsianos se biniesen en su compañía a esta ducha provincia a serbir en ella a su mag.*”
60. Ibid. “*los cuales truxeron sus mujeres e hijos y muchos esclavos y esclavas en muy gran cantidad de bastimentos.*”
61. Carta de Hernando Ribera, February 25, Asunción, 1545. DHG II: 411.
62. Hernández mentions Ribera by name in his description of Cabeza de Vaca’s 1543 *entrada* in the Gran Chaco. Relación de Pero Hernández 1545. DGH II: 400-401. Ribera also wrote a *relación* of his participation in this *entrada*, which is published in Serrano y Sanz, *Relación de los Naufragios y Comentarios de Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 1, 368-378.
63. Información de Gonzalo de Mendoza, 1545. BG: 204. “*para que alli residiesen aydar y sustentar e asegurar la dicha tierra por la pacification de los yndios que alli bivian.*”
64. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 309. “*pasamos tantas necesidades que por esta no lo se contar hasta tanto que obimos de mudar al Pueblo otra vez al asiento i tierra de los Timbús.*”
65. In the primary sources, there is confusion regarding the distinction between Buena Esperanza and Corpus Christi. In their chronicles, Guzmán and Schmidl only refer to the latter. Corpus Christi was the village of the Timbús where Ayolas first arrived and to which the conquistadors returned. Lafone Quevedo, “Prólogo del traductor,” *Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brasil*, CLVIII-CLX. After the Tumbús’ attack, the men who survived went with Ruiz Galán to Asunción in June 1539.
66. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 37. In the original German *Karendos*. Lafone Quevedo, “Prólogo del traductor,” *Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brasil*, CXXVII.
67. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 37-39. These are all Guaycurú-related groups. Lafone Quevedo provides etymological and ethnographic analyses of the various nations Schmidl identifies in his voyage upriver to Paraguay. “Prólogo del traductor,” *Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brasil*, CXXVIII-CXXX.
68. Ibid., 40-41. Lafone Quevedo notes that the Mepenes (*mapenus* in the original German) were identified by the naturalist Felix de Azara in the early 1800s as aquatic Abipones, who after the introduction of horses by the Spanish became equestrian nomads. It is more probable that they were related to the Agaz-Payaguá although Métraux follows Azara’s lead and identifies them as Abipones. “Prólogo del traductor,” *Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brasil* CXXX; Métraux, HSAI I: 214.

69. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 42.

70. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 87. “con quienes trabaron luego con amistad, y se proveyeron del matalotage necesario para pasar adelante.”

71. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 311. “Llegaron á esta tierra do al presente estamos, ques tierra de los Indios Caribes que en otras Indias se llaman Caribes. Estos Indios Caribes salieron á los Cristianos de paz y les dieron mucha comida de maiz i batatas y algunas abas por sus Rescactes por ques gente labradora i acostumbra á labrar i criar i desto vive esta gente.”

72. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 42-43. “entre los carios o guaraní hallamos trigo turco o maíz, mandiotín, batatas, mandioca-poropí, mandioca-pepirá, maní, bocaia y otros alimentos, así como pescado y carne, venados, puercos salvajes, avestruces, ovejas indias, conejos, gallinas y gansos, y otros animales salvajes que ahora no puedo describir. También hay en abundancia una miel de la que se hace vino, y tienen en su tierra muchísimo algodón.” Lafone Quevedo provides a detailed discussion of the manioc crops in “Prólogo del traductor,” *Crónica del viaje a las regiones de la Plata, Paraguay y Brasil CXX-CXXI*.

73. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 44. “y no hay nación mayor para la Guerra y más sobria que los dichos carios.”

74. *Ibid.*, 44-45. Kleinpenning states that villages of the size of Lambaré’s were surrounded by a palisade of timber stakes, ditches, and body traps. *Paraguay 1515-1870*, vol. 1, 119.

75. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 46. “cuando estuvimos cerca, hicimos disparar nuestros arcabuces, y cuando oyeron y vieron que su gente caía y no veían ni flecha alguna sino un agujero en los cuerpos, no pudieron mantenerse y huyeron, cayendo los unos sobre otros como los perros, mientras huían hacia su pueblo. ... En seguida quisimos entrar al pueblo, pero los indios que allí estaban se mantuvieron lo mayor que pudieron y se defendieron muy valientemente por dos días. Mas cuando vieron que no podrían sostenerlo más y temieron por sus mujeres e hijos, pues los tenían a su lado, vinieron dichos carios y pidieron perdón y ellos harían todo cuanto nosotros quisirémos.”

76. *Ibid.* También trajeron y regalaron a nuestro capitán Juan Ayolas seis muchachitas, la mayor como de dieciocho años de edad; también le hicieron un presente de siete venados y otra carne de caza. Pidieron que nos quedáramos con ellos y regalaron a cada hombre de Guerra dos mujeres, para que cuidaran de nosotros, cocinaron, lavaran, y atendieran a todo cuanto más nos hiciera falta. También nos dieron comida, de la bien necesitábamos en aquella ocasión. Con esto quedó hecha la paz con los carios.”

77. *Ibid.*, 47-49.

78. Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata: Siglos XVI y XVII*, 132; Gandía, *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay*, 64-65. Schmidl may have confused this initial confrontation with a later attack on the fort of Asunción by the Carios, although his claim that Ayolas met with resistance is as credible as Villalta’s claim that it was

peaceful. In terms of the raid against the Agaces, here he has more clearly confused Irala and his subsequent raids with Ayolas.

79. Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 311.

80. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Emperador, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 419.

81. Relación de Pero Hernández, 1545. DHG II: 397.

82. Carta de Irala al Emperador, March 1, 1545, DHG II: 419. “*me dexo seis o seite hanegas demayz y quelos demas procurase del mayoral a quien me dexaua por amigo.*”

83. Hernández describes the Payagúas and Agaces raiding the Carios for agricultural crops in the *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I: 201.

84. Relación de Pero Hernández 1545. DHG II: 397. “*estava todo el dia con ella en la cama del vgantín.*”

85. Ibid. “*por ser tan amigo deste vicio.*”

86. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 419.

87. Ibid. “*faltandome los mantenimientos y por q los nauios en q. Andaua estauan tales q no los podia sostener sobre el agoa Acordamos q me retruxese a esta generaçion asi para Rehazer mede bastimentos como para adereçar los nauios para tornar a subir al dho puerto.*”

88. Ibid.

89. Información de Gonzalo de Mendoza, 1545. BG: 205. “*e ansi mesmo se le dio a juan perez la lengua quel dicho capitan gonçalo de mendoça avia traydo de la costa del brasil para que anduviese con el proveyendonle de bastimentos y abisandole delas cosas que le conbenian como hombre experimentado en lengua delos yndios carios y costumbres.*”

90. Ibid. Asunción did not become a *casa real* (city) until September 16, 1541, by virtue of an official act to found the *cabildo* (town council). This act is published in Juan Francisco Aguirre, *Discurso histórico sobre el Paraguay* (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 2003), 253-257.

91. Información de Gonzalo de Mendoza, 1545. BG: 206.

92. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 420. “*vista la mucha necesidad q avia en la tierra de mantenimientos a cause dela langosta q destruyo todo se vbo de tornar abaxo dexando al capitan joan de salazar con çinquenta ombres eneste puerto y ami me dio un vergantín en q pudiese ir al puerto de la canderlaria.*”

93. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay*, 71-72. Gandía transcribes a detailed testimony by Hernan Darias de Mansilla about the altercation between

Irala and Ruiz Galán, which was included in an *Información* by Alonso de Cabrera, dated February 25, 1539, in the port of Buenos Aires. Gandía states that the *Información* is unpublished, but provides no archival citation. As I have been unable to locate any subsequent version of this document, I am presuming that it remains unpublished and the original is housed in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville.

94. Información de Francisco Ruiz Galán, 1538. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 489.

95. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 420

96. Ibid., 420. The *real cédula*, dated Sept. 12, 1537, is published in DHG II: 149. It also stipulated which members of the expedition were authorized to trade and barter with Indians.

97. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 102-3.

98. Requerimiento al veedor Cabrera and repuesta al requerimiento del veedor Cabrera, dated June 20, 1539, signed by Irala. LM: 379-81 & 383-384.

99. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 420; Carta de Francisco Villalta, 1556. Lafone Quevedo, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 316; Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 55.

100. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Repuesta al requerimiento del veedor Cabrera relativa al abandono del puerto de Buenos Aires, April 16, 1541. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 385-6.

101. Irala's exact birthdate is unknown. Gandía dates his year of birth as 1512, *Historia de la conquista*, 14-15. Roulet states that he was born in the Villa de Vegara (Guipúzcoa) in about 1509, *La resistencia de los guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista española (1537-1556)*, 275. As Gandía worked extensively with the documentation of the era, his estimate can be considered the most reliable.

102. The positions the royal officers held can be deduced from how they signed their letters, and from partial lists of the conquistadors in Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 75; and "Memoria de la Gente quell dia de oy se tiene por ser y son bibos en las provincias de los rios de la plata, Paraguay y parana," 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 525-534.

103. Relación de Gregorio de Acosta, (circa 1572). DHG II: 486; BG: 11. "un vizcaino de poca cantidad y autoridad e impotancia que se llamva domingo de irala." The original document is undated. Blas Garay identifies the *relación* as written in 1545, which is wrong. Acosta's reference to a conflict that occurred in the late 1560s between the first Bishop of Asunción, Fray Pedro Fernández de la Torre, and Felipe de Cáceres meant that it could not have been written before 1571. DHG dates the *relación* as 1572, which is a reasonable approximation of when it could have been written. Bibliographical information on Acosta is found in Parry and Keith, *The Iberian World*, vol. 5, 284.

104. Relación de Domingo Martínez de Irala, June 1541. DHG II: 299. *“han de saber q en el Paraguay en veynte E cien grados yvn tercio esta fundado ypoblado vn pueblo en q estaban con los q. de aq vamos al presente quatrocinetos hombres thenemos en paz como vasallos desu m los yndios guarenis sy quier carios q. biben treynta legaos alderredor deaq. puerto los quales siruen a los xpianos asy co sus psonas como sus mujeres en todas las cosas del serui.^o delos xpianos setezientas mujeres para q. les sirvan en sus casas y en las rroças por el trabajo delos quales yporque dios ha seruido deello principalmente se tiene abundancia de manthenimy, q. nosolo aypara lagente q reside mas para mas de otros tres mill onbres ençima siempre q. sequiere hazer alguna Guerra van en nra comañya mill yndios en sus canoes e sy por trra los queremos llevar llevamos los mas q. queremos conelayuda de dios y con el servui.^o destes yndios auemos destruydo muchas generaciones de otros yndios q. no ansido Amygos specialmente alos agazes de los quales auemos avido cantidad de plata y mucho oro.”*

105. Carta de Francisco de González Paniagua, March 3, 1545. DHG II: 449. *“los hr^{os} q tienen las yndias de qualquier cristiano no los llama tal cristiano hr^{os} demis criados o moças sino hr.^o de mis mujeres emis cunados suegros y suegras con tanta desverguença como sy en muy ligitmo matrimonio fuesen ayuntados alas hijas delos tales yndios cyndias q ansi de suegros yntitulan.”*

106. Ibid. *“Caso muy en favor de mahoma y su alcoran y avn me paracesçe q vsan de mas libertades pues El otro no estiende mas de asiete mujeres yaca tienen algunos Asetenta digo a vra S.^a ill.^{ma} q pasa ansi q el Cristiano qsta contento con quarto ynidas espor q no puede aver ocho y el q con ocho por q no puedo aver dies ysesys yansy de aqui arriba dedos y dretres syno algo muy pobre no ay quien baje cinco y deseys la mayor parte de quinze yde veynte de treynta yquarenta.”*

107. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 43. *“El padre vende su hija; lo mismo el marido a su mujer cuando no le gusta, y el hermano a la hermana; una mujer cuesta una camisa, un cuchillo, una hachuela, u otro rescate cualquiera.”*

108. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 29. *“tenian aceso carnal con madre é hija, dos hermanas, tias é sobrinas y otras parientes, y las yndias libres crystianas vendian, trocaban y cambiaban unos con otros como sy fueran escalvas, y especialmente el dicho Domingo de Yrala lo hizo, é otorgó cartas de benta ante escribiano, de las yndias libres que bendio, é demas desto estaban amancebados cada uno contreynta y quarenta y cinquenta mujeres.”*

109. Carta de Francisco de Andrade, 1545. DHG II: 417. *“hallamos S.^{or} enesta trra vna maldita costumbre q las mugeres son las q siembran y cojen el bastimento y como quiera q. nos podriamos aqui sostentar con la pobreza dela trra fue forçado tomar cada cristinao yndias destas desta trra contentando sus parientes con rrescates para q. les hizienen de comer. Traydas asus poderes de los cristianos van avido dellas hijos en cantidad.”*

110. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 109. *“A los capitanes y soldados daban sus hijas y hermanas para que le sirviesen; estimando en mucho tener por medio deudos con ellos, y así las llamaban cuñados, como se ha quedado hasta ahora este lenguaje entre ellos. Tuvieron de las mujeres que les dieron los naturales á los españoles, muchos hijos é hijas, á los cuales criaron*

en buena doctrina y policía, y S.M. ha servido de honrarlos, haciéndolos encomenderos, y ocupándolos en cargos honrosos y preeminentes en aquella provincia.”

111. Declaration of Captain Bernabe Sánchez in Informe del Maestre de Campo Juan Arias de Saavedra. Ciudad de Santa Fe, April 13, 1658. Published in Enrique de Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro y la Condición social de los Indios. Río de la Plata, Paraguay, Tucumán y Perú. Siglos XVI y XVII* (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 1939), 540. “*cuando los primeros pobladores y conquistadores entraron a la Provincia del Paraguay fundaron la ciudad del la Asuncion, cabeza de estas provincias, por haber hallado en ella jente de razon de nacion Guaraní, fundados y acimentados en pueblos con su caciques, a los cuales respetaban como sus dueños y superiores y en consideracion que los superioeres y conquistadores no trujeron de Europa mujeres bastantes, mucha jente noble se casaron con hijas de caciques, por ser jente noble con que totalmente aseguraron los españoles y facilitaron sus conquistas, de cuya razon ha quedado llamar dicha nacion, en su idioma cuñados a los españoles y sobrinos.”*

112. Testimonio de Manuel Cabral in Informe del Maestre de Campo Juan Arias de Saavedra. Ciudad de Santa Fe, April 13, 1658. Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro y la Condición social de los Indios*, 543. “*llamar dichos indios a los españoles cherobayá que es lo mismo que cuñados.”*

113. Anonymous Jesuit Report, December 1620. *Jesuitas e bandeirantes no Guairá (1594-1640)*, ed. Jaime Cortesão (Rio de Janiero: Biblioteca Nacional, 1951), 167. “*y a todas la baciones llaman escalvos sino es al español, pero no le quiere llamar señor sino cuñado o sobriño porque diçen que solo dios es su señor, porque como he dicho el ayudar el español y admitirle en sus tierras por via de cuñadasgo y parentesco.”*

114. Carta de Francisco de Andrade, 1545. DHG II: 415. “*biuen cada vno con sus parientes todos juntos an vna Casa no tiene y rronya gentilica nynguna q, hasta agora seles aya alcançado q. no adorauan nynguna cosa / enpero comyan carne amana delos Enemygos suyos q. tomauan y matauan enla Guerra tenyan por mugeres a sus deudas dende hermanas abaxo.”*

115. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 18.

116. *Ibid.*, 20.

117. Testimonio de Manuel Cabral in Informe del Maestre de Campo Juan Arias de Saavedra. Ciudad de Santa Fe, April 13, 1658. Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro y la Condición social de los Indios*, 543. “*obligandoles a que les contribuyesen con sus hijas para servirse, como de escalvas.”*

118. Juan de Salazar, “Proceso hecho por orden de Alvar Nuñez contra los Oficiales Reales y otros culpados cuando se fué a Brazil Fray Bernardo de Armenta,” June 11, 1543, Asunción. Partially transcribed in Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 65. Gandía provides no citational reference for this document, which he transcribes as follows: “*en esta cibdad dende pocos días queste testigo la ovo fundado en nombre de su magestad para el buen subceso desta conquista estando e resydiendo en ella ciertas personas que avian bivido e estado en la costa del brasil los quales heran personas que sabían e entendían vien la lengua destos yndios se fueron escondidamente para la dicha costa del brasil e los yndios desta tierra mataron ciertos*

de los dichos xristianos de do resultó alçarse e revelarse la tierra y estuvo muy a punto de se perder esta cibdad e algunos yndios que quedaron aunque fueron muy pocos syn se alçar este testgo detuvo con dávidas e buenas palabras porque a alçarsele pedro de mendoça e juan de salaçar que eran yndios principales que no se alçaron aunque fueron para ello requeridos.”

119. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 65.

120. Carta de Francisco Villalta. Lafone Quevedo, *El Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 311. “*llegados á esta tierra determinaron de hacer una casa fuerte do todos se metieron é luego determinaron de bsucar comida entre los Indios los quales no la querian dar sino hera por puro Rescate ni hacer ninguna cosa de Serbicio á los Cristianos ce cuia causa con muy gran trabajo é necesidad traiendo palos acuestas los Cristianos hacian la casa que dicho tengo.”* Villalta had accompanied Ruiz Galán in his first journey from Buenos Aires to Asunción and had remained in the fort.

121. Carta de Isabel de Guevara, 1556. CI: 619. “*Ansi llegaron á esta çiuudad de la Asunçion, que avnque agora está muy fertil de bastimentos, entonçes estaua dellos muy neçesitada, que fue necesario que las mugeres boluiesen de nuevo á sus trabajos, haziendo rosas con sus propias manos, rosando y carpiendo y senbrando y recogendo el bastimento, sin ayuda de nadie, hasta tanto que los soldados guareçieron de sus flaquezas y començaron á señorear le tierra y alquerir yndios y yndias de su serviçio.”*

122. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 108.

123. Ibid. “*De allí adelante los españoles fueron temidos y estimados de los indios, y al General en su opinion le tuvieron por hombre de valor, y juez que castigaba á los malos, y á los buenos premiaba y estimaba: y así le cobraron grande amor y obedecíanle como era justo; y en agredimiento, á los capitanes y soldados daban sus hijas y hermanas para les sirviesen.”*

124. Carta de Francisco de Andrade, 1545. DHG II: 416. “*el ano primero q. Aquí llegamos vino aesta trra tanta langosta q. El sol escureçia y cobrio toda la trra y la destruyo q. No dexo cosa verde enella demanera q. No se cojo nyngun bastimento enella o muy poco / y de hambre se murieron muchos naturales de la trra y la mayor parte de la gente cristiana.”*

125. Anonymous Relación del Río de la Plata, dated 1545. BG: 44. “*y hallo muy mal recabdo de comida en la tierra por cabsa q. avia langosta q. asolo toda la tierra tanta q. de hambre murieron muchos yndios y por cabsa de la mucha neçesidad de comida le [Irala] fue forçado yr a la guerra a çiertos yndios destos nros. amigos que estavan alçados q. tenian comida.”*

126. Schmidl, *El Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 48.

127. Relación de Pero Hernández 1545. DHG II: 396. “*luego como fue Reçibido domingo de yrala compareçer de al^o cabr^a e gra venegas fue a las casas epueblo de vna generaçion de yndios se llaman agazes llevando en su compañia a los yndios Carios e dio de noche en ellos e mato muchos dellos e los Carios comieron muchos dellos en su presencia del captain E oficiales.”*

128. Carta de Hernando Ribera, February 25, Asunción, 1545. DHG II: 412. “*el dho al.º Cabrera dio la obediencia de ten.ede governador y capita general al dho domingo deyrala y dende a pocos dias fue a hazer guerra a los agazes dondese hizieron muy grands crueldads de niños, criaturas y mujeres y los indios carios los comian nazidos y asados enpresencia deldho capita vergara [Irala] y oficiales d. vra mag.*”

129. Relación de Pero Hernández, 1545. DHG II: 395. “*atro si vendio vn yndioo vna yndia dela generacion de los agazes por vna capa de grana e vna colcha a vn frayle de la orden dela mrd.*”

130. Ibid. “*vendido e dado consentimiº q se vendiesen muy gran numº de yndias libres siendo xpianas vasallos de V.m. a treuq de capas e otras Ropas.*”

131. Creación de monedas, October 3, 1541. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 415. “*cochinos, mahiz, frijoles, madnioca y aves y otras cosas que se cobran de los diezmos y quintos a su magestad pertenenciens*”

132. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 451. “*A bueltos Aesta cibdad muriero mas de cincuenta xpianos de los a la trra Adentro entramos los quales eran de los mas pobres porno alcançar A tener vna yndia q les llevase su comida ni a vn vna Red en qu durmiese abiendo otras personas como Capitanes y Aliogados A ellos q llevaban A diez y a veynte y treynta /q Como durmian en aqlls pantanos enel suelo seles entro elmal y llegados aca fenescieron.*”

133. Anonymous Relación del Río de la Plata, 1545. BG: 48. “*a toda la mas de la gente les peso de verle desposeido al capitan domingo martinez de yrala porq. todos heran bien tratados y el bien quisto de todos porp. antes quel viniere a mandar heran todos tratados como escalvos y despues fueron libres en todo tpo. quel mando.*”

134. Relación de Pero Hernández 1545. DHG II: 396. “*Juan perez lengua corto lo suyo a vn yndio xpiano de casa de moquiraçe por çelos qtuvo del.*”

135. Ibid. “*antonio pineda çeRajero mato a trayçion a Valle su conpanº vº de madrid por çelos de vna india suya e nunca fue castigado.*”

136. Ibid. “*cansi mando pregonar qninguno fuese osado deEcharse conyndia ajena so graues penas.*”

137. Ibid., 395. “*El qual hizo muchos agravios ala gente e a los naturales mandandolos matar equitar sus mujeres espeçialm.^{te} / mando a pedro de mendoça yndio q ahorcase dos yndios los quales ahorco junto alpueblo y a otro yndio de casa de lorenço morquiraçe principal le tomo su mujer e la dio a andres Hernandez el Romo Vº de cordoua y el dho yndio vino a Rogar a las lenguas q Rogasen al dho Gra venegas q le diesen su mujer e qle daria vna hija suya qtruxo consigo de hasta doze años lo qual dezia llorando e el dho Gra Venegas no quiso antes por ql yndio anduvo inportunando sobrello e qxandose a franº de andrada eligo fue pu^{eo} q lo mando matar apalos a lorº moquiraçe q hera suegro de gra Venegas e el yndio nunca mas paresçio.*”

Chapter Four: Shamans and Priests: The Arrival of Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. 1541 -1542.

On December 2, 1540, Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, the newly appointed *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata, set sail from Spain with four ships and four hundred men.¹ He landed at the island of Santa Catalina, Brazil, on March 29, 1541, and travelled overland to reach Asunción by March 1542. Two years later, he was deposed and imprisoned by the conquistadors he had been sent to rule and Irala was reinstated as governor. During Cabeza de Vaca's brief but eventful tenure as *adelantado*, the power struggle that evolved between him and the royal officials aligned with Irala marks a pivotal moment in the process of transculturation of the region, transforming the relations between the Spanish and the Carios from collaboration to internal strife and conflict.

That Cabeza de Vaca's governorship of Asunción proved disastrous is at first glance surprising. A middle-ranking noble in his early fifties, he had considerable experience as a soldier in Europe and an explorer in the Americas before arriving in the Río de la Plata.² As a youth, he had served in the ducal house of Medina Sidonia, in which capacity he had participated in the defense of Spain's Aragonese territories in Italy from 1511 to 1513 and in the suppression of the Comunero Rebellion in Castile in 1520-21. He could also claim a familial legacy and first-hand knowledge of the New World. His grandfather, Pedro de Vera Mendoza, was the conqueror of the Canaries. Cabeza de Vaca himself was a member of the ill-fated Pánfilo de Narváez expedition to *La Florida*, the northern unexplored territories of New Spain that stretched from present-day Florida to the Pacific coast of Mexico.³ The Narváez expedition had departed from Spain in June 1527 and landed the following April off the Gulf coast of Florida. By November, explorations undertaken of the coastal region had resulted in the loss of the ships and most of the men. As one of the few survivors, Cabeza de Vaca spent the next six and a half years living among the indigenous peoples of the coastal areas of Texas and Tamaulipas as a castaway, a slave, and, by his own account, a Christian-inspired healer with an indigenous following. From the late summer of 1535 to the spring of 1536, he and three other men from the expedition walked from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean,

where they made contact with the Spanish in Nueva Galicia (the Mexican state of Sinaloa). Returning to Spain in 1537, Cabeza de Vaca intended to seek an appointment as governor of *La Florida*. However, as this had been already granted to Hernando de Soto, he sought instead the governorship of the Río de la Plata.⁴

As part of his lobbying efforts to obtain this appointment, Cabeza de Vaca prepared a *relación* about his shipwrecked years in New Spain while residing at the court of Valladolid from 1537 to 1540. First published in 1542, his *relación* was modified and republished in 1555 together with the *Comentarios*, the account of his governorship of the Río de la Plata.⁵ The publication of the revised *relación*, which is usually referred to as the *Naufragios*, assured Cabeza de Vaca historical fame. It was reprinted numerous times in the twentieth century and has been studied extensively by colonial historians and anthropologists for its insights into indigenous cultures at the time of first contact with Europeans.⁶ Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz, who have written the definitive study on the 1542 *relación* and its subsequent editions, note that as a description of his service to the Crown it could not “boast of offering the crown economic gain in the customary forms of lands or peoples conquered.”⁷ Instead, Cabeza de Vaca emphasized the knowledge he had acquired of unknown lands and peoples, writing in his dedication of the work that he was able to learn through his ordeal of “the diverse customs of many and very barbarous peoples with whom I conversed and lived.”⁸

While New Spain and the Río de la Plata were distinctive geographies, it is not unreasonable to assume on the basis of Cabeza de Vaca’s claim to have learned about “the diverse customs of many and very barbarous peoples” in New Spain that he would have been at an advantage in the Río de la Plata. Yet, despite his almost cult status in Latin American colonial historiography as a healer-qua-shaman who cured and protected Indians in New Spain, his subsequent efforts in the Río de la Plata to implement just rule by insuring the fair treatment of his indigenous vassals undermined his authority with the Carios and led to confrontation with the conquistadors. In part, this resulted from his intervention in the conquistadors’ relations with indigenous women, which violated the principles of reciprocity established by the Carios’ integration of the Spanish into their kinship networks. It also resulted from his refusal to accede to warrior norms, including captive-taking and cannibalism. A deciding factor in the conflict generated by Cabeza de Vaca’s brief rule in Asunción can be traced to his experience

surviving as a castaway in New Spain, which contrasted sharply with the official powers invested in him as *adelantado* and the resources he had at his disposal as the leader of a well-armed expedition with goods to barter in the Río de la Plata.

This chapter focuses on the events of Cabeza de Vaca's first few months as *adelantado* in the Río de la Plata, during which he journeyed overland from Brazil to Paraguay and undertook a punitive raid with the Carios against their enemies, the Guaycurúes, after he arrived in Asunción. Specifically, I analyse what his altercation with two Franciscans who accompanied him on his overland journey and his use of the cross during the Guaycurú raid reveal of his attempts to counter the influence of shamanism among the friars and the Cario warriors. I argue that while as a castaway in North America he negotiated between worldviews by merging the Christian faith and indigenous spirituality, as a conqueror in the Río de la Plata he became the enforcer of the boundaries between them. I also address how the first measures he undertook as the governor of Asunción threatened the power base that the royal officials and Irala had established by adapting to indigenous norms. While Cabeza de Vaca succeeded in leading an expedition overland from Brazil to Asunción because of the barter goods he had to offer and the discipline he maintained over his newly-arrived conquistadors, once he reached Asunción he became implicated in the already established dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations based on kinship and warrior norms. In this context, his apparent successes of restoring civic order in Asunción and pacifying the Guaycurúes had the unforeseen consequence of challenging indigenous norms on material as well as spiritual planes. What he had learned as a castaway and healer in New Spain would prove a disadvantage in Asunción, his measures earning him the enmity of the Irala and the royal officials rather than the veneration of an indigenous following.

Because of the controversial nature of Cabeza de Vaca's governorship, the documentation for the early colonial period of Asunción from 1542-1545 is both extensive and polemical, in that it is written in defense of and against his leadership. After being deposed by the royal officials in Asunción in April 1544, he returned to Spain a year later under the guard of Garcí Venegas, the treasurer, and Alonso de Cabrera, the inspector of the mines (*veedor*), who carried with them letters denouncing his rule of the Río de la Plata. Upon his arrival in Cádiz in August

1545, Cabeza de Vaca wrote a report in defense of his governorship, the *Relación general*, which was submitted to the Council of the Indies in December 1545.⁹ A month later formal charges were laid against him by the Council of the Indies, and a year later he was imprisoned in February 1546. Following a lengthy process of litigation and a criminal trial, he was found guilty of a number of offences relating to the abuse of his office and received a sentence of banishment to a penal colony on the Barbary Coast in 1551. He immediately appealed the verdict and his sentence was essentially commuted in 1552, although litigation over restitution for his material losses in Río de la Plata continued until 1555.¹⁰ In that same year, he published the *Relación y comentarios* to redeem his reputation and secure his historical legacy.¹¹

While the 1555 *Relación* or *Naufragios* was written in the first person and authored by Cabeza de Vaca, the accompanying *Comentarios* was a third person memoir published under the name of his secretary, Pero Hernández. As a narrative account that substantially expands on Cabeza de Vaca's unpublished 1545 *Relación general* and, to a lesser degree, Hernández's 1545 *relación*, the *Comentarios* presents a particularly fraught issue of authorship. The question of whether Cabeza de Vaca wrote the text, Hernández served as a ghostwriter, or simply lent his name to its publication has not been resolved in the scholarship to date. On one hand, the historian Enrique de Gandía unequivocally attributes the authorship of the *Comentarios* to Hernández.¹² On the other hand, the literary theorist José Rabasa analyses the *Comentarios* as Cabeza de Vaca's self-representation of his rule of the Río de la Plata.¹³ Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz conclude that the *Comentarios* was an amalgamation of Cabeza de Vaca's own voice and that of Hernández's, but attribute to Hernández the narrative qualities of the text.¹⁴ Following their lead, I consider the *Comentarios* to be a collaborative effort. To convey the uncertain authorship of Hernández or Cabeza de Vaca of specific passages from the text, I have chosen not to identify an author when citing from the *Comentarios*.

In their discussion of the narrative qualities of the *Comentarios*, Adorno and Pautz argue that the it was composed in the tradition of the early-modern memoir, intended to persuade the reader of the truth of the protagonist's achievements and to leave a record for posterity.¹⁵ This historicizing objective of the *Comentarios* was achieved in part by laying claim to an imperial legacy, with Adorno and Pautz noting that the title “evokes the ancient Roman heroic military tradition and lends prestige to the account of Cabeza de Vaca as conqueror.”¹⁶ They also argue

that the rhetorical stances of the narrative pivot on the use of “Indian interlocutors” to highlight his “personal qualities of leadership.”¹⁷ This focus on indigenous peoples as the guarantors of historical truth in the *Comentarios* results in an important and contradictory document for the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata. On the one hand, the *Comentarios* serves as a justification for Cabeza de Vaca’s leadership that emphasizes his efforts to impose good government. On the other, the attention paid in the text to the “Indian interlocutors” provides a unique glimpse of indigenous responses to these efforts. By undertaking a close reading of the *Comentarios* in relation to Cabeza de Vaca’s earlier *relaciones* and the contemporary accounts of the period, I consider in this chapter what the “Indian interlocutors” reveal of the initial success and incipient conflicts of Cabeza de Vaca’s first year and a half of colonial rule.

As the second *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata, Cabeza de Vaca encountered a set of circumstances distinct from those of Pedro de Mendoza’s expedition. While Mendoza sailed directly up the estuary of the Río de la Plata to found the fort of Buenos Aires, Cabeza de Vaca stayed on the island of Santa Catalina for seven months before proceeding inland. During this time, he had access to various sources of information about the region and the fledgling colony of Asunción. He had brought with him Felipe de Cáceres, a royal official from Mendoza’s expedition who had returned to Spain in 1537, and thus could provide him with prior knowledge of the region. Within a few weeks of arriving on the coast of Brazil, nine Spaniards, half-starved and naked, arrived in a boat from Buenos Aires with tales of mistreatment on the part of the royal officials and captains from Mendoza’s previous expedition. They informed Cabeza de Vaca that the outpost of Asunción had been established on the Paraguay River, where the Spanish had made an alliance with the Carios. They also told him that Ayolas, the appointed deputy of Mendoza, had made an *entrada* in search of silver and gold, and had been killed by the Payaguás after he returned to the Paraguay to discover that Irala was no longer waiting for him with ships and supplies.¹⁸ This latter news was of particular import for Cabeza de Vaca’s aspirations as *adelantado*, for the *capitulación* he had signed with the Crown stipulated that he could only assume his position as governor if Ayolas was no longer presumed alive.¹⁹

As well, two Franciscan friars, the *comisario* (commissary) Bernaldo de Armenta and Alonso Lebrón, who had been living among the Carijós further south along the mainland, arrived at the encampment. According to the *Comentarios*, they had fled from the area where they were evangelizing because they had been “terrorized by the Indians of the land, who wanted to kill them because certain houses of the Indians had been burnt, and because of this two Christians who were living in that land had already been killed.”²⁰ The friars provided Cabeza de Vaca with valuable information about the region. Pedro Dorantes, who held the royal office of *factor* (manager of the King’s interests), relates in his 1543 letter that Armenta and a castaway named Durango told Cabeza de Vaca about a Christian named García who had made an overland *entrada* from Brazil to the sierra and found metals there.²¹

On the basis of the information provided by Armenta, Durango, and the nine Spaniards from Buenos Aires, Cabeza de Vaca sent Cáceres with supplies to Buenos Aires and ordered Dorantes to lead a reconnaissance mission inland to ascertain the state of the land and find a route to the interior. While Cáceres was unable to enter the estuary of the Río de la Plata due to unfavourable winds and returned within a few weeks, Dorantes spent three and a half months exploring the mountainous interior of Brazil. His 1543 letter describes how he travelled inland with fourteen Spaniards, his black slave, and three Indians carrying supplies.²² After marching for seventeen days without finding populated territory, he arrived at the villages of Guaraní-speaking peoples in an area he called *el campo*—meaning cultivated countryside or fields. He relates that he was received well because “the Indians who came with him said that I was the son of the comisario [the Franciscan friar Armenta] whom they called *paycaue* and held in great veneration.”²³ He also reports that he found plentiful supplies of corn in the villages and the house from which García had departed for the sierra. According to the inhabitants of *el campo*, the route overland from their villages to Asunción was well populated and abundant in food.

When Dorantes returned to the coast with confirmation that the route García had taken was viable, Cabeza de Vaca decided to travel overland to Asunción. He took with him the majority of his men and his horses, accompanied by a number of coastal Carijó-Guaraníes and the two Franciscan friars. He ordered Cáceres and his cousin, Pedro de Estopiñán, to proceed with the rest of the men by boat up the Río de la Plata in order to provide assistance to the outpost fort

of Buenos Aires. In making this latter decision, Cabeza de Vaca could not have known that Irala had ordered Buenos Aires abandoned the year before.²⁴ Thus Cáceres and Estopiñán found the fort deserted, although they did find the *relación* and supplies Irala had left there. After managing to navigate the Paraná and Paraguay Rivers, they reached Asunción seven months after Cabeza de Vaca at the end of 1542.²⁵

Departing from the coast of Brazil on November 2, 1541, Cabeza de Vaca spent four months travelling overland to Asunción. In his *Relación general*, Cabeza de Vaca briefly describes how he was able to obtain food supplies and maintain favourable relations with the Indians during his journey by bartering fairly.²⁶ In contrast, the *Comentarios* provides a detailed narrative of his interactions with the indigenous peoples he met, presenting Cabeza de Vaca's journey as a triumphant procession befitting a conqueror. It describes how after nineteen days of travel through uninhabited land, Cabeza de Vaca reached Guaraní-speaking settlements in the area Dorantes had identified as *el campo*, located along a source of the Iguazú River (near present-day Curitiba). The Indians greeted the expedition "laden with many provisions and demonstrating great pleasure at their arrival"²⁷ and Cabeza de Vaca gave them presents in return. Continuing on his journey, he made contact with a Christian Indian named Miguel, who was travelling back to the coast of Brazil from Asunción after having lived many years among the Spaniards there. Miguel volunteered to accompany the expedition and "advise the Spaniards of the route they needed to take."²⁸ With Miguel secured as his guide, Cabeza de Vaca sent the Carijós with whom he had been travelling back to Santa Catalina, and began marching north towards the Piquirí River.

Both the *Relación general* and the *Comentarios* state that in order to prevent altercations with the indigenous peoples whose territories Cabeza de Vaca was traversing, he forbade his men to have relations with the Indians, "to neither trade nor communicate with them, nor go to their houses and villages."²⁹ Instead, he designated "four persons who understand and know the language and trading customs"³⁰ to buy provisions for the expedition at the governor's expense. The *Comentarios* relates that as news travelled of Cabeza de Vaca's good treatment of the Indians, "his fame spread through the land, and all the indigenous peoples lost their fear and came to see him and bring to him all that they had, for which they were paid."³¹ After Cabeza de Vaca turned south from the Pequirí River and marched back towards the source of

the Iguazú at the beginning of January, the expedition was met with ever-increasing enthusiasm, with the inhabitants of villages marching one or two days to bring food, clearing the paths to their villages, and “dancing and jubilant to see them.”³²

At the end of January, Cabeza de Vaca began his descent down the Iguazú towards the waterfalls located at the junction of the Alto-Paraná River. Having been warned in advance that he would be met with hostility once he reached the Paraná, he was able to avert confrontation through bartering and the intervention of the interpreters. The *Comentarios* relates that

on the shore of the river there were a great many Indians of the same nation of Guaraníes in squadron formation, adorned with large parrot feathers and red ochre and painted in many colours and patterns with their bows and arrows in their hands, so that it was a pleasure to behold them. When the governor and his people arrived (in the manner already described), the Indians became very afraid and confused. The interpreters began to communicate to them in their own language and distribute gifts to the chiefs. As the Indians were very covetous and desirous of new things, they began to calm down and gather around the governor, and many of these Indians helped him and his men cross the river.³³

As the expedition neared Asunción, Cario Indians amassed in large numbers to welcome him.³⁴ On March 11, 1542, almost a year after landing on the coast of Brazil, Cabeza de Vaca reached the outskirts of the settlement. The *Comentarios* describes how he was “received by all the captains and people who were in the city, who came with such pleasure and joy that it was an incredible thing. They declared that they never believed nor even thought they would be rescued, so great was the danger and difficulty of the route.”³⁵

Since the *Comentarios* was intended to persuade the reader of Cabeza de Vaca’s qualities as a military conqueror, its account of his remarkable journey may owe as much to the rhetorical function of the text as to an empirical reporting of events. The incredulous reaction of the conquistadors in Asunción to his overland odyssey hints at their disbelief that his journey could have occurred as described in the *Comentarios*. Despite the claims of Villalta and Guzmán that Ayolas had been similarly greeted with offerings of food and spontaneous

cooperation, the survival of the conquistadors from Mendoza's expedition had been contingent on their incorporation into the Cariós' kinship relations and acquiescence to indigenous mores. How Cabeza de Vaca had managed to traverse the territories of autonomous Guaraní-speaking groups in Brazil and Paraguay without altercation, which would have required the permission of each *tuvichá* whose *guára* he entered, must have appeared to them an extraordinary feat. In this light, it is tempting to dismiss the *Comentarios*' lengthy descriptions of dancing and merriment greeting Cabeza de Vaca at every turn as exaggeration or even deliberate fiction intended to demonstrate his authority as the new governor. On the other hand, if we entertain the possibility that something like a joyous reception occurred as the expedition travelled through Guaraní territories, the opportunity arises to analyse how it reflects the transcultural dynamics at work during Cabeza de Vaca's overland march.

Most obviously, Cabeza de Vaca's access to interpreters and his payment for provisions with European barter goods facilitated his negotiations with the indigenous peoples. The Indian Miguel provided first-hand knowledge of the route, while the region's inhabitants, who all spoke some dialect of Guaraní, acted as messengers who "carried the news from place to place of his good treatment towards them and displayed everything they had received."³⁶ That Cabeza de Vaca had come in peace was demonstrated by his efforts to prevent altercations between his soldiers and the Indians. The *Comentarios* reports that although the Indians were worried the Christians might use violence against them and greatly feared their horses, their initial trepidation did not last. When they witnessed "that the governor punished anyone who angered them by something,"³⁷ they lost their fear of the soldiers and of their horses.

More intriguing is the role the two Franciscans accompanying Cabeza de Vaca played in the expedition. Both the *Comentarios* and the *Relación general* describe the friars' behaviour during the journey to Asunción as disruptive and insubordinate. The *Comentarios* relates that the friars travelled with "certain Indians, both old and young, who were of no use and to whom they gave food."³⁸ The *Relación general* numbers their Indian followers at over a hundred men and women, and states that many had joined the friars along the route.³⁹ Travelling in advance of the expedition, the friars collected provisions for their entourage, which jeopardized Cabeza de Vaca's ability to barter for supplies. The *Comentarios* reports that when Cabeza de Vaca arrived at villages where the friars had been, he discovered that "the Indians had nothing more

to give, about which the people [his men] complained to the governor, for they [the friars] had done the same many times before.”⁴⁰ Towards the end of the journey, the friars took another route against Cabeza de Vaca’s orders.⁴¹ Upon their return, Cabeza de Vaca states in the *Relación general* that he registered a complaint with a notary “concerning the disorders they had made on this said route and in order that they not take with them so many women.”⁴²

While the *Comentarios* and the *Relación general* present the friars’ disruptive actions as a minor irritant in an otherwise triumphal march to Asunción, Dorantes tells a far different story in his 1543 letter. He claims that the journey’s success was owed “to the fact that Armenta accompanied the governor, for he was greatly loved by the Indians,” and, because of this, Armenta “received more food for alms than the expedition was able to buy.”⁴³ Dorantes’s perception of the Franciscans as pivotal to the journey’s success casts their insubordination in a less incidental light and raises the question of why they were so venerated by the Indians and able to attract the indigenous following that so irritated Cabeza de Vaca. Based on the Jesuit accounts of the Guaraní’s spiritual practices recorded during the colonial period and twentieth-century anthropological studies, the answer may lie in the Indians’ association of the friars with their shamans, who also travelled with an entourage of women from village to village; in which case, the friars become central to an understanding of how the spiritual as well as material dimensions of cultural exchange contributed to the joyous reception of Cabeza de Vaca’s expedition during his overland journey to Asunción.

While it was not until Nimuendajú’s 1914 study of the Apapokúva-Guaraní in south-eastern Brazil that the Guaraní’s shamanistic practices were recorded in terms of an autonomous belief system, the Jesuits in the 1600s and 1700s wrote at length of sorcerers with whom they battled for the conversion and salvation of Guaraní souls. In his 1639 *La conquista espiritual*, Ruiz de Montoya describes a confrontation with a great sorcerer whose “vassals venerated him as a priest” and who was “exceptionally scandalous as he had a large number of concubines.”⁴⁴ A Jesuit *relación* concerning spiritual unrest in the reduction of Jesús María in the 1650s describes how the sorcerers “had dispersed throughout this land many of their disciples, whom they call *Yeroquihara*” to lure away the mission Indians “with ceremonies, dances and songs.”⁴⁵ The later Jesuit synthesizer Lozano provides a lengthy discussion of these sorcerers in his eighteenth-century history, identifying three distinct types of sorcery they practiced.⁴⁶

The first was the art of healing, exercised through sucking (*chupar*). The second was the ability to summon the devil and to cast spells. The third, and most powerful, was the power to control the elements and divine the future, which was exercised by men called *karai*. While the *karai* were “treated like saints, and the people obey and venerate them as if they were Gods,”⁴⁷ Lozano cautions that “other magicians, either less skilled in the art of enchantment or more unlucky in their encounters with clever Indians who do not give credit to their frauds, pay for their folly of wanting to be deities with jeers, vexations, and death.”⁴⁸

In Nimuendajú’s ethnographic study of the Apapokúva-Guaraní, there are striking correspondences between his documentation of the Guaraní’s spiritual practices and the Jesuits’ descriptions of sorcerers. Like Lozano, Nimuendajú codifies levels of shamanistic powers, which he relates to knowledge of sacred songs or chants that the Guaraní term the “beautiful words.” While all Guaraní have the potential to learn some sacred songs and believe in their dreams, the most powerful shamans, called *paiés* or *payés*, receive special knowledge through dreams and inspiration, and travel constantly, often with an entourage of women.⁴⁹ These shamans, who correspond to Lozano’s *karai*, were the only ones who could lead the *Nemongaraí*, a feast that occurs when the corn starts to ripen in January that brings all the villages of a region together.⁵⁰

Correspondences are similarly evident between Nimuendajú’s and the Jesuits’ descriptions of the Guaraní shamans and Dorantes’s and Cabeza de Vaca’s accounts of the Franciscans. The name *paycaue*, which Dorantes reports was how the Carijós called Armenta, appears to be a compound word derived from *payé*, defined by Montoya as sorcerer, and *caú*, which means both wine and to drink wine.⁵¹ This suggests that the Carijós may have perceived an equivalency between their shamans and the friars who drank wine as a sacramental ritual. The discrepancy between the friars’ first appearance in the *Comentarios*, fleeing in great fear from the Carijós, and Dorantes’s claim that they were greatly venerated is resolved when considered in the context of Lozano’s assertion that the Guaraní sorcerers were not all equally revered. The description of a village of burning houses and Christians being slain suggests that the friars had encountered “clever Indians” who viewed their preaching with suspicion and made them “pay for their folly of wanting to be deities with jeers, vexations, and death.”

During Dorantes's journey to *el campo*, the Indians travelling with him who claimed he was "the son of the *comisario*" may have done so to identify him as a disciple or *jerokyhára* of the Franciscan Armenta and, thus, ensure that they were well received. The Indian Miguel whom Cabeza de Vaca met on his journey overland to Asunción also had a previous association with Armenta. According to Irala's 1545 letter, he was the nephew of a chief (*principal*) named Domingo from Santa Catalina, both of whom had been baptized by the Franciscans in Brazil, and then had accompanied Gonzalo de Mendoza to Asunción in 1537.⁵² When Cabeza de Vaca encountered Miguel in December 1542 he was travelling back to Brazil on the orders of Irala with letters written by him to give "to the said commissary [Armenta] informing him of the affairs of the country."⁵³ This explains why Miguel chose to return to Asunción rather than continuing to the coast as ordered by Irala, as Armenta was part of the expedition. Miguel's facility as a guide and interpreter may also have been aided by the Indians' identification of him as a disciple of the Franciscans.

During Cabeza de Vaca's overland journey, the friars travelled with an entourage, as did the wandering shamans. They also travelled separately from the expedition, marking a distinction between the armed soldiers and their own disciples. Cabeza de Vaca notes in the *Relación general* that a large number of women accompanied them and he explicitly addresses the friars' relations with indigenous women after he arrived in Asunción.⁵⁴ He reports that he had reprimanded them for "keeping in their house and monastery [in Asunción] more than thirty indigenous women, daughters of the Carios who were between twelve and twenty years old, confined as if they were their wives."⁵⁵ Whether the Franciscans understood the significance of their female entourage in relation to the wandering shamans' practice of polygamy is not possible to discern. What is evident is that a parallel existed between them.

In Francisco de Andrade's description of his initial conversion efforts in Asunción before the arrival of Cabeza de Vaca and the Franciscans, another parallel between the spiritual practices of priests and shamans can be detected. In his 1545 letter, Andrade relates that he had built a church with the approval of Irala and begun to preach through an interpreter to the pagans, reproaching them for their bad customs such as eating human flesh and having carnal relations with their relatives.⁵⁶ The Carios apparently were enthusiastic listeners. Andrade reports that "so many people came to receive the doctrine that they could not fit in the church or the plaza;

there were old men as well as old women, and Indians of every age and women with babies in their arms.”⁵⁷ While unable to dissuade them of their attitude towards carnal relations, he was anxious to baptize them and counter the influence of an Indian who was preaching against him. He writes how

it became opportune to give them the baptism water because of the danger of *un mal yndio* (evil Indian) whom they called *entigura* [perhaps related to *etiguara*, meaning poet in Guaraní]. He had come to the land of these Indians from a territory far away on the coast of Brazil, and went singing and saying to those that he was able to attract that he could make them Christians.⁵⁸

From this description, it appears that a shaman had made his way from Brazil and realized he could increase his powers of persuasion and gain disciples by preaching about the Christian faith. While we can never know what the shaman meant by making the Cariós’ Christian, or whether the Franciscans were viewed by the Cariós as quasi-shamans or were extraordinary evangelists, the *mal yndio*’s appropriation of Andrade’s conversion efforts and the Indians’ veneration of the friars during Cabeza de Vaca’s overland journey hint at the spiritual slippage between indigenous and European worldviews that was occurring during the first years of conquest.

Cabeza de Vaca’s understanding of the friars’ behaviour and of the Guaranies’ reception of his expedition during his overland journey in relation to this spiritual slippage takes on added significance in view of his previous, northerly experiences as a castaway and a healer. In his 1542 *relación* about his years spent in New Spain, Cabeza de Vaca describes in considerable detail the rituals of indigenous healers he observed while walking westward from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific coast during 1536 and 1537. He relates how he cured the sick by merging these rituals with his Christian faith, “making the sign of the cross and blowing on them, and praying a Pater Noster and an Ave Maria,”⁵⁹ and records a number of specific incidents in which he was able to cure illnesses and arrow wounds, and revive those near death. As his reputation grew, whole villages came to be blessed by the sign of the cross, and numerous Indians began to follow him and his companions. Although these followers sacked and robbed the villages they passed through — a custom Cabeza de Vaca and his companions

“were powerless to remedy or to dare to punish”⁶⁰ — they were still greeted with enthusiasm for their healing powers. He describes how in one village

all the people came to receive us with great pleasure and festivity, and among other things, two of their physicians gave us two gourds. And from this point forward we began to carry gourds with us, and we added to our authority this ceremony, which to them is very great. Those who had accompanied us sacked the houses, but since the houses were many and they were few, they could not carry everything they took, and they left more than half of it abandoned.⁶¹

With gourds in hand, the four men reached the north-west region of present-day Mexico.⁶² As they walked from settlement to settlement accompanied by local guides, their blessings procured peace as well as cures. Cabeza de Vaca writes how

throughout all these lands those who were at war with one another later made friends in order to come to receive us and bring us everything we had. And in this manner we left the entire land [in peace] and we told them by signs, because they understood us, that in heaven there was a man we called God, who had created heaven and earth, and that we adored him and served him as Lord.⁶³

In comparison to the 1542 *relación*, the *Comentarios* is strangely silent on the subject of healing. It includes comprehensive descriptions of the Guaranies’ proclivity for war and cannibalism, but there is no corresponding account of their ritual practices of curing. Nor is the existence of “physicians” or shamans acknowledged in the *Relación general*. Yet, the *Comentarios*’ detailed description of the celebrations that greeted Cabeza de Vaca during his overland journey — with whole villages coming to meet him and offerings made — is remarkably similar to Cabeza de Vaca’s earlier account of his reception as a healer in New Spain. In light of this similarity, the absence of descriptions of shamanistic rituals in either the *Comentarios* or the *Relación general* raises several potential interpretations. Either Cabeza de Vaca misread, or was unable to read, the signs of ritual practices, or, alternatively, he understood their significance but was determined to assert his imperial authority as a conqueror who no longer had the necessity of adapting to an indigenous worldview.

In terms of the shamanistic rituals that Cabeza de Vaca might have witnessed, the timing of his overland journey from January to March coincided with the *Nemongaraí*, the feast that occurs when corn starts to ripen. As the wandering shamans were the only ones who could lead this feast, the jubilation with which Cabeza de Vaca reported he was greeted as he travelled through Guaraní territories may have been derived from their perception of the Franciscans as *payés* who had come to celebrate the *Nemongaraí*, rather than gratitude for his largesse in distributing barter goods. The role of the shaman to unite the autonomous and often adversarial *tekó'ás* during the feast also helps explain why Cabeza de Vaca was able to travel unchallenged through the different *guáras* of the region. While he may have interpreted the celebratory dancing and singing of the Guaraníes who travelled for two or three days to see him as confirmation of his skills as a military leader who kept his men in order and paid for supplies, his participation in indigenous ceremonies in New Spain makes such a degree of incomprehension unlikely. Maureen Ahern has argued that his 1542 *Relación* reveals “Cabeza de Vaca’s unusual understanding and command of the older indigenous systems of power and knowledge.”⁶⁴ To prove her assertion, she analyses how his deployment of the cross and the gourd bridged the cosmologies of a miraculous Christianity and shamanistic healing to negotiate between cultures. As Ahern points out, Cabeza de Vaca clearly identified the ritual significance of the gourd. In his 1542 *Relación*, he describes how upon arriving at a village, “they [the people of a village] carried pierced gourds with stones inside, which is the item of highest celebration, and they do not take them out except to dance and cure, nor does anyone but they dare use them.”⁶⁵

In the Río de la Plata, the Guaraní similarly used the gourd as a ritual object, called *mbaraká* (*maraca* or rattle in Spanish and English), although its specific significance would have differed. Ruiz de Montoya describes it as “a gourd with seeds inside, which serves as an instrument for singing.”⁶⁶ Nimuendajú’s twentieth-century study emphasizes the *mbaraká*’s spiritual and social importance, whereby “the indispensable condition for a *paie* ceremony is that the *paie* has a *maraca*. This is made from a gourd of various sizes, but usually it is a litre or more in volume. In the interior of the *maracas* are the black seeds of the *ymaú* [plant].”⁶⁷ He also notes that during the feast of the *Nemongaraí*, the *maracas* assume an even greater spiritual significance and are painted with perpendicular lines.⁶⁸ As Cabeza de Vaca’s journey coincided with the celebrations of the *Nemongaraí* feast, he would have been witness to

dances with gourds, and at the very least recognized that they had symbolic power. It seems reasonable to assume that he would have also recognized the ritual function of the celebrations in the Guaraní villages.

In New Spain, Cabeza de Vaca had used this recognition of indigenous spiritual rituals to earn the trust of the Indians as a healer, although he was always careful in his account to attribute his curing powers to the blessing of the cross and the miraculous intervention of a Christian God. In his subsequent journey overland to Asunción, however, it was the friars who possessed the sign of the cross and the ability to attract indigenous followers, while Cabeza de Vaca had armed Spaniards and trading goods. In certain instances, his resources as *adelantado* worked to his advantage. When the Guaraníes met him in full war regalia near the Iguazú falls, it was barter rather than crosses that averted a confrontation. While he could not restrain his marauding indigenous entourage in New Spain, he rectified this situation during his overland journey to Asunción by preventing his soldiers from trading directly with the Indians. However, he was unable to exercise control over the Franciscans, who travelled with an indigenous following that was of “no use” and usurped his exchange of goods. While ineffective, Cabeza de Vaca’s disciplinary action of registering a complaint “concerning the disorders they had made on said route,” and his order that they “not take so many women with them,” provide evidence that he recognized the threat the friars as mediators between spiritual worldviews posed to his authority as *adelantado*.

However Cabeza de Vaca may have understood the significance of the friar’s indigenous following and his reception by the Guaraní-speaking nations during his overland trek, his greeting in Asunción by a motley crew of conquistadors dressed in skins and living among the Carios must have come as a shock. Irala’s 1541 *relación*, written when he abandoned Buenos Aires and brought the conquistadors living there to Asunción, lists the Spaniards who remained from Mendoza’s expedition as numbering four hundred. Cabeza de Vaca’s expedition almost doubled their numbers to over seven hundred.⁶⁹ The arrival of this new contingent of soldiers, armed and commanded by an *adelantado* appointed by the Crown, meant that Irala had to relinquish his authority as provisional governor. It also posed a challenge to his prestige among the Carios as the *mburuvichá*. Yet, despite the obvious threat that Cabeza de Vaca represented to Irala’s power base, he was initially well received. Both

Irala's 1545 letter and the *Comentarios* state that when Cabeza de Vaca presented his credentials to the royal officers, they formally recognized him as the governor of Asunción and the insignia of justice was rendered up.⁷⁰

This initial welcome quickly turned hostile as Cabeza de Vaca demonstrated his intention to bring a semblance of law and order to the impoverished colonial outpost. After supplying the conquistadors with the clothing and arms they lacked, he issued a series of *ordenanzas* directed at the royal officials' abuse of power and their relations with Cario women. The *Comentarios* states that Cabeza de Vaca rescinded the *quinto* (a royal tax that required the fifth of all goods, normally silver and gold, obtained by conquest to be remitted to the Crown) that Irala and the royal officials had required the common soldiers to pay "on fish, butter, honey, maize, and other commodities; on the skins with which they clothed themselves, and which they bought from the Indians."⁷¹ Hernández's 1545 *relación* is more explicit in linking the *ordenanzas* to the "bad ways and customs"⁷² that the conquistadors had acquired from living with the Carios, reporting that Cabeza de Vaca sought to remove the Cario women from their houses and control their access to indigenous women.⁷³ In his *Relación general*, Cabeza de Vaca describes these "bad ways and customs" in graphic terms:

These Spanish Christians I found living in Asunción, and especially the captains and royal officials and their friends, were committing great grievances and cruelties against the natives. They were taking their women and children by force and from others their goods. They lashed the women out of jealousy and in order to make them work excessively. They also made their parents come and work by force, beating them and not paying them. And on top of all of this, they were killing each other out of jealousy for these said Indian women.⁷⁴

Cabeza de Vaca was equally scandalized by the number of women that Irala and the royal officials had in their possession and their manner of "selling, trading, and exchanging these free Christian women between them as if they were slaves."⁷⁵ In response to his perception of this rampant polygamy and de facto slavery, he reports that, "with great diligence I sought to separate them [Irala and the royal officials] from this grave sin and offense against God. I ordered a priest, with the assistance of the interpreters and in front of the notary, to examine

their familial relationships, and in this manner I separated and took away from them many women.”⁷⁶

Cabeza de Vaca’s first official act of justice was an intervention in a previous judicial matter that had arisen from the conquistadors’ relations with Cario women. He describes in his *Relación general* how shortly after his arrival in Asunción he learned that a Cario woman named Juliana had poisoned her Spanish husband with herbs. Although she had been found guilty of the crime and imprisoned by Irala, she had been freed by him and had gone to live with her deceased husband’s cousin, Sancho de Salinas, who also happened to be Irala’s friend. After ascertaining that she alone was responsible for her husband’s murder, Cabeza de Vaca ordered that she be re-imprisoned. Over the objections of Irala and Salinas, who begged for her release, he sentenced her to death.⁷⁷ According to Hernández’s 1545 *relación*, she was quartered after being executed.⁷⁸ Cabeza de Vaca justified his actions by stating that her punishment fit the crime, and, moreover, that it was important to set an example to prevent others from having the audacity of trying to do the same.⁷⁹ One cannot help but suspect that his motivation also lay in warding off the ill effects of sorcery, of which Juliana’s case had provided evidence. Despite Hernández’s denunciations of the rape of indigenous women and the murders of both Cario and Spanish men that went unpunished before Cabeza de Vaca’s arrival, the retrial and sentencing to death of Juliana was unique. There is no record in the contemporary accounts of another case of retroactive justice, or, for that matter, of another execution of a Cario living in Asunción during Cabeza de Vaca’s rule as governor.

While we have no way of knowing whether the conquistadors perceived Juliana as a sorcerer, and how they reacted to her execution, they must have been witness to the spiritual dimensions of the Guaraní’s worldview. An observation made by Andrade in his 1545 letter that all the Carios “believed in their dreams”⁸⁰ indicates that he had some inkling of their shamanistic practices, while his description of *el mal yndio* provides evidence that there were more agents of the spiritual realm in Asunción than priests. What we do know is that Cabeza de Vaca’s *ordenanzas* produced alarm among the conquistadors and insubordination on the part of the royal officials. Francisco González Paniagua, a priest who came with Cabeza de Vaca’s expedition, reports in a letter written in 1545 that there was widespread discord in Asunción, with rumours circulating that the new governor wanted to remove the Carios from all the

conquistadors' houses and take away their weapons.⁸¹ Cabeza de Vaca claims that this discord arose from his efforts to reform the royal officials' sinful ways, and as a consequence they tried "through indirect means to do him all the harm they could, being motivated by zealous enmity, with the result that they were arrested and imprisoned."⁸²

The "zealous enmity" of royal officials reflects the challenge that Cabeza de Vaca's *ordenanzas* posed to the central elements of the *amistad y alianza* established before his arrival. His removal of the Cario women from the conquistadors' houses threatened to disrupt their kinship ties with the Carios and the reciprocal obligations that secured their food and protection. It also served to alter the hierarchy of command that equated the conquistadors' wealth and prestige with the number of women in their possession. Prohibiting the royal officials from charging the *quinto* (the royal fifth) had the effect of undermining their ability to exploit their status among the Carios through the appropriation of surplus food produced by indigenous women. Cabeza de Vaca's distribution of barter to the Carios would also have challenged Irala's prestige as the *mburuvichá*, whose reciprocal obligations included the accumulation and dispersal of material goods. As for the quartering of Juliana, this European rite of execution could only have further damaged the Spanish relations with the Carios, whose own ritual killings were restricted to male captives, and whose women were central to the cohesion of kinship networks.

In tandem with the disciplinary measures he imposed on the conquistadors, Cabeza de Vaca sought to ensure that the Carios' evangelization was being conducted in an appropriate manner. What with Spaniards being poisoned, the *mal yndio* making his kind of Christians, and Andrade baptizing Carios in spite of their carnal relations, not to mention the arrival of the Franciscans and their indigenous following, Cabeza de Vaca must have perceived an urgent need to intervene in the priests' business of saving souls. The *Comentarios* relates that he summoned the clerics living in the region and ordered them to "take special care in teaching the Christian doctrine to the natives."⁸³ He then called an assembly of the Carios with the clergy present. He told the Carios that he had come to protect them, and that they should submit to the Christian teachings of the priests. Admonishing them to desist in eating human flesh, he promised them fair treatment if they agreed to provide service to the Crown, and distributed presents among them.⁸⁴

By issuing this injunction against ritual cannibalism, Cabeza de Vaca had intervened in a more serious matter of an indigenous warrior norm. Before his arrival, the conquistadors' tolerance of ritual cannibalism had been an important aspect of their identification by the Carios as *avá* and the ability of Irala as a *mburuvichá* to attract warriors and undertake raids. With its prohibition, a distinction was being drawn between the Spanish command and the Cario war chiefs that threatened the social cohesion of their alliance and the unity of *tekó-ás* in the region, which was affirmed by eating enemy warriors taken in raids.

Within a few months of his arrival, Cabeza de Vaca further contravened indigenous norms of warfare by negotiating peace with the Agaces, who were the Carios' mortal enemies. The *Comentarios* states that the Agaz caciques Abacoten, Tabor, and Alabos came to Asunción of their own volition "to give obedience to His Majesty and to be friends of the Spanish,"⁸⁵ and that Cabeza de Vaca accepted their vassalage on the basis of a number of conditions. He ordered them to cease making war against the Carios and to return all the Cario captives in their possession. When they came to the port of Asunción to trade, they were to "come and go in daylight and not at night, and stay on the other side of the river, not where the Guaranies and the Spaniards have their villages and fields."⁸⁶ Lastly, they could not take from Asunción their wives and daughters who had been converted to Christianity. The presence of these women in Asunción helps explain the Agaz caciques' sudden interest in pledging allegiance. With the arrival of Cabeza de Vaca, they may have viewed his authority as the new governor of Asunción as an opportunity to negotiate for the return of their women. Their interest in pledging allegiance may also have been motivated by the potential to obtain trading goods from Cabeza de Vaca, although there is no evidence that they received barter from him. Whatever their motives, their women were not returned, and they soon resumed their habitual raiding.

While this peace accord with the Agaces was short-lived, it signalled to the Carios that a shift had taken place in the dynamics of their alliance with the Spanish. Not only had Cabeza de Vaca challenged the inter-ethnic hierarchies of the region by negotiating with the Agaces, who were *tapíi* and inferior, he had undermined the foundation of their alliance with the conquistadors, which had been forged through undertaking joint-raids against the Agaces. By

negotiating with their enemies and dictating the conditions of peace, Cabeza de Vaca had in effect transformed the basis of the Carios' relations with the conquistadors from one of Spanish adaptation to warrior norms to the assertion of colonial rule over indigenous vassals.

The Cario caciques' interactions with Cabeza de Vaca reveal that they clearly understood, as had the Agaces, that a transfer of power among the conquistadors had taken place. The *Comentarios* relates that at the same time as Cabeza de Vaca was negotiating with the Agaces, the Cario caciques of Asunción came to seek his counsel. Identified as "Pedro de Mendoza, and Juan de Salazar Cupiratí, and Francisco Ruiz Mayraru, and Lorenço Moquiraci, and Gonçalo Mayraru, and other newly converted Christians,"⁸⁷ they requested Cabeza de Vaca's assistance in mounting a war party against the Guaycurú, a nomad nation that occupied the west bank of the Paraguay opposite Asunción and had attacked one of the Cario villages.⁸⁸ The linguistic hybridity of the caciques' names points to the ways in which they acknowledged the transcultural dimensions of their alliance with the Spanish, indicating that they had been baptized in the Catholic Church and identifying their kinship ties with the specific conquistadors. In this respect, it is curious to note that one of the chiefs had the name of Pedro de Mendoza, the deceased *adelantado* who never reached the territories of the Carios. This lack of association with a specific kinship relation suggests that the Carios may also have accepted Spanish names for their symbolic power in order to increase their warrior status. Whether or not such nomenclature served to increase their prestige, the kinship alliances that the caciques had established with the conquistadors by taking their names meant that there was the expectation of a reciprocal obligation on the part of the Spanish to wage war against the Carios' enemies.

By consenting to assist the Cario caciques in their raid against the Guaycurúes, Cabeza de Vaca, as Irala before him in his war against the Agaces, signalled his acceptance of this reciprocal obligation. Unlike Irala, however, who had secured his power base among the conquistadors and the Carios through his adaptation to indigenous norms of warfare, Cabeza de Vaca followed the established precepts of Hispanic law. He states in the *Relación general* that in response to the caciques' request for assistance, he established evidence of their allegations against the Guaycurúes by summoning a large number of Christian Spanish witnesses and soliciting the opinion of the clerics of Asunción, including the Franciscans

Armenta and Lebrón, and the priest Andrada.⁸⁹ After receiving confirmation from them that the war in which he was about to engage was justified, he describes how “I went personally with two hundred men and twelve cavalry with the Indian allies, drove them [the Guaycurúes] from the land [of the Guaraní], and brought back many prisoners.”⁹⁰ Cabeza de Vaca also emphasizes that at the same time as he was pacifying the Indians he was unable to assert his control over the Asunción conquistadors. Most pointedly, he accused Irala and the royal officers of trying to assassinate him during the raid against the Guaycurúes. He claims that they created a false alarm, which caused the Carios to flee into the woods and the Spanish to fire on them. In the ensuing confusion, Irala’s supporters took the opportunity to take aim at him as well.⁹¹

In contrast to the brief account of the Guaycurú raid in the *Relación general*, the *Comentarios* is remarkably detailed. Describing how the raid began auspiciously with great squadrons of Cario warriors lining the riverbank to join Cabeza de Vaca, the *Comentarios* recounts that “it was something to behold the order they maintained, dressed for war, all of them embellished with parrot feathers and painted in many different colours, armed with many bows and arrows, and carrying musical instruments they use in war, such as trumpets and drums and bugles.”⁹² After Cabeza de Vaca crossed to the west side of the Río Paraguay—an undertaking in itself as the Carios had to transport the horses of the Spanish on rafts made from their canoes—the chiefs came

to tell the governor that it was their tradition when they went to make war to make a gift to their captain, and that they, in keeping with this custom, wanted to do so. They begged him to receive it; and the governor, in order to give them pleasure, agreed to do so. One by one, all the chiefs gave him an arrow and a painted bow, very elegant. Behind them were all of the other Indians, each carrying a painted arrow decorated with parrot feathers, and they offered these as gifts until it was nightfall.⁹³

With this display of allegiance, Cabeza de Vaca now had 10,000 warriors under his command. Stretching over a league in length, the war party was led by the Carios, followed by Cabeza de Vaca and the cavalry. The Spanish foot soldiers and indigenous women who carried supplies and munitions formed the rearguard. The sight of this multitude of warriors must have been

striking, for the *Comentarios* remarks again on their appearance, describing how they were all “painted in red ochre and many colours, adorned with white beads around their necks, feather headdresses, and many sheets of copper that gave such a brilliant gleam (*resplandor*) when the sun shone on them that it was a marvel to see.”⁹⁴

Yet, as the war party neared the encampment of the Guaycurúes, the discipline of the feathered and brightly painted warriors unraveled. Echoing the version of events recorded in the *Relación general*, the *Comentarios* recounts how the Carios broke rank and fled into the woods, and the Spanish opened fire, nearly wounding Cabeza de Vaca. Where it differs from the *Relación general* is in providing a reason for the Carios’ sudden disarray, explaining that the Carios’ flight was provoked by the sighting of a tiger, the *yaguareté* or jaguar, which had terrified them. The *Comentarios* relates that Cabeza de Vaca restored calm by following them into the woods and “calling to them that it was nothing more than a tiger that had caused the disturbance and that he and his Spanish people were their friends.”⁹⁵ After re-uniting the Spanish and the Carios, he then instructed his men to march in advance of the Carios so they would not fire on their Indian allies. He also ordered gesso (white chalk) crosses painted on the chests and shoulders of each warrior so that that the Spanish would not mistake the “friendly” Indians for the enemy Guaycurúes.⁹⁶ As an added precaution, he decided to wait until dawn to attack the Guaycurúes, for in the darkness the Spanish would have been unable to see the crosses.⁹⁷

According to the *Comentarios*, the Carios were as terrified of the Guaycurúes as they had been of the tiger. Arriving at the edge of the Guaycurúes’ encampment at dawn, they became paralyzed by fear when they heard the drumming of the Guaycurúes who were

chanting and calling to all the nations of the earth, saying to come to them, for although they were few, they were the most valiant of all the nations of the land. They were the masters of the land and the deer, and of all the other animals of the forest, and masters of the rivers and the fish that swam in them. For it was their custom to keep vigil over the world at night.⁹⁸

The Guaycurúes responded to the massive army arrayed before them by demanding in a loud voice:

“Who are you that come to our houses?” And a Christian who knew their language responded to them saying: “I am Hector (as that is what the interpreter was called) and I have come with my people to barter for (which in their language means avenge) the deaths of the Batates you have killed.” Then the enemy answered: “Many of you have come at a bad time, and we will kill you as we did them.”⁹⁹

Running to their houses to get their bows and arrows, the Guaycurúes returned to fight with such bravery that the Carios once more broke rank and fled. At this point Cabeza de Vaca ordered Juan de Salazar to attack with his cavalry. The Guaycurúes, who had never seen horses before, retreated into the woods after setting their straw houses on fire to create a diversionary smokescreen. Although four hundred Guaycurúes were taken captive, those who had escaped during the attack kept ambushing the Spanish on their return to Asunción. The *Comentarios* blames this harassment on the Carios, claiming that they had failed to kill most of the Guaycurúes as “once they have a feather or arrow or bamboo mat of any one of their enemies, they go with this alone to their territories.”¹⁰⁰

In this description of military tactics and troop formations, tigers and crosses, panic and ambush, there is a strange conflation of trigger-happy soldiers and terror-stricken warriors that belies the aim of the *Comentarios* to portray Cabeza de Vaca’s leadership in a favourable light. Most obviously, the incident of “friendly fire” and the necessity to identify the Cario warriors by marking their bodies with crosses suggests that joint raiding was not as seamless under Cabeza de Vaca’s command as it had been under Irala’s. What with the Spanish shooting at their allies and the Carios indistinguishable from their adversaries, Cabeza de Vaca was proving less formidable as a general and war chief in Paraguay than he had as a castaway and healer during his shipwrecked years in *La Florida*. Although both the *Relación general* and the *Comentarios* attribute the chaos that ensued after the Carios broke rank to Irala’s attempt to assassinate him, it is equally plausible that Cabeza de Vaca’s newly arrived reinforcements, who were unfamiliar with the terrain and indigenous warfare, had fired on Cabeza de Vaca as he followed the Carios into the woods in a moment of panic.

Even if one accepts Cabeza de Vaca’s claim that Irala had instigated the shooting, the decision to paint crosses on the Cario warriors was a curious remedy to restore military calm. Irala’s

men had already fought with the Carios against the Agaces, and presumably could distinguish their allies from their enemies. As for the newly arrived soldiers, the Carios' elaborate war decorations, which Hernández records in detail several times, were surely sufficiently distinctive. It is difficult to imagine how warriors painted in red ochre and sheathed in plates of copper could have been mistaken for the Guaycurúes, who did not use metal adornments. Aside from the dubious efficacy of using crosses as a form of identification, the sheer logistics of painting crosses on the backs and shoulders of 10,000 Carios the night before a raid was a monumental undertaking. The question of who was put to the task of this symbolic branding is left unanswered in the text. What the conquistadors thought of this intervention is also not mentioned. These unanswered and unanswerable questions raise the larger issue of whether the painting of the crosses actually transpired. As neither the sighting of the tiger nor the marking of crosses is recorded in Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación general*, these events may have been a textual invention. Yet, despite their improbability as historical facts, their inclusion in the *Comentarios*' narrative account of the raid suggests that something disturbing had taken place.

Similarly, the *Comentarios*' portrayal of the Carios, who were experienced hunters and warriors, as fleeing at the slightest provocation, whether from a tiger or the Guaycurúes, signals that something was amiss. The denunciation of their cowardly behavior is at odds with other accounts of the period that describe the Guaraní as the bravest of nations. Instead, it echoes the Jesuit Lozano's description of their way of waging war written two hundred years later. He relates how

their manner of fighting was completely barbaric, because they did not preserve any order of ranks or form squadrons, nor choose a location, nor use any form of battle except a casual foray, furious at first with a wrath and vengeance that was not easy to resist; when their anger cooled, their pride diminished, and they scattered like people without a leader.¹⁰¹

As it appears that, like Lozano, Cabeza de Vaca neither comprehended nor valued indigenous forms of warfare, what was perceived by him as fear may instead have been the confusion produced by his decision to conduct the raid as a pitched battle in daylight rather than deploying the indigenous war strategy of ambush. In Schmidl's account of Irala's earlier raid against the Agaces, he describes how the Carios and their Spanish allies had relied on elements

of stealth and surprise by attacking the unsuspecting Agaces between three and four in the morning when they were sleeping.¹⁰²

The frustration expressed in the *Comentarios* over the Carios' apparent lack of interest in killing their enemies and their willingness to settle for a "feather or arrow or bamboo mat" also contrasts with other accounts of indigenous warfare. Schmidl's description of raiding the Agaces emphasizes how the Carios indiscriminately killed their enemies, characterizing them "as a people who kill as many as they can in battle, without compassion for a single person."¹⁰³ In subsequent raids undertaken by the Spanish and the Carios during Cabeza de Vaca's governorship, eyewitness accounts similarly comment on the Carios' fierceness as warriors and their slaughter of adversaries. That the Carios' reluctance to kill their enemies only occurred during the Guaycurú raid makes their purported behaviour doubly strange, raising the question of whether there was more at stake than a difference in military tactics.

By entertaining the possibility that what was at stake had indeed begun with a tiger and ended in the psychic confusion produced by painting crosses on warriors, we venture into an interpretative arena of symbolic exchange in which the spiritual and the material planes of existence converge. Similiar to Guzmán's apocryphal tale of La Maldonada, the story of the tiger and the crosses represents the transmutation of worldviews that was unfolding in the Río de la Plata through intersection of animal and human. As experienced hunters, the Carios' panicked reaction to a tiger alerts us to the possibility that what had spooked them was no ordinary animal, but the less tangible apparition of the feared jaguar-shaman. If we accept Susnik's argument in her ethnohistory of the Guaraní that a distinction existed at the time of the conquest between the collective power of the *tuvichás* to unite the *tekó-ás* in warfare and the individual power of the *payé* to exercise ritual magic, then the appearance of this jaguar-shaman would have signalled the intrusion of the spirit world into the material arena of warfare.¹⁰⁴ As the Guaraní and the Guaycurú held a shared belief in the power of the jaguar-shamans, what startled the Carios may have been the manifestation of an enemy shaman among their ranks. By following the Carios into the woods and calling to them that it was only a tiger, Cabeza de Vaca would have heightened their terror by transgressing his collective role as a *mburuvichá* to individually confront the jaguar-shaman as if he was a *payé*.

In the context of this spiritual intrusion before the raid began, the Carios' flight into the woods at the sight of a tiger and their reluctance to engage in battle becomes comprehensible as something other than cowardice or lack of military resolve. An understanding of the tiger as a jaguar-shaman also provides an interpretative framework for the *Comentarios*' description of the Guaycurúes' war chant, the only such example in the primary sources for the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata. The Guaycurúes' assertion they "were the masters of the land" and that it was "their custom to keep vigil over the world at night" was in effect a declaration of their shamanistic powers to combat the Carios on a spiritual plane. The Carios substitution of a "feather or arrow or bamboo mat" for a slain enemy extends the logic of this spiritual battle to the aftermath of the raid. Whether or not Carios actually took such objects back with them to Asunción, the *Comentarios*' description of the enemy feathers and arrows they possessed mirrors the marking of the cross with the shamanistic power of the fetish.¹⁰⁵

As the signs of a battle unfolding in the spiritual realm become visible in the *Comentarios*' account of the raid, Cabeza de Vaca's actions can be understood as a response to the intangible and unknowable threat of the supernatural. In view of his previous experience as healer, when he was both a witness to shamanistic rituals and the purveyor of the Christian faith, he may have sensed that something more than a tiger had caused the Cario to flee into the woods. While we cannot know what he actually saw in the woods, or whether he actually painted crosses on the bodies of the Cario warriors, the narrative of his actions in the *Comentarios* alerts us to the possibility that what he sensed or saw transcended the material boundaries of perception. Following the Carios to call them back from the woods, Cabeza de Vaca became a mediator of the spiritual realm, as he had done many times before in New Spain. Responding to the disorder caused by the tiger through the use of the cross as a marker of identification, he deployed its power as an instrument of exorcism. In turn, his decision to attack the Guaycurúes in daylight so that the crosses could be seen by his men may have been motivated by more than the logistics of differentiation. Perhaps the terror caused by appearance of the tiger was contagious, unnerving the Spanish as much as it had the Carios. And so to banish the spectre of this shadowy spirit world Cabeza de Vaca ordered the painting of crosses and chose to combat the Guaycurúes after their night vigil had ended, thus reassuring his own men of the efficacy of the Christian faith and evoking the crusading spirit of warfare.

What Cabeza de Vaca's actions might have signified for the Cario warriors is more difficult to conjecture. In his 1542 *relación*, he clearly links the sign of the cross to an indigenous understanding of healing and the miraculous power of God. In contrast, the *Comentarios* addresses neither the response of the Carios to his use of the cross nor its power to confront the forces of evil and produce miracles. However, the marking of crosses on the painted bodies of warriors in full war regalia must surely have had an unsettling effect. The accounts in the colonial period that describe in any detail confrontations between indigenous nations in the Río de la Plata all refer to the aesthetic dimensions of the warriors' appearance. The *Comentarios*, as we have seen, notes their use of feathers, paint, and copper breastplates. It also states that the Carios wore metal plates "because they say that the glare blinds the sight of their enemies."¹⁰⁶ Lozano, writing in the 1700s, relates that while the Guaraní manner of fighting was anarchic and chaotic, their preparation for battle was meticulous and sublime, as "they paint their bodies with various glazes and colours, seeking in these designs what is most beautiful for a soldier, which is their manner to appear more fierce to their enemies."¹⁰⁷ While we cannot know whether the Carios viewed their war regalia through the same aesthetic prism as Cabeza de Vaca and Lozano, we can speculate that the superimposition of crosses on top of their painted bodies may have been perceived by them as undermining their power as warriors, thus producing the paralyzing fear as they faced the Guaycurúes and the substitution of arrows and feathers and bamboo mats for the slaying of their enemies.

Cabeza de Vaca's manner of making peace after he returned to Asunción from his raid against the Guaycurués was equally disorientating. Instead of keeping the captives he had obtained in battle, he negotiated with the cacique of the Guaycurúes a pledge of obedience and vassalage in exchange for the release of all the prisoners.¹⁰⁸ This act of leniency must have appeared incomprehensible to the Carios, who ritually killed or integrated captives into their *tekó-ás*, as well as foolhardy to the Spanish who had acceded to the Carios' warrior norms in order to secure their alliance. The *Comentarios* states that the Guaycurúes also agreed to trade with the Carios, in effect displacing their customary raiding with the mercantile exchange of goods. To this end, every few days the Guaycurúes brought venison, wild boar, fish, grease, blankets, and animal skins to the river bank opposite Asunción, and the Carios crossed the river to meet them with corn, manioc, peanuts, and bows and arrows.¹⁰⁹ The description of their exchange of goods in the *Comentarios* positively bucolic:

Two hundred canoes [of Carios] cross the river together to trade their goods; and it is the most beautiful thing in the world to see them go. Sometimes they are in such a hurry that they collide with each other in such a way that they and their merchandise fall in the water. The Indians to whom this happens, and those who are on the banks of the river, burst into great laughter and their merriment carries on for two days. They come to barter with their bodies painted and in feather headdresses, and all this fine plumage is carried down the river as they vie with each other to be the first to arrive, which is why their canoes so often collide.¹¹⁰

Cabeza de Vaca attributes this transformation of the Guaycurúes from bellicose warriors to amicable traders to his decision to undertake the raid against them, relating that “they were the most feared in the region and indomitable, and if war had not been made against them they would never have come to give obedience to your Majesty.”¹¹¹ He also states that “many other Indians of diverse languages came of their own free will to ask for peace and submit to the servitude and vassalage of your Majesty.”¹¹² These “Indians of diverse languages” included the Yaperú, a nomad people of the Gran Chaco, whose chiefs gave their daughters to Cabeza de Vaca as a sign of friendship, and who in turn gave them to the clergy to be instructed in the Christian faith.¹¹³

With markets bustling with activity and indigenous nations flocking to Asunción to pledge allegiance, it appeared as if Cabeza de Vaca was even more successful at bringing together warring nations as the *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata than he had been as a castaway healer in New Spain. But as in the raid against the Guaycurúes, his good leadership had adverse consequences. By establishing a market place where the Carios traded with, rather than ate, their enemies, he only served to further undermine their warrior ethos already violated by the marking of their bodies with crosses and the releasing of captives. In making peace with the Yaperús, he contravened the indigenous practice of forging alliances through kinship by turning over the caciques’ daughters to the priests, and, in so doing, inadvertently increased the priests’ power as quasi shamans. While his manner of making war and peace would prove his undoing in the year and a half that remained of his governorship, the causes of Cabeza de Vaca’s impending conflict with the Carios and the conquistadors were already evident. By seeking to impose his vision of just colonial rule, he had violated the indigenous norms of

warfare, kinship, and reciprocity. His removal of indigenous women from the conquistadors' houses threatened the social cohesion of the *tekó-ás* and Irala's and the royal officials' power base among amongst the Carios. He had also transgressed the Carios' spirit world by executing Juliana and branding warriors with the cross. In the process, he ended up enforcing the boundaries between indigenous and European worldviews in a context where the transcultural dynamics were dependent on the convergence of the two.

In this chapter, I have argued that Cabeza de Vaca's previous experience as a castaway and healer in New Spain was a significant factor in influencing his imposition of colonial rule. Cabeza de Vaca's altercation with the Franciscans and his subsequent use of the cross during the Guaycurú raid suggest that he understood well the spiritual dimension of an indigenous worldview. His actions also demonstrated his intention to exorcise its influence on the Christian faith. Whether he understood the transcultural dynamics of the Asunción conquistadors' integration into the Cario kinship networks and their adaptation to indigenous warrior norms is less certain. What is clear is that his *ordenanzas* had the potential to destabilize the alliances the Spanish had forged with the Carios. As the conflicts produced by his leadership escalated in the months following the Guaycurú raid, all signs of the spiritual realm, whether of tigers and crosses or poisonous herbs and fetish objects, vanish from Hernández's *Comentarios*. In their stead, a narrative of rebellious caciques and mutinous conquistadors draws Cabeza de Vaca into a material arena of raiding and captive-taking he can no longer control.

Endnotes:

1. The *Comentarios* records the date of departure from Cádiz, Spain, as November 2, 1540. Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz date his departure as December 2, 1541, in *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: his account, his life, and the expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), vol. 1, 391. The discrepancy in dates may relate to it being recorded as December 2 by Pedro de Estopiñan Cabeça de Vaca in his *probanza*, dated July 28, 1547, published in Manuel Serrano y Sanz, *Relación de los naufragios y comentarios*, vol. 2, 3-98. Both sources concur that Cabeza de Vaca arrived at the island of Santa Catalina in March of the following year.

2. Adorno and Pautz date Cabeza de Vaca's year of birth between 1485-92, suggesting his probable date of birth as 1488, which meant he was fifty-two years of age in 1540. Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 1, 343-350.
3. Adorno and Pautz provide the definitive overview of Cabeza de Vaca's life and primary sources pertaining to his biography based on documentation reviewed in the Archivo General de Indias as well as published sources. *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 1, 350-369.
4. Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 1, 372-378. Adorno and Pautz provide a concise overview of the Narváez expedition and Cabeza de Vaca's itinerary in their introduction to *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 1-42.
5. The 1542 *relación* was published as *La relación que dio Álvar Núñez Cabeça de Vaca de lo acaescido en las Indias en la armada donde iva por governador Pánphilo de Narbáez, desde el año de veinte y siete hasta el año de treinta y seis que bovió a Sevilla con tres de su compañía*. (Zamora: Printed by Agustín de Paz and Juan Picardo for Juan Pedro Musetti, 1542). It is translated into English with critical annotations by Adorno y Pautz in *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 1, 3-280, and reprinted in *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, 44-176. Adorno and Pautz state that the 1542 *relación* was based on a joint report he had written with Andrés Dorantes (another survivor of the Narváez expedition) that was subsequently lost. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés wrote his account of the Narváez expedition in *Historia general y natural de las Indias* based on this joint report. Adorno and Pautz, *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, 24.
6. Analyses of the *Naufraios* include Maureen Ahearn, "The Cross and the Gourd: The Appropriation of Ritual Signs in the *Relaciones* of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and Fray Marcos de Niza" in Jerry William, ed., *Early Images of the Americas: Transfer and Invention* (Tucson and London: University of Arizona Press, 1993); Rolena Adorno, "The Negotiation of Fear in Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufraios*" in Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *New World Encounters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Sylvia Molloy, "Alteridad y reconocimiento en los Naufraios de Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 35 (1987): 425-49. The 1990 film directed by Mexican director Nicolás Echevarría, *Cabeza de Vaca*, is also based on *Naufraios*. An exception to the scholarly focus on *Naufraios* to the exclusion of the *Comentarios* is José Rabasa's chapter, "Reading Cabeza de Vaca, or How We Perpetuate the Culture of Conquest," in *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000).
7. Adorno and Pautz, *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, 25.
8. *Ibid.*, 25.
9. Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. *Relación general* [1545]. Serrano y Sanz, *Relación de los naufragios y comentarios*, vol. 2, 3-98. Herein cited as *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II.
10. Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 1, 393-402; vol. 3, 89-99.

11. Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *La relación y comentarios del gobernador Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, de lo acaesido en las dos jornadas que hizo a las Indias* (Valladolid, Spain: Francisco Fernández de Córdova, 1555.) There are many modern editions of the 1555 *Relación* and several that include the *Comentarios*. This study refers to Serrano y Sanz, *Relación de los naufragios y comentarios*, vol. 1.
12. Gandía consistently refers to Hernández as the author of the *Comentarios* in *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay: los gobiernos de don Pedro de Mendoza, Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca y Domingo de Irala, 1535-1556*.
13. José Rabasa, “Reading Cabeza de Vaca, or How We Perpetuate the Culture of Conquest,” in *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest*, 31-83.
14. Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 3, 86, 101. It should be noted that while Adorno and Pautz have published the most comprehensive analysis of the *Comentarios*’ textual influences to date, Catherine Julien is currently in the process of translating and collating an extensive collection of unedited as well as previously published documentation of the period, including Hernández’s and Cabeza de Vaca’s 1545 *relaciones*. In my correspondence with Julien, she has stated that she will be attributing the authorship of the *Comentarios* solely to Cabeza de Vaca in her publication of this collection of documents, which is forthcoming from the University of Nebraska Press.
15. Ibid. 85-86.
16. Ibid., 101.
17. Ibid., 89.
18. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 163-4.
19. Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 3, 103.
20. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 162. “*muy escandalizados y atemorizados de los indios de la tierra, que los querian matar a causa de auerles quemado ciertas casas de indios, y por razon dello anian muerto a dos christianos que en aquella tierra viuian.*”
21. Carta de factor del Río de la Plata D. Pedro de (D)Orantes al Rey, Asunción, (circa 1543). COR: 58. Adorno and Pautz note that Dorantes was incorrectly identified as *factor* and that he was instead the royal inspector of mines. However, all of the letters written by Dorantes and compiled by Levellier in COR are signed by Dorantes as *factor*. Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 1, 391.
22. Carta de Pedro de Dorantes, (circa 1543). COR: 59.

23. Ibid., 60. “*los yndios que yban conmigo dezian que yo hera hijo de comisario a quien ellos dizen paycaue y tienen en mucha veneracion.*”

24. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Repuesta al requerimiento del veedor Cabrera relativa al abandono del puerto de Buenos Aires, April 16, 1541. Lafuente Machain, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 385-6.

25. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 244. The abandonment of Buenos Aires proved a point of immediate friction between Irala and Cabeza de Vaca, who ordered the fort rebuilt upon arriving in Asunción and accused Irala of irresponsible government for leaving the region without an outpost settlement between the coast of Brazil and Asunción.

26. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 12-20.

27. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 170. “*cargados con muchos bastimentos, muy alegres, mostrando gran plazer con su venida.*”

28. Ibid., 172. “*para guiar la gente y auisar del camino done auian de yr.*” The *Relación general* provides the same information. Serrano y Sanz II, 13-14.

29. Ibid., 173. “*que no contratassen, ni comunicassen con ellos, ni fuesen a sus casas y lugares.*”

30. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 12. “*quatro personas que entendian é sabian la lengua é contratación.*”

31. Ibid., 172. “*en tal manera que corria la fama por la tierra y prouincia y todos los naturales perdian el temor y venian a ver y traer todo lo que tenían y se lo pagauan.*”

32. Ibid., 184. “*baylauan y hazian grandes regozijos de verlos.*”

33. Ibid., 186. “*en la ribera del rio estaua muy grande numero de los indios de la misma generacion de los Guaranies, todos muy emplumados con plumas de papagayos, e almagrados, pintados de muchas maneras e colores y con sus arcos y flechas en las manos, hecho vn esquadron dellos, que era muy gran plazer de los ver. Como llego el gouernador y su gente (de la forma ya dicha) pusieron mucho temor a los indios y estuuieron muy confusos e començo por lenguas de los interpretes a les hablar e a derramar entre los principiades dellos grandes rescates, y como fuesse gente muy cobdiciosa y amiga de nouedades començaronse a sossegar y allegarse al gouernador e su gente, e muchos de los indios les ayudaron a passar de la orta parte del rio.*” The “manner already described” refers to a description of how the Spanish travelled on land with their horses and the Indians by canoe.

34. Ibid., 191. Hernández’s claim that they “demonstrated great familiarity and conversed with him as if they had been born and raised in Spain” suggests that they had learnt enough Spanish from the conquistadors to communicate directly with Cabeza de Vaca. “*monstrandose grandes familiares y conuersables como si fueron naturales suyos nascidos y criados en España.*”

35. Ibid., 192. “*Recebirlos los capitanes y gentes que en la ciudad estauan, los quales salieron con tanto plazer y alegria que era cos increyble. Dizeindo que jamas creeron ni pensaron que pudieran ser socorridos, ansi por respecto de ser peligrosa y tan dificultoso el camino.*”

36. Ibid., 174. “*y assi yuan luego de vn lugar a otro a dar las nueuas del buen tratamiento que les hazian, y les enseñauan todo lo que les dauan.*”

37. Ibid., 173. “*viendo que el gouernador castigaba a quien en algo les enojaua.*”

38. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 180. “*ciertas personas de indios grandes y chicos ynutiles a quien dauan a comer.*”

39. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 13.

40. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 180. “*y quando llegaua el gouernador con la gente no tenían los indios que dar, de lo qual la gente se querello al gouernador por auerlo hecho muchas veces.*”

41. Ibid.

42. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 13. “*é con ellos hice ciertos autos ante un escribiano que se dize Juan de Araoz, sobre las desordenes que venian haziendo por el dicho camino y para que no se cargasen de tantas mujeres.*”

43. Carta de Pedro de Dorantes, (circa 1543). COR: 61. “*que haria mucho al caso para nuestro buen viaje que el comisario fuese con el governador porque los yndios del campo deseaban mucho a el le trayan de limosna que se lo davan mehor que no venderlo a nosotros.*”

44. Ruiz de Montoya, *La conquista espiritual*, 83. “*le veneraban sus vasallos como a sacerdote: era sobremanera deshonesto porque tenía gran número de concubinas.*” English translation from McNasby, *Spiritual Conquest*, 53.

45. Relación de lo que sucedido en las Reduciones de la Sierra ... January 29, 1655. MCODE IV: 254. “*despacharon a toda aquella tierra muchos dicipulos suyos q llaman Yeroquihara, haballan y traiendo los que estaban en los pueblos, con danças, bailes y cantos.*” Montoya translates *Yeroqui* as *dança* (dance). *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 194. In modern Guaraní, *jerokyhára* means one who dances. Bartomeu Melià analyses the historical and contemporary spiritual role of the *jerokyharás* in *El Guaraní: conquistado y reducido* (Asunción: Universidad Católica, 1986), 118-119.

46. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 1, 401-4.

47. Ibid., 403. “*Teníanles en opinion de santos, y les obedecian y veneraban como á dioses.*”

48. Ibid., 404. “*Pero otros magos, ó menos diestros en el arte de encantamientos ó mas desgraciados en topar con indios advertidos, que no diesen crédito á sus embustes, pagaban*

la temeridad de quererse hacer deidades, con la pena condigna á sus locura, que eran el escarnio, les vejaciones, y la muerte.”

49. Curt Nimuendajú, *Los mitos de creación y de destrucción del mundo como fundamentos de la religión de los Apapokuva-Guaraní* (Lima: Centro Amazonico de Anthropología y Aplicación Practica, 1978), 93.

50. Ibid.

51. Ruiz de Montoya, *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 261; 95. *Pai*: “*es palabra de refpeto, y con ella no brá a fus viegos, hechizeros, y gente graue,*” 261. *Caiú*: “*vino. y. u. Beuer, beuer vino,*” 95. He also translates *pai abaré* as bishop or great priest, 261.

52. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Emperador, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 421.

53. Ibid. “*Al dho Comisario haziendo rrelacio dlas cosas desta trra.*”

54. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 39.

55. Ibid. “*en tener consygo dentro de su casa é monesterio mas cantidad de trenyta mujeres, hijas de los naturales, moças de doze hasta beynte años, tan encerradas como sy fueran sus mujeres.*”

56. Carta de Francisco de Andrada, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 416.

57. Ibid., 416. “*era tanta le gente q. venya ala dotrina q. no cabian enla ygelsia y an la plaça, ansi viejos como viejas y de toda Edad y madre con sus hijos de teta en los braços.*”

58. Ibid., 416. “*y muy enportunado dellos le diese al agua del bautismo ypor el peligro de vn mal indio q. se dezia entigura q. avia venydo ala trra destes yndios avnq. lexos desta comarca dela Costa del brasil el qual andaua Cantando ydezia alos q. consigo q. hazia cristianos.*”

59. Adorno and Pautz, *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, 94.

60. Ibid., 135.

61. Ibid., 139.

62. Ibid., 151.

63. Ibid., 153.

64. Ahearn, “The Cross and the Gourd,” 227.

65. Adorno and Pautz, *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, 134.

66. Ruiz de Montoya, *Tesoro de la lengua guaraní*, 212. Montoya spells it *mbaracá*. “*calabaço con cuentas dentro, que firue de infrumento para cantar.*”
67. Nimuendajú, *Los mitos de creación y de destrucción del mundo*, 99. “*La condición indispensable para una danza paié es que, por lo menos el paié, tenga una maraca; ésta se fabrica con una calabaza de capacidad variable, pero que suelen ser un litro o más. En su interior las maracas llevan semillas negras del ymaú.*”
68. Ibid.
69. Relación de Domingo Martínez de Irala, June 1541. DHG II: 299. Alonso Cantero, a witness testifying in one of the *probanzas* Cabeza de Vaca presented after he returned to Spain in 1545, stated that Cabeza de Vaca’s expedition numbered three hundred men. Probanza recorded in Madrid, July 2, 1546. Serrano y Sanz II, 161.
70. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Emperador, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 422; *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I: 197.
71. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 204. “*de pescado y manteca, de la miel, maiz y otros mantenimientos, y pellejos de que se vestian, y que auian y comprauan de los indios naturales.*” This royal tax was *el quinto*, which required the conquistadors to remit one-fifth of the value of all goods they had acquired in conquest to the Crown. It was normally levied on gold, silver, and export goods.
72. Relación de Pero Hernández, 1545. DHG II: 397. “*malos vsos e costumbres.*”
73. Ibid. “*luego començo a quitar las costumbres e vicios malos quitandoles las parientes e ansi se quitaron E aparton muy muchas yndias a muchas personas de lo qual se agraviaron mucho.*”
74. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 29. “*Estos crystianos españoles que hallé en esta provincia, y especialmente algunos de los capitanes y oficiales de Su Magestad é sus amigos, hazian grandes agrabios é crueldades en los naturales y en sus mugeres é hijos tomandoselas por fuerça con los otros sus bienes, dandoles de açotes por celos y trabajos demasiados, y á sus padres y parientes haziendolos venir á trabajar por fuerça y á palos, no les pagando sus trabajos, demás desto se mataban unos á otros sobre los celos de las dichas yndias.*”
75. Ibid. “*y las yndias libres crystianas vendian, trocaban y cambiaban unos por otros como sy fueran esclavas.*”
76. Ibid. “*yo puse con diligencia en apartarlos de grabe pecado y ofensa de Dios, y los cometi a un clerico que con los ynterpetres delante el escribiano exsaminase los parentescos, y deste manera aparté é quité muchas mugeres.*”
77. Ibid., 27.

78. Relación de Pero Hernández, 1545. DHG II: 398. “*el Gou^o proçedio de ofiçio contra la yndia q mato a su amo con yeruas ela mando prender e fue presa e por vtud de su confisyon e delo cont^{do} enel prim^o proçeso qfue acomulado conel segundo fue sentenciada a pena demuerte efue hecho quartos.*”

79. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 27.

80. Carta de Francisco de Andrada, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 415.

81. Carta de Francisco de González Paniagua, March 3, 1545. DHG II: 437.

82. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 29; *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I: 204. “*por las vias indirectas intentaron de hazerlo todo el mal y daño que pudiessen, mouidos com mal zelo, de que resulto prenderlos y tenerlos presos.*”

83. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 197. “*tuiessen especial cuydado en la doctrina y enseñamiento de los indios naturales.*”

84. *Ibid.*, 198.

85. *Ibid.*, 203. “*a dar obediencia a Su Magestad e ser amigos de los Españoles.*”

86. *Ibid.*, 202. “*ouisse de ser y fuesse de dia claro y no de noche, y por la otra parte de la ribera del rio, no por dondes los otros indios Guaranies y Españoles tienen sus pueblos y labranças.*”

87. *Ibid.*, 206.

88. While the *Comentarios* only refers to this Chaco nation as the Guaycurú, Métraux identifies them as the Mbayá. He states that the Guaraní used the blanket term Guaycurú to refer to all the nomad indigenous nations occupying the west side of the Paraguay River, so that in the 1500s the term Guaycurú was used interchangeably with Mbayá in the primary sources, which also refer to the Guaycurú by numerous specific tribal names. By the 1600s, references in the primary sources to specific sub-groups had ceased and the general term Guaycurú was used to identify all of the nomad Chaco tribes while the Agaz (Agaces) were referred to solely as the Payagúa. Métraux, “Ethnography of the Chaco,” HSAI I: 215-225.

89. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 24.

90. *Ibid.* “*fui personalmente con dozientos hombres é doze de á caballo, con los yndios amigos, y los eché de la tierra, de donde se truxeron muchos prisioneros.*”

91. *Ibid.*, 25.

92. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 208. “*Era cosa muy de ver la orden que lleuauan y el adereço de Guerra de muchas flechas, muy emplumados con plumas de de papagayos y sus*

arcos pintados de muchas maneras e con instrumentos de guerra que vsan entre ellos, de atabales y trompetas y cornetas y de otra formas.”

93. Ibid., 211. “*los indios principales vinieron a dezir al gouernador que era su costumbre quando yuan a hazer alguna guerra hazian su presente al capitan suyo, y que assi ellos, guardando su costumbre, lo querian hazer; que le rogauan lo rescibiesse; y el gouernador, por les hazer plazer acepto, y todos los indios cada vno tuxo vna flecha pintada y emplumada con plumas de papagayos y estuuieron en hazer presentes hasta que fue noche.”*

94. Ibid., 213-14. “*pintados de almagra e otras colores e con tantas cuentas blancas por los cuellos y sus penachos e con muchas planchas de cobre como el sol reberueraua en ellas dauan de si tanto respandor que era marauilla de ver.”*

95. Ibid., 216. “*se lanço en el monte con los indios, animandoles y diziendoles que era nada, sino que aquel tiguere auia causado aquel alboroto, y que el e su gente española eran sus amigos.”*

96. Ibid., 217.

97. Ibid., 218

98. Ibid., 219. “*cantando llamando todas las nasciones, diziendo que viniessen a ellos, porque ellos eran pocos y mas valientes que todas las otras nasciones de la tierra, y eran señores della y de los venados y de todos los otros animales de los campos, y eran señores de los rios y de los pesces que andauan en ellos, porque lo tienen de costumbre quella nascion, que todas las noches del mundo se velan desta manera.”*

99. Ibid. 220. “*¿quien soys vosotros que venir a nuestras casas?; y respondiodes vn christiano que sabia su lengua y dixoles. Yo soy Hector (que assi se llamaua la lengua que lo dixo) y vengo con los mios a hazer treuque (que en su lengua quiere dezir vengança) de a muerte de los Batates que vosotros matastes. Entonces respondieron los enemigos: vengays mucho en mal hora, que tambien aura para vosotros como ouo para ellos.”* Batates is another word for *batatas* (sweet potatoes), and in this context most likely is being used to signify those who died when the Guaycurúes raided the Carios’ village to obtain agricultural foods.

100. Ibid. 223. “*tienen por costumbre que en auiendo vna pluma o vna flecha o vna estera de qualquiera de los enemigos, se vienen con ella para su tierra solo.”*

101. Lozano, *Historía de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 2, 388. “*Su modo de pelear era totalmente bárbaro, porque ni guardaban órden ni formaban escuadrones, ni escogian lugar ni usaban otro forma de batalla que una casual enuestida, furiosos al principio con la ira que no se les resistia fácilmente; pero resfriada la cólera se abatia su orgullo, y andaban desatinados como gente sin consejo.”*

102. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 48. The Tupí of Brazil used the tactic of ambush as well. Léry describes a Tupinambá raid in which “the most skillful and valiant, leaving the others with the women one or two day’s journey behind them, approach as stealthily as they

can to lie in ambush in the woods; they are so determined to surprise their enemies that they will sometimes lie hidden there more than twenty-four hours. If the enemy is taken unawares, all who are seized, be they men, women, or children, will be led away.” Léry. *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, 116.

103. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 48. “Los Carios son un pueblo así, que matan a cuantos encyentran en la Guerra frente a ellos, sin tener compassion con ningún ser humano.”

104. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 22.

105. The anthropologist Michael Taussig notes that the Portuguese traders and slavers working in Africa in the fifteenth century invented the concept of the fetish. He defines it as a “European makeshift word meant to grasp the essence of African spirituality as the worship of objects.” *What is the Colour of Sacred?* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 130.

106. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 260. “y dizen que las traen porque aquel resplandor quita la vista a sus enemigos.”

107. Lozano, *Historía de la conquista del Paraguay*, II, 388. “se pintaban los cuerpos con diversos barnices y colores, buscando en esta traza la mayor hermosura de un soldado, que es parecer mas fiero á su enemigo.” Léry describes in similar terms the beauty of the Tupinambá warriors: “it was also a marvel to see so many arrows fly in the air and sparkle in the sunbeams with their grand featherings of red, blue, green, scarlet, and other colours, and so many robes, headdresses, bracelets, and other adornments of these natural feathers with which the savages were arrayed.” Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, 120.

108. *Ibid.*, 230; *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 25; *Relación de Pero Hernández*, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 387.

109. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 231.

110. *Ibid.*, 231-2. “y passan el rio a esta contratacion dozientas canoas juntas cargadas destas cosas, que es la mas hermosa cosa del mundo verlas yr, y como van con tanta priessa algunas vezes se encuentran las vnas con las otras de manera que toda la mercaduria y ellas van al agua. Y los undios a quien acontesce toman tan gran risa que en dos dias no se apacigua entre ellos el regozijo. Y para ir a contratar van muy pintados y empenachados, y toda la plumeria va por el rio abaxo y mueren por llegar con sus canoas vnos primeros otros, y esta es la causa por donde se encuentran muchas vezes.”

111. *Ibid.* “esta generacion hera la mas temida de toda aquella tierra, gente yndomita, é sy no se les hiziera la guerra munca binieran á la obidienca de Su Magestad.”

112. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 25. “fue cabsa que otras muchas gentes de yndios de dibersos lenguajes, de su propria boluntad binieran á pedir paz é a someterse á la serbidumbre é vasallaje de Su Magestad.”

113. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 233-34. Métraux identifies the Yaperú as the Naperú, and suggests they pertain to the Chané and the Arawakan linguistic families. HSAI I: 218. Susnik distinguishes between the two as separate nations and identifies them as Guaycurú in *Los aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnología del Chaco Boreal y su Periferia (siglos XVI y XVIII)*, 63-69.

Chapter Five: Raiding and Captive-Taking: The Entrada to Puerto de los Reyes. 1542-1544.

By November 1542, Cabeza de Vaca could lay claim to having secured his authority over the indigenous peoples in the vicinity of Asunción by virtue of his successful raid against the Guaycurúes in collaboration with the Carios, and the peace accords he had made with the Chaco nations. He also had restored a degree of civic and moral order in Asunción despite the conquistadors' opposition to his *ordenanzas*. However, he had yet to realize his central objective as *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata to find new lands of gold and silver to conquer. To this end, the *Comentarios* relates that he called the clergy and royal officers together to sanction the exploration of the region. He also summoned the principal caciques of the Carios to request their assistance. According to Cabeza de Vaca, they all were eager to support him.¹ He chose Aracaré, a chief “much feared and respected by the Indians”² whose territories lay upriver, to lead three Spaniards who spoke Guaraní and eight hundred Cario in an exploration of the lands to the west of the Paraguay River. He also ordered Irala to take ninety men and sail north to scout for a populated area from where an *entrada* could be launched to the sierra.³ Almost eight months later on September 8, 1543, Cabeza de Vaca departed on his *entrada* to Puerto de los Reyes, a natural harbour north of present-day Corumbá near the source of the Paraguay, which Irala had reached during his scouting mission.

In the months that elapsed between sending Aracaré and Irala upriver and his departure for Puerto de los Reyes, Cabeza de Vaca's authority over the Carios and the civic order he had restored in Asunción unraveled. He contended with rebellions by Aracaré and then his relatives, a major fire that destroyed most of Asunción, the insubordination of the royal officials, and an attempt by the Franciscans Armenta and Lebron to flee Asunción and undermine his government. His *entrada* to Puerto de los Reyes was as calamitous as the events preceding it, resulting in a futile march inland, uncontrolled raiding by the Carios, and a mutiny by the conquistadors who returned to Asunción empty-handed. After imprisoning Cabeza de Vaca and reinstating Irala as governor in April 1544, the conquistadors began to fight among themselves, and the Carios fled from Asunción. By the time Cabeza de Vaca was

forcibly returned to Spain under the guard of the royal officials Alonso de Cabrera and Garcí Venegas in April 1545, the Carios were in open revolt against the conquistadors with whom they had made kinship alliances and integrated into their *tekó-ás*.

In this chapter, I examine the evolving dynamics between the conquistadors and the indigenous peoples of the Río de la Plata leading up to Cabeza de Vaca's imprisonment. I draw primarily upon the *Comentarios*, which provides the most detailed account of the period under consideration. By comparing the *Comentarios* to Schmidl's and Guzmán's chronicles and the conquistadors' letters, which were written in the first months of 1545 in anticipation of Cabeza de Vaca's return to Spain, I show how indigenous practices of raiding and captive-taking were altered by a series of punitive raids ordered by Cabeza de Vaca before and during his *entrada* to Puerto de los Reyes. I argue that these raids proved a flashpoint for the incompatibility of European objectives of conquest and indigenous warrior norms, which had the consequence of undermining Cabeza de Vaca's authority as a military commander among the conquistadors and as a war chief among the Carios. During the *entrada*, the exploration of unfamiliar territories and hostile confrontations with non-*avá* nations intensified the violence of these raids and the conflicts generated by Cabeza de Vaca's leadership, revealing that what was at stake during his final year and a half as governor was a power struggle between him and the conquistadors over the Carios' allegiance.

The first hint of the Carios' unrest began with the exploratory mission led by Aracaré. On November 20, 1542, Aracaré and Irala departed from Asunción and travelled up the Paraguay as far as the port of Las Piedras, located north of the Jejuí-Guazú River in the territory of a Guaraní nucleus that Susnik identifies as the Guaramabarés.⁴ At this point, Aracaré went inland to the west with his eight hundred Cario warriors and the three Spanish interpreters, while Irala continued northward with his ninety men to Puerto de los Reyes. Although there are no reports of Irala encountering hostility as he sailed upriver, both the *Comentarios* and the *Relación General* state that Aracaré turned against the three Spaniards after he entered inland. According to the *Relación general*, he prevented the Spaniards from exploring the area by telling his accompanying warriors not to show them the route inland "as they [the warriors] would become their slaves."⁵ The *Comentarios* relates that Aracaré ordered "all the fields they passed to be set on fire, which was a signal to enemy Indians to come and attack them,"⁶ and

incited his warriors to rebellion by telling them that “the Christians are very evil and other very bad and disparaging words that scandalized the Indians.”⁷ As a consequence, Aracaré’s warriors deserted the three Spaniards, who managed to return to Asunción some twenty days later.

In these accounts of Aracaré’s unexpected transformation from willing collaborator to rebellious cacique, his speech and actions provide distinct sets of clues to interpret the significance of his animosity towards the Spanish interpreters. Aracaré’s warnings about enslavement and evil Christians imply that this was the cause of his hostility. His burning of fields as a sign of war and the desertion of his warriors tell a different story, one in which his apparent treachery is inextricable from the fundamental role raiding had played in establishing Irala’s power base in Asunción. While the previous joint raids Irala had led against other Cario *tekó-ás* and the Agaces had positioned him as a *mburuvichá* who united the Asunción *tuvichás* through warfare, Cabeza de Vaca chose to send him with a few soldiers to the far reaches of the Paraguay River and mandated Aracaré, a cacique who controlled a territory distinct from Asunción upriver, to lead a large contingent of warriors. As a strategy for neutralizing Irala’s influence among the Asunción caciques, Cabeza de Vaca’s decision to entrust Aracaré with an exploratory mission was a rational response to Irala’s potential challenge to his authority as *alelantado*. It also had the consequence of empowering Aracaré independently of the Asunción Carios’ alliance with the Spanish by appearing to sanction him rather than Irala as the *mburuvichá* of the region. In this context, Aracaré’s eagerness to cooperate with Cabeza de Vaca and his burning of fields suggest that he viewed his mission as an opportunity to launch raids to consolidate his own prestige as a war chief. Whether or not he actually spoke disparaging words against evil Christians, his warriors’ desertion of the Spanish interpreters suggests that Aracaré perceived that his status as a *mburuvichá* was better achieved by opposing the conquistadors and the Asunción Carios than by collaborating with them.

This supposition is borne out by Aracaré’s hostility towards a subsequent scouting expedition that Cabeza de Vaca sent upriver in December 1542. Once again, Cabeza de Vaca placed caciques in charge of the Cario warriors, enlisting the assistance of Juan de Salazar Cupiratí, Lorenço Moquiraci, and Gonçalo Mayraru, the Asunción *tuvichás* who had approached him to lead the raid against the Guaycurúes.⁸ Fifteen hundred Carios and four Spaniards accompanied

these caciques as far as Las Piedras, where Aracaré refused them entry to his territory. Forced to return to Asunción by an alternate and depopulated route, they were harassed by Aracaré and his warriors as they made their way down river.⁹

In retribution for Aracaré's defiance, Cabeza de Vaca ordered charges to be drawn up against him, and, in accordance with proper legal procedure, Aracaré was sentenced to death.¹⁰ Irala, who was sailing from Puerto de los Reyes to Asunción, was charged with finding and hanging Aracaré.¹¹ While we cannot know whether Cabeza de Vaca first approached the Asunción caciques to execute Aracaré and they refused, or whether he had been unwilling to trust them with this task, his decision to enlist Irala to bring Aracaré to justice only served to compound his problem of asserting his authority over the Carios. By empowering Irala to confront a cacique "much feared and respected by the Indians" Cabeza de Vaca had reaffirmed Irala's status as a war chief among the *tuvichás* and implicated the Spanish and their Cario allies in an escalating conflict with other *guáras*. In his 1545 letter, Irala reports that after he carried out Cabeza de Vaca's order, "all the land was in rebellion because of the death of the cacique Aracaré."¹² Similarly, Schmidl recounts that in Aracaré's death "lay the origin of a great war by the Carios against us Christians."¹³

News of this rebellion first reached Asunción when Gonzalo de Mendoza was scouting up the Paraguay River to trade for provisions in February 1543. The *Comentarios* relates that after arriving at the juncture of the Jejuí-Guazú River, Mendoza sent back word that some friendly Indians had come to ask for his protection from Aracaré's relatives, who were seeking revenge for the hanging of their war chief. The Indians informed Mendoza that "two chiefs named Guaçani and Atabare (Tabaré), together with all their relatives and followers, were making a crude war against them with fire and blood, burning their villages and chasing them from their territories, saying that they would kill and destroy them if they did not join together to kill and destroy and drive the Christians from the land."¹⁴ These attacks against Indians who were willing to trade with the Spanish had direct implications for Cabeza de Vaca's plans for his *entrada*. In the preceding months, Cabeza de Vaca was building brigantines and accumulating food supplies in anticipation of mounting an expedition. His preparations suffered a major setback when most of Asunción burned down on February 4 and 40,000 kilograms of supplies intended for the *entrada*, as well as a large quantity of arms and ammunition, were lost.¹⁵ Of

two hundred houses, only fifty were saved, which meant that the majority of the conquistadors lost their personal supplies of food and goods. In order to proceed with the *entrada* before the next harvest, Cabeza de Vaca began to requisition provisions from other *tekó-ás* in the region, which included sending Mendoza upriver in search of food.¹⁶ Although both the *Relación general* and the *Comentarios* emphasize that these requisitions were paid for with barter goods, Mendoza's mission to obtain supplies from the territory of the recently-executed Aracaré could only have served to fuel the insurrection.

To quell the rebellion, which took place in March 1543 between the Jejuí-Guazú and Ipané Rivers, Schmidl relates that Cabeza de Vaca mandated Irala to lead an expedition of two hundred soldiers and two thousand Cario warriors to the area.¹⁷ Reporting on his pacification campaign in his 1545 letter, Irala states that he destroyed two fortified towns of eight thousand inhabitants, brought peace to the land, and sustained casualties of four Christians killed and forty wounded.¹⁸ In *La Argentina*, Guzmán embellishes Irala's brief account. He describes how one thousand Indian allies and three hundred Spanish stormed the wooden palisades of Tabaré's village to engage eight thousand warriors in hand-to-hand combat replete with showers of feathered arrows and burning houses.¹⁹ Despite Tabaré's fierce resistance, the Spanish were victorious, sustaining losses of four soldiers and one hundred and fifty Cario allies, and killing four thousand enemy warriors. After the battle, more than three thousand women and children who had been taken captive were divided amongst the soldiers.²⁰ Schmidl's eyewitness account similarly reports enormous losses for Tabaré and minimal ones for Irala. He relates that three thousand enemy "cannibals," many Cario "friends," and eighteen Spaniards were killed, and many women taken captive.²¹ He also notes that while these women captives "were of great use to us,"²² they were returned to Tabaré after he surrendered. According to Schmidl

Tabaré and his people came begging, saying that if he was pardoned and his children and women returned, he would promise to submit and serve the Christians for the release of his women and children. Our general had to concede to him, in accordance with what the King had ordered: that if an Indian comes and asks pardon, until the third time one must concede; however, if he breaks his word, he and his children can be taken as slaves.²³

He further states that as a condition of his surrender Tabaré agreed to provide Cabeza de Vaca with a contingent of two thousand warriors for his *entrada*.²⁴

In Guzmán's and Schmidl's descriptions of the battle and its aftermath, with indigenous warriors pitted against each other on a massive scale and large numbers of captives taken by the Spanish and then released in exchange for Tabaré's submission to colonial vassalage, a shift in the power dynamics between the Carios and the conquistadors can be discerned. Most significantly, the Carios' collaboration with the conquistadors was no longer predicated on raids in which they obtained assistance to fight against their traditional enemies, such as the Guaycurúes, or against other *tekó-ás* in times of scarcity or territorial expansion. Instead, the Asunción Carios were drawn into a war provoked by Cabeza de Vaca's hanging of Aracaré, entangling indigenous warrior norms of revenge with the ethos of conquest. In the process, the objectives of raiding, the intensity of combat, and the resolution of conflict had changed from previous confrontations involving the Carios and the Spanish.

While earlier joint raids had provided Cario warriors with the opportunity to obtain captives to barter with the Spanish, integrate into their *tekó-ás*, or sacrifice through ritual cannibalism, after Tabaré's defeat the captives were divided among the Spanish soldiers. The number of captives taken in battle had also dramatically increased. In comparison to Cabeza de Vaca's joint raid against the Guaycurúes, in which four hundred prisoners were seized, the war against Tabaré had yielded three thousand women and children. The terms of surrender also signaled a reversal of indigenous norms. Instead of offering his women to create kinship alliances with the Spanish, as had the Cario caciques on previous occasions, Tabaré retained them by agreeing to colonial vassalage. Irala, who had collaborated with the Carios in previous raids as a war chief, engaged in battle as a captain following Cabeza de Vaca's order to repress the rebellion, and was bound by the *adelantado*'s authority as a representative of imperial Spain to negotiate the return of Tabaré's women.

That the terms of engagement and surrender were now based on European principles of warfare rather than indigenous norms is also evident from the distinction Schmidl makes for the first time in his chronicle between Cario allies as "friends" and enemy Carios as

“cannibals” (*caribes*). This identification of Tabaré’s warriors as *caribes* may have reflected the influence of Cabeza de Vaca’s *ordenanzas*, which had explicitly forbidden the practice of cannibalism. It also evoked Hispanic legal precedents of conquest originating in the crusades, whereby cannibalism as a violation of Aristotelian natural law was grounds for just war against the infidels and their enslavement.²⁵ With Spain’s conquest of the Americas, debates proliferated in the 1500s over the nature of the indigenous peoples of the Indies and the philosophical and theological issues of natural law, conversion, just war, and enslavement.²⁶ While the legal implications of these debates were continually shifting ground in Spain, a series of royal ordinances issued in 1526 concerning the treatment of the Indians were included in the Crown’s contracts for the *adelantados* in the 1530s and 1540s.²⁷ These ordinances addressed the responsibilities of the Crown’s representatives in the conquest of new lands and peoples and focused on the importance of the Indians’ conversion and fair treatment as vassals. They required governors and captains to consult with the clergy and royal officials and acquire their consent in matters concerning settlements and trading, and authorized the removal of illegally enslaved Indians from the power of the Crown’s subjects. They also established the legal protocol for declaring just war, in which a document known as the *Requerimiento* was read or communicated through interpreters before initiating battle. It required the Indians to accept the sovereign authority of the Crown and the Christian faith, and warned them they would be subject to war and enslavement if they did not comply.²⁸

In both Cabeza de Vaca’s military expedition against the Guaycurúes and Irala’s pacification of Tabaré’s rebellion, the legal considerations of conquest took precedence over deference to indigenous norms of warfare. For the raid against the Guaycurúes, Cabeza de Vaca sought the approval of the clergy and royal officials, attacked in squadron formation in broad daylight, and released the captives taken in battle after obtaining the Guaycurúes’ allegiance. For the war against Tabaré, Hernández emphasizes in the *Comentarios* that before launching the pacification campaign, Cabeza de Vaca gathered an assembly of the clergy and royal officers to determine a course of action, that he insisted peace be demanded of the rebellious Indians, and that only if submission was not forthcoming could war be declared.²⁹ He also sought to ensure a peace accord was reached if a confrontation occurred by instructing Irala to repeat as often as possible the demand for allegiance to the King and to distribute presents to those who agreed.³⁰

The terms of surrender following from the legal considerations of conquest had implications for the victorious conquistadors as well as the vanquished Carios. Despite the women captives the Spanish had taken in battle being “of great use” to the common soldiers such as Schmidl for personal service, they had to be relinquished once Tabaré pledged allegiance to the King. The conquistadors’ loss of control over these captives also prevented the Spanish captains from increasing their kinship networks among the Carios by establishing relations with the daughters of the defeated caciques. Instead, Cabeza de Vaca’s adherence to the protocols of conquest asserted his authority over Tabaré’s warriors as vassals of the King and curtailed the conquistadors’ ability to forge independent alliances with the *tuvichás* of his *guára*. While Cabeza de Vaca does not mention the conquistadors’ reaction to the loss of their captives, he does report that the insubordination of the royal officials increased after the rebellion’s repression. In the *Relación general*, he accuses them of actively seeking to undermine his *entrada* in retaliation for his attempts to halt “the robberies, aggravations, and vexations they made against the inhabitants, conquistadors, and Indians.”³¹ He also denounces Bernaldo de Armenta and Alonso Lebrón, the two Franciscans whose practice of keeping a large number of young girls in their monastery he viewed as tantamount to concubinage, for plotting against him.

If Cabeza de Vaca is to be believed, Armenta and Lebrón were a law unto themselves. In the *Relación general*, he describes how they imprisoned and lashed many Christians out of jealousy, presumably because these Christians had sought to have sexual relations with the girls in their monastery. He hints at the harem-like nature of the monastery by claiming that the friars beat a cacique whom they had brought from the Piquirí River and had wanted to cut off his penis (*cortar el miembro*), which would have effectively made him a eunuch. When Cabeza de Vaca reprimanded them for their behaviour and tried to take the girls away, the friars went to live on the outskirts of the city.³² On July 10, 1543, as Cabeza de Vaca was preparing to depart on his *entrada*, they secretly fled Asunción.³³ They took with them the young girls from their monastery and carried letters destined for Spain, which contained accusations against Cabeza de Vaca of bad government and petitions to make Irala the governor and Armenta the bishop of the Río de la Plata.³⁴

In conspiring against Cabeza de Vaca, the Franciscans once again used the Christian faith to undermine his leadership, as they had before during the overland march from Brazil. However, this time they coerced their indigenous female followers and literally deployed the sign of the cross to usurp his authority. According to the *Comentarios*, the friars had made their supporters “place a hand on the crucifix and swear to guard in secret their plan to go to Brazil.”³⁵ Cabeza de Vaca learned of their flight when the Asunción caciques complained to him that the friars had taken their daughters, “whom they had given to the priests to be instructed in the Christian faith,”³⁶ against their will and demanded their return. The soldiers sent to find the friars overtook them several leagues outside Asunción and forced them to return to the city, where they were brought to trial by Cabeza de Vaca for conspiring against him and seeking “to impede his *entrada* and discovery of the land.”³⁷

Cabeza de Vaca appointed his cousin Pedro de Estopiñán as the presiding judge of the trial, and charged him with investigating the royal officials’ role in abetting the flight of the friars. Estopiñán found the royal officials guilty as accomplices and imprisoned both them and the Franciscans.³⁸ Although Estopiñán also identified Irala as the ringleader of the conspiracy, Cabeza de Vaca sent word “not to prosecute him, nor mention him in the proceedings, nor in the charges, because I need him to serve me in the name of the King.”³⁹ He also ordered the royal officials Felipe de Cáceres and Pedro de Dorantes released from prison so they could “participate in the said conquest.”⁴⁰ In view of the animosity between Cabeza de Vaca and Irala and the royal officials, such leniency is inexplicable unless Cabeza de Vaca was dependent on their participation in the *entrada* to obtain the cooperation of the conquistadors and the Carios.

Cabeza de Vaca’s decision to release the royal officials and not to prosecute Irala underscores the difficulty he faced in maintaining the Carios’ allegiance in a context where their collaboration was secured through kinship ties and the prestige acquired through leading joint raids. While Tabaré had agreed to supply warriors for the *entrada* through his submission to colonial vassalage, the willingness of the Asunción caciques to participate in “the said conquest” was contingent on their perception of Cabeza de Vaca’s authority as a war chief. Yet, in his pacification campaign against Tabaré, Cabeza de Vaca had delegated his military command to Irala. In so doing, Cabeza de Vaca may have had no choice but to depend on

Irala's prestige as a *mburuvichá* to summon warriors and unite the *tuvichás* of Asunción to fight against Tabaré. By the time the rebellion occurred, Cabeza de Vaca had damaged his credibility among the Carios by marking warriors with crosses, making peace accords with non-*avá* nations, releasing the Guaycurú captives, and sending Irala to execute Aracaré. His claim that Irala's men had attempted to kill him during the Guaycurú raid may also have left him with little confidence in leading another one. Whatever Cabeza de Vaca's motives, his decision not to command the Carios in the pacification campaign against Tabaré further diminished his prestige as a war chief among them. It also weakened his authority over the conquistadors to such a degree that he was forced to release those conspiring against him in order to mount his *entrada*.

When Cabeza de Vaca finally departed for Puerto de los Reyes on September 8, 1543, he was neither the first nor the last conquistador to attempt to cross overland to the sierra in search of the illusive wealth of the *Rey blanco*. Before him, both García's epic trek from Brazil in the 1520s and Ayolas's expedition in 1536 had ended in their deaths at the hands of their indigenous collaborators. Irala led an expedition to Bolivia between 1547 and 1549, only to discover that conquistadors from the Pacific coast had already claimed the region. In 1553, Irala mounted another expedition to Bolivia, known as the *mala entrada* for the excessive casualties that occurred. Ñuflo de Chaves, who had come with Cabeza de Vaca from Spain, led the last major *entrada* from Asunción in 1558. During this *entrada*, Chaves sought to conquer and colonize the Chiquitos region of Bolivia. After travelling to Lima to lay claim to this territory, he founded Santa Cruz de la Sierra in 1561.⁴¹

For all these *entradas*, the greatest obstacle the Asunción conquistadors faced was crossing the sparsely inhabited and inhospitable Gran Chaco, which lies between the Paraguay River and the foothills of the Andes. Derived from the Quechua for "hunting ground"⁴² and still known colloquially in Argentina as *El Impenetrable*, the Gran Chaco is a region of suffocating heat, excessive rains, and parched deserts. The central part of the Gran Chaco is demarcated by the Bermejo and Pilcomayo Rivers and encompasses the Argentine provinces of Resistencia and Formosa. It is an area of snake-infested forests of thorny trees and cacti, riverbeds that change course and dry up without warning, and temperatures climbing above fifty degrees Celsius during the summer months from December to February. Further north near the source of the

Paraguay, the Gran Chaco becomes known as the Chaco Boreal, where dense jungle folds into the Pantanal, a vast wetland swelling during the summer rainy season into an impassable swamp.⁴³

Depending upon when and where the conquistadors entered the Gran Chaco to seek a route westward, they encountered flooding or drought. Irala describes how during an inland foray he made in February 1540 in search of Ayolas

the land was so low and depopulated and there was so much water that it created great floods. In eighteen days of walking we never left water up to our belts and there came the day when the men were so thin and lacking in supplies and the great swamps kept rising that, with the agreement of your Majesty's officials and priests and captains, I turned around and we returned to the port.⁴⁴

Schmidl reports that during Irala's *entrada* from 1547 to 1549 “there was such a scarcity of water that one did not worry about gold, or silver, or food, or other goods, for the only thing that mattered was water.”⁴⁵ In addition to confronting extremes of terrain and weather, the conquistadors had to secure supplies from indigenous settlements, engaging in military skirmishes that resulted in the slaughter and enslavement of Indians.

While each *entrada* proved an ordeal in its own way, Cabeza de Vaca's expedition was particularly ill advised. Its size alone made the logistics daunting. The *Comentarios* states that it was composed of twelve horsemen, four hundred harquebusiers and archers, and twelve hundred Carios in full war regalia with painted bodies, feather headdresses, and metal breast plates.⁴⁶ The timing was not propitious, for Cabeza de Vaca's arrival at Puerto de los Reyes coincided with the summer rainy season and the annual flooding of the Pantanal. Although Irala had scouted the region during the previous summer, he had been restricted by Cabeza de Vaca from venturing inland. Cabeza de Vaca, on the other hand, attempted to lead a march to the interior, encountering swampy jungle and torrential rains. The presence of large numbers of Cario warriors increased the potential for confrontation with the indigenous peoples in the area. The Carios' full war regalia signalled that they had joined the *entrada* with the expectation of raiding, while as Guaraní-speakers they were identified with Itatines, who were

the enemies of the non-*avá* nations at Puerto de los Reyes and further inland. All these factors contributed to the conflicts that arose once the expedition reached Puerto de los Reyes.

According to the *Comentarios*, the *entrada* began innocuously enough. As Cabeza de Vaca sailed up the Paraguay he stopped at ports along the way to distribute presents to his Guaraní allies and “to request on behalf of His Majesty that they remain always in peace.”⁴⁷ After meeting with the caciques of Tapuá, Juriquiza (Hieruquiza), and Itaquí, he reached the territories of Guaçani and Tabaré and “received them with great love because they had kept the peace they had made.”⁴⁸ Although Schmidl claims that Tabaré had agreed to provide two thousand warriors for the *entrada* as a condition of his submission to colonial vassalage, the *Comentarios* states that it was at this juncture that Tabaré offered to join the expedition, bringing with him thirty relatives and dependents.⁴⁹ While the discrepancy of the two accounts can be attributed to Schmidl’s faulty memory and propensity for embellishment, it also signals the precariousness of Tabaré’s allegiance and the possibility that he had been forced to join the expedition. The *Comentarios* represents his uncertain loyalty in a positive light, relating that the governor

perceived that it would be good to bring [Tabaré] with him, so that he would comply with what he offered, and the land would remain pacified and secure with Tabaré in his company. He therefore thanked him and agreed to his coming, and gave him more presents than he had [provided] any other chief of the river. For it was certain that by keeping this chief contented, the whole land would remain at peace and nobody would dare raise a rebellion.⁵⁰

With Tabaré’s cooperation secured, whether voluntarily or through coercion, Cabeza de Vaca continued to sail upriver. By September 28, he had reached the port of Guayviaño, which marked the limit of the territory where Guaraní was spoken.

For the rest of the journey to Puerto de los Reyes, the *Comentarios* emphasizes Cabeza de Vaca’s intercultural skills as a leader by detailing his negotiations with various non-*avá* nations. First, the expedition passed the harbour of Candelaria, where Ayolas had set out on his ill-fated *entrada*. After making contact with the Payagúas, Cabeza de Vaca attempted to

obtain the gold and silver they claimed to have kept after killing Ayolas.⁵¹ When the precious metals did not materialize and the Payaguás slipped away into the swampy marshes of the river banks, Cabeza de Vaca resumed his journey. On October 18, he reached the territory of the Guajarapos, canoe warriors living near the mouth of the Negro River from whom Irala had obtained testimonies during his scouting mission in December 1542. The Guajarapos pledged their allegiance to Cabeza de Vaca in return for presents. He learned from them and from some Chanés who had been slaves of the Itatines that García previously had passed through the region on his way to the sierra with five Christians and many Indians.⁵² After the territories of Guajarapos, the Paraguay became an intricate maze of lagoons and channels, and so Cabeza de Vaca ordered three tall crosses erected as signposts before entering a river the Indians called Yguati (the Paraguay after it branches eastward into Mato Grosso).⁵³ Passing by riverbank settlements of distinct indigenous groups, Cabeza de Vaca rowed upstream to reach Puerto de los Reyes in early November. Planting a large wooden cross under some tall palm trees, he used the sign of the Christian faith that had earned him the veneration of indigenous peoples in New Spain to mark his possession of the land for the King.⁵⁴ Cabeza de Vaca then established a base camp, appointed Irala *maestro de campo* (second-in-command), and charged him with the pacification of the Indians.⁵⁵

The first challenge Cabeza de Vaca faced after arriving at Puerto de los Reyes was the difficulty of finding indigenous guides who knew the way to the sierra and could lead the expedition inland. As a starting point for this task, he had at his disposal Irala's report from his previous scouting mission. Upon reaching the area the year before, Irala had met a nucleus of forty Guaraníes who claimed that their people had once crossed overland to the sierra from the entry point of Puerto de los Reyes, and that the metals the Spanish sought were located a five-month march inland.⁵⁶ When Irala had asked if they could lead him there, they replied that they could not show him the way because of their many enemies, but that there were Guaraníes who knew the paths, naming their caciques as "*marotapy, abal moc tènby, tabupici, matirua, and temesu.*"⁵⁷ A year later, there were no Guaraníes to be found in the immediate vicinity of Puerto de los Reyes, and so Cabeza de Vaca had to rely on information provided by the Chanés to try to locate them. The *Comentarios* relates that some Chanés who came to Puerto de los Reyes told Cabeza de Vaca that there were "Guaraníes inhabiting the mountains in this land [who] know the route and could show it to him for they come and go making wars

against the Indians in the interior.”⁵⁸ But when Cabeza de Vaca sent several Spaniards and some Carios to find these Guaraníes, they returned six days later to report that “the Guaraníes had left the area because their villages and houses were deserted and all of the land appeared depopulated.”⁵⁹

Upon learning from the Chanés that these Guaraníes may have gone to the territory of some other Guaraníes that was located near an indigenous people called the Xarayes and could be reached by canoe in eight or ten days, Cabeza de Vaca sent a second scouting party to in search of them. This scouting party was led by two *lenguas*, Hector de Acuña and Antonio Correa, both of whom were seasoned interpreters.⁶⁰ Acuña had mediated the verbal exchange with the Guaycurúes during Cabeza de Vaca’s raid, while Correa had translated for Irala during his scouting mission to Puerto de los Reyes. Their role as protagonists in the search for the elusive Guaraníes signaled a subtle shift in the power dynamics of the expedition. No longer was Cabeza de Vaca the intercultural diplomat dispensing largesse and negotiating directly with indigenous peoples; instead, he had become a middleman in a strange land, deciphering second-hand information from *lenguas* who were once again the cultural brokers of indigenous-European interactions.

According to the *Comentarios*, Acuña and Correa made peaceful contact with the Xarayes and found a Guaraní-speaking Indian living among them. They reported to Cabeza de Vaca that after an arduous journey through knee-deep mud and swamps of brackish water, they were met by Indians who offered them “maize bread, cooked ducks, fish, and maize wine,”⁶¹ and took them to a village of more than one thousand inhabitants.⁶² Ruled by a cacique named Camire, the villagers cultivated corn, potatoes, manioc, and cotton; the men pierced their lips; and the women wore white cotton dresses called *tipoes* and were great weavers.⁶³ This description of the Xarayes, whom Susnik identifies as canoe-fisherman who had adopted agriculture and textiles through their contact with the tribute nations of the Inca,⁶⁴ is the first historical record of their customs. It is also the most accurate. By the 1600s, colonial maps represented the Xarayes’ territory in the Mato Grosso swamplands as a large and mysterious lake, and Jesuit histories described their village as an island sanctuary of noble savages renowned for their innate goodness and peaceful nature.⁶⁵

While Acuña and Correa were able to provide Cabeza de Vaca with reliable information about the Xarayes, their attempts to learn about the interior were less unsuccessful. Communicating with Camire through the Guaraní-speaking Indian living in the village, they explained that Cabeza de Vaca wanted to make an alliance with the Xarayes and find the route to inland settlements. Camire responded by denying all knowledge of the interior, telling them that “he did not know of or have any news about such a route, nor had his people ever gone inland because the land is flooded for two months, and when the waters recede the country remains in such a state that travel is not possible.”⁶⁶ Asked if he could take them to the Guaraníes who knew the way, Camire replied that the Guaraníes were his enemies and he was at war with them. Nevertheless, he offered his Guaraní interpreter as a guide to lead the *lenguas* to where the Guaraníes had settled. He also assembled six hundred men in full warrior regalia to protect them, explaining that since they had visited him the Guaraníes would consider them enemies.⁶⁷ Confronted with this array of warriors, Acuña and Correa decided to return to Puerto de los Reyes rather than embark on what appeared to be a raiding party mounted under false pretenses. Presenting Camire with a red hat and other barter goods, they received parrot feather headdresses and the Guaraní interpreter in exchange.⁶⁸

When the Acuña and Correa arrived back at Puerto de los Reyes with the Guaraní interpreter, the problem of finding a guide for the *entrada* appeared to have been resolved. Cabeza de Vaca’s questioning of the Guaraní revealed that he was from Itatí on the Paraguay River, (meaning that he was Itatín), and that as a young boy he had accompanied a raiding party to the sierra. When the raiding party was attacked by other indigenous nations, he had managed to escape and was adopted by the Xarayes. Although this had occurred many years ago, he told Cabeza de Vaca that he might be able to find the route they had taken, and that the first settlement in the interior lay within a five-day march of Puerto de los Reyes.⁶⁹ On the basis of his testimony, Cabeza de Vaca decided that the Guaraní had sufficient knowledge to guide the expedition inland. On November 28, Cabeza de Vaca departed from Puerto de los Reyes with more than one thousand Cario warriors and three hundred conquistadors, leaving one hundred men and two hundred Carios behind to guard the base camp.⁷⁰

Cabeza de Vaca’s decision to trust the Guaraní as his guide reflected the necessity of embarking on a march to the sierra before his supplies were exhausted and men demoralized.

In light of what the *lenguas* Acuña and Correa, and Irala before them, had learned from their scouting missions, it was also reckless. Camire was unequivocal about the impassibility of the interior, while his summoning of warriors to accompany them was a sign that encounters with either the Guaraníes of the mountains, or other indigenous nations, would be not be amicable. The Guaraníes with whom Irala had spoken the previous year had told him that all the nations of the interior were their enemies, and that gold and silver lay a five-month march away. Moreover, Cabeza de Vaca's first scouting party had discovered that the area immediately to the west of Puerto de los Reyes was deserted.

In a letter Irala wrote to the King in 1545, he attributes the depopulation of the area to the wars waged by the Guaraníes whom he had met during his scouting mission. He reports that

I learned from them that it was a fifteen-day journey to reach populated lands. This desert had been made through wars in which the Guaraní had killed and destroyed many people of this land, and had also taken [captive] other peoples from further inland, in an area they said was very populated.⁷¹

These wars appear to refer to an Itatín raid to the sierra that was later described by Diego Felipe de Alcaya in a *relación* he wrote in the early 1600s.⁷² Alcaya relates that the raid began in the Xarayes wetlands and ended near the town of Samaipata, southwest of Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Instead of returning to their territories east of Paraguay River, the Itatines scattered and settled in small groups in the area around the Guaypay River (Río Grande) north of Santa Cruz, where they formed a nucleus of Guaraní-speakers who were known as the Chiriguaná (the present-day Chiriguano) in the 1500s.⁷³ Alcaya's account of this raid explains why Irala had found Guaraní-speakers near Puerto de los Reyes, why the Chanés claimed they were living in the mountains, and why the Acuña and Correa had found a Guaraní-speaker living among the Xarayes. It also explains why Cabeza de Vaca's guide proved unreliable, for he had never actually reached the sierra.

Cabeza de Vaca's error in judgment in trusting the Guaraní to lead him inland quickly became evident. The *Comentarios* relates that after the expedition had marched for five days through heavy rains and impenetrable jungle, the Guaraní admitted that he did not know where he was

and that the old tracks made by his people had disappeared.⁷⁴ The expedition's encounter the next day with an isolated group of fourteen Guaraníes did little to resolve the situation. Presumably they were survivors of the Itatín raid, for they told Cabeza de Vaca they had taken refuge in the forest after most of their people had been killed during a raiding foray many years earlier.⁷⁵ They were unable to advise him on what direction to take, or on how far away the interior settlements lay. However, they did inform him that their relatives living a two-day journey away still knew the route.⁷⁶ Cabeza de Vaca dispatched an interpreter and some Carios to find them. Three days later the interpreter returned with an Indian who claimed he knew a route to a rocky summit called Tapuaguazú, from where the smoke of all the settlements could be seen.⁷⁷ This summit, which he stated lay a sixteen-day march further inland, may have referred to a flat mountain top now known as El Fuerte, located near Samaipata.⁷⁸

At this point in the *entrada*, news that the nearest settlements were still a sixteen-day march away produced a near mutiny among the conquistadors. When Cabeza de Vaca convened an assembly of the officers, captains, and clergy to discuss what course of action to take, they were unanimous in demanding to return to Puerto de los Reyes, telling him they had lost faith in the guides and that only six days of provisions remained.⁷⁹ Cabeza de Vaca argued for continuing the march. He warned that there was not enough food back at Puerto de los Reyes and none could be obtained from the indigenous peoples in the area, as the crops were not yet ripe. He also cautioned that flooding would soon make the region impassable and another attempt to reach the interior unfeasible.⁸⁰ Presented with these reasons for not abandoning the march, the other members of the expedition were still adamant that turning back was the only option to ensure the “security and lives of the Christians and Indians.”⁸¹ Reluctantly, Cabeza de Vaca conceded to their demand, “not wanting to provide an opportunity for some disturbance that he would have been obliged to punish.”⁸² After ordering a captain named Francisco de Ribera and six Spaniards to continue inland with eleven Cario caciques and the Indian who knew the route to Tapuaguazú, Cabeza de Vaca and the expedition returned to Puerto de los Reyes.⁸³

While the *Comentarios* does not elaborate on the nature of these potential disturbances, Cabeza de Vaca claims in his *Relación general* that Irala was plotting to kill him in the first confrontation with hostile Indians.⁸⁴ The priest Francisco González Paniagua also describes an

acrimonious exchange that took place between them. He relates how Cabeza de Vaca, upon learning that the food supplies had been distributed in an undisciplined fashion and that rations allotted for twenty days had been consumed in less than a week, angrily told the conquistadors “they were not men but beasts, who would die like pigs.”⁸⁵ In response to his outburst, Irala publicly declared “the governor the most evil man to have been born in the world.”⁸⁶ While this verbal altercation attests to Irala’s animosity towards Cabeza de Vaca and lends credibility to Cabeza de Vaca’s fear of assassination, it also provides a glimpse of the panic and rising tempers gripping the expedition as the conquistadors struggled through swampy jungle terrain, vastly outnumbered by the Cario warriors and led astray by an indigenous guide. According to Ochoa de Eizaguirre, the entire march was chaotic. He describes how “we marched for nine days without advancing forward with such disorder that has never been seen in the world. And turning back, we returned to the brigantines with great hardship for all the Christians.”⁸⁷

If the return march had caused the conquistadors great hardship, the news awaiting them at Puerto de los Reyes was equally demoralizing. They learned that in their absence the Indians from a nearby island had begun terrorizing the Spaniards and Cario warriors who remained behind. In alliance with the Guajarapos and other nations, these Indians had ceased to bring provisions and tried to attack the base camp at night and seize the brigantines.⁸⁸ Although the *Comentarios* states that Cabeza de Vaca was able to achieve peace by distributing barter goods to the caciques in the area and issuing a warning that he would declare war if they attacked the Christians again, there were still the logistics of feeding a large expedition and finding a route to the sierra to resolve.⁸⁹ On the advice of the clergy and captains, Cabeza de Vaca sent Gonzalo de Mendoza with one hundred and twenty soldiers and six hundred Carios in obtain provisions from the Arianicosies, who lived in the lagoons north of the port.⁹⁰ Five days later, on December 20, he ordered Hernando de Ribera, the sailor from Caboto’s expedition, to lead fifty men on an exploratory mission up the Yguati River to seek food supplies from the Xarayes and information about how to reach the sierra.⁹¹

While the *Comentarios* records at great length the instructions that Cabeza de Vaca issued to Mendoza to trade for provisions and to ensure that his men did not abuse the Indians are recorded, it also states that in the event that the Indians refused to supply food Mendoza was ordered “to take it by force, and if it is defended by arms, to make war upon them, for the

hunger we suffer leaves us no other choice.”⁹² The de facto license that Cabeza de Vaca granted to Mendoza to raid the surrounding settlements underscores the dire lack of provisions to sustain the expedition. It also reveals an inherent contradiction the *Comentarios*’ representation of Cabeza de Vaca’s concern for the fair treatment of the Indians. While he had to rely on obtaining food from the indigenous peoples in the region, the size of the expedition precluded the likelihood that they would have sufficient resources for such large numbers and be disposed to trading. Moreover, as Cabeza de Vaca had pointed out in the assembly he held during his inland march, the corn was not yet ripe. Thus, even if the Indians at Puerto de los Reyes were willing to barter, they did not have food surpluses to offer in return. That raiding was the expedition’s only option to obtain provisions became evident when Mendoza sent back word several weeks later that after trying in vain to barter “beads and knives and iron wedges (which they greatly esteem), and to give them many fish hooks,”⁹³ the Arianicosies had attacked him. After two of their warriors were killed in the ensuing skirmish, the rest fled, and Mendoza had plundered their village for food. In retaliation, the Arianicosies joined with other nations, including the Guajarapos and the Guatos, to fight against him and his men.⁹⁴

As hostilities escalated over scarce food resources, Francisco de Ribera returned to Puerto de los Reyes from his scouting mission to Tapuaguazú at the beginning of January with news of treacherous Indians and an equally treacherous terrain that lay further inland. Ribera reported that he had travelled westward with the six Spaniards and eleven Cario chiefs until he made contact with an indigenous people called the Tarapecocies. The initial encounter was promising. The Tarapecocies’ houses were filled with ample stores of corn and the Spaniards noticed bracelets, plates, and small axes made of silver. Communicating by signs, they were ushered into the cacique’s house, where two slaves, whom Ribera identified as Orejones, informed them that a three-day journey further west there were Christians living with the Payzunoos who could show them the route to Tapuaguazú. While this news was encouraging, Ribera soon suspected that the cacique’s welcome was a ruse, and that the Tarapecocies were planning to kill the Spaniards and the Carios as they slept. Fleeing from the village with the Tarapecocies in pursuit, Ribera and his men were wounded but managed to escape. They made their way back to Puerto de los Reyes through swamps that had swollen to the size of lagoons, forcing them to build rafts to cross them.⁹⁵

While Ribera's scouting mission served to reinforce Camire's warning that the interior was impassable, his encounter with the Tarapecocies revealed another fundamental problem that faced the expedition. Some Tarapecocies living near Puerto de los Reyes told Cabeza de Vaca that the reason Ribera had been attacked was because he was travelling with Guaraní-speaking Indians, "who were their enemies, as in former times they had gone as far as their lands to kill and destroy them."⁹⁶ The Tarapecocies assured Cabeza that if he went to the interior without Guaraní-speakers, he would be well received and be able to trade for silver and gold. The Tarapecocies' association of the Cario warriors with the raiding Itatines meant that Cabeza de Vaca's indigenous allies were perceived as enemies by the nations en route to the sierra. That this inter-ethnic conflict also extended to the indigenous peoples inhabiting the area around Puerto de los Reyes became apparent when the island Indians resumed their assaults on the expedition soon after Ribera's return. According to Hernández's 1545 *relación*, they succeeded in killing four Christians and eating one, prompting Cabeza de Vaca to attack them.⁹⁷

The *Comentarios* expands on Hernández's account of the attack by the island Indians to emphasize Cabeza de Vaca's resolve to maintain peaceful relations with the indigenous nations at Puerto de los Reyes despite their aggression. It describes how the Indians ambushed a group of Carios and Spanish who had ventured from the base camp to go fishing. After slaughtering the baptized Carios, they took five Spaniards and the rest of the Carios as captives to their island, where "they killed and dismembered the five Christians and [Cario] Indians, and shared amongst them the pieces with the Guajarapos and Guatos."⁹⁸ Emboldened by the success of their ambush and the weakness of the Spanish, who had succumbed to fevers as the summer rains intensified, the Indians set fire to the base camp and killed fifty-eight more Christians.⁹⁹ Yet, despite the unprovoked nature of these attacks and the cannibalism that occurred, the *Comentarios* claims that it was only when the island Indians refused to return the Cario captives that Cabeza de Vaca, in accordance with the advice of the captains and the clergy, declared war on them.¹⁰⁰

While the *Comentarios*' repetitive insistence upon Cabeza de Vaca's entreaties for peace and due process before declaring war sought to underline the *adelantado*'s genuine concern for just rule and the legal principles of conquest, other eyewitness accounts contrast sharply in their

evaluation of the violence he sanctioned during the *entrada*. Ochoa de Eizaguirre reports that “without any just reason, he [Cabeza de Vaca] ordered wars to be made on all the nations in the area that had done nothing wrong, in which more than four thousand women and babies died and two thousand more were taken prisoner.”¹⁰¹ Felipe de Cáceres claims that the governor “killed so many Indians, and did so with such cruelty, that eleven towns were left destroyed and burnt and more than three thousand souls perished without cause or just reason.”¹⁰² Pedro de Dorantes echoes his claim, stating that “ten or twelve towns [were] destroyed and most of the inhabitants killed or imprisoned”¹⁰³ Even Schmidl, who as a seasoned mercenary had no political stake in demonizing Cabeza de Vaca or empathizing with the indigenous peoples that he fought against, was horrified by the violence that transpired. Both he and Dorantes denounce a massacre that occurred during a raid Cabeza de Vaca ordered against the island Indians just before the expedition returned to Asunción. Dorantes decries it as a slaughter of innocents:

The Christians arrived at the island and the Indians greeted them without weapons and with their children in their arms. As they were defenseless, the [Cario] Indians and Christians killed and took many women, children, and young men captive. The Guaraníes, our allies, killed them as they had done in the previous war, for their greatest joy is to kill and eat Indians from other tribes.¹⁰⁴

Schmidl tells a similar tale of carnage. He relates that when the Indians came out of their houses unarmed and in a peaceful manner to greet the Spanish, “a discussion began between the Surucuis [the island Indians] and the Carios; and hearing this we fired our harquebuses, killing all those we found and taking two thousand men, women, young boys, and children captive.”¹⁰⁵

In view of the conquistadors’ animosity towards Cabeza de Vaca, it is tempting to dismiss these descriptions of unprovoked carnage and massive captive-taking as malicious exaggerations intended to discredit his leadership. However, Dorantes’s and Schmidl’s accounts of the island massacre suggest there may be another explanation for the atrocities they described. In each instance, they hint at a situation in which the Spanish had lost control of their Cario allies. Dorantes asserts that the Cario warriors killed the Indians with great

relish. In Schmidl's account, the conquistadors appear to have opened fire in response to the fear generated by the "discussion" between the Carios and the Surucucsis.

Although there is no other record of the Carios' participation in the wars fought at Puerto de los Reyes, a number of factors contributed to the probability that they engaged in uncontrolled raiding. Most saliently, the depletion of the expeditions' provisions and the failure to reach the populated settlements of the interior meant that Cabeza de Vaca had to rely on his Cario allies to secure provisions by force, which provided opportunities for engaging in battle and taking captives. By conferring on Mendoza the right to wage war that he had previously bestowed on Irala, Cabeza de Vaca had inadvertently undermined a centralized chain of command that was contingent on Irala's prestige as a *mburuvichá* to unite the *tuvichás*. When Cabeza de Vaca first arrived at Puerto de los Reyes, he had clearly recognized Irala's competence as a captain by appointing him *maestro de campo* and charging him with the pacification of the land. However, Cabeza de Vaca's subsequent conviction that Irala was planning to assassinate him during the inland march had made sending him on raiding missions a dangerous proposition. By entrusting Mendoza in his stead, Cabeza de Vaca increased the *tuvichás*' power to act independently and the potential for indiscriminate slaughter and excessive captive-taking. The island Indians' cannibal feast and the Spaniards' previous war against Tabaré, which had pitted the Carios against each other and robbed them of their captives, may also have motivated them to enact a particularly virulent revenge against the non-*avá* nations at Puerto de los Reyes.

While Cabeza de Vaca may have lost control of the Cario warriors in the raids that he ordered, he sought to preserve his authority at the base camp and ensure fair treatment of the Indians by controlling trade. He issued an edict prohibiting bartering for slaves and food between the members of the expedition and non-*avá* nations. To enforce this edict, he instituted penalties for entering indigenous settlements around Puerto de los Reyes and placed guards on the paths to their villages and in front of their houses.¹⁰⁶ He also forbade the conquistadors to trade with the Carios for the captives they had taken in raiding. Ochoa de Eizaguirre reports with more than a hint of indignation that the governor

ordered for public decree that no person should contract with or barter for slaves or any other thing with our Indian allies [the Carios], even though they had a great many captives. When no one came to buy these captives, each day they were killed in a very cruel manner. On the other hand, he [Cabeza de Vaca] sent his servants to trade with the Carios and take for him the slaves that they had.¹⁰⁷

Dorantes corroborates Ochoa de Eizaguirre's allegations, describing how the governor issued a decree "that no Christian could buy from our Indian allies any Indian prisoner or other thing, and on account of these prohibitions the Indians killed many more [prisoners] than they would have killed if they had been bought."¹⁰⁸

In preventing the conquistadors from trading with the Indians at Puerto de los Reyes despite the severe lack of supplies, Cabeza de Vaca's intent may have been similar to his concern to avoid altercations during his overland journey from Brazil, during which he had forbidden his men to communicate or trade with the Indians.¹⁰⁹ The contexts, however, were distinct. On his march to Asunción, the conquistadors who accompanied Cabeza de Vaca were unfamiliar with the culture and language of the indigenous peoples they encountered. At Puerto de los Reyes, the majority of the conquistadors had been living and collaborating with the Carios for almost eight years, and had secured their allegiance through relationships with indigenous women. In this respect, Hernández's explanation in his 1545 *relación* for why Cabeza de Vaca's prohibition against bartering with the Indians at Puerto de los Reyes antagonized the conquistadors is revealing. He reports that the caciques in the area had begun

to give their daughters to the interpreters and the captains, and brought some to the Governor. When he [Cabeza de Vaca] realized this was happening he ordered that the women were not to be taken from their houses so that the Indians would not rise up and rebel upon seeing how badly their women were being treated. Because the soldiers were not permitted to go amongst the Indians or exchange things with them, the royal officials and the captains developed a great hatred for the Governor.¹¹⁰

While Hernández defends Cabeza de Vaca's prohibition against consorting or trading with the Indians as a protective measure, their offering of women suggests that Cabeza de Vaca may also have feared that the conquistadors were forging independent alliances with the caciques at

Puerto de los Reyes that would threaten his leadership. An accusation that Cáceres makes against Cabeza de Vaca of seeking a monopoly over interactions with non-*avá* Indians suggests that this was the case. He states that “all the times the Indians came to see him [Cabeza de Vaca], who were many and from many tribes ... he never mentioned the name of His Majesty but told them that he was the sole chief of the Christians and that they were to serve him and no other.”¹¹¹

Ochoa de Eizaguirre’s claim that Cabeza de Vaca forbade the conquistadors to trade with the Carios for captives at the same time that he sent his servants to obtain them is a puzzling allegation. If we accept that his prohibition was similar in intent to the injunction against trading with the Indians of Puerto de los Reyes, it can be understood as an additional measure to ensure that colonial justice was being observed by preventing the enslavement and abuse of prisoners. In acquiring these captives, Cabeza de Vaca may have been seeking to retain them for the purpose of negotiating peace accords and colonial vassalage, thus deploying the same strategy he had used in his previous raids against the Guaycurués and Tabaré. On the other hand, he may have been seeking monopoly control over an incipient slave trade with the Carios in the same manner as he sought to establish a monopoly over interactions with non-*avá* nations. But as the Carios were killing the captives in their possession, it appears that Cabeza de Vaca instead had lost control of the terms of surrender as well as engagement in the wars being waged at Puerto de los Reyes. Not only was he unsuccessful at halting the escalating hostilities between the Carios and the non-*avá* nations, but he had also sealed the fate of the captives whom he had sought to protect.

The Carios’ possession of the captives they had taken in the raids underscores their independence from the Spanish command at Puerto de los Reyes. Their killing of these captives also points to how they had adapted their warrior norms to a mercantile economy. Although some form of ritual cannibalism might have occurred in the “very cruel manner” by which the captives met their deaths, both Ezaguirre and Dorantes claim that the number of deaths increased because no one came to buy them. And while their claim can be seen as the justification for an incipient slave trade, it also suggests that the captives’ exchange value was of greater significance to the Carios than their use value for integration into their *tekó-ás*. This raises the question of whether the Carios had taken an excessive number of captives during the

raids at Puerto de los Reyes specifically for barter, and if their primary motive for agreeing to participate in the *entrada* had been to obtain captives to trade with the conquistadors.

While Cabeza de Vaca was able to prevent the trafficking of captives, albeit at the cost of their lives, he had alienated both the conquistadors and his Carios allies on whom he was dependent to organize another march inland to reach the lands of gold and silver. As a consequence, the closest the expedition came to finding these elusive precious metals was during the exploratory mission Hernando de Ribera led up the Yguati River. Schmidl, who participated in the mission, relates that they arrived at the Xarayes' village, only to be told, as Hector de Acuña and Antonio Correa had been previously, that it was not a good time to travel inland because of the rains.¹¹² Despite the Xarayes' warning about the rains and their refusal to provide a guide, Ribera and his men pushed inland, marching in water up to their waists. When they finally managed to reach inhabited lands, they found that the indigenous people were starving because locusts had destroyed their crops.¹¹³ According to Schmidl, these people were called the Ortueses, and were so populous that "it was lucky for us that there was such hunger in the land, for if this was not the case, who knows if we would have been able to leave there with our lives."¹¹⁴ While the encounter with Ortueses appears to have been less than amicable, Schmidl reports that before turning back to Puerto de los Reyes, the conquistadors were able to trade "knives, rosaries, scissors, mirrors, and other things"¹¹⁵ for some blankets, cotton, and a small amount of silver.

While the return journey proved so arduous that Schmidl claims "half of our people were at death's door because of the flooding and the scarcity we experienced,"¹¹⁶ what awaited the scouting party at Puerto de los Reyes was worse. The rising waters had essentially marooned the conquistadors, who were so weakened by fever and hunger that Ochoa de Eizaguirre was prompted to conclude that "God had punished the expedition by making everyone ill to the point of death."¹¹⁷ Irala's and the royal officials' hatred of Cabeza de Vaca had festered to the point that Cabeza de Vaca was living in fear they would assassinate him.¹¹⁸ To add to the mutinous mood, Schmidl reports that Cabeza de Vaca confiscated the scouting party's bounty and imprisoned Ribera, although he was forced to reverse his decision when the conquistadors threatened to rebel against him.¹¹⁹ By the time the rains had subsided and the waters receded in mid-March, Cabeza de Vaca had lost the confidence of his men, whom according to Schmidl

were “neither content nor did they speak well of him because of the manner in which he conducted himself.”¹²⁰ Despite Cabeza de Vaca’s entreaties to attempt another march to the interior, the conquistadors categorically refused to follow him and demanded to return to Asunción.

Seven months after embarking on the *entrada*, Cabeza de Vaca arrived back in Asunción on April 8, 1544, and sought unsuccessfully to re-establish his authority over the mutinous conquistadors. As he entered the city, he was greeted by Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza and an army of twenty thousand Cario warriors who had amassed to launch a retaliatory raid against the Agaces.¹²¹ The raid never happened. Instead, the *Comentarios* relates that the royal officials incited the conquistadors to rebel against the governor by spreading rumours that he intended to seize their women and lands.¹²² Cáceres provides a context for these rumours in his 1545 letter, stating that Cabeza de Vaca issued writs prohibiting trade with the Asunción Carios and “called together all the caciques that are here in our service and ordered that not one of them could serve any Christian except him or he would hang them.”¹²³ Dorantes similarly claims that Cabeza de Vaca ordered the Carios to serve only him.¹²⁴

These measures, which may have been prompted in part by Cabeza de Vaca’s alarm at the massive army of Cario warriors Salazar had at his command, represent the culmination of his efforts to control the Carios’ allegiance by intervening in the conquistadors’ relations with them. Less than two weeks after returning from the *entrada*, his fear of the royal officials’ violent intentions against him were realized. The *Comentarios* describes how on the evening of San Marcos, (April 25), Garcí Venegas, Alonso Cabrera, and Felipe de Cáceres dragged Cabeza de Vaca from his bed where he lay ill. They took him prisoner with cries of “liberty, liberty, long live the king — *libertad, libertad, viua el rey!*,”¹²⁵ paraded him through the streets, and took him to Venegas’s house where he remained shackled for almost a year.

In the conquistadors’ accounts of the *entrada* that had led to this ignominious ending of Cabeza de Vaca’s rule of the Río de la Plata, there is one fantastical exception to the relentless litany of grievances against the governor, the material deprivation they suffered, and the carnage that transpired at Puerto de los Reyes. Both Schimdl’s chronicle, which was published in 1567, and a *relación* by Hernando Ribera that was dated March 3, 1545, and published as an

addendum to the *Comentarios* in 1555, include in their descriptions of their exploratory mission up the Yguati River tantalizing tales of one-breasted women and the wealth of empires that were to be found in the interior. Contrasting the adversity of the *entrada* with the riches that lay beyond the jungle swamps of the Pantanal, their tall tales offered their sixteenth-century readers a curious amalgam of myth and hearsay that represented the fantasy of conquest.

In Schmidl's chronicle, his only flight of fancy in an otherwise mundane recounting of everyday survival, occurs when he reaches the territory of the Xarayes. Transforming their village into the stately kingdom of the Jerús, and their cacique Camire into a king who had a "great court like Europe,"¹²⁶ he relates that the king of the Jerús welcomed the conquistadors with pomp and ceremony. He describes how the path to the king's palace was strewn with flowers and music was played during meals, while at noon the most beautiful women and men danced for the king's pleasure.¹²⁷ In Schmidl's estimation, the women were both industrious and lascivious, weaving "large cotton blankets bordered [with designs of] deer, ostrich, and llamas,"¹²⁸ and being "great lovers and affectionate with ardent bodies."¹²⁹ Most importantly, when the conquistadors told the king they were looking for gold and silver, he gave them a crown of silver and a piece of gold he had procured through his wars against one-breasted women who lived on an island.¹³⁰ Bearing a remarkable resemblance to Herodotus's Amazons of ancient Greece, the women only made contact with men to conceive their children; they raised the girls to be warriors and left the boys with the men, who lived in a land of great wealth ruled by a king named Iñis.¹³¹

Hernando Ribera makes no mention in his 1545 *relación* of the Xarayes and the gold and silver they had. Instead, he relates how caciques from the interior came to see him at the Ortueses' village, which Schmidl had described as decimated by a locust plague, and told him about the lands that lay to the west.¹³² Ribera learned from the caciques that there were female warriors who possessed a great deal of silver and gold, and of the existence of an island in a large lake where the women lived "called by the Indians the house of the sun because the sun shuts itself in there."¹³³ According to the caciques, there were "large settlements of people who possess much metal"¹³⁴ bordering the lake that could be reached in a few days by travelling through populated lands with good roads. They also claimed that there were Christians living

in these settlements who had come from the other side of the mountains, where there were great deserts of sand and salty waters with large ships.¹³⁵

Rather than pure invention, Schmidl's and Ribera's accounts appear to have been woven from their own projections based on European lore and the indigenous caciques' perceptions of the Inca dynasty as viewed from the fringes of the empire. The king named Iñis referred to the ruler of the Inca, who was descended from Inti (Quechua for sun). The large lake that the caciques had described to Ribera was most likely Lake Titicaca, where according to Inca legend the sun first emerged. The island of the female warriors was probably the Isla del Sol, where temple convents housed the *mamaconas*, village girls who were chosen to live apart and serve the Incan nobility.¹³⁶ The Christians would have been Pizarro and his conquistadors, who had sailed down the Pacific coast in large ships and crossed the coastal deserts of Peru to reach Cusco and the heart of the Incan empire.

Beatriz Pastor has argued in her analysis of colonial writing that indigenous peoples told tales of female warriors and incalculable riches to Europeans as a strategy to mirror back to them their fantasies of conquest in order to "lure them into a trap from which they could not escape: nature, with its marshes, deserts, plains, and jungles."¹³⁷ During Cabeza de Vaca's *entrada*, this appears not to have been the case. The *Comentarios* contains no record of tall tales being told to entice the conquistadors to travel inland. Instead, it reveals how Cabeza de Vaca stubbornly clings to his goal of reaching the sierra in spite of indigenous informants' warnings of the difficulties of marching to the interior. In Schmidl's chronicle, the Jerús' king materializes the sought after riches by handing the conquistadors a piece of gold and a silver crown, yet he also advises them that the terrain beyond his village is impassable. In Ribera's *relación*, he turns back to Puerto de los Reyes after hearing the caciques' stories of the fabulous wealth of settlements that lay only a few days away through populated land with good roads.

The absence of any tall tales in the *Comentarios* and the ambiguous lure of the fantasy of conquest in Schmidl's and Ribera's accounts makes the stories of Amazons and fabulous riches all the more intriguing, raising the question of what purpose they were intended to serve. As Schmidl's chronicle was written long after his return to Europe, his descriptions of

the Xarayes' opulent kingdom and one-breasted female warriors most likely were intended to offer his readers a literary respite from the relentless adversity of the *entrada*. Whether he actually believed in the Amazons' existence is another issue. Perhaps his one flight of fancy in his chronicle stemmed from his conviction that they did inhabit the interior, and sustained his dream of conquest as he waded through the impenetrable swamps of the Gran Chaco. An understanding of what purpose Ribera's tall tales served requires a more intertextual, although no less speculative, interpretation. As a codicil to the *Comentarios*, his *relación* is inseparable from the objective of the *Comentarios* to persuade the reader of Cabeza de Vaca's achievements as *adelantado*, and, as Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz have argued, to lay claim to an imperial legacy of conquerors.

In the context of the *Comentarios*' historicizing function, the contrast between its memorializing of Cabeza de Vaca's conquest of the Río de la Plata and Hernán Cortés's self-aggrandizing account of his conquest of Mexico in his letters to the King, is striking.¹³⁸ Cortés's letters, which were circulating in Spain at the same time as Hernández was penning the *Comentarios*, are described by the historian Inga Clendinnen as "splendid fictions" crafted from "the messy series of events"¹³⁹ that led to his victory over the Aztecs. Deconstructing the layers of "politic elisions, omissions, inventions, and a transparent desire to impress Charles of Spain with his own indispensability"¹⁴⁰ embedded in Cortés's triumphalist prose, she persuasively demonstrates how the mutual unintelligibility of cultural signs was masked by the coherence of his narrative. Within this narrative, Cortés justifies his invasion of Mexico without royal authority as an exceptional soldier who is victorious over the despotic Moctezoma and the indigenous peoples of New Spain, whom, in Cortés's words, practiced a "fierce and unnatural cruelty."¹⁴¹

Like Cortés's letters, the *Comentarios* was crafted as proof of Cabeza de Vaca's loyalty to the King. But in this instance, it was also a memoir intended for publication that sought to redeem Cabeza de Vaca's reputation after years of fighting criminal charges laid against him by the Council of the Indies. In order to do so, the *Comentarios* needed to counter the accusations of the Asunción conquistadors that Cabeza de Vaca had ruled as a despot and practiced a "fierce and unnatural cruelty." It also needed to explain the "series of messy events" leading to his imprisonment and return to Spain in chains. The *Comentarios* accomplishes this by inverting

the triumphalism of the conquest narrative to highlight Cabeza de Vaca's fair treatment of his indigenous vassals and the depravity of his insubordinate captains and royal officials. Yet, this narrative inversion cannot quite disguise the failure of Cabeza de Vaca's effort to impose just rule, nor how this effort paled in comparison to Cortés's breathtaking defeat of an empire. By adding Ribera's *relación* as a codocil to the *Comentarios*, Cabeza de Vaca hints at what he could have achieved in the name of the King, if it had not been for conquistadors "gone native" and the mutiny of his men.

While the inclusion of Ribera's *relación* as an addendum to the *Comentarios* makes sense as a compensatory strategy to represent the unrealized promise of conquest, the question still remains why it was not incorporated into the narrative of the *Comentarios*, as was Francisco de Ribera's report of his encounter with the Tarapecosies. Perhaps Cabeza de Vaca was at pains to banish any whiff of fantasy or doubt from the historical truth of his governorship. The answer may also lie in its attribution of authorship, for the *relación* differs considerably in voice and content from a letter Ribera wrote one week in which he describes the events and his in the conquest of the Río de la Plata from the arrival of Pedro de Mendoza's armada until after Cabeza de Vaca's imprisonment. The discrepancy between the two documents raises the possibility that Hernández either embellished or wrote the *relación*. If this was the case, he may have done so after he returned to Spain, where he would have been able to draw on the knowledge of the Inca empire that had begun to filter back to Europe and embed it in *relación's* narrative. In Ribera's earlier letter, which is dated February 25, 1545, and signed without the notary intervention of Hernández, there is no mention of female warriors or the house of the sun. Instead, Ribera describes in a few brief lines how he arrived at the Xarayes' village, continued inland to make contact with other indigenous peoples, whom he does not name or describe, turned back because of flooding, and made a report to the royal notary of what he had learned of the interior settlements.¹⁴²

In the *relación* dated a week later and witnessed by Hernández, Ribera explains that he did not submit this report to Cabeza de Vaca when he returned to Puerto de los Reyes because the governor was ill and soon afterwards imprisoned.¹⁴³ More significantly, he states that his report was only a partial account of his journey, for he did not want to tell the royal notary Juan Valderas the truth about the riches and settlements of the diverse peoples.¹⁴⁴ In view of

this surprising admission, the value of the *relación* as an addendum to the *Comentarios* rests on Ribera's willingness to reveal to Hernández the full account of his journey. The displacement of historical truth from Ribera as an eyewitness to Hernández as one who bears witness reinforces Hernández's trustworthiness as a notary, and by inference, his credibility as the author of the *Comentarios*. It also serves to underscore the authority of Hernández's own account of the *entrada* in the *Comentarios*: a "messy series of events" that pivoted on the fear stalking Cabeza de Vaca as his Guaraní guide misled him, provisions dwindled, hostilities escalated, waters rose, the conquistadors succumbed to fever, and Irala and the royal officials plotted to assassinate him.

The issue of how fear influenced the decisions Cabeza de Vaca made as *adelantado*—whether in following the Carios into the woods in search of a tiger, delegating to Irala the task of leading punitive raids, or seeking to control the interactions of the conquistadors, the Carios, and the non-*avá* Indians at Puerto de los Reyes—returns us to *Naufragios*, the *relación* he wrote about his castaway years in New Spain. Rolena Adorno has argued that *relación*'s narrative is predicated on the intertwining "discourses of terror and miracles," which transform Cabeza de Vaca's fear of being held as a captive and a slave by the indigenous peoples into their awe and fear of his healing powers.¹⁴⁵ In the *Comentarios*, Cabeza de Vaca's negotiation of fear is not nearly as successful. Rather than transforming terror into miracles through the sign of the cross, his marking of the Carios during the Guaycurú raid violates their warrior ethos, while his adherence to the legal protocols of conquest after planting a cross at Puerto de los Reyes to claim the territory for the King results in massacres and the cruel deaths of captives.

How the protocols of conquest generate a "menacing regime of terror"¹⁴⁶ is analyzed by José Rabasa in the context of Cabeza de Vaca's earlier *relación* about his castaway years in New Spain. Rabasa compares the language of the 1526 royal ordinances employed in the *Comentarios* to the narrative tropes of the *Naufragios* to argue that it is the inherent violence of the law that he calls upon to transform terror into miracles. While the objective of Rabasa's argument is to counter the dominant interpretation of the *Naufragios* in the historiography of colonial Latin America as "a critique of empire and the advocacy for peaceful conquest,"¹⁴⁷ he concludes his analysis by speculating on the significance of the *Comentarios* for an

understanding of colonial dynamics in the Río de la Plata. Prefacing his supposition with the disclaimer that “whether his [Cabeza de Vaca] accusations of Irala and his followers are reliable representations of the event need not concern us,”¹⁴⁸ he proposes that Cabeza de Vaca’s denunciation of the conquistadors’ relations with Guaraní women reveals the origin of Paraguay’s “hybrid and bilingual culture”¹⁴⁹ as one of the abuse and rape of indigenous women.

In this chapter, I have argued against reducing the origin of Paraguay’s hybrid culture to the violation of Guaraní women. Rather, my reading of the *Comentarios* against the grain of the conquistadors’ eyewitness accounts, and my concern to ascertain the empirical reliability of both, demonstrate how the negotiation of warrior norms was central to the early colonial dynamics of the Río de la Plata. In this context, Cabeza de Vaca’s adherence to the legal protocols of conquest altered and intensified the Carios’ practices of raiding and captive-taking; in turn, the Carios’ subversion of the objectives of conquest at Puerto de los Reyes produced a “menacing regime of terror” in which they became the protagonists of violence.

I also have argued that Cabeza de Vaca’s imposition of Hispanic law in a context where the conquistadors had survived by forging kinship alliances was the cause of their mutiny against him. A hundred years later, the Jesuit Del Techo represented this mutiny as a choice between civilization and barbarism, imagining Cabeza de Vaca admonishing his recalcitrant men at Puerto de los Reyes as follows:

What reason can there be, my fellow companions that like children you prefer an apple to gold, whose value you appear to not understand? Have we crossed the seas in search of land or precious metals? What can so fascinate you in order to put cakes of honey before the hope of becoming rich? Who can be capable of abandoning the pleasures of Spain, the love of your fathers, the sweetness of patriotism, and expose yourselves to a thousand dangers only to be satiated by the fruits, fish and meat of wild beasts in barbarian villages.¹⁵⁰

The contemporary accounts that recorded the events at the time suggest that a far less binary conflict had occurred during Cabeza de Vaca’s rule of the Río de la Plata, one in which an imperial dream of conquest, warrior norms, Hispanic law, and kinship obligations were

inextricably intertwined. While the adaptation of Mendoza's conquistadors to an indigenous worldview had enabled them to establish a colonial outpost in Asunción, Cabeza de Vaca's efforts to impose just rule and his adherence to the legal protocols of conquest rendered the fledgling colony ungovernable. As will become evident in the next chapter, Irala's attempts to make the colony governable once more pivoted on the contestation of worldviews, and the convergence, however fraught, between them.

Endnotes.

1. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 237-238.
2. *Ibid.*, 240. "*como los indios le temian y actuauan con mucho respecto.*"
3. *Ibid.*, 238; *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 32.
4. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 27.
5. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 34. "*porque serian sus esclavos.*"
6. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 240. "*fuessen poniendo fuego por los campos por donde yuan camiendo, que era dar grande auiso a los indios de aquella tierra, enemigos, para que salieron a ellos al camino y los matassen.*"
7. *Ibid.* "*porque los christianos eran malos, y otras palabras muy malas y asperas, con las quales escandalizo a los indios.*"
8. *Ibid.*, 242. Hernández also includes in this list a cacique named Timbuay who was not among the caciques mentioned as requesting assistance for the Guaycurú raid.
9. *Ibid.*, 243.
10. *Ibid.*, 244.
11. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Emperador, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 423. Irala reports that he received a letter from Cabeza de Vaca with instructions to bring Aracaré to justice. "*A caueça debaca y alcamino me embio vna carta q si ser pudiese hiziese Justiça de vn indio principal q estaua XXX legoas deste puerto que llamaua Aracare por q asi conuenia al seruiçio de vra ma.*"
12. *Ibid.*, "*Todo latrra estaua lebantada porla muerte del dho aracare principal.*"

13. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 68. “por ello se originó después una gran guerra de los carios contra nosotros los cristianos.”

14. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 252. “dos indios principales que se dezian Guançani y Atabare con todos sus parientes y valedores, y les hazian la guerra crudamente a fuego y a sangre y les quemauan sus pueblos y les corrian la tierra dizieno que los matarian y destruyian si no juntauan con ellos para matar y destruyr y hechar de la tierra a los christianos.”

15. *Ibid.*, 247. In the original four thousand *quintales*.

16. *Ibid.*, 250.

17. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 69. In the *Comentarios*, Hernández states that Irala was sent to join Gonzalo de Mendoza and the soldiers who were already in the region. Serrano y Sanz I, 254.

18. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Emperador, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 423.

19. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 123. While contemporary accounts clearly identify Irala as the commander of the expedition, Guzmán erroneously identifies Rui Díaz Melgarejo and Alonso Riquelme as the commanding officers in his later chronicle. Both these conquistadors were aligned with Cabeza de Vaca and enemies of Irala.

20. *Ibid.* “se repartió todo á los soldados; hallándose solas mujeres y niños mas de tres mil, y muertos mas de cuarto mil.”

21. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 69. “entramos en ella y matamos cuantos encontramos y cautivamos muchas de sus mujeres, lo que fue una gran ayuda.”

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, 70. “vinieron Tabaré y su gente y rogaron que se les diese perdón y se les devolvieran sus mujeres y niños, prometiendo en cambio someterse y servir a los cristianos. Nuestro general tuvo que concederlo, pues así lo había mandado Su Cesárea Magestad: que si uno indio viene y pide perdón, hasta por tercera vez debe condérsele; pero si falta a su palabra, él y sus hijos son esclavos si se les puede tomar.”

24. *Ibid.*

25. For an analysis of scholastic canon law and its use in the justification of conquest, see James Muldoon, *The Expansion of Europe: The First Phase* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977).

26. For an analysis of these debates see Anthony Padgen, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* and Lewis Hanke, *All Mankind is One: A Study of the Disputation Between Bartolomé de las Casas and Ginés de Sepúlveda in*

1550 on the Intellectual and Religious Capacity of the American Indians (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974). J.H. Parry offers a succinct summary of the debates and their relationship to just war in *The Spanish Seaborne Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 137-152.

27. José Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier: The Historiography of Sixteenth-Century New Mexico and Florida and the Legacy of Conquest* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2000), 38.

28. *Ibid.*, 39-41. Rabasa provides a succinct summary of the twelve ordinances, “*Las ordenanzas sobre el buen tratamiento de los indios.*”

29. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 254.

30. *Ibid.*, 255-6.

31. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 39. “*los robos, agrabios, bexaciones que hazian á los pobladores, conquistadores é á los naturales.*”

32. *Ibid.*, 39-40.

33. *Ibid.*, 41. Hernández states that they left Asunción the very same day that Cabeza de Vaca was departing on his *entrada*. *Relación de Pero Hernández*, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 399.

34. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 40.

35. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I: 258. “*hazia que pusiessen la mano en el crucifixo y jurassen de guardar el secreto de su yda de la tierra para el Brasil.*”

36. *Ibid.* “*las quales ellos auian dado a los dichos frayles para que se las industriassen en la doctrina christiana.*”

37. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 40. “*para ynpidierme la entrada y descubrimiento de la tierra.*”

38. *Ibid.*, 42.

39. *Ibid.* “*Mandé al juez á quien cometi la causa no procediese contra él, ni se hiziese ninguna minción en las probanças, ni autos, porque queria tornarlo al servicio de Su Magestad é servyrme de el en su nombre.*”

40. *Ibid.*, 43. “*en la dicha conquista.*”

41. For an overview of the these *entradas* see Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata Siglos XVI y XVII*, 229-296.

42. Métraux, “*Ethnography of the Gran Chaco,*” HSAI I: 197.

43. Ernesto Maeder and Ramón Gutiérrez, *Atlas histórico del nordeste Argentino*, 20-26.

44. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Emperador, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 421. “*como la trra es baxa y despoblada sehizieron tan grandes pantanos que en XVIII dias q camianomos por ellos jamas salimos del agoa hasta la çinta y avn acaeçernos dia de no hallar donde guisar de comer Acauo delos quales viendo la flaqueza dla gente yque yvan creçiendo mas los pantanos yfaltando los bastimientos con pareçer de los oficiales de vra mag. yrreligiosos ycapitanes di la buelta y bolvimos al dho puerto.*”

45. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 111. “*hubo una gran escasez de agua, tanto que uno no se preocupaba ni del oro ni de la plata, ni de la comida ni de otros bienes, pues solo importaba el agua.*”

46. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 260. “*muy pintados con muchos penachos y plumería y con muchas planchas de metal en la frente.*”

47. *Ibid.*, 261. “*les rogaua y de parte de Su Magestad les mandaua que por su parte estuuiesen siempre en paz*”

48. *Ibid.*, 263. “*los quales el gouernador rescibio con mucho amor porque cumplieran las pazes que auian hecho.*”

49. *Ibid.*, 264.

50. *Ibid.* “*le parescio que era buena prenda para que cumplieran lo que ofrescian, y la tierra quedaua muy pacifica y segura con yr Tabare en su compañía, y se los agradescio mucho y acepto su yda y le dio mas rescates que a otro ninguno de los principales de aquel rio. Y es cierto que teniendo a este contento toda la tierra quedaria en paz y no se osaria leuantar ninguno.*”

51. *Ibid.*, 266.

52. *Ibid.*, 267-279.

53. *Ibid.*, 283.

54. *Ibid.*, 286.

55. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 45.

56. Irala, *Relación de la jornada al Norte*, Dec. 1542/Jan. 1543. DHG II: 319.

57. *Ibid.*, 320.

58. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 292. “los indios Guaranies que habitan en las montañas desta tierra saben el camino por donde van a la tierra, los quales lo podian bien enseñar porque van y vienen a guerra contra los indios de la tierra dentro.”

59. *Ibid.*, 294. “Los indios Guaranies se auian ydo de la tierra porque sus pueblos y casas estauan despoblados y rodo la tierra assi lo parecia.”

60. *Ibid.*, 294-295.

61. *Ibid.*, 299. “pan de maiz y de patos cozidos y pescado y vino de maiz.”

62. *Ibid.*

63. *Ibid.*, 297.

64. Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnología del Chaco boreal y su periferia (siglos XVI y XVII)*, 28-33. Catherine Julien suggests they were Gé-speaking in footnote 14 of her manuscript version of “Kandire in Real Time and Space,” *Ethnohistory* 2007 54(2): 245-272. I would like to thank Julien for sharing her manuscript with me before its publication.

65. For reproductions of the maps of the Jesuit province of Paraguay see Guillermo Furlong. *Historia social y cultural del Río de la Plata 1536-1810. El Trasplante Cultural: Ciencia* (Buenos Aires: Tipográfica Editora Argentina, 1969), 66-91. One such example, dated 1732 and attributed by Furlong to Antonio Machoni, shows the Xarayes’ territory as a large lake with an island in the middle inhabited by the Orejones. Furlong, 65. By the 1600s, many of the distinct indigenous groups of the Chaco Boreal, including the Xarayes, were collectively identified by Guzmán and the Jesuit chroniclers as the Orejones, which referred to the large ear-pieces of the Inka caste that had been adopted for use by some of their tribute nations. Del Techo writes how the Xarayes “do not know of war or fraud. They are more hospitable than any of the other many nations that until now have been discovered, in such a manner that they seemed to have acquired the innate goodness of the land they inhabit.” Nicolás del Techo, *Historia de la provincia del paraguay de la Compañía de Jesús por el P. Nicolás del Techo*, 56.

66. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 301. “no sabian ni tenian noticia que ouiesse tal camino, ni ellos auvian ydo a la tierra adentro a causa que toda la tierra se anegaua al tiempo de las auenidas, dende a dos lunas, y passadas todas las aguas todo la tierra quedaua tal que no podian andar por ella.”

67. *Ibid.*, 302.

68. *Ibid.*, 304.

69. *Ibid.*, 304-306.

70. *Ibid.*, 308; *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 46.

71. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Emperador, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 423. “*supe q. desde halli donde estauan hasta trrapoblada avia quinze jornadas y q. aquel desierto avia hecho quando entro por halli q. mataron y destruyeron mucha gente de aquella trra y los demas se auian rrecogido otros pueblos la trra Adentro la q.^{al} dezian ser muy poblada.*”

72. *Relación cierta que el Padre Felipe de Alcaya, cura de Mataka, envió a su excelencia el Señor Marqués de Montes Claros, Visorrey de estos Reynos, sacada de la que el Capitán Martín Sánchez de Alcayaga, su padre, dejó hecha, como primer descubridor y conquistador de la Gobernación de Santa Cruz de la Sierra.* [circa 1607-1615] in *Cronistas cruceños del Alto Perú Virreinal* (Santa Cruz: Universidad Gabriel René Moreno, 1961), 47-86. This relation is cited by Métraux, “Tribes of Mato Grasso and eastern Bolivia,” HSAI III: 430. Catherine Julien cautions that Alcaya’s report contains many inaccuracies and should not be used uncritically. “Alejo García, or Tales of the phantom conquistador,” endnote 35. However, in the instance of the Itatín raid, the information in Alcaya’s *relación* coincides accurately with that provided by the indigenous testimonies.

73. *Relación de Padre Felipe de Alcaya, ca. 1607-1615. Cronistas cruceños del Alto Perú Virreinal.* 51-55. For an analysis of Itatín-Guaraní migrations to Bolivia, see Catherine Julien, “Colonial Perspectives on the Chriguaná (1528-1574)” and “Kandire in Real Time and Space: Sixteenth-century expeditions from the Pantanal to the Andes.”

74. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 310.

75. *Ibid.*

76. *Ibid.*, 311.

77. *Ibid.*, 312.

78. El Fuerte may have been a religious site of the Chané before the Incan invasion of the region.

79. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 314.

80. *Ibid.*, 316.

81. *Ibid.*, “*les parecia que por la seguridad y vida destes christianos e indios.*”

82. *Ibid.* “*lo ouo de hazer por no dar lugar a que ouiesse algun descacato por do ouiesse de castigar a algunos.*”

83. *Ibid.*

84. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 46.

85. Carta de Francisco González Paniagua, March 3, 1545. DHG II: 439. “*no heran hombres syno bestias y q los tales mueriesen como puercos.*”

86. Ibid. “*dezian q El gou.^{or} era Elmas mal hombre q avia enel mundo esto naçia*”

87. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 452. “*andados nueve dias con tanta desorden quanta nunca creo poder aver entodo el mundo syn passar mas Adelante nos volivimos Alos vergantines con harto pesr y mayor pena de todos los xpianos.*”

88. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 317.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid., 321.

91. Ibid.

92. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 321. “*Y todavia no os lo quisieren dar, tomarlo heys por fuerça, y si os lo defendieron com mano armada, hazerles heys la guerra, porque el hambre en que quedamos no sufre otra cosa.*”

93. Ibid., 322. “*en quantas y cuchillos y cuñas de hierro (lo qual ellos tenian en mucho) y les daria muchos anzuelos*”

94. Ibid., 323.

95. Ibid., 324-329.

96. Ibid., 330. “*que los tienen por enemigos porque en tiempos pasados fueran hasta su tierra a los matara y destruyr.*”

97. Relación de Pero Hernández, January 28, 1545; DHG II: 400.

98. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 333. “*los mataron y despedaçaron a los cinco christianos e indios y repartieron entre ellos a pedaços entre los indios Guaxarapos y Guatos.*”

99. Ibid., 334.

100. Ibid.

101. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 452. “*sin ning.^a Razon q justa fuese m.^{do} hazer muchas guerras alas poblaciones detoda le Redonda sin aver dellos Rec.^{do} mal en ningun tpo donde murieron mas de quatro mill yndios y niños de teta / y fuero presos mas de dos mil.*”

102. Carta de Contador y Oficial Felipe de Cáceres á S.M. March 7, 1545. COR: 87. “*hizo matar tantos yndios y con tanta crueldad que de onze pueblos todos quedaron asolados y quemados donde perecieron mas de tres mil nimas sin cabsa ni justa rrazon.*”

103. Carta de Factor Pedro de Orantes al Rey, February 28, 1545. COR: 76. “*dexando destruidos diez o doce pueblos y la mayor parte de la gente muerta y presa.*”

104. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 87. “*dexando destruidos diez o doce pueblos y la mayor parte de la gente muerta y presa.*” “*yendo los cristianos a la yslla salieron los yndios della sin armas y con sus mugeres e hijos en los brazos y los muchachos con ellos a los rrecibir como gente descuidada de lo que subcedio los cristianos y yndios mataron y prendieron muchos yndios y yndias y niños y muchachos y se artaron ansi alli como en la otra guerra bien su felicidad que es matar y comer yndios de otras generaciones.*”

105. Ibid. “*En esto empezó una discusión entre surucuis y carios. Cuando oímos eso, disparamos nuestros arcabuces, matamos a cuantos encontramos y cautivamos como dos mil entre hombres, mujeres, muchachos y chicos.*”

106. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 53.

107. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 452. “*mando por bandos publicos q ninguna persona cotratase ni Rescaptase Con los indios nros amigos ni esclavo ni otra cosa ninguna Avnq tenia presos gran Cantidad dellos / Alos quales Como ning.^o osaba comprar Cada dia matava vna crueldad muy grande / ypor otra pte el mandava yenbiava Asus criados Alos tajupas de los indios p^a q les Rescaptase o tomase p^a el los esclavos que tenian.*”

108. Carta de Factor Pedro de Orantes al Rey, February 28, 1545. COR: 76. “*para que ningun cristiano comprase de los yndios amigos ningun yndio prisionero ni otra cosa por los quales vedamientos estos yndios mataron muchos mas de los que mataran si se los compraran.*”

109. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 173. “*que no contratassen, ni comunicassen con ellos, ni fuesen a sus casas y lugares.*”

110. Relación de Pero Hernández, January 28, 1545; DHG II: 401. “*de los ynterpetes e Capitanes los yndios naturales deste puerto delos Reyes començaron a darles sus hijas e al Gou.^{or} le truxeron algunas e como el Gou.^{or} fue avisado mando q no sacasen de sus casas por q no se alborotasen e Reçibiesen alteraçion de verlas tratar mal por esta rrazon e por no dexarlos andar e enviar porlos lugares de los yn^ondios los oficiales é capitanes tomaron mucho odio contra el Gou.^{or}.*”

111. Carta de Contador y Oficial Felipe de Cáceres á S.M. March 7, 1545. COR: 87. “*todas las veces que venian yndios a le ver que eran muchos y de muchas generaciones ... jamas mento el nombre de vuestra magestad sino diciendoles que el solo hera principal de los cristianos y qe a el solo avian de servir e no a otro.*”

112. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 81.

113. Ibid., 82.

114. Ibid., 84. “*Fue para nosotros una suerte que hubiera tanta hambre en el país porque de ser así quién sabe si hubiéramos salido de allí con vida.*”
115. Ibid., 83.
116. Ibid. “*la mitad de nuestra gente estaba a las puertas de la muerte por causa del agua y de escasez que habíamos tenido durante este viaje.*”
117. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 453. “*aquí creo q dios quiso vsar con nosotros dealgun Castigo por q de todos quantos xnos alli estavamos no qdo ninguno q no enfermanse y llegase al punto dela muerte.*”
118. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 56.
119. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 85.
120. Ibid., 87. “*tampoco la gente estaba contenta, ni nadie hablaba bien de él, por la forma en que había conducido.*”
121. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 338.
122. Ibid., 339.
123. Carta de Contador y Oficial Felipe de Cáceres á S.M. March 7, 1545. COR: 87. “*hizo llamar a los yndios principales que estan aquí para nestro servicio y les mando que ninguno fuese osadp de servir a ningun cristiano sino solo a el sino que los ahorcaria.*”
124. Carta de Factor Pedro de Orantes al Rey, February 28, 1545. COR: 77.
125. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 340.
126. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 79. “*el rey de los Jerús tiene su corte como un gran señor de Europa.*”
127. Ibid., 78-79.
128. Ibid., 79. “*las mujeres hacen grandes mantas de algodón, muy fines y sutiles, u bordan en ellas muchos animales, como venados, avestruces, ovejas indias.*”
129. Ibid. “*grandes amantes, afectuosas y de cuerpo ardiente.*”
130. Ibid., 70-80.
131. Ibid., 81. The fifth-century historian Herodotus discusses the Amazons in *The Histories* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), 306-8. For an analysis of how the Amazons served a mythic function in *The Histories* see François Hartog. *The Mirror of Herodotus: The*

Representation of the Other in the Writing of History (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

132. Relación de Hernando de Ribera, Serrano y Sanz I, 372.

133. Ibid., “*que los indios nombararon la casa del sol; dizen que alli se encierra el sol.*”

134. Ibid., 374. “*auia vn lago de agua muy grande, y que no se parecia tierra de la vna banda a la otra, y a la ribera del dicho lago auia muy grandes poblaciones de gentes vestidas y que posseyan mucho metal.*”

135. Ibid., 376.

136. Various sixteenth-century accounts described the pre-conquest Inca empire, including Pedro Cieza de León, Juan de Betanzos, Juan Polo de Ondegardo, and José de Acosta. The Jesuit Bernabé Cobo drew on their accounts to produce a compendium of Incan history and customs, parts of which are translated and edited by Roland Hamilton in *History of the Incan Empire* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990) and *Incan Religion and Customs* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990). Both the origin myth of the sun and the palace built by Tupac Yupanquí at Lake Titicaca are recorded in *Incan Religion and Customs*, 91-99. For an analysis of the relationships of the sun, women, and the Inca dynasty, see Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun, and Witches: Gender Ideologies and Class in Inca and Colonial Peru* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 40-66.

137. Beatriz Pastor, “Silence and Writing: The History of the Conquest,” in René Jara and Nicholas Spadaccini, eds. *1492-1992: Re/Discovering Colonial Writing* (Hispanic Issues series 4. Minneapolis: Prisma Institute, 1989), 152.

138. Cortés’ letters are published in Anthony Padgen, *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico* (New Haven and Mexico: Yale University Press, 1986).

139. Inga Clendinnen, “‘Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty’: Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico,” in Stephen Greenblatt, ed. *New World Encounters* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 15.

140. Ibid.

141. Ibid., 41.

142. Carta de Hernando de Ribera, Asunción, February 25, 1545. DGH II: 413.

143. Relación de Hernando de Ribera, Serrano y Sanz I: 369.

144. Ibid. “*pero que la verdad de las Naufragios.cosas, riquezas y poblaciones y diuersidades de gentes no las quiso dezir al Juan Valderas.*”

145. Adorno, “The Negotiation of Fear in Cabeza de Vaca’s *Naufragios*,” 69-70.

146. Rabasa, *Writing Violence on the Northern Frontier*, 39.

147. *Ibid.*, 83.

148. *Ibid.*, 81.

149. *Ibid.*, 82.

150. Del Techo, *Historia de la provincia del paraguay*, 56. “*Que razón hay, compañeros míos, para que, a semejanza de los niños, prefiráis una manzana al oro, cuyo valor parecéis no compender? Hemos atravesado los mares en busca de tierras o de ricos metales? Qué error os fascina para anteponer tortas de miel a la esperanza de ser ricos? Quien será capaz de abandonar las delicias de España, el amor de los padres, la dulzura de la patria, y de exponerse a mil peligros tan sólo para hartarse, entre pueblos bárbaros, de frutas, peces, y carnes de animales fieros?*”

**Chapter Six:
Conquistadors and Caciques: Infighting in Asunción and the
Insurrection of the Carios.
1544 -1546.**

In Guzmán's *La Argentina*, the conquistadors' dream of conquest is kept alive by their miraculous triumphs over adversity and hostile Indians. The ill-fated founding of Buenos Aires and the horrors of starvation and cannibalism are countered by the tale of La Maldonada. The threat of annihilation posed by the Semana Santa rebellion ends with the Cario caciques offering their daughters to the conquistadors and esteeming Irala as a leader of great valour. Guzmán even manages to combine terror and miracles in his account of the Timbús' attack on Corpus Christi in 1539. Alluding to the Carios' manner of making war, he transforms the glare of their breastplates that blinded their enemies into the heavenly light of a saintly apparition. The conquistadors are saved from certain death when "a man dressed in white appeared in the fort's tower, his unsheathed sword in hand, and the Indians, struck blind by seeing him, fell terrorized to the ground."¹ Guzmán also inflects his description of Cabeza de Vaca's *entrada* with a hint of otherworldly powers. When the Spanish reach the sierra, they find a village overflowing with food and emptied of signs of life, except for the presence of an enormous demonic snake, twenty-five feet long and thick as a calf, with flashing eyes and scales the size of platters.²

Once the conquistadors mutiny against Cabeza de Vaca's royal authority, however, any semblance of divine intercession or demon snakes vanishes from Guzmán's chronicle. In its stead, a relentless narrative unfolds in which the conquistadors begin to fight among themselves, their Cario allies rebel against them, and their *entradas* to the sierra reveal that silver and gold are unattainable. Bereft of miracles, the conquistadors' dream of imperial conquest ends in failure. "What befell our Spanish men in the discovery and conquest the Río de la Plata, who came thinking they would return rich and prosperous," writes Guzmán, "was the opposite. Of all of them, not one returned with their rewards to Spain and most met cruel and miserable ends."³

The contemporary accounts for the period following Cabeza de Vaca's imprisonment differ starkly from Guzmán's assessment of the conquistadors' failed dream of conquest. Letters and *relaciones* written by priests and conquistadors who were sympathetic to Cabeza de Vaca denounce that after Irala took control of Asunción that it was the Carios who met with "cruel and miserable ends." They describe the tyranny of Irala's governance and the oppression the Carios endured as he and his supporters undertook *rancheadas* (looting raids) to plunder the *tekó-ás* and enslave indigenous women. After the Carios rebelled in 1545-46, the sources assert that the brutal repression of their uprising and submission to colonial vassalage worsened this oppression, transforming the Carios from defiant warriors into defenseless victims.

This chapter examines the evidence of transcultural dynamics embedded in these polarizing accounts of the Carios' subjugation. Focusing on the period from Cabeza de Vaca's imprisonment in April 1544 to the defeat of the Carios' rebellion at the end of 1546, I analyse how kinship and warrior norms dominated and shaped the course of the conquistadors' infighting and the Carios' insurrection. During the period of the *rancheadas* that preceded the rebellion in which women were seized and the *tekó-ás* plundered, I demonstrate how Irala sought to assert his dominance over a factionalized Asunción by acquiescing to warrior norms of raiding and captive-taking while condoning the conquistadors' abuse of Cario women by trading them as if they were slaves. At the same time, I show how kinship ties led to the caciques' collaboration in the *rancheadas* while the violations of these kinship ties provoked their insurrection. In so doing, I contend that the Carios were far from passive victims, and the conquistadors were not solely colonial oppressors. Rather, the violence of the *rancheadas* mirrored the virulence of indigenous raiding, and the infighting among the conquistadors reflected a power struggle among the Asunción caciques. Once the Carios rose in rebellion, this terrible mirroring became their undoing. As their traditional Chaco enemies collaborated with the Spanish to lay waste to their lands and slaughter whole villages, the Carios were forced to capitulate, revealing that their acceptance of the conquistadors as kin and equals had led to their destruction.

The first sign that the Carios and their Spanish allies would be drawn into a destructive spiral of violence was the breakdown of civic order in Asunción. Guzmán relates that following

Cabeza de Vaca's arrest, the infighting which broke out between the *leales*, the conquistadors who remained loyal to Cabeza de Vaca, and those aligned with Irala was tantamount to civil war.⁴ Schmidl describes how "we battled each other day and night and fought in such a way that even the devil would not have been able to govern us."⁵ Cabeza de Vaca's account of what transpired is even more dire and much more detailed. In his *Relación general*, his indignation at the affront of being deposed by the men he was sent to rule is palpable in his condemnation of Irala and his followers. He emphasizes their disloyalty to the Crown by referring to them as *comuneros*, an allusion to the rebellions in Spain against Charles V in 1520, and denounces them as "*hombres de mala bida y fama*—outlaws and men of ill-repute."⁶ Providing a litany of their misdeeds, he recounts how they roamed the town decrying him as a tyrant, threatened him and those loyal to him with death, imprisoned his notary Pero Hernández and *alcalde mayor* (chief magistrate) Juan Pavón, tried to poison him, illegally elected Irala acting governor, dismantled the caravel he had ordered built to make windows and doors for their houses, robbed him of his goods, and took away the women in his personal service to divide among themselves and sell as if they were slaves.⁷

As the infighting escalated, Cabeza de Vaca's and Hernández's descriptions of the anarchy that gripped Asunción are rife with altercations over indigenous women and goods, especially clothes, and incidents of murder, torture, mutilation, and rape.⁸ In his 1545 *relación*, Hernández even goes as far as accusing the *comuneros* of groping women's breasts in the church.⁹ Their accounts of the infighting also denounce the devastation the *comuneros* wrought as they began to plunder the *tekó-ás*. The *Comentarios* relates that Irala and the royal officials

gave open license to all their friends, supporters and servants to go to the villages and places of the Indians and seize their women and daughters by force and to take their hammocks and other things they had without paying for them [with barter], which was not in accordance with service to the King and the pacification of this land. Having done this, they went through the countryside beating the Indians and bringing them to their houses to work in their fields without compensation.¹⁰

The *Relación general* decries how they “visited great cruelties against the Indian women of the land, flogging them so badly that they were left for dead, and killing them with blows.”¹¹

Ochoa de Eizaguirre’s and Hernando de Ribera’s 1545 letters attribute to the *comuneros*’ faction the ruin of the land. Ochoa de Eizaguirre laments that “the lack of justice and bad treatment were so great that we had nothing more to hope for than the total destruction of everything.”¹² Ribera reports that “the Christians as well as the indigenous peoples have fled and depopulated the land because of the bad treatment, vexations, and wrongs they experienced.”¹³ The *Comentarios* expands upon these accusations of lawlessness, describing how Irala gave permission to the Cario warriors to practice cannibalism and to the *comuneros* to seize their opponents’ lands.¹⁴ When the conquistadors who opposed Irala began to flee Asunción and many more, including several priests, were imprisoned, Irala distributed their arms and possessions to his supporters.¹⁵ After the Carios went to Irala to complain about the *rancheadas* and received no recourse, they too “abandoned their villages and went to live in the mountains and hide where the Christians would not be able to find them.”¹⁶

While these accusations against the *comuneros* portray the Carios as victims of the conquistadors’ internecine violence, they also yield evidence of how kinship ties implicated them as protagonists in the factionalism that beset Asunción. Most saliently, the partisan nature of the infighting, which targeted the lands and women belonging to Cabeza de Vaca and his supporters, meant that the Carios who were aligned through kinship with the *comuneros* initially were spared the *rancheadas*. In turn, the *Comentarios*’ reference to the participation of “servants” in these raids alludes to their collaboration in attacking the *tekó-ás* aligned with the *leales*. Because Irala and his supporters had established kinship relations with the Carios before the arrival of Cabeza de Vaca, the loyalties of most of the Asunción caciques lay with the *comuneros*. In his 1545 *relación*, Hernández identifies Morquiraçe and Timbuay, both of whom had approached Cabeza de Vaca to lead the raid against the Guaycurúes, as Garcí Venegas’s and Gonzalo de Mendoza’s fathers-in-law.¹⁷ Irala’s last testament of 1556, which states that his servant’s daughter Maria was related to the cacique Pedro de Mendoza, reveals Irala’s familial connection to one of the *tuvichás* who had made an alliance with the conquistadors during the founding of Asunción, as well as participating in the raid against the Guaycurúes.¹⁸

An exception to the many caciques aligned with the *comuneros* was Juan de Salazar Cupiratí, the other *tuvichá* who had supported the Spanish when they established a fort in Cario territories and who likewise participated in the Guaycurú raid.¹⁹ His baptismal name identified his kinship relation with Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza, who sided with Cabeza de Vaca in the infighting among the conquistadors. Testimonies presented by Salazar and Pedro Estopiñán in *probanzas* that were recorded after they returned to Spain with Cabeza de Vaca in 1545 provide additional insights into the Carios' initial responses to the infighting. According to Estopiñán, the cacique Juan de Salazar, whom he describes as a chief-of-chiefs, and another *tuvichá* called Tuanteira, rose up in rebellion when Cabeza de Vaca was imprisoned.²⁰ Whether their rebellion was motivated by their allegiance to Cabeza de Vaca as Estopiñán infers is doubtful. More likely, Cupiratí had sought to affirm his own status as a *mburuvichá*, and then fled when his *tekó-á* was attacked by caciques aligned with the *comuneros*. Salazar does not mention any caciques by name or a specific incidence of unrest in his testimony. However, he does state that whenever the Indians were angered and went to war against the Christians, “they take their women and children and all that they have and go to the forest and mountains to hide, and from there they launch ambushes.”²¹ In light of Salazar's description of indigenous war tactics, Hernández's claim that the Carios abandoned their villages and fled to the mountains can be interpreted as more than an evasive move to escape the violence of the *rancheadas*, signaling as well their intention to regroup and counter attack Asunción.

That the “civil war” between the *comuneros* and the *leales* was simultaneously an indigenous power struggle also can be deduced from Irala's consent to the Carios' resumption of ritual cannibalism. The *Comentarios* states that “in order to gain the favour of the Indians, the officers and Domingo de Irala gave license to the Carios to kill and eat their Indian enemies.”²² It also reports that “many of those whom he gave license to were newly converted Christians,”²³ indicating that they had established kinship ties with the conquistadors through baptism. The *Comentarios* further qualifies Irala's act against “God and Sovereign” by claiming that he permitted cannibalism to ensure that the Carios would remain and assist the *comuneros*.²⁴ The necessity of currying favour with the Carios by acceding to the ritual cannibalism of war captives underscores Irala's dependence on indigenous allies as he sought to assert his dominance over Asunción.

Hernández's specific denunciation in his 1545 *relación* that two thousand Indians gathered to eat an Agaz captive taken by Timbuay, Gonzalo de Mendoza's father-in-law, reveals the Carios' considerable strength at the onset of the *rancheadas*.²⁵ Even if an exaggeration, the large number of warriors Timbuay commanded suggests that he may have sought to assert his own status as a *mburuvichá* in opposition to the chief-of-chiefs Juan de Salazar Cupiratí. Whether or not this was the motive for Timbuay's ritual cannibalism, the twenty thousand Carios whom Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza had summoned to fight the Agaces, and those who had arrived back from Puerto de los Reyes, were far from uniformly victimized as they were drawn into the conquistadors' infighting. On the contrary, Cupiratí's kinship tie to Juan de Salazar had made him a rebel, while the *rancheadas* provided those caciques aligned with the *comuneros* the opportunity for raiding and captive-taking, as had the *entrada*.

At the same time, the prestige that had accrued to Irala and Mendoza at Puerto de los Reyes as commanders of the Carios enabled them to call on large numbers of warriors as collaborators in their raids against the *tekó-ás* associated with the *leales*. In this context, the Carios' appeal to Irala to halt the *rancheadas* indicates that they viewed him as exercising control over the *comuneros* and their warrior collaborators. However, Irala's ability to orchestrate the raiding as Hernández charged, or to prevent it, was limited by the questionable legality of his status as the acting governor and the kinship loyalties of the caciques with specific conquistadors. Unless Cabeza de Vaca resigned from his position or had his title revoked by the Crown, he was still nominally the *adelantado* of the region. In this respect, Cabeza de Vaca relates in the *Relación general* that the royal officials, Venegas and Cabrera, came to him while he was imprisoned to ask him to formally recognize Irala as governor.²⁶ Instead, he appointed Salazar as his second-in-command, exacerbating rather than resolving the factionalism among the conquistadors. With Asunción lacking a legally constituted colonial authority, the *rancheadas* could be undertaken by any of the conquistadors who could summon the assistance of the caciques and their warriors, which contributed to the anarchy gripping the region. Ochoa de Eizaguirre, for example, states that of the captains appointed under Irala's command, "there was not one of them who did not have his officials and Indian followers (*allegados*)."²⁷

The legacy of Cabeza de Vaca's brief rule as governor played an equally important role in the onset of the *rancheadas*. While joint Hispanic-Guaraní raids against other *tekó-ás* were not without precedent, the *rancheadas* differed in that they began as a response to Cabeza de Vaca's attempts to assert his control over the Cario caciques while he was governor. Most significantly, he had intervened in their kinship relations with the conquistadors by forbidding them to serve anyone but him and separating the Cario women from the conquistadors' households. In reference to the latter, Cabeza de Vaca states in the *Relación general* that he took the Cario women away "from those who treated them badly and gave them to those who treated them well."²⁸ Complaints by the conquistadors that Cabeza de Vaca was unduly harsh with those who were already in Asunción before his arrival points to the likelihood that he gave the Cario women to the men who accompanied his expedition.²⁹ With Cabeza de Vaca's imprisonment, the *rancheadas* enabled the caciques to recover these women, whether kin or slaves, who were part of their kinship networks. In this context, their collaboration with *comuneros* in seizing "all the lands and supplies of those loyal to Cabeza de Vaca" can be understood in part as retribution for Cabeza de Vaca's previous violations of their kinship ties with the conquistadors.

Socio-economic factors also were central to the transcultural dynamics of the *rancheadas*. Fights over clothes, not to mention dismantling Cabeza de Vaca's caravel for windows and doors, indicate the scarcity of European barter goods, which had been essential to establishing the conquistadors' kinship alliances with the Carios. The seizure of food supplies reflects the considerable strain that the return of fifteen hundred warriors and three hundred conquistadors from the *entrada* must have placed on the Carios' subsistence agriculture. The large number of women the royal officials and the captains had in their personal service, and their kinship obligations to sustain these women's extended families, further fuelled competition over resources.

Of these factors, the polygamy of the conquistadors was the most significant source of conflict. Until the arrival of the Spanish, polygamy had been circumscribed by the ability of caciques to maintain both the women in their possession and their relatives. While most *tuvichás* of each *teýy-ogá* (long house) had several wives, only the *mburuvichás* and the wandering shaman *karais* had sufficient resources to sustain a large number of women and followers. The

mburuvichá accumulated food surpluses by controlling a large territorial area or *guára*, such as Asunción, and by constant raiding. The *karais* fed their female followers by moving from *guára* to *guára* to avoid exhausting these food surpluses or threatening the political authority of the *mburuvichá*.³⁰ After 1537, the Carios' offering of their daughters to the conquistadors in exchange for barter goods and access to gunpowder technology altered the social ecology of this polygamy. The arrival of Cabeza de Vaca's expedition in 1542, which doubled the numbers of conquistadors, increased the potential for conflict over resources and prestige. This conflict was reflected in Aracaré's and Tabaré's rebellions as well as in Cabeza de Vaca's removal of women from the conquistadors' households and his altercations with Franciscan friars, who kept their female followers in a monastery rather than moving throughout the region. During the *entrada* to Puerto de los Reyes, the departure from Asunción of most of the conquistadors and caciques minimized the competition for resources. Once they returned, conflict became evident in the *rancheadas*.

In the context of the competition for resources produced by the altered social ecology of polygamy, the *rancheadas* initially benefited the Cario caciques aligned with the *comuneros*, in as much as raiding provided the opportunity to sustain their kinship obligations to feed their women, children, war captives, and warrior followers through the seizure of food surpluses. Ultimately, however, the differing objectives of the *comuneros* and the caciques in raiding the *tekó-ás* led to economic disruption and the enslavement of the Carios' women. For the Carios, raiding was integral to increasing the agricultural resources and captive labour of the *tekó-ás*, and thus the ability of the *tuvichás* to attract followers and women. The conquistadors carried out the *rancheadas* to expropriate³ rather than expand the *tekó-ás*, and their looting of goods for individual barter took precedence over the collective norms of reciprocity. Thus, while the initial effect of the *rancheadas* was to increase resources for the Carios aligned with the *comuneros*, the overall result was a contraction of the trading base of Asunción. As the Carios whose *tekó-ás* were attacked began to flee, agricultural production diminished, leading to a greater scarcity of food supplies and an intensification of raiding. In this economy of diminishing returns, women in the service of the Spanish who planted and tilled the fields became increasingly valuable as a commodity to be traded among the conquistadors rather than as a social liaison to secure alliances with the Carios.

By 1545, the selling of women signaled a significant shift in the convergence of a European barter economy with indigenous reciprocity norms that facilitated Cario-Spanish kinship alliances. Andrade, who initially viewed the Cario women's role of tending the fields as a "bad custom" that forced the conquistadors to take them as concubines and "satisfy their parents with barter,"³¹ relates that after the imprisonment of Cabeza de Vaca, the Christians acquired the "bad custom of selling Indian women to each other for barter, for which I have admonished them many times."³² Similarly, Ochoa de Eizaguirre reports that "there is a custom between us to hire out and sell for excessive prices, as if they were slaves, the female Indians who are given to us by their parents and relatives to serve us and who come free and subject to our authority."³³ Paniagua not only accuses the conquistadors of treating Cario women as if they were slaves from Guinea but also of bartering days of service in order to circumvent the appearance of enslavement.³⁴

As a royal official aligned with the *comuneros*, Dorantes identifies the reciprocal obligations of kinship, which enabled the conquistadors to call upon the male relatives of the women they maintained for the clearing of fields and building of houses, as the reason why the conquistadors had large numbers of women in their households and were selling them as slaves. To remedy the conquistadors' reliance on these kinship obligations to obtain indigenous labour, he proposed the establishment of the *repartimiento*, (the assignment of labour tribute to individual conquistadors), which would alleviate the need for the conquistadors' to keep more than two or three women in their households.³⁵ He also advocated the selling of captives whom the Carios had taken in wars against enemy nations. He notes that the Carios kept these captives in their houses in order to kill and eat them, and argues that God and the King would be better served if the Christians bought them. This measure, he reasons, would ensure that the captives were neither killed nor eaten, and that the labour they provided would further reduce the need of the conquistadors to support so many women.³⁶

While the conquistadors' reliance on kinship obligations contributed to the bartering of Cario women and their services, Hernández claims in his 1545 *relación* that they also were being bought and sold in order to pay taxes to the royal officials.³⁷ In this respect, Irala's *ordenanzas* concerning the rates of barter, issued on February 12, 1545, make clear that taxes were being levied despite the turmoil. Similar to his 1541 *ordenanzas*, which established equivalencies

between trading goods and the coinage of *maravedis*, Irala set the worth of an iron wedge (*cuña*) of seven ounces at one hundred *maravedis*, and a knife at twenty-five *maravedis*. He ordered these trading goods serve as the standard currency and that all taxes, including the tithe owed to the church and the fifth to the Crown, as well as fines (*penas de camara*), be remitted as either *cuñas* or knives. In addition, *cuñas* were to serve as a currency measure for *jornales*, what Paniagua referred to as days of service.³⁸ By restricting the payment of taxes, fines, and services to trading goods rather than permitting the remittance of food supplies, Irala effectively undermined the convergence of a European barter economy and reciprocity norms. With the onus on the conquistadors to obtain *cuñas*, indigenous women became more valuable for what their services could purchase in standard currency than for the food they produced in the context of kinship obligations.

This equation of personal service with the purchasing value of standard currency had the consequence of shifting the economy of human barter from war captives to Cario women. While some trading of Cario women undoubtedly occurred before the arrival of Cabeza de Vaca, as both he and Hernández claim, the majority of overt exchanges were limited to non-*avá* captives, who were considered *tapíi* or inferior by the Carios. After the onset of the *rancheadas*, the seizure of Cario women from the *tekó-ás* blurred the distinction between war captives who were *tapíi* slaves and the Carios' status as free vassals of the Spanish. In addition, the necessity to barter with the Carios to obtain these war captives, and the perception that their economic value as slaves was declining, increased the incentive for the conquistadors to trade the Cario women who were in their possession. In an *ordenanza* issued by Cáceres on July 26, 1544, he states that "slaves are worth very little, because four out of every five die. None fetches more than thirty *cuñas*."³⁹ Pedro Fuentes calculated a comparable rate of exchange in a 1545 letter, stating that "a young female slave in this land is worth twenty-five *cuñas*,"⁴⁰ and that the slave together with a house and two fields (*rozás*) were worth ninety *cuñas*. In his 1545 letter, Paniagua identifies the personal service of two Cario women as having an equivalent barter value of a house and fields.⁴¹ In the *Relación general*, Cabeza de Vaca addresses the exchange value of personal service relative to slaves and goods by denouncing that "after my imprisonment the said Domingo de Irala and the officials of Your Majesty sold many free Indian women, trading them in order to make houses and fields with the work of [male] Indians, and also bartering them for mares, slaves, clothes, and other things."⁴²

Once the conquistadors began to view the personal service of Cario women as barter rather than as kinship obligations, the reciprocity norms that had sustained the *comuneros*' alliances with the Carios during the initial stages of the infighting ceased to function. By the end of 1545, the remaining Carios in Asunción had terminated their kinship ties with the *comuneros* by refusing to provide service, and had fled the city to rise in rebellion. Whether the women who were in the possession of conquistadors fled as well is not discernable from the contemporary accounts. However, the presence of mestizo children who had been born during the first years of *amistad y alianza* raises the possibility that their mothers' loyalties were divided between the Carios and the Spanish. In letters written in 1545, the estimates of the number of mestizo children living in Asunción range from four to six hundred. Francisco de Andrade states that there were "more than five hundred children of the Christians and baptized women in this land."⁴³ Alonso Riquelme de Guzmán, who had sent a letter back to Spain in 1545 in support of Cabeza de Vaca, places their numbers at four hundred.⁴⁴ Cáceres and Ochoa de Eizaguirre both calculate that there were more than six hundred.⁴⁵ Because of the large number of mestizo children, many Cario women may have chosen to remain in Asunción despite their ill-treatment. Alternatively, the women's status as de facto slaves may have made it difficult for them to escape with their children from the conquistadors' households. In either case, the women who stayed became isolated from their kinship networks and more vulnerable to exploitation. In turn, without the Carios' collaboration in the *rancheadas*, raiding became solely an act of colonial violence rather than conforming to the indigenous norms of warfare. In this context, Ochoa de Eizaguirre's lament that "we had nothing more to hope for than the total destruction of everything" can be understood as symptomatic of the breakdown of an indigenous as well as a European social order.

As Ribera and Hernández noted, the Carios were not the only ones fleeing Asunción. According to Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación general*, fifty of the common soldiers who remained loyal to him tried to escape to Brazil shortly after his arrest in April 1544. On his orders they returned to Asunción, after which they were even more badly treated by the *comuneros*.⁴⁶ Ribera's claim in his *relación*, written ten months later in January 1545, that "Christians as well as the indigenous peoples" had fled the region, raises the possibility that some of these soldiers deserted again, only this time fleeing with the Carios. Guzmán's description in his

chronicle of a confrontation that occurred ten years later between renegade *leales* led by a one-handed Englishman, Nicolás Colman, and the Asunción conquistadors provides a glimpse of how the common soldiers had joined forces with the Carios. According to Guzmán, Colman and his band of *leales* were living in indigenous villages near the Guairá waterfalls at the junction of the Alto-Paraná and Igatemi Rivers. Located some three hundred kilometres east of Asunción, these falls were beyond the reach of the *comuneros*' raiding parties. When Irala sent a contingent of soldiers to the area to impose his colonial authority, they blockaded the river and attacked Irala's men, forcing their retreat to Asunción.⁴⁷ While it is not clear when Nicolás Colman had deserted Asunción to live among the Indians, Pedro Estopiñán states in his 1546 testimony that during the rebellion of the cacique Juan de Salazar Cupiratí after Cabeza de Vaca was imprisoned, Irala punished an Englishman named Nicolás by severing his right hand.⁴⁸ This punishment would have been inducement enough for Nicolás to flee Asunción at this time.

The Franciscan friars, whose previous attempt to return to Brazil had been thwarted by Cabeza de Vaca, also left Asunción shortly after his imprisonment. The accounts of their departure suggest that they had sustained their influence over the Carios as either quasi-shamans or extraordinary evangelists. Cabeza de Vaca states in the *Relación general* that they departed for Brazil four months after his arrest, taking with them letters slandering his governance, more than forty daughters of the caciques, and many slaves.⁴⁹ Hernández claims in his 1545 *relación* that they also sold a number of free Indians before leaving.⁵⁰ A later *relación* by Francisco Ortiz de Vergara reports that they took with them "many sons of the caciques of the land, saying they were taking them to Christianize them."⁵¹ Whether or not the Carios who accompanied the friars were the daughters or the sons of caciques, or both, what is clear from these accounts is that the friars had not been restrained by the infighting. Unlike the common soldiers who were unsuccessful in reaching Brazil, or who may have fled to far away Indian villages to avoid persecution by the *comuneros*, the friars were able to take advantage of the unfolding power struggle in Asunción to make the journey to Brazil with an entourage of Carios and to sell those who did not accompany them.

An assertion made by Cabeza de Vaca in his 1546 *probanza* that the friars' departure with the caciques' daughters provoked unrest among the Indians adds another layer of complexity to the

Carios' motives for fleeing Asunción during the initial stages of the factionalism.⁵² While most of the witnesses in his *probanza* do not respond to his assertion about the unrest that the friars caused— although they all confirm that the two Franciscans left Asunción with a large entourage of Indian women—Salazar testifies that it was public knowledge that the daughters were taken against their will, chained and lashed, and that these “were things to disturb the Indians and the land.”⁵³ If the friars indeed had forced the caciques' daughters to accompany them, then it may not have been only the *rancheadas* but also the friars' unorthodox evangelization that caused the Carios to go and hide in the mountains where the Christians could not find them.

Cabeza de Vaca's and Salazar's accusations against the friars serve to remind us of how the conflicts produced by the conquistadors “going native” were intertwined with the Carios “becoming” Christian. Before the infighting between the *comuneros* and the *leales* began, elusive glimpses of these conflicts were evident in the *mal yndio* who appropriated Andrade's preaching of the Christian doctrine, the *mala yndia* who had poisoned her Spanish husband with herbs, and Cabeza de Vaca's marking of the Cario warriors with the cross. However, it was the friars, venerated by the Carijós as *paycaue* and attracting an indigenous following in Asunción, who offer the most insight into the convergence and collision of worldviews occurring on a spiritual plane. After the friars' departure from Asunción, it would not be until 1556 that a spiritual dimension related to rebellious Carios is mentioned again in the contemporary sources. The lack of references to conflict in the sacred realm does not mean that it did not occur in the intervening years. What its absence from the historical record does signal is how significant the material dimensions of warfare were for redefining Cario-Spanish relations during a period of escalating violence.

Although the *Comentarios* does not identify the friars' departure as fostering unrest, it implies that God played a hand in punishing their defiance of royal authority and ecclesiastical propriety in collusion with the officials of the Crown. The concluding pages of the *Comentarios* relate that the friars suffered “sudden and ill-fated deaths”⁵⁴ after arriving in Brazil, and that the royal officials Garcí Venegas and Alonso de Cabrera also met with unexpected ends. After placing Cabeza de Vaca on a ship in April 1545 and guarding him on the voyage back to Spain, Venegas died “after his eyes fell from his head”⁵⁵ and Cabrera went

mad and killed his wife. While we do not learn from the *Comentarios* what happened to Cabeza de Vaca after he survived the ignominy of being deposed and returned to Spain in chains, we know from other documentation that he spent the rest of his years embroiled in criminal proceedings and civil litigation over his contentious rule as *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata before dying sometime in 1559 or 1560 in his natal city of Jerez de la Frontera.⁵⁶ As for the *comuneros* who remained in Asunción, they did not experience a seemingly divine retribution for their sedition. Instead, they found themselves besieged by the insurrection of all the Carios in the region.

Writing from his eighteenth-century vantage point, the Jesuit historian Lozano describes in florid prose how the conquistadors' infighting and the *rancheadas* provoked the Carios to rebellion:

The Indians, although barbarians, deduced that so universal a discord dividing the empire against itself could not last for long. Desiring to press for its ruin in order to free themselves from oppression they viewed as an intolerable yoke, they united to expel the Spanish from their country. It is true that they had more than enough cause to be offended, for the liberty permitted by Irala had opened the door for the perdition and lamentable ruin of the neighbouring towns. [The Indians] were oppressed by the cruelty and greed of the soldiers, who committed terrible aggressions, going to their villages when their fancy struck them, robbing what they wanted, destroying their fields and taking their women, and making such extortions that my pen trembles to record them.⁵⁷

Contemporary accounts similarly apportion blame. Diego Telléz de Escobar, a conquistador who came with Cabeza de Vaca's expedition, describes in his 1557 *relación* how:

The Indians of the land, realizing that the Christians were divided amongst themselves, rebelled in order to kill and expel them from their territories. They did so because they had received very great injuries from the Christians, who took their children and women away and kept them in their houses. To demonstrate they were at war, they began to kill some Christians who were going about the land doing these acts.⁵⁸

In a letter to the Emperor dated April 25, 1556, the cleric Antonio d'Escalera, who also came with Cabeza de Vaca, implies that an increase in the *rancheadas* following his departure for Spain also was a factor:

After the governor and his lieutenant [Juan Salazar de Espiñoza] left the land in the year 1545, Domingo de Irala, in order to be able to make and sustain what he had done, gave such liberty to his friends and followers that they went about the land doing many and great wrongs against the indigenous peoples. The Indians, seeing how persecuted they were, decided to kill some Christians. They did this, killing four or five. Once these [men] were dead, they rose up against the Christians in such a way that it was necessary to go to [war against] them, and to kill and take many of them captive.⁵⁹

An anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) provides insight into the specific dynamics of the confrontation that sparked the Carios' insurrection. The author relates that Irala ordered a *lengua* named Salvador, who had been a servant of Cabeza de Vaca, to *ranchear* Indians. When Salvador protested that the Indians were angry and would kill him, Irala ignored his warning and sent him against his will with twelve "friends" (*amigos*) of the royal officials to seize Indian women and children. As Salvador predicted, the Carios attacked them and no more than four or five escaped with their lives. Afterwards, the Indians rebelled by withdrawing the services that they had provided to the Christians with the intention of destroying them.⁶⁰

While this description of rebellion's onset is significant for demonstrating how kinship ties were terminated by withdrawing services, equally important is what it reveals about the *lenguas'* diminished influence as cultural brokers. As either Indians, mestizos, or Europeans who interpreted for the conquistadors, the *lenguas* straddled the worldviews of the Spanish and the Carios. As long as the conquistadors maintained kinship alliances with the Asunción caciques, the *lenguas* were positioned as the cultural intermediaries between the two. However, once the raiding of the *tekó-ás* became more indiscriminate, the *lenguas* became the Carios' enemies. Hence, *lenguas* such as Salvador had little choice in becoming Irala's reluctant

henchmen, even if their divided loyalties lay more with an indigenous than a European worldview.

While the contemporary accounts identify the flashpoint for the Carios' uprising as the *rancheadas*, other factors contributed to the rebellion of the Asunción caciques who had remained allies of the *comuneros* during the year of Cabeza de Vaca's imprisonment. In addition to their women being seized and treated as *tapíí*, the Carios' grievances were rooted in Irala's attempt to resolve the infighting by consolidating his rule over Asunción in the same manner as Cabeza de Vaca had before him: through intervening in the independent kinship relations established between the conquistadors and the Carios. Four months after Cabeza de Vaca's departure, Irala issued public edicts (*bandos*) on August 27 and 29 forbidding the conquistadors to go to the Indians' houses outside the boundaries of the city without his express permission. Penalties for those who disobeyed included the severing of a toe, fines of *cuñias*, imprisonment in the public jail, and being put in stocks.⁶¹ An ordinance dated September 22 placed further restrictions on the conquistadors' freedom to leave the city and prohibited male Indians older than thirteen years from residing in their houses.⁶²

Of the *ordenanzas*, the prohibition against keeping male Carios in the conquistadors' houses most overtly contravened the kinship norm of maintaining a following of young warriors to mount raids and accrue prestige. Through restricting the freedom of movement in the city and interactions with Carios who lived in the vicinity, Irala also exercised control over who was able to undertake *rancheadas* against the Cario villages in the countryside. In effect, he prevented the conquistadors and the Cario caciques aligned with them from increasing their power base through raids not authorized by him. A series of *requerimientos* Irala issued in May, June, and August concerning the Agaces' aggression against Asunción—which included stealing canoes, seizing crops from the Carios' and settlers' *rozas* (fields), and taking Cario women hostage—further concentrated his control over raiding. These *requerimientos* determined when and how raiding against the Agaces could take place in accordance with the same legal protocols that Cabeza de Vaca had used before him. In consultation with the clergy and Crown officials, Irala declared war on the Agaces and authorized the right to enslave them as captives.⁶³

While Lozano and d'Escalera claimed that Irala and his followers roamed the countryside with impunity, an *ordenanza* Irala issued on August 29 reveals a lack of security in Asunción and its environs. It states that “because we wish to make war against our enemies, the Agaces, and a Christian could be taken and made captive, or an Indian could inform them of our intention, I have ordered and order that no person of any state or condition be so bold to go or to send any Indian, old or young, to fish or to hunt or any other thing below the fields of the Captain Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza.”⁶⁴ The reference to Christians being taken captive meant that the outskirts of Asunción were unsafe; the fear of informants indicates that Irala perceived the Indians who were living in the city as untrustworthy. While Agaz captives were the most likely source of these informants, Dorantes's claim in his *memorial*, dated July 4, 1545, that the Agaces had begun to offer their women to the Carios casts doubt on the loyalty of the Asunción caciques who were still collaborating with the Spanish. Dorantes explains that “when the Agaces were asked why they were giving their women to the Cario Indians, they replied that it was because the Cario Indians had said they were the strong ones and so they gave their women to them because soon they [the Carios] would kill us all.”⁶⁵ This testimony, whether a literal transcription or an embellishment, provides additional insight into Irala's decision to sanction captive-taking and permit the practice of ritual cannibalism. Such moves would have countered the Carios' intention to annihilate the Spanish by encouraging them to make war on the Agaces instead.

As became evident from the desertion of most of the Carios from Asunción by the end of 1545 and the gathering of large war parties in preparation to attack the Spanish, Irala failed in his bid to retain the allegiance of the caciques. In essence, his strategy for consolidating power after Cabeza de Vaca left the Río de la Plata was double-edged. He simultaneously sought prestige and allies as a *mburuvichá* by sanctioning ritual cannibalism while he violated kinship norms by condoning the trading of Cario women. He constrained the conquistadors' independent kinship relations through his *ordenanzas* at the same time as he secured the support of his followers through the *rancheadas*. Ultimately, Irala was unable to reconcile his adaptation to indigenous norms, which had facilitated his election as provisional governor in 1539, with his attempts to impose his colonial rule over a factionalized Asunción after Cabeza de Vaca left for Spain in April 1545.

Although Irala was unsuccessful in halting the conquistadors' factionalism through his *ordenanzas*, the threat of war proved a powerful incentive to cease their infighting. This threat was made all the more serious by the alliance the Carios made with the Agaces to mount an offensive against Asunción. Schmidl relates:

When the Carios, who until then had been our friends, saw us fighting amongst ourselves, they planned and resolved to kill all the Christians and to expel us from the country. Almighty God did not assist the Carios in achieving their plan, despite the fact that all the Carios in the country were against us, and with them the Agaces nation.⁶⁶

In response to the Carios' intention to join forces with the Agaces, the conquistadors established alliances with the Chaco nomad nations. Schmidl reports that, "when we realized this [the Carios' plan], we made peace among ourselves and also with two other Indian nations who had five thousand warriors and were called Yapirus (Yaperús) and Guatatas."⁶⁷ The Franciscan priest Martín González, who came with Cabeza de Vaca's expedition, also addresses the formation of these alliances. He states in his 1556 letter that the Christians "summoned two enemy Indian nations of the Carios called the Apirares (Yaperús) and Guatatas,"⁶⁸ who supplied them with two thousand warriors. In this context, the *lenguas* again assumed a prominent role as negotiators for the Spanish. The anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) states that the alliances were made with the assistance of "other Christians who had stayed from Caboto's expedition"⁶⁹ and who were interpreters for the Chaco nations.

With the onset of war, the shifting alignments between the Carios, the Agaces, the Spanish, and the nomad Chaco nations marked a rupture of the ethno-cultural norms of the region. Most significantly, the Carios' alliance with the Agaces violated their fundamental sense of identity based on their hostility towards non-*avá* peoples, whom they considered inferior or *tapíí*, and in the case of the Agaces, were their principal enemies. In the *Comentarios*, Hernández describes how

it is their [the Agaces'] custom to take the Guaraní captives and bring them in their canoes to Guaraní territories. When their relatives come to rescue them, the Agaces

whip the captives cruelly in front of their parents and children, women and followers, and say they will kill them unless they are given food. After the Guaraníes have brought enough supplies to fill their canoes, the Agaces return to their houses, taking the prisoners with them. This they do many times and very few [captives] are rescued, because after the Agaces tire of carrying them in their canoes and whipping them, they cut off their heads and stake them on tall sticks along the banks of the river.⁷⁰

That the Carios were willing to accept the Agaces' women and mount a joint offensive with them against the conquistadors in spite of these past atrocities reveals the depth of their disillusionment with their former Spanish allies. Only five years earlier Irala had led the Carios in a retaliatory raid against the Agaces to affirm his *amistad y alianza*. And it had only been a few months since Gonzalo de Mendoza's father-in-law Timbuay had eaten an Agace war captive in ritual cannibalism.

The counter-alliance of the conquistadors with the Chaco nomad nations of the Guatatas and the Yaperús further destabilized the ethno-cultural norms of the region. According to Branislava Susnik, the Guatatas were canoe people and traders rather than raiders, who occupied the Chaco side of the Paraguay River.⁷¹ In making an alliance with the Spanish, they would have provided supplies rather than warriors, and do not figure in the accounts of the pacification campaign against the Carios. On the other hand, the Yaperús' alliance with the Spanish enabled them to penetrate Cario territories that had previously been unassailable and exact revenge on their enemies on an unprecedented scale of slaughter. The priest González relates:

In the numerous encounters with the Indians [Carios], a great many of them were killed. As a sign of their revenge, they [the Yaperús] cut off their heads, which both they and the Christians took back with them to their lands. They would not have done so, nor dared to attack [the Carios], if it had not been for the permission of the Christians.⁷²

Telléz de Escobar's description of these "numerous encounters" similarly indicates that the Spanish exercised little restraint over their Chaco allies. In his 1557 *relación*, he recounts how

“Domingo de Irala made alliances with other Indian nations to wage war with the Christians against the Indians [Carios] and they killed a large quantity of men and women and children, burning their houses and cutting and destroying their fields.”⁷³

While the joint forces of the Agaces and the Carios should have proven a formidable adversary, no mention is made in eyewitness accounts of the Agaces’ participation in the rebellion. This suggests that their alliance was at best fleeting. As canoe warriors, the Agaces may have played a role in impeding the travel of the conquistadors and their Chaco allies up the Paraguay. However, there is no evidence that their warriors were incorporated into Cario war parties or given license to enter their territories where the main battles were fought over fortified villages in the heart of distinct *guáras*. Most likely, the Agaces withdrew their support when it became apparent that the Yaperús and the Spanish were more “robust and strong” than the Carios.

Schmidl, who provides the most comprehensive description of battles fought between the Spanish and the Carios, confirms the collaboration of the Yaperú warriors and the absence of the Agaces as the Spanish advanced northward, fighting the Carios until the final offensive at the Río Jejuí. According to Schmidl, the war began when three hundred and fifty Christians and one thousand Yaperús commanded by Irala marched from Asunción to where fifteen thousand Carios had congregated. In an ensuing battle that was fought on open ground, Schmidl reports negligible casualties among the conquistadors and a massive death toll for the Carios. He claims ten Spaniards and forty Yaperús lost their lives, while some two thousand Carios were killed.⁷⁴ After the battle ended, the Carios fled four leagues north to the fortified village of the cacique Macaria. Irala and his Spanish-Yaperú army pursued them and stormed Macaria’s fortified village, slaughtering men, women, and children. The Carios who escaped fled further north to the *guára* of Carahiba. Irala then laid siege to the main village of Carahiba after receiving reinforcements from Asunción of two hundred Christians and five hundred Chaco warriors.⁷⁵

During this siege, internal divisions amongst the Carios contributed to their defeat. Schmidl relates that their village was extremely well fortified and would have been impossible to storm except for the betrayal of a Cario cacique, who revealed to the Spanish how to enter it in return

for assurances that they would not lay waste his territories.⁷⁶ After the battle at Carahiba, the Carios who avoided being slaughtered by the Yaperús or taken captive by the Spanish regrouped forty leagues further north in the *guára* of Hieruquizaba, which was controlled by the cacique Tabaré. Whether he was the same cacique who had rebelled in 1543 after Aracaré was executed on the orders of Cabeza de Vaca is unclear. Schmidl does not identify him as such and we do not know what happened to him after he went with Cabeza de Vaca on the expedition to Puerto de los Reyes.⁷⁷ Irala then descended the river to Asunción to gather reinforcements, munitions, and food supplies. During his return voyage to Hieruquizaba with four hundred soldiers and fifteen hundred Yaperús, he was met by the cacique from Carahiba, who compounded his initial betrayal by offering one thousand warriors to fight against Tabaré.⁷⁸

While Schmidl explains the cacique's betrayal at Carahiba as motivated by self-preservation, Lozano's account of a similar incident that occurred during the Oberá rebellion of 1579 suggests that there were other reasons for his shift in allegiance. Lozano attributes the betrayal of one of the caciques under Oberá's command to long-standing feuding between the *tuvichás*, in which their desire for revenge against each other undermined their collective determination to defeat the Spanish.⁷⁹ Susnik concurs with Lozano's analysis. She argues that the Guaraní rebellions of the 1500s failed because the competition between caciques for young women and male followers ultimately led each *guára* to act independently.⁸⁰

The Carios' incorporation of the conquistadors into their kinship networks also contributed to the difficulty of sustaining a united front against the Spanish. Prior to the insurrection, infighting among the conquistadors had fueled internal divisions among the Carios who were aligned with either the *comuneros* or the *leales*. Once the conquistadors ceased to fight amongst themselves, Irala was able to use these internal divisions to his advantage to negotiate with individual caciques. The conquistadors' familiarity with the Carios' worldview made such a negotiation possible. The necessity of regaining the Carios' allegiance to ensure their survival in an isolated colonial outpost also made it imperative.

During the final offensive at the Río Jejuí, this necessity was reflected in the dual-pronged strategy of negotiation and repression that Irala used to pacify the cacique Tabaré, who

controlled the *guára* of Hieruquizaba. Schmidl relates that before attacking Tabaré's fortified village, Irala offered him the opportunity to avoid a confrontation by agreeing to provide service to the Spanish.⁸¹ In so doing, Irala may have been encouraged by the other cacique's betrayal and hopeful that disunity among the Carios would prevail over their collective resistance. His offer was also a measure of Tabaré's considerable military strength. Although Schmidl does not provide a figure for the number of warriors Tabaré commanded, his claim that "if it had not been for our harquebuses, not one of us would have been saved,"⁸² indicates that he was a formidable adversary. When Tabaré refused to capitulate, Irala ordered that the women and children were to be taken captive and stormed his village.⁸³ In the ensuing battle, Irala succeeded in preventing the slaughter of the women and children but was unable to restrain the Yaperús from killing the Cario warriors. Schmidl relates that although many escaped, the Yaperús hunted them down after the battle ended and obtained "about one thousand Cario heads."⁸⁴

Irala's concern to spare Tabaré's women and children underscores the importance of the pacification campaign for securing the personal service of the Carios. It also reflects the divergent objectives of the conquistadors and the Yaperús in uniting in war against them. While the Spanish were intent on suppressing the Carios in order to obtain their vassalage, the Yaperús were seeking revenge against their traditional enemies by indiscriminately massacring women and children as well as men. In this respect, the Yaperús' ferocity as warriors proved a decisive factor in defeating the Carios militarily. Antonio d'Escalera relates:

The death and destruction was so great that the natives [Carios], having seen the great damage that had been done and that the Spanish had used neighbouring Indians they had for slaves against them, asked for peace in order not to lose everything. It was conceded to them, and this was how they were and still are pacified, although decimated and desolate.⁸⁵

The terms of surrender agreed upon by Tabaré reveal that the capture of his women and children was equally important for a negotiated end to the rebellion. According to Schmidl, he and the other caciques came to "ask forgiveness from our captain and to request the return of

their women and children, saying that they once again wished to be our good friends and to serve us as they had served us before.”⁸⁶ Claiming that Irala “agreed with great happiness” to these terms of surrender, Schmidl noted that “since then, the Carios have been good friends, at least until I left the country [in 1552].”⁸⁷ Irala’s account of the pacification campaign echoes Guzmán’s description of his divide-and-conquer strategy after the Semana Santa rebellion. In Irala’s 1555 letter to the Council of the Indies, he reports in one brief line that he had been forced to repress the Carios after “many of them had fled the land and others had risen up,”⁸⁸ and had succeeded in “pacifying and reducing the Indians to the service of the Crown, by pardoning some and punishing others.”⁸⁹

While Irala’s tactics in repressing the two rebellions was consistent, the results were strikingly different. In Guzmán’s chronicle, the defeat of the Semana Santa rebellion is identified as the pivotal event in the establishment of the Guaraní-Hispanic alliance, which enabled the Spanish to forge kinship relations with the caciques in the region. Eight years later, the contemporary accounts link the final stage of the Carios’ pacification to a continuum of colonial violence and the resumption of the *rancheadas*. Telléz de Escobar relates that Irala

gave new license to the Christians to go to the territories and settlements of the Indians and take away their women and children from their houses. And some of the Indians, weary of the maltreatment that they received every day, came to the Christians to ask to be friends. As they had rebelled, Irala demanded of them that they give him their women and children in return. And because he let them remain in their villages, they gave him all he asked for, and in this manner [Irala] made peace with the Indians.⁹⁰

Similarly, the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) states that

after having made the said peace with the said Indians, the captain Domingo de Irala sent Alvaro de Chaves, *lengua*, and another Christian named Moreno to abduct women and bring them to him, and they obtained many in this way and not just this once but many times. And as the caciques did not want to give them their daughters and women, Irala sent letters authorizing their seizure by force.⁹¹

Both these accounts demonstrate how coercion was the defining factor in establishing the terms of the Carios' vassalage. The anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) also makes explicit that Irala's use of the *rancheadas* as the instrument of this coercion was carried out under the guise of legal protocol. Once again, the *lenguas* figure in the anonymous *relación* as Irala's henchmen, as they had when the rebellion began. Only this time, they were also the enforcement agents of Spanish law. The letters that Irala sent to the caciques with them presumably were *requerimientos* authorizing the seizure of women and children as a defensible measure of just war, which permitted the enslavement of rebellious Indians. If this was the case, the legal pretence of the *rancheadas* casts into doubt Schmidl's claim that Irala had returned Tabaré's women and children after the final offensive. Alternatively, it suggests that Irala had reneged on the terms of surrender. The seizure of women as a condition of the caciques' submission to Spanish rule also made the post-rebellion *rancheadas* more destructive than those that had taken place prior to the Carios' insurrection. Whereas the initial raiding of the *tekó-ás* by the *comuneros* and their Cario allies in 1544 was still bound by kinship ties, and increased the resources of some *tekó-ás* to the detriment of others, two years later the raiding of the *tekó-ás* by the Spanish and their *lengua* collaborators had as its sole objective the acquisition of women to serve the conquistadors in Asunción. As a consequence, the terms of colonial vassalage threatened the very core of the economic and social fabric of the *tekó-ás*, which depended on women for agricultural labour and reciprocal kinship obligations.

In her ethnohistory of the Guaraní, Branislava Susnik posits that the Carios' 1545-6 rebellion demonstrated a resolve to unite against the conquistadors in opposition to being treated as *tapíi* rather than as *avá* "friends' and allies."⁹² Florencia Roulet observes in her subsequent study of Guaraní resistance to the Spanish conquest that Susnik's interpretation of the rebellion as a united response provoked by the conquistadors' abuses marked a departure from how it was viewed by historians, such as Enrique de Gandía and Julián Rubio, who regarded the rebellion as an isolated episode or transitory crisis in the Carios' ongoing cooperation with the Spanish.⁹³ Roulet expands on Susnik's interpretation to identify the defeat of the Carios' rebellion as a decisive event in their subjugation to a "colonial situation," which Roulet defines as "domination imposed by a foreign minority, racially (or ethnically) and culturally distinctive, in the name of a racial (or ethnic) and cultural superiority dogmatically affirmed, over an indigenous majority that is materially inferior."⁹⁴ Roulet argues that the defeat of the 1545-6

insurrection marked both the Carios' realization that they would be unable to expel the European, and the emergence of an "indigenous consciousness —*conciencia indigena*"⁹⁵ in opposition to this "colonial situation." She also locates in the Carios' alliance with the Agaces leading up to the rebellion evidence that this "indigenous consciousness" was pan-ethnic in its inception.⁹⁶

In a different but related context, Steve J. Stern's study of indigenous resistance in the Huamanga region of Peru in the 1560s initiated debate concerning the emergence of a pan-ethnic "indigenous consciousness." By analysing how different ethnic groups rose up in defiance of their colonial oppressors during a messianic nativist movement, known as Taki Onqoy or "dancing sickness," Stern posits that the rebellion of the *taquiungos* signified a new identity formation of being Indian in opposition to the Spanish.⁹⁷ Irene Silverblatt, in an article entitled "Becoming Indian," has responded to Stern's analysis by arguing that the formation of an "Indian" identity presupposes a Spanish-dominated world, and that the *taquiungos* "did not accept—at least in principle—a Spanish presence in the Andes; they would brook no compromise with colonialism."⁹⁸ She states that their rebellion "nevertheless was steeped in colonial constraints and paradoxes; as an ideology of native position and possibility in the colonial world, the Taki Onqoy set directions of understanding—directions that would be resurrected and transformed during the century to follow."⁹⁹

In the context of the transcultural dynamics of Spanish-Cario relations that I have analysed in this chapter, and Roulet's arguments concerning the Carios' 1545-6 insurrection, Stern's and Silverblatt's observations about the *taquiungos*' rebellion are instructive comparisons. While both Stern and Roulet propose that the pan-ethnic dimension of indigenous resistance signals a new identity formation of being Indian in opposition to the Spanish, I have argued that the formation of this identity was impeded by the Carios' hierarchical distinction between being *avá* and being *tapíí*. Although the Carios made an initial alliance with the Agaces, they did not integrate them as a *tapíí* nation into their warrior ranks. The traditional hostility between *guáras* and the kinship relations the Carios had established with the conquistadors before their rebellion further impeded the emergence of an "indigenous consciousness" of being *avá* in opposition to the Spanish. In turn, while Silverblatt's framing of "becoming Indian" in relation to a colonial world parallels Roulet's framing of an "indigenous consciousness" in relation to a

“colonial situation,” the Carios’ rebellion took place in a world dominated by indigenous norms. In this respect, I concur with Susnik that the Carios’ 1545-46 insurrection signalled a resolve to preserve their identity as *avá* in face of being treated by the Spanish as *tapíi*, but do not consider it to constitute the emergence of an “indigenous consciousness” as Roulet has argued. What reading the contemporary sources for evidence of transcultural dynamics reveals instead is that both the Carios’ rebellion and its defeat was predicated on intercultural entanglements between worldviews rather than on binary resistance.

These intercultural entanglements were manifested most clearly in the alliances the Carios and the Spanish made with non-*avá* nations. While the Carios’ hierarchical distinction between *avá* and *tapíi* undermined their resolve to join forces with the Agaces to expel the Spanish from Asunción, the Yaperús’ collaboration with the Spanish transformed the Carios’ rebellion into an indigenous war in which they were vanquished by their *tapíi* inferiors. The *lenguas*’ role as intermediaries further complicated the binary equation of colonial oppression and indigenous resistance. They were used by Irala to raid the *tekó-ás* of his Cario allies, and it was the *lenguas* who negotiated the alliance between the Yaperús and the Spanish. With their submission to colonial vassalage, the Carios were now the *tapíi* inferiors of their former Spanish allies, whom they had incorporated into their *tekó-ás* through kinship as *avá* and equals. How the Carios responded to becoming *tapíi* in a world still dominated by indigenous norms, and how the mestizos’ role as kinship intermediaries blurred the boundaries between being *avá* and being Spanish, are the foci of the next chapter.

Endnotes.

1. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 94. “*vieron en un torreón del fuerte un hombre vestido de blanco, con una espada desnuda en la mano, que les cegaba con su vista, de que atemorizados, caían en tierra.*”

2. *Ibid.*, 128. Guzmán believes that he is describing an Inca object of worship, although Cabeza de Vaca’s expedition did not reach the highland settlements where such objects were to be found. Bernabé Cobo’s commentary on Incan idols states they were life-size or slightly smaller, and thus Guzmán’s description is clearly fanciful, although it must have been informed by descriptions of Incan spiritual practices told to him by conquistadors arriving in Asunción from Upper Peru. Cobo, *Incan Religion and Customs*, 46. The full description in his chronicle is as follows: “In the middle of the central plaza they found a house so terrifying they

dared not enter. It was a large circular structure made of strong wood in the style of a fortified tower and in the form of a pyramid, covered at the top with palm tree leaves. Enclosed within it was a monstrous snake or type of serpent so deformed that it struck terror and fear in all those who saw it. It was very thick and scaly, twenty-five feet long, and in the middle as thick as a calf. It had a large flat head, uneven fangs, and tiny eyes that lit up and appeared to flash. The skin of its tail was dark and hard, although covered in part by diverse colours. The scales were the size of platters, with many reddish-blond eyes that made it appear more fierce.” (*en la plaza principal se hallo una casa espantable, que por serlo no dejaré de tartar de ella. Estaba en un círculo muy grande á modo de palenque, de muy buena y fuerte madera en forma pyramidal, cubierta por lo alto de ciertas empleitas de hojas de palmas, dentro de la cual tenian encerrada una monstruosa culebra ó genera de serpiente tan disforme, que ponía gran terror y espanto á todos los que la veían. Era muy gruesa y llena de escamas; la cabeza muy chata y grande, con disformes colmillos; los ojos muy penqueños, tan encendidos, que parecia centellear; tenia de largo 25 pies, y el groser por el media como un novillo; la cola tableada de duro y negro cuero, aunque en parte manchado de diversos colores. La escama era tan grande como un plato, con muchos ojos rubicundos que le hacían mas feroz.*)

3. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 113. “*De esta suerte sucedió á nuestros españoles en la conquista y descubrimiento del Rio de la Plata, de donde pesando volver prósperos y ricos, sucedió tan al contrario, que de todos ninguno volvió remediado á su natural: acabando todos ó los mas sus vidas cruel y miserablemente.*”

4. *Ibid.*, 136-139.

5. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 90. “*nos batíamos día y noche y nos guerreábamos en tal forma que ni el diablo hubiera podido gobernarnos.*”

6. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 65. For overviews of the Comunero rebellions see Stephen Haliczer, *The Comuneros of Castile: The Forging of a Revolution, 1475-1521* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981); J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain: 1469-1716* (New York: Penguin, 2002), 151-9; and Jon Cowans, ed. *Early Modern Spain: A Documentary History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 46.

7. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 65, 67-74.

8. *Ibid.*, 72; *Relación de Pero Hernández*, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 406-408.

9. *Relación de Pero Hernández*, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 407.

10. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 351. “*dieron licencia abiertamente a todos sus amigos y valedores y criados para que fuessen por los pueblos y lugares de los indios y les tomassen las mujeres y las hijas y las hamacas y otras cosas que tenían, por fuerça y sin pagarselo, cosa que no conuenia al seruicio de Su Magestad y a la pacificacion de aquella tierra, y haziendo esto yuan por toda la tierra dandoles muchos palos, trayendoles por fuerça a sus casas para que labrassen sus heredades sin pagarles nada por ello.*”

11. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 67. “hicieron grandes crueldades en las yndias naturales del la tierra, dandoles tantos açotes que las dexaban por muertas, y á palos las mataban.”
12. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 452. “en no nos hazer justiçia y malos tratamientos no se espera syno total destruyçion de todos.”
13. Carta de Hernando Ribera, February 25, Asunción, 1545. DHG II: 414. “ansi los cristianos como los naturales las desamparan y despueblan porlos malos tratami.^{tos} y vexaciones y agravios qles hazen.”
14. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 352, 357-9 (permission for cannibalism).
15. *Ibid.*, 352-354.
16. *Ibid.*, 351. “se començo a despoblar y se yuan los naturales a viuir a las montañas, escondidos donde no los pudiessen hallar los christianos.”
17. *Relación del Pero Hernández*, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 407, 395. Morquiraçe is also identified in the *Comentarios* as Lorenzo Moquiraci, one of the caciques who participated in the raid against the Guaycurúes.
18. Testamento de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 13, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 560. The assistance of Pedro de Mendoza in the founding of Asunción is recorded in Juan de Salazar’s declaration in the proceedings made against the royal officials on the order of Cabeza de Vaca: Proceso hecho por orden de Alvar Nuñez contra los Oficiales Reales y otros cupables cuando se fué al Brasil fray Bernardo de Armenta, June 11, 1543. Cited in Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 65.
19. Juan de Salazar Cupiratí is identified in Salazar’s declaration as the other cacique who assisted in the founding of Asunción. Declaration of Juan de Salazar in Proceso hecho por orden de Alvar Nuñez contra los Oficiales Reales y otros cupables caundo se fué al Brasil fray Bernardo de Armenta, June 11, 1543. Cited in Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 65. Cupiratí is named in the *Comentarios* as one of the caciques who participated in the raid against the Guaycurúes. Serrano y Sanz I, 206.
20. Testimony of Pedro Estopiñán recorded for Cabeza de Vaca’s *probanza*, Xerez de la Frontera, July 19, 1546. Serrano y Sanz II, 146.
21. Testimony of Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza recorded for Cabeza de Vaca’s *probanza*, Madrid, July, 26, 1546. Serrano y Sanz II, 230. “quando quieren ir a les hacer Guerra sacan de sus casas sus mujeres e hijos y todo que tienen e lo ponen en montes e sierras donde esten mas escondidos, e van a hacer saltos e trayçiones”
22. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I, 357. “Para valerse los oficiales y Domingo de Yrala con los indios naturales de la tierra les dieron licencia que matassen y comiessen a los indios enemigos dellos.”

23. Ibid. “*y a muchos destos a quien dieron licencia eran christianos nueuamente conuertidos.*”
24. Ibid. “*y por hazellos que no se fuessen de la tierra y les ayudassen.*”
25. Relación de Pero Hernández, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 407.
26. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 72.
27. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 452. “*y no ay ning.^o d.llos q. no tenga sus offi.^s y otros allegados.*”
28. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 68. “*y que al que las tratase mal se las quitaria y las daria á quien las tratase bien.*”
29. Anonymous relación de Río de la Plata, 1545. BG: 29.
30. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 15-20.
31. Carta de Francisco de Andrada, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 417.
32. Ibid. “*an tomado vna mal costumbre en de vender estas yndias vnos a otros por Rescate/ sobre todo lo vno ylo otro les e amonestado muchas vezes y amonesto.*”
33. Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 453. “*se tiene de costumbre entre nosotros de contratar y vender por exçesibos presçios como se fuere esclavas las yndias q nos dadas por sus padres y parientes p^a nro serui^o syendo como son libres y vros subditos.*”
34. Carta de Francisco González Paniagua, March 3, 1545. DHG II: 448.
35. Carta de factor Pedro de Orantes al Rey, March 5, 1545. COR: 81.
36. Ibid.
37. Relación de Pero Hernández, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 408.
38. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Ordenanza sobre valor de la moneda de la tierra, February 12, 1545. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 425.
39. Ordenanzas de Felipe de Cáceres, July 26, 1544. COR: 106. “*lo poco que los dichos esclavos valen porque de cinco partes las quatro dos muertos hay, y porque por ningun esclavo se hallan arriba de treynta cañas.*”
40. Carta de Pedro de Fuentes, presented by Cabeza de Vaca for his *probanza*, Xerez de la Frontera, Spain, September 31, 1545. Serrano y Sanz II, 299. “*una esclavilla que vale en esta*

tierra veynte e çinco cuñas, e una casa e dos almudes de roça, que ynnumerado todo puede valer hasta noventa cuñas.”

41. Carta de Francisco González Paniagua, March 3, 1545. DHG II: 448.

42. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 82. “*despues de mi prision el dicho Domingo de Yrala y oficiales de Su Magestad y sus amigos bendieron muchas yndias libres, asi á trueque de hazerles casas y roças con el trabajo de yndios, como á trueque de yeguas y de asclabos y ropas y otras cosas.”*

43. Carta de Francisco de Andrada, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 417.

44. Carta de Alonso Riquel(me) de Guzmán, presented by Cabeza de Vaca for his *probanza*, Xerez de la Frontera, Spain, September 31, 1545. Serrano y Sanz II, 289.

45. Carta de Contador y Oficial Felipe de Cáceres á S.M. March 7, 1545. COR: 88; Carta de Gerónimo Ochoa de Eizaguirre, March 8, 1545. DHG II: 453.

46. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 69.

47. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 177-78.

48. Testimony of Pedro Estopiñán recorded for Cabeza de Vaca’s *probanza*, Xerez de la Frontera, July 19, 1546. Serrano y Sanz II, 147. Nicolás Colman is listed in an anonymous *memoria* from 1556 as coming with Pedro de Mendoza’s expedition. *Memoria de la Gente quell dia de oy se tiene por ser y son bibos en las provincias de los rios de la plata, Paraguay y parana*, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 527.

49. *Relación general*, Serrano y Sanz II, 80.

50. Relación de Pero Hernández, January 28, 1545. DHG II: 408;

51. Relación de Tesoro Francisco Ortiz de Vergara, Cape Verde, January 1, 1573. COR: 244. “*Llevaron consigo muchos hijos de caciques de la tierra diciendo que los llevavan al catecismo.”*

52. Probanza of Cabeza de Vaca, Xerez de la Frontera, July 18, 1546. Serrano y Sanz II, 135.

53. Testimony of Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza recorded for the Cabeza de Vaca’s *probanza*, Madrid, July, 26, 1546. Serrano y Sanz II, 244. “*eran cosas para alterarse los yndios y la tierra.”*

54. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz I: 367. “*murieron supita y desastradamente los frayles.”*

55. *Ibid.* “*que le saltaron los ojos de la cara.”*

56. Adorno and Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*, vol. 1, 412.

57. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 2, 318. “Los indios, aunque bárbaros, infieron de discordia tan universal que imperio dividio entre sí no prometia mucha duración, y queriendo ayudar con un fuerte impulso á apresurar su ruina, para verse libres de la opresion que miraban como un yugo intolerable, se conjuraron para explusar de su país á los castellanos. A la verad tenía sobrado motivo para estar agraviados, porque la licencia de vida, permitia Irala abria puerta para la perdicion y lamentable ruina de los vecinos pueblos, que oprimidos de la crueldad y codicia de los soldados, siendo amigos, llorando, lastimosas hostilidades; por que saliendo á ellos cuando les dictaba su antojo, les robaban cuando querian, destruian sus labranzas ultrajaban á sus mujers, y hacían tales estorciones que aun la pluma tiene rubor de escribirlas.”

58. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. GGV 81:3 and BG: 261. “se levantaron los yndios de la tierra, paresciendoles que estando los xpianos devisos que serian parte para matarlos y hecharlos de la tierra porque avian Rescivido de los cristianos muy grandes agravios de averles tomado sus mujeres e hijas e lo que tenian en sus casas e ansy empezaron a matar algunos cristianos de los que andavan haziendoles este agravio.”

59. Carta del clerico presbitero Antonio d’Escalera al Emperador Don Cárlos, April 25, 1556. CI: 583. “Pues, salido de la tierra el governador y su teniente, que fué por el año de quinientos y quarenta y çinco, Domingo de Yrala, que mandava, para poder hazer y sustentar lo que tenia hecho, dava y avia dado tantas largas á sus amigos y valedores, que por la tierra anduviesen, los quales fecho tantos y tan grandes agravios á los naturales desta tierra, que visto ellos que tan perseguidos heran, determinaron de matar algunos cristianos, y asi lo hizieron, y mataron quatro o çinco, y muertos, se lebantaron contra los cristianos, en tal manera, que fué necesario yr á ellos, y mataron y prendieron muchos.”

60. Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 273.

61. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Ordenanzas de policia, August 27, 1545. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 425-426; Fragmento sobre pesquería, August 29, 1545. Lafuente Machaín, 427-8.

62. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Ordenanzas de policia, September 22, 1545. Lafuente Machaín, 430.

63. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Requerimiento y parlamento sobre los Agaces. May 31, August 29, and June 18, 1545. Lafuente Machaín, 443-452.

64. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Fragmento sobre pesquería, August 29, Lafuente Machaín, 427. “y por q. su Mrd quyere hazer guerra a los yndios agazes nros enemygos y podria ser q. llevando y cabtibando algun xpiano / o yndio podria del ynformarse y saber la verdad de todo / por tanto e q. mandaba y mando q. ninguna ny algunas psonas de cualquier estado y condizion q. sean / sean osados de yr ny enbyar yndio alguno grande ny pequeño a pescar ny a cazar ny otra cosa alguna abajo de roça dl Cap^{an} Joan de Salazar despinoso.”

65. Memorial de Pedro de Dorantes. July 4, 1545. COR: 116. “*preguntando a los yndios agazes que porque dauan sus mujeres a los yndios carios rrespondieron que porque dezian los yndios carios que ellos eran los rrecios y que les diesen a ellos sus muheres porque a nosotros pronto nos matarian.*”
66. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 91. “*Cuando los carios, que hasta entonces habían sido nuestros amigos, vieron que los cristianos luchábamos entre nosotros, planearon y resolvieron matarnos a todos los cristianos y echarnos fuera del país. Dios Todopoderso no ayudó a los carios a que su plan y propósito se realizaran, a pesar de estar contra nosotros todo el país de los carios y con ellos la nación de los agaces.*”
67. Ibid. “*Cuando los cristianos nos dimos cuenta, hicimos la paz entre nosotros y también con otras dos naciones de indios que tenían como cinco mil guerreros y se llaman Yapirus y Guatatas.*”
68. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Carlos V, June 25, 1556. CI: 606. “*llamaron los cristianos dos generaciones de yndios enemigos destes carives, los quales es jente muy ligera y se dizen Guatatas y Apiraes.*”
69. Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 273. “*otros xipanos que habian quedado de gavoto eran lenguas de unos yndios contrarios destes que se avian alçado, los quales se llamavan yaperus e guatatus e vineron en nuestra ayuda hasta dos myll ombres.*”
70. *Comentarios*, Serrano y Sanz II, 201. “*tienen por costumbre de tomar captiuos de los Guaranies y traenlos maniatados dentro sus canoas y lleganse a la propia tierra donde son naturales y salen sus parientes para rescatarlos, y delante de sus padres e hijos, mujeres y deudos les dan crueles açotes e les dizen que les trayan de comer, sino que los mataran. Luego les traen muchos mantimientos hasta que cargan las canoas y se bueluen a sus casas y lleuense los prisioneros, y esta hazen muchos vezes y son pocos los rescatan, porque despues que estan hartos de traerlos en sus canoas y de açortarlos los cortan las cabeças y las ponen por la ribera del rio hincadas en vnos palos altos.*”
71. Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnología del Chaco Boreal y su Periferia*, 71.
72. Carta de Martín González al al Emperador Don Carlos, June 25, 1556. CI: 607-8. “*y en muchos reuentos que los naturales ovieron, mataron muy gran cantidad de los naturales, y en señal de vengança, les quitavan las cabeças, las quales los yndios que los cristianos llebaban, se llevaban á su tierra, lo qual no hizieran ni osaran acometerles, sino fabor que los cristianos tenían.*” While González uses the term “cabezas,” as does Schmidl, a later memorial describes how the Carios were “descabecados” or scalped by the Yaperús. Memorial de las cosas que han sucedido despues que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del rio de la plata, undated. BG: 273. A testimony recorded for the television series, *Pueblos Originarios* (First Peoples), which was produced by the Argentine state channel *Encuentro*, provides potential insight into the references to *cabezas* in the contemporary accounts of the 1500s. In one of the programs, a Guaycurú Indian from the Gran Chaco described how his grandfather used to go to war and scalp his enemies. Afterwards, the scalps were draped over gourds and placed on long

poles to dry. Once the scalps had adhered to the gourds, the gourds were cut open and used in ceremonies as drinking vessels. While this testimony is obviously not concurrent with the colonial documentation, it explains the discrepancy in the contemporary accounts between heads and scalps, and suggests that Hernández's description of the poles the Agaces placed along the side of the river with the "heads" of their enemies were scalps drying on gourds. In this regard, Susnik identifies the Agaces' practice of placing their enemies' heads on poles as scalping in *Etnohistoria de la Guaraní*, 22.

73. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. GGV 81:3. "*se mataron muy gran cantidad de yndios y mujeres y muchachos quemando las casas y cortando y destruyendo los bastimentos.*"

74. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 93.

75. *Ibid.*, 95.

76. *Ibid.*, 96.

77. *Ibid.*, 97. Lozano states that Tabaré was not the same cacique who led the 1543 rebellion. However, the proximity of the locations and dates of the two uprisings, which were three years apart, raises the possibility that he may have been. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 2, 327.

78. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 98

79. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 3, 220

80. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 61.

81. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 98.

82. *Ibid.*, 99. "*Creo que no a no haber sido por los arcabuces, ni uno de nosotros se hubiera salvado entonces.*"

83. *Ibid.*, 100.

84. *Ibid.* "*que más tarde nuestros amigos yapirus se trajeron alrededor de mil cabezas de esos carios.*"

85. Carta de clerico presbitero Antonio d'Escalera al Emperador Don Carlos, April 25, 1556. CI: 587. "*Fué la mortandad y destruçon tan grande, que visto por los naturales el gran daño que se les hazia, y que avian metido otros yndios comarcanos, que ellos tienen por esclavos, contra ellos, por no perderse del todo, pidieron pazes y se les conçedió, y asi an estado y están paçíficos, avnque esquilimados y ávn desollados.*"

86. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 100. "*vinieron al campamento Tabaré y otros principales de los carios, y pidieron perdón a nuestro capitán, rogando que se devolvieron sus mujeres e*

hijos; dijeron que querían ser de nuevo buenos amigos como antes, y servirnos como antes nos habían servido.”

87. Ibid. “*desde entonces los carios han sido buenos amigos, por lo menos hasta que yo salí de ese país.”*

88. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias, Asunción, July 24, 1555. CI: 572. “*por aver muchos dellos desamparado la tierra y leuantado otras.”*

89. Ibid. “*se paçficó y se reduxo al seruiçio de V.A., perdonando á vnos y castigando á otros.”*

90. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. GGV 81:3; BG: 262. “*dava de Nuevo licencia a los cristianos para que fuesen á la tierra y casa de los yndios a trahellos y quitalles sus mujeres e hijas e lo que tuviesen en sus casas, y los yndios alçados de los malos tratamyentos que cada dia Recivian algunos que veian a la amistad de los cristianos domyngo de Yrala les pidio que le diesen sus mujeres e hijas de tinteco que se avian levantado, y los yndios porque le dexasen estar en sus casas le davan todo quanto les pedia y desta manera rrecivian a los yndios a la amistad.”*

91. Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 273. “*E despues de aver hecho las dichas pazes con los dichos yndios el capitan domyngo de Yrala envió a alvaro de chaves legua e otro xpiano que se dezia moreno de Rovalles las mujeres e traerselas de donde truxo ansi muchas e no solamente esta vez sino munchas vezes e como no lo querian dar los principales las dichas sus hijas e mujeres le enviaba cartas para que se le quitase por fuerça.”*

92. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 57.

93. Roulet, *La resistencia de los guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista española (1537-1556)*, 214.

94. Ibid., 215.

95. Ibid., 214.

96. Ibid., 214-215.

97. Steve J. Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 51-69.

98. Irene Silverblatt. “Becoming Indian,” in Gyan Prakash, ed. *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 282.

99. Ibid.

Chapter Seven: Ranchedas and Entradas: The Rule of Domingo Martínez de Irala. 1546-1556.

In the letters and reports written to the Crown concerning Irala's tyrannical governorship of the Río de la Plata from the time of the defeat of the Carios' insurrection in 1546 to the establishment of the *encomienda* in 1556, scandalized descriptions of his oppression of the Carios centre on the devastation caused by the *ranchedas* of the period. The Franciscan priest Martín González writes despairingly that after the women were seized from their villages

the male Indians were left to care for the children, and worked so hard they died of pure exhaustion. Not only that, the children, who were very young, fell in the fires and burned to death. For as they had no mothers, there was no one to rescue them. Other children perished because there was nothing to give them to eat except earth. Still others were infants and breastfeeding at the time their mothers were taken away. Some of the old women took a few of them to their breasts until milk came, and thus they were raised, malnourished and in a hazardous manner.¹

Telléz de Escobar similarly laments their miserable fate:

The interpreters and the people whom Irala sent to the Carios' territories burned the villages and brought back women who had just given birth. They left behind the newborn children, saying that the men could take care of them. And because it was the custom in this land that the women work the land and make the meals, both children and fathers died.²

Juan Muñoz de Carvajal, who identifies himself as a native of Placenzia and a conquistador of the Río de la Plata, decries the Carios' emotional anguish as well as their material deprivation, relating that there was "such grief and mourning, the husbands for their wives and the wives for their husbands [as well as] for the children they had lost, that one would have thought the sky would break for the tears that poured forth."³

According to González, the fate of the women taken to Asunción was as horrific as that of the men and infants left bereft in the *tekó-ás*. He reports that some of the women hanged themselves out of despair. Others were locked up like prisoners or killed by their jealous masters.⁴ He conveys the degradation they endured by describing how he witnessed Spaniards gambling over an Indian woman. After the game had finished, they “stripped her nude and sent her with the person who had won her without any clothes, for they said that the bet had not included the clothes she was wearing.”⁵ The anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) adds another dimension to González’s portrayal of the conquistadors’ cavalier betting. The author claims that when they lost at gambling, Irala sent his servants to *ranchear* more women in order to keep the game going.⁶

González’s estimate of the death toll that resulted from the seizure of the Carios’ women is equally shocking. He reports that of the almost fifty thousand Cario women brought to Asunción after Irala became the governor, “at present [1556] there are amongst the Christians fifteen thousand. All the rest are dead from mistreatment.”⁷ Muñoz de Carvajal attests to their high morality rate in a more literary vein, describing how

from the day of the imprisonment of Cabeza de Vaca until the day of this date [June 15, 1556], they brought flocks of women to serve them as if they were going to a fair and bringing herds of sheep. From this practice, the church cemeteries of the city were populated and more than twenty thousand souls have perished and a great part of the land has been depopulated.⁸

Gregorio de Acosta, the Portuguese pilot who had come with Mendoza’s expedition, calculates in his *relación* (c. 1572) that between 1545 and 1556 more than thirty thousand Indian men, women, children, and babies died from the *rancheadas*.⁹

While these testimonies of devastation, despair, and death speak eloquently to the Carios’ suffering, the degree to which they are accurate reflections of their subjugation by the Spanish is a contentious point in the twentieth-century historiography of Paraguay. On the one hand, Enrique de Gandía argues in his study of Spanish-Guaraní relations in the early colonial period, *Indios y conquistadores en el Paraguay*, that the condemnations of the *rancheadas* were inventions stemming from the *leales*’ hatred of Irala and the priests’ animosity toward the

immoral relations between the conquistadors and the indigenous women in their personal service.¹⁰ He takes particular issue with González and the number of Cario women that he claims perished in Asunción, casting González as the Bartolomé de Las Casas of Paraguay who was intent on maligning the Spaniards' achievement of civilizing the Indians through *mestizaje*.¹¹ On the other hand, Florencia Roulet relies on the veracity of the testimonies in her anthropological study, *La resistencia de los guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista española (1537-1556)*, to argue that the *rancheadas* were central to “the failure of the Guaraní to preserve their status as warriors, the defense of their liberty, their culture, and their way of life”¹²

In this chapter, I approach the inherent difficulty of evaluating the empirical validity of the historical record for the period from 1546 to 1556—one that risks being either an apologist for colonial violence or accepting at face value cultural genocide about which certainty is unattainable—by contextualizing the *rancheadas* as one facet of the transcultural dynamics of the post-rebellion era. I argue that while the contemporary accounts attest to the traumatic alteration of the *tekó-ás*, they also reveal that the Carios exercised considerably more agency in the wake of their rebellion's defeat than is discernable from the narratives of their victimization. Most crucially, Martín González's description of Irala's 1547-49 *entrada* to the sierra identifies the Carios as protagonists in the constant warfare the expedition waged while crossing the Gran Chaco. In a comparison of his description with eyewitness accounts and the chronicles of Schmidl and Guzmán, what becomes evident is the opportunity that the *entrada* provided for the Carios to affirm their *avá* identity as warriors. By choosing to collaborate with rather than resist the Spanish, they were able to engage in their indigenous norms of raiding and captive-taking at the same time as their women were being enslaved and *tekó-ás* plundered.

The importance of this and subsequent expeditions to Irala's ten-year rule as governor is the focal point of the chapter. I argue that by mounting *entradas*, Irala was perceived by the Carios as a powerful war chief, which enabled him to maintain an indigenous power base in Asunción despite the violence of the *rancheadas*, and to exert his authority over the fractious The disastrous outcome of the *entrada* he led in 1553, during which many Carios deserted and many more died, marked a turning point in the power relations of his governance, undermining

his prestige among the Carios and diminishing his control over the conquistadors. With the arrival of news in 1554 that he had been officially recognized as governor, and in the face of increasing pressure from the conquistadors to institute the *encomienda*, Irala's rule became contingent on colonial rather than indigenous exigencies. In this chapter, I also address the increasing importance of the conquistadors' mestizo children, whose kinship relations with the Carios were essential for obtaining service, to the complex nexus of power dynamics in the post-rebellion era.

The first report of an *entrada* undertaken by the Spanish after the Carios' uprising in 1545-56 is found in Irala's 1555 letter to the Council of the Indies. He states that after pacifying the Carios he sent Ñuflo de Chaves, a captain who had come with Cabeza de Vaca's armada, with fifty Spaniards and three thousand Indians to find a route to the sierra that the Carios called *el camino de los mayas*. In October 1546, Chaves sailed up the Paraguay River and marched inland from the port of San Fernando between Candelaria and Puerto de los Reyes. Having established that the route existed, he turned back because of a lack of food and returned to Asunción by December.¹³ On the basis of Chaves's findings, Irala elected to take this route for the *entrada* he led to the sierra from 1547 to 1549. Departing from Asunción in November 1547, he arrived at San Fernando in January 1548, and succeeded in crossing the Chaco Boreal to reach the Guapay River (Río Grande) east of present-day Santa Cruz de la Sierra by the end of August 1548.¹⁴ According to Irala, two hundred Spaniards and two thousand Indians accompanied him on this expedition.¹⁵ In their respective chronicles, Guzmán and Schmidl report higher numbers than Irala, stating that three thousand Cario warriors participated as well as three hundred conquistadors, whom, according to Guzmán, included Ñuflo de Chaves, Felipe de Cáceres, and Gonzalo de Mendoza.¹⁶

For both Chaves's exploratory expedition and Irala's subsequent *entrada*, the number of participating warriors exceeded those who had accompanied Cabeza de Vaca to Puerto de los Reyes. The Carios' willingness to collaborate in such large numbers so soon after their insurrection's defeat has several plausible explanations in addition to the opportunity it provided to affirm their warrior status. If Irala's claim that he pacified the Carios "by pardoning some and punishing others" is to be believed, then the Cario caciques who agreed to participate in the *entradas* may have been spared further attacks on their villages. A more

certain incentive was the potential for the Carios to expand the range of their raiding against non-*avá* nations, especially as their traditional enemies, such as the Yaperús, were now aligned with the Spanish. In this respect, the Carios' previous experience at Puerto de los Reyes was pivotal to their collaboration. Unlike the Itatines, there is no historical record of the Carios crossing the Gran Chaco and raiding the sierra before the arrival of the Spanish. During Cabeza de Vaca's expedition to Puerto de los Reyes, they had gained knowledge of these regions, while the large number of captives they had obtained gave them a reason to return.

According to the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556), the Carios took the initiative in volunteering to participate in the *entradas*. The author states that after Irala sent the *lenguas* Alvaro de Chaves and Moreno to the caciques with letters authorizing the seizure of their women and children, the Carios realized that they could no longer oppose the Spanish. Instead, they came to Asunción to talk with the *racionero* (canon) Juan Gabriel de Lezcano, "for whom the Indians had a great love because of the doctrine."¹⁷ They told Lezcano about the *camino de los mayas*, which they claimed Ayolas had taken, and offered to go with the conquistadors if they wanted to follow this route to the sierra.¹⁸ As the Carios did not raid the sierra they could have had no first-hand knowledge of such a route. Their claim that they did suggests that they had conceived of it as a negotiating tool to accompany the conquistadors as warrior allies on the expedition and thus counteract the defeat of their rebellion and their status as vassals. Their decision to confide in Lezcano also provides an elusive glimpse of how the clergy had displaced the *lenguas* as the mediators of conflict. Four years earlier, the Indian whose wife Garcí Venegas had stolen had approached the *lenguas* to intervene on his behalf. Now, the *lenguas* were Irala's accomplices and tainted by the violence of the *rancheadas*. In contrast, Lezcano had retained his influence among the Carios as a Christian evangelist, revealing how the spiritual realm remained a site of cultural exchange despite the horrific repression of the Carios' rebellion and the Franciscan friars kidnapping their women.

In addition to the Carios' claim that they knew the *camino de los mayas*, Irala had other reasons for enlisting their collaboration in mounting the *entrada*. In order to undertake an expedition through lands inhabited by potentially hostile nations, he required the support of indigenous warriors. Although the Yaperús had fought alongside the Spanish in the pacification of the Carios, the absence of any references to them accompanying the

conquistadors on the *entradas* before the late 1550s suggests that initially they were disinterested or unwilling to venture beyond familiar terrain. As nomadic hunters, they did not have the custom of raiding for territorial expansion. Nor were they obligated to provide personal service as vassals of the Spanish. Instead, they functioned as mercenaries who could be called upon to repress the Carios. A 1556 letter describes their collaboration with the Spanish as follows:

On the other side of the river there is a nation called the yapirus [Yaperús], and with them other groups who are their relatives and friends. When the Cario Indians rebelled they crossed to this side of the river to come to our aid, and since then they do the same every time we need their assistance.¹⁹

Thus, Irala had little choice but to secure instead the participation of the Cario warriors if he was to reach the fabled mines of gold and silver.

By relying on the Carios for assistance, Irala faced the same situation that Cabeza de Vaca had confronted at Puerto de los Reyes: that the Guaraní-speaking Carios would provoke the hostility of non-*avá* nations and raiding would be necessary to obtain provisions to feed a large number of warriors. Both these factors contributed to the constant warfare that took place during Irala's journey to the sierra. At the same time, there were important differences between his and Cabeza de Vaca's *entradas* that exacerbated the ferocity of this warfare. While Cabeza de Vaca had sought to barter for provisions in his encounters with indigenous groups, the lack of European goods was already evident by the onset of the *rancheadas*. This made raiding a logistical imperative rather than a last resort for Irala. At Puerto de los Reyes, the dismal failure of Cabeza de Vaca's march to the interior and his prohibition against trading with the Carios for captives provoked the conquistadors' mutiny against him. In contrast, Irala succeeded in crossing the Gran Chaco and the conquistadors were unhindered in their acquisition of captives taken by the Cario warriors. However, once the conquistadors discovered that the silver-rich sierra was claimed by the Viceroyalty of Peru, dissension within their ranks contributed to the further escalation of indiscriminate raiding as the expedition returned to Asunción.

Schmidl's chronicle provides the most detailed narrative of Irala's journey to the sierra and the expedition's confrontations with non-*avá* nations.²⁰ He relates that the first major battle of the *entrada* occurred when twenty thousand Mbayás, who were Guaycurú nomads, ambushed the expedition after a fifteen-day march inland from the Paraguay River. Following the ambush, the conquistadors and Carios pursued the Mbayás but were unable to locate them. In retaliation, they massacred an unrelated group of Mbayás they found in the forest and took more than three thousand men, women, and children captive.²¹ Travelling further inland, the expedition made contact with various indigenous groups, including the Chanés, who avoided altercation by either fleeing or providing food.²² Then, Irala reached a desert region in which water was so scarce that many of the Cario warriors died of thirst. On the verge of abandoning the *entrada*, Irala learned from an indigenous group, whom Schmidl identifies as the Siberis, that a nation called the Payzunos was only a six-day march away.²³ Since Irala's informants during his 1542 journey to Puerto de los Reyes had told him that García obtained a "white metal" from the Payzunos, the proximity of this nation must have been an incentive for Irala's decision to forge onwards. Although the Siberis Irala took as his guides disappeared in the middle of the night three days later, the expedition managed to reach a village of the Payzunos, where a second massacre occurred.

According to Schmidl, the impetus for this second massacre lay in the Payzunos' murder of Spaniards who had been living among them since Ayolas had passed through the region on his *entrada* ten years previously. He relates that when the expedition arrived at the Payzunos' village, they were met with hostility. After a skirmish ensued, most of the Payzunos fled and several were taken prisoner. From them, the conquistadors learned that the Payzunos were warned by the Siberis—presumably the guides who had disappeared—of the expedition's approach and had killed three Spaniards whom they were holding captive. Schmidl explains that these Spaniards had been left behind by Ayolas with the Payzunos after they fell ill from dropsy, and that one of them, called Gerónimo, had been a trumpeter for Pedro de Mendoza. To avenge their deaths, the conquistadors went in search of the Payzunos, and finding them in a wood, killed and captured all that they could.²⁴

In his justification for this massacre, Schmidl brings closure to the mystery of the never-seen Christians living in the interior—first mentioned by Irala's indigenous informants in 1542 and

again by the Orejones during Francisco de Ribera's inland foray from Puerto de los Reyes in 1544. At the same time, it raises questions about how the Payzunos understood the arrival of large numbers of Spaniards and Carios in their midst. If the Payzunos' killing of their Spanish captives was in response to a territorial intrusion by other Spaniards, then why would they not have previously attacked Ayolas and killed his men rather than permitting those who were sick to remain with them? Furthermore, since the Payzunos had chosen to keep the Spaniards alive for ten years, which meant that they must have been culturally integrated into their village, then why were they not employed as interpreters to ascertain the nature and motives of Irala's expedition? Although necessarily speculative, an answer to these questions lies in how the Payzunos viewed the presence of the Cario warriors, who outnumbered the conquistadors ten to one. If their presence was perceived by the Payzunos as signaling the arrival of a Guaraní raiding party, then the captive Spaniards may have been killed because their fellow-countrymen were identified as an enemy nation. In this case, it would have been the Payzunos' perception of the Spanish as allies of the Guaraní, and not their difference as Europeans, that sealed the captives' fate after so many years of living as Indians.

In the next confrontation that Schmidl describes, a glimpse emerges of why the Payzunos may have viewed the conquistadors as members of an indigenous raiding party. He relates that after the massacre of the Payzunos, the expedition reached the hilltop village of another nation called the Mayáguenos. When they too proved hostile, Irala launched a two-flanked assault on their village, with the Carios advancing from one side of the hill and the Spanish from the other. During the assault, twelve Spaniards and various Carios were killed before the Mayáguenos set fire to their village and fled. Several days later, five hundred Carios slipped away from the expedition's encampment in the early hours of the morning to seek out and ambush the Mayáguenos. The Carios were vastly outnumbered, and if it had not been for reinforcements of one hundred and fifty Spaniards and a thousand warriors that Irala sent after learning of their raid, all of them would have been killed.²⁵ As a result, writes Schmidl, "our Cario allies were very grateful we had gone to their aid."²⁶

While Schmidl's description of the expedition's confrontations with the Mayáguenos demonstrates how the Carios fought independently in joint-battles with the conquistadors and took the initiative to mount raids on their own, it also portrays them as militarily dependent on

the Spanish. In contrast, González's account of the *entrada* identifies the Carios as the perpetrators of all the massacres and captive-taking that took place. In his 1556 letter, he relates that "the Carios were the ones who went to war,"²⁷ fighting with such alacrity that the persecution of the enemy took place "not only in the towns and houses, but even in the woods where they went in search and pursuit of them."²⁸ He also makes clear that they did so with the approval of the Spanish:

We went forward destroying and killing everything we encountered, which was not done by the Christians but by the Indians in our service, who performed this with our consent and as a good thing. Because of this, wherever we went the Indians took prisoners, and in order to capture them, they did great damage, taking everything the people had, burning their houses and uprooting their crops.²⁹

It was, he laments, "a great sorrow to see the children and old people dead, for it was only the young men and women that the Carios brought alive to their masters (*amos*),"³⁰ claiming that in a single confrontation the Carios killed four thousand children, old women, and old men, and took more than two thousand captives.³¹ In addition to attesting to the Carios' belligerence as warriors, González reveals that they were led by different commanders, noting that Irala sent Ñuflo de Chaves with a contingent of Carios in advance of the main expedition to ambush villages and massacre the inhabitants.³²

Although González's account of the expedition's journey to the sierra does not coincide exactly with Schmidl's, there is sufficient correspondence between them to give credence to González's assertion that the Carios were the "ones who went to war." González's description of the Carios pursuing their victims into the woods indicates that they were the protagonists in the slaughter of the Mbayás; his denunciation that the Carios killed four thousand children, old men, and women in a single confrontation appears to have referred to the assault on the Payzunos. His claim that Ñuflo de Chaves led a contingent of warriors in advance of the expedition also provides insight into the last phase of Irala's journey that Schmidl describes.

Schmidl relates that after battling the Mayáguenos, the expedition marched for thirteen days to reach the territories of the Corocotoquis.³³ This was the nation that Irala's informants at Puerto de los Reyes identified as organizing "a large war party against García and those that went with

him.”³⁴ Irala’s prior knowledge of the Corocotoquis may have played a part in his decision to send an advance party of fifty conquistadors and five hundred Carios to negotiate his arrival. Schmidl, who was a member of this party, tells how they feared for their lives when they made contact with the Corocotoquis, who were more numerous than any other nation they had encountered. After Irala received word that they were in danger, he and the rest of the expedition arrived in time to avert a full-scale confrontation.³⁵ According to Schmidl, the Corocotoquis “became very sad”³⁶ when they realized the strength of Irala’s forces, and out of concern to protect their women and children offered provisions instead of attacking. In light of González’s claim that Ñuflo de Chaves led an advance contingent of Cario warriors, one cannot help but wonder if there was more to Schmidl’s story of the Corocotoquis’ transformation from menacing to sorrowful. If the Carios in Chaves’s service were raiding and captive-taking at every opportunity, then the Corocotoquis’ initial hostility may have been caused by the Carios’ ambushes of their outlying villages.

From different vantage points, both González’s and Schmidl’s accounts of Irala’s eight-month trek across the Gran Chaco attest to the collaboration of the Carios with the Spanish as one predicated on raiding non-*avá* nations. Once Irala reached the Guapay River and made contact with the Tomacosías whose settlements by his calculation lay eight leagues (fifty kilometres) from the Corocotoquis, these dynamics changed.³⁷ Rather than being attacked by the Tomacosías, the conquistadors were greeted in Spanish. When the Tomacosías were asked whom they served, they said that they were vassals of Spaniards like Irala and the conquistadors, and added that their lord had been a *caballero* (nobleman) named Pedro Anzures.³⁸ While this meant that the Tomacosías were willing to cooperate with the expedition, it also signified that the conquistadors had entered lands conquered by other Spaniards before even reaching the sierra. The import of this turn of events became clearer when twenty days later Irala received a letter from the governor of Peru, Pedro de la Gasca, ordering him to halt his expedition until he received further instructions.³⁹ Instead of raiding non-*avá* nations with Cario warriors, the conquistadors now confronted the strictures of royal authority for the first time since they had deposed Cabeza de Vaca three years previously.

While Schmidl does not explain how Gasca had learned of the expedition, the arrival of his letter reveals that he exercised jurisdiction, at least nominally, over the vast territorial network

of the defeated Inca's tribute nations. Gasca had just established his tentative control over Cusco, the former administrative centre of the Inca empire, by executing Gonzalo Pizarro in April 1548 and bringing to a close a series of civil wars fought in Peru between Spanish factions with Inca allies during the late 1530s and 1540s.⁴⁰ He thus had good reason to prevent another group of conquistadors with indigenous collaborators from entering the sierra. Moreover, he could not be assured of the loyalty of Pedro de Anzures, who had been aligned with Pizarro in 1538 when he founded La Plata (modern-day Sucre) and subjected the Tamacosis to Spanish rule.⁴¹ Schmidl writes indignantly that Gasca's order was intended to ward off the risk that Pizarro's supporters, "who had fled and were in the forests and mountains,"⁴² would attempt to organize a rebellion with the help of Irala's expedition. He also accuses Gasca of making a deal with Irala to halt his *entrada* to the sierra by bribing him—in Schmidl's words, "he made him a good present"⁴³—and declares that if the conquistadors had known of this accord, they would have "tied Irala up hand and foot"⁴⁴ and gone on to Peru.

Although Schmidl does not elaborate on the nature of Gasca's "present," soon after receiving Gasca's letter, Irala sent Ñuflo de Chaves with several other Spaniards on to Lima to lobby for the formal recognition of his governorship.⁴⁵ This suggests that Gasca may have promised Irala that Spain would appoint him governor of the Río de la Plata in exchange for forfeiting his ambitions to conquer territories in the sierra. Whether Irala's decision to send Chaves to Lima was based on this understanding or a gamble, it resulted in the mounting frustration of the conquistadors as they waited in the Tamacosíes' territories for Chaves to return. They were prevented not only from continuing onwards to the sierra, which lay so tantalizingly close, but also from obtaining silver from the Tamacosíes. Schmidl relates that Gasca sent further orders for the expedition to continue waiting with the Tamacosíes and to take from them only necessary provisions. Hence, explains Schmidl, "we knew the Macasís (Tomacosíes) had silver, but, as they were subjects of a Spaniard, we could not do anything."⁴⁶ Although Schmidl leaves hanging what that "anything" could have been, the absence of any references to the Carios in his chronicle during the several months the expedition remained with the Tamacosíes is telling. It suggests that Irala and the conquistadors, who despite their years of isolation in Asunción still were bound by royal authority, must have restrained the Carios from raiding.

While Schmidl's chronicle emphasizes the collective impotence the conquistadors experienced in the face of this royal authority, the other accounts of the *entrada* address how their mounting frustration produced dissension among them, conveying a sense that the expedition was descending into worse disorder than had occurred at Puerto de los Reyes. Irala briefly alludes to this dissension in his 1555 letter. He reports that in November 1548, he was removed as commander of the expedition by the royal officials, who appointed Gonzalo de Mendoza in his stead.⁴⁷ In his later chronicle, Guzmán relates that a third of the conquistadors mutinied against Irala and elected Mendoza as their commander when they were prevented from continuing to the sierra.⁴⁸ González identifies the conflict as stemming from a dispute between Irala, who wanted to follow Chaves to Peru, and the royal officials who demanded to return to Asunción.⁴⁹ The anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) provides yet another version of events. The author states that the rank-and-file rebelled because Irala and the royal officials expropriated their captives and goods.⁵⁰

If Irala was seeking official recognition of his governorship, it is unlikely that he would have disobeyed Gasca's orders by continuing to Peru. The move on the part of the expedition's command to expropriate goods was a more plausible motive for the mutiny of the rank-and-file. It indicates that the acquisition of food supplies from the Tamacosis was dependent on the plunder acquired from the rampage across the Gran Chaco, and, in so doing, reveals a fundamental issue confronting the expedition. Unable to advance to the sierra and obtain silver, raiding became the only means to secure goods to trade for provisions, or alternatively, to seize food supplies. As raids against nations subject to Spanish rule, such as the Tamacosíes, would have signified a rebellion against royal authority, there was little choice but to turn back to the Gran Chaco after barter goods and food had run low. While Schmidl does not mention either the mutiny of the rank-and-file or disputes among their commanders, he reports that the expedition was forced to return to the Corocotoquis when only a month's worth of provisions remained.

Once the conquistadors re-entered the Gran Chaco, the division among their ranks made them more susceptible to attacks by hostile nations. It also led to even more excessive raiding and slaving as separate contingents each sought to obtain captives as well as food and plunder. Schmidl reports that when the expedition reached the Corocotoquis' territories, the latter

already had fled their villages with their women and children and were preparing a large war party. In response, Irala launched a preemptive attack in which a thousand slaves were taken and many more were killed.⁵¹ After this battle, Schmidl, who appears to have been aligned with Irala's contingent, falls silent about what transpired during the remainder of the journey back to Asunción. In contrast to his detailed narrative of the confrontations with indigenous nations on the way to the sierra, he simply states that the expedition returned to the Paraguay River where the ships had been left. However, he does allude to the raiding and captive-taking that had taken place by summarizing his experience of the *entrada* in one brief line, recounting that: "we were constantly at war for the whole journey and en-route we won twelve thousand slaves, between the men, women, and children; for my part I obtained some fifty [slaves]."⁵²

Guzmán's later chronicle fills the gap in Schmidl's narrative by relating that the conquistadors "marched with little order on their journey back, and, divided into separate companies, were assaulted by the Indians along the route who killed some Spaniards and caused the rest great harm."⁵³ The contemporary accounts provide a different perspective, describing how the conquistadors and the Carios fought their way back across the Gran Chaco by raiding Indian nations. Telléz de Escobar's 1557 *relación* identifies Irala's contingent as the principal perpetrator of these raids, explaining that the expedition

returned [to Asunción] making great cruelties against the indigenous peoples of the land, burning their houses and supplies, and killing and capturing Indians who brought them food in peace. They did this because Irala and his Indian followers and supporters did not want to obey anyone. Thus, they came bringing a great quantity of men and women and young male captives, leaving the small children with other Indian nations who killed and ate them.⁵⁴

Irala in turn casts the blame on Mendoza's leadership for the indiscriminate raiding. He states in his 1555 letter that after the royal officials appointed Mendoza commander, the expedition "returned making war against those who did not merit it, and I endeavoured to preserve [order] without the others having any interest except the service of their people (*personas*)."⁵⁵ The anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) accuses both Irala and Mendoza of unprovoked attacks, stating that Irala "sent his servants with the Indians in his service to make war and bring slaves"⁵⁶ while Mendoza similarly waged war and enslaved Indians. Like Telléz de Escobar, the author

also notes that Indians who came peacefully to offer food were seized as captives and taken to Asunción.⁵⁷

By attesting to the slaughter and massive captive-taking that took place during Irala's 1547-49 *entrada*, the eyewitness accounts make explicit that the violence was as excessive as during Cabeza de Vaca's previous expedition to Puerto de los Reyes in 1543. They also reveal how the power dynamics had changed. At Puerto de los Reyes, the Carios had participated as allies, while Mendoza and Irala were still nominally subject to Cabeza de Vaca's royal authority as *adelantado*. During Irala's *entrada* five years later, the contemporary sources make clear that the Carios acted in the service of the Spanish, while the division in conquistadors' ranks after the expedition reached the territory of the Tamacocís revealed the precariousness of Irala's authority as provisional governor. This enabled the captains to command their own armies of Cario warriors; it also meant they had to give the Carios free rein to raid in order to retain their allegiance. Hence, the Carios who accompanied Irala and Ñuflo de Chaves "went forward destroying and killing everything" with their consent, and a third contingent led by Mendoza on the return to Asunción safeguarded the Carios' cooperation by "making war against those who did not merit it."

The captains' dependence on the warriors in their service raises the question whether the Carios kept the captives they had taken once they returned to Asunción. Schmidl's claim that he personally acquired fifty slaves and González's account of the Carios bringing captives to their masters (*amos*) indicate that they were considered the property of individual conquistadors. The expropriation of the captives by Irala and the royal officials also reveals that their ownership was subject to dispute. The degree to which this dispute reflected the importance of captives for a barter economy in Asunción is difficult to conjecture. Unlike the trading of free Cario women, the selling of non-*avá* captives does not elicit commentary or condemnation in the contemporary accounts. Schmidl's figure of twelve thousand slaves would suggest that they constituted a substantial number of the Indians bought and sold in Asunción after the expedition's return. However, Antonio d'Escalera reports in his 1556 letter that Irala brought back from the *entrada* a thousand children and adult slaves, which indicates that they were far fewer in number.⁵⁸

While the Carios may not have retained the captives they had taken, they still had affirmed their identity as *avá* warriors by raiding during the *entrada*. Moreover, the conquistadors' dependence on their allegiance had made the Carios equals, if not superior, to the Spanish in the context of indigenous warfare. The Carios' prowess as raiders raises a second, and more fundamental, issue of how the conquistadors were able to control their marauding armies once they returned to Asunción, as it seems improbable that large numbers of bellicose warriors were suddenly transformed into submissive vassals. A careful reading of the contemporary accounts reveals that the "service" of the Carios in Asunción was contingent on a complex nexus of factors, including the role of mestizo children in reactivating kinship relations, a shift in the objectives and scope of the *rancheadas*, and the Carios' collaboration in the subsequent expeditions Irala led eastward to the Alto-Paraná River and west again to the sierra before 1554. An analysis of these factors reveals that Irala's reliance on indigenous norms to consolidate his control over Asunción's fractious conquistadors and bellicose warriors after he returned from the *entrada* was central to the evolving dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations until the *encomienda* was established in the mid-1550s.

In part, Irala's privileging of indigenous norms can be seen as an astute strategy to retain the allegiance of the Asunción Carios who had participated in the *entrada*. It also was imperative to counter the opposition he faced from the *leales*, who did not recognize the legitimacy of his governorship, and challenges to his authority by the royal officials, who had removed him as the commander of the *entrada* in favour of Mendoza. In this respect, the first documented power struggle between Irala and the royal officials predates the *entrada*. The anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) relates that after Ñuflo de Chaves departed on his exploratory expedition in 1546, Felipe de Cáceres began to agitate against Irala.⁵⁹ Cáceres told the conquistadors that Irala had sent Chaves on an *entrada* without the permission of royal officials because he was secretly planning to follow Chaves and take all the munitions from Asunción with him. Alarmed at these accusations, the conquistadors divided into warring camps aligned with either Cáceres or Irala. If it had not been for the mediation of some "*buen hombres*—good men," all those who had sided with Cáceres would have been killed by the Indians as Irala controlled the distribution of arms.

In his 1555 letter, Irala acknowledges that a confrontation occurred between him and the royal officials at this time, stating that they opposed mounting an *entrada* without legitimate reason.⁶⁰ Later testimonies recorded in a 1564 *información* authored by the first bishop of Asunción, Fray Pedro Fernández de la Torre, who arrived in Asunción in 1556, also address the conflict. Juan Redondo states that hostilities escalated between Irala and Cáceres during the later stages of the Carios' rebellion, while the cleric Alonso de Segovia describes these hostilities as a "war" between them.⁶¹ Both identify Padre Paniagua (the cleric Francisco González Paniagua) as one of the "good men" mentioned by the anonymous *relación* as resolving the conflict, although neither explains the specific nature of his intervention.⁶² That Paniagua, who had come with Cabeza de Vaca's expedition and had so vociferously condemned Irala and the royal officials in his 1545 letter, now figured as the conciliator between them reveals the influence that the priests had begun to exercise over the conquistadors as well as the Carios in the aftermath of the rebellion. The anonymous *relación's* claim that if some "good men" had not intervened the Indians would have killed Cáceres and his dissenting men also suggests how Paniagua's role as a mediator was essential to the survival of the factionalized conquistadors.

However Paniagua may have resolved their differences, Irala responded to Cáceres's challenge to his leadership in the same manner as he had to the *leales* before the Carios' insurrection. In 1547, he issued further ordinances prohibiting the conquistadors from going to any house outside the city or sleeping in the houses or *tijupaes* of the Carios, and, the Indians from entering the city.⁶³ Having thus established order in Asunción, Irala reports in his 1555 letter that he was able to depart on the *entrada*, which with its promise of silver and gold should have proven effective in maintaining the loyalty of his men. But as we have seen, when this promise failed to materialize antagonisms emerged again, revealing the ultimate weakness of Irala's control over the *comunero* captains and the royal officials.

In addition to the power struggles that had occurred between Irala and the royal officials before and during the *entrada*, infighting broke out among the conquistadors who were left behind to guard Asunción. When more than a year had passed without Irala's return, Francisco de Mendoza, whom Irala appointed commander of the city in his absence, held an election to confirm himself governor on the grounds of Irala's presumed death. Diego de Abreu, a captain

aligned with the *leales*, also let his name stand. When Mendoza failed to receive the majority of votes but refused to honour the election, Abreu ordered him imprisoned and publicly beheaded.⁶⁴ Guzmán relates in his later chronicle that Mendoza tried to bargain for his life by offering his daughters to Abreu and another of the *leales*, Ruy Díaz Melgarejo. Abreu and Melgarejo refused his offer, even though Mendoza had married the mother of these children, whom Guzmán identifies as a Spanish woman, in order to legalize them as his heirs before he was executed.⁶⁵ Subsequently, Ñuflo de Chaves married one of Francisco de Mendoza's spurned daughters, Doña Elvira Manrique, making him a sworn enemy of Abreu and Malgarejo.⁶⁶

Shortly after Mendoza's death, Irala and the majority of the conquistadors returned from the *entrada* to a divided community. Schmidl relates that when Abreu learned of their imminent arrival, he retreated to the woods with fifty of his men and Irala was able to enter Asunción without resistance.⁶⁷ However, Irala's control over the city was far from assured. Many of Abreu's supporters remained in Asunción and the *comuneros* were in a mutinous mood. They already had challenged Irala's leadership by electing Gonzalo de Mendoza commander of the *entrada*, and had failed to obtain any silver during an almost two-year march through hostile Indian territories. To add to the dissension, a few months later Chaves returned to Asunción with a number of conquistadors from Peru, whom the historian Rubio argues were sent by the Viceroy to rein in Irala and his fractious *comuneros*.⁶⁸

Irala responded to these threats to his authority by using the same divide-and-conquer strategy that had gained him prestige among the Carios and the support of the conquistadors during his first governorship. Only this time, his adaptation of indigenous norms to colonial ends was reversed. It was the *leales* whom Irala repressed rather than the Carios and it was he and not the caciques who forged alliances by offering his mestiza daughters to the conquistadors who opposed him. First, he imprisoned Abreu and executed some of his supporters, although Abreu was able to escape and once again take refuge in the woods, where he remained at large for several years until he was killed by Felipe de Cáceres. Next, Irala married his mestiza daughters Marina and Ursula to the *leales* Riquelme de Guzmán, who was the father of the chronicler Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, and Francisco Ortiz de Vergara, whom Irala appointed royal treasurer.⁶⁹ According to the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556), the cleric Francisco de Andrade

negotiated these unions.⁷⁰ Further consolidating what Guzmán describes as a “confederation,” two more of Irala’s daughters married Pedro de Segura Zavala, who had come from Peru with Chaves, and Gonzalo de Mendoza, who had supplanted Irala’s leadership during the *entrada*.⁷¹

While Andrade’s role in facilitating these marriages appears to have sanctioned Irala’s “confederation” in the context of European social mores and the Catholic faith, a passage from Telléz de Escobar’s 1557 *relación* suggests how it also served to consolidate his power base through kinship norms. Telléz de Escobar relates that until the *encomienda* grants were distributed in the mid-1550s

it was the custom of the Indians of the land to serve the Christians and to give to them their daughters or sisters and come to their houses by way of familial relations or friendship as the Christians had many children of this land. And it was for this reason the Indians came to serve in the house of their relatives and nephews and this was how the Spanish were served.⁷²

By identifying the mestizo “children of the land” as triggering the reciprocal obligations of the *tekó-ás*, Telléz de Escobar reveals that the vestiges of the Carios’ kinship ties with the conquistadors were operating after the defeat of their insurrection.

Telléz de Escobar’s description also points to how the dynamics of these reciprocal obligations had changed. In the first years of *amistad y alianza*, the male Carios had provided “service,” which included clearing the land and building houses but not the women’s work of planting and harvesting, because the conquistadors’ relations with indigenous women had forged kinship alliances with their indigenous fathers. Now the Carios came to serve in Asunción because of these women’s mestizo children, which increased the prestige of the children’s Spanish fathers and indicated that the Carios viewed the conquistadors as having the power of the *tuvichás*. As Irala, the royal officials, and the *comunero* captains were the ones who had forged alliances with the major caciques of Asunción and kept numerous women in their houses during the period of *amistad y alianza*, they had the largest number of mestizo children and the most influence within this reconfiguration of kinship. This meant that most of the Carios would have come by way of friendship to their houses, which enabled Irala, the royal officials, and the *comunero* captains to obtain the labour “debts” of the male Carios and

the loyalty of young warrior followers in the same manner as they had before the rebellion. Because Irala and Gonzalez de Mendoza had commanded large contingents of warriors in the *entradas*, they also were the most likely to be offered the Carios' daughters and sisters in recognition of their prestige garnered through raiding, which further increased the number of Carios in their service.

In the context of these reconfigured kinship relations, the marriage of Irala's mestiza daughter to Mendoza consolidated Irala's prestige as a powerful cacique and meant that he could call upon the Carios in González's service to mount future *entradas*. The marriage of his other daughters to the *leales* and Pedro de Segura Zavala served a different function. The *leales*, whose women had been seized by the *comuneros* during the onset of the *rancheadas* in 1544, had far fewer mestizo children in their households to reactivate the reciprocal obligations of the *tekó-ás*, while Zavala, who had come from Peru, had no prior kinship ties with the Carios at all. Their marriages to Irala's daughters ensured that as his sons-in-law they were incorporated into the extended kinship network he controlled and beholden to him for the Carios' willingness to provide service.

In turn, the role of Irala's daughters as mestizas in brokering this complex merger of power and kinship ensured them an elevated status among the conquistadors. While the *leales* had refused to marry Francisco de Mendoza's children, who were Spanish and his legal heirs, they accepted Irala's offer of his daughters, who were not only mestiza but also illegitimate, for Irala did not legally recognize his mestizo children until he issued his will in March 1556. While obviously Irala's position as governor had a large part to play in making his mestiza daughters preferable to those of a man about to be beheaded, the *leales'* willingness to marry them without inheritance rights underscores how significant kinship ties were for the conquistadors' internal power dynamics relative to Hispanic mores. In light of González's condemnation of the abuse of Cario women in Asunción, the newfound importance of the mestizas in brokering these power relations is also sobering. Born at the earliest in 1538 or 1539, they could not have been more than eleven or twelve years of age at the time of their marriages.

The role of Cario women in facilitating the initial kinship alliances between the Spanish and the Carios, and now their mestiza daughters in facilitating Irala's "confederation" of conquistadors, raises the interesting question of how Spanish women, such as Doña Isabel de Guevara, fared in Asunción. Doña Isabel had written to the Princess Juana in 1556 to protest that she had not received an *encomienda* as a reward for her deceased husband's loyal service to the Crown. In her letter, she explained how important Spanish women were for the survival of the conquistadors when they first arrived in the Río de la Plata, holding the fort at Buenos Aires and tilling the fields in Asunción until they obtained the personal service of Cario women.⁷³ From her letter, it is not clear how she benefited from such personal service. She does not mention whether she had children who, if they were male, would have been able to establish kinship ties in taking Cario women as concubines. Nor does she mention remarrying a Spaniard, who similarly would have had access to the personal service of indigenous women. However, without either male children or a relationship with a conquistador, she could not have survived. In respect to the latter, an anonymous *memoria* from 1556 notes that all the Spanish women in Asunción were married.⁷⁴ As the wives of conquistadors, these women were dependent on their husbands' conjugal relations with Cario women and mestizo children to obtain reciprocal labour obligations. This meant that the Spanish women in Asunción had no option but to accept polygamy as a social norm and economic necessity. It also meant that mestizas such as Irala's daughters, who married conquistadors, were equal in social status, if not superior, to Spanish women.

In addition to Spanish women such as Doña Isabel, there were conquistadors who potentially lacked access to the reciprocal kinship obligations of the *teko-ás* activated by the mestizo children living in Spanish households. As noted, both the *leales* and the conquistadors from Peru had few or no mestizo children. From the inception of the *amistad y alianza*, the rank-and-file had never been "rich" in women, and hence in children, for the caciques had offered their daughters to the captains and royal officials. The tensions produced by this unequal distribution of indigenous labour were manifested in two fundamental ways for the duration of Irala's governorship. On the one hand, Irala used the *rancheadas* to seize women from the *tekó-ás* of those Carios who did not come voluntarily by way of "familial relations" to serve in Asunción. On the other hand, the royal officials pressured Irala to distribute *encomienda* grants

to the conquistadors so that the acquisition of indigenous labour was not dependent on kinship ties or raiding.

In respect to the former, both González and Telléz de Escobar report that Irala initiated a new wave of *rancheadas* upon his return from the *entrada* in 1549. While González sardonically notes that “Irala had not forgotten his bad custom of molesting and seizing the Indian women from the Indian men for himself and others,”⁷⁵ these post-*entrada* *rancheadas* differed from earlier ones in several important aspects. Immediately following the insurrection, the *rancheadas* were used by Irala as a coercive tactic to demand the submission of the caciques, which also enabled him to obtain the collaboration of Cario warriors for his *entrada*. In contrast, the post-*entrada* *rancheadas* had as their primary objective the plunder of goods for barter and the seizure of women to secure indigenous labour for his supporters, including the newly arrived conquistadors from Peru. The anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) states that “the captain Domingo de Irala sent many *lenguas* to bring Indians to those who had come with Ñuflo de Chaves,”⁷⁶ and that *lenguas* shared the items they had plundered with Irala for him to sell. Telléz de Escobar relates that Irala sent “mestizos (*lenguas de la tierra*) and his servants (*criados*) and his men in the city to the villages and lands of the Indians to take and seize their women and children and all that they had in their houses,”⁷⁷ dividing these women and goods among himself and his supporters.

When Portuguese traders began to arrive from the coast of Brazil in search of Indians for the São Paulo slave markets, there arose the added incentive to raid the *tekó-ás* for the purpose of human trafficking. Telléz de Escobar reports that the first such Portuguese traders appeared in Asunción with tools and iron to trade soon after Irala’s return from the 1547-49 *entrada*. He states that Irala gave this trader “male and female Indians as barter for some iron and granted him the right to take from the city and the land Indians to bring to Brazil and the territory of the King of Portugal where they were made slaves.”⁷⁸ An anonymous *relación* dated July 2, 1556, indicates that some of these Indians were captives from the *entrada*. The author states that Irala sold the Corocotoquis and many Indians of other nations whom he had brought back to Asunción.⁷⁹ Telléz de Escobar identifies Cario women as the primary source of slaves, denouncing Irala for establishing a market place where they “were bartered for horses and other things and sold and bought and wagered.”⁸⁰ For his part, Irala blames the trafficking of

slaves on the Portuguese authorities and unnamed conquistadors, reporting in his 1555 letter that “the governor of São Vicente allows the Cario Indians, who are forced to leave here by some Christians, to be branded and contracted and sold.”⁸¹

While Irala’s seizure of women to provide himself and his supporters with de facto slaves to barter and gamble with or sell to the Portuguese would seem to be at odds with his need to retain the Carios’ allegiance for his power base in Asunción, several factors explain this apparent contradiction. First, there would have been no utility in raiding the Carios who already came by way of familial relations to serve the conquistadors and voluntarily offered their women and daughters. This meant that their *tekó-ás* most likely were spared the *rancheadas* and their women overt enslavement. In turn, by punishing other conquistadors who attempted to enter or raid the *tekó-ás* in the vicinity of Asunción, Irala was able to position himself as the protector of the Carios who came to serve him and his supporters while curtailing the ability of the *leales*, whose leader Diego de Abreu was at large in the countryside, to maintain or establish new kinship relations. As he had done before, Irala issued edicts forbidding the conquistadors to go to the Carios’ fields or among their villages. Only this time, his methods of enforcing the ordinances were more draconian. Telléz de Escobar reports that he jailed those who ignored his orders, and in one incident hanged a soldier who went to the countryside without his permission.⁸²

Second, a distinction can be drawn between the *rancheadas* that took place in the Carios’ territories near Asunción when Irala first returned from the *entrada* and later ones that were carried out at a distance from the city as Irala began to penetrate Guaraní territories east of the Paraguay River. Because these Guaraníes had no prior history of kinship alliances with the Spanish, their *tekó-ás* were more vulnerable to attack, and the women who were seized to mistreatment. In addition, their resistance to Irala’s incursions increased the violence of the *rancheadas*. González and Telléz de Escobar reserve their most vociferous disapprobation for the raiding that occurred during an expedition Irala undertook in late 1551 or early 1552 to Paraná, a region located south of the Piquirí and west of the Alto-Paraná Rivers (the present-day Paraguayan provinces of Canendiyu and Alto Paraná). González describes how “individuals (*personas*) sent by Irala destroyed and depopulated the land, taking women and children and all that they had, burning houses and uprooting crops and making other great

damages because they [the Indians] did not want to give their wives and daughters.”⁸³ He also denounces the killing of old women in retribution for their defiance. Similarly, Telléz de Escobar relates that

Irala and those who went with him made great grievances against the Indians, taking their wives and daughters and all that they had in their houses. On this journey, they hanged eleven or twelve old women because the Indians had resisted, saying that the old women had urged the Indians to defend themselves and had refused to tell the Christians what they had in their houses.⁸⁴

While neither González nor Telléz de Escobar specifies who accompanied Irala to Paraná, the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) identifies mestizos as the perpetrators of the raiding that occurred. The author relates that Irala sent many *lenguas* to rob the *tekó-ás*, including a certain mestizo Gaspar, who burned more than twenty towns en route to Paraná, and another named Tomás, who destroyed and burned ten villages and seized Indian women for the conquistadors to gamble with.⁸⁵ Although it is possible that these mestizos were the sons of the conquistadors and the Cario women in Asunción, it is unlikely. The mestizo children born from these unions would not have been more than twelve or thirteen years of age in 1551. While girls clearly were considered old enough to be married off to Irala’s rivals, boys of the same age would have been too young to engage in warfare. This meant that the mestizos who were rampaging in Paraná were either the children of Caboto’s men who had joined Pedro de Mendoza’s expedition and would have been twenty or more years of age, or *lenguas* from Brazil.

While the extent and brutality of these mestizos’ actions may have been embellished, their apparent role in spearheading the raiding in Paraná alerts us to another dimension of Irala’s power base in Asunción. While the contemporary sources identify the Carios as protagonists during the 1547-49 *entrada* in relation to their alignments with individual captains, the mestizos figure in the anonymous *relación* as the perpetrators of *rancheadas* orchestrated exclusively by Irala. This suggests that Irala may have sought to secure the mestizos’ allegiance by giving them free rein to raid the *tekó-ás* in Paraná, as he had done with the Carios during the *entrada*. This also would have enabled Irala to use his mestizo raiders to repress resistance in the same way as his Yaperú allies had during the Carios’ insurrection. If this was

the case, then the author's condemnation of the mestizos' scorched-earth tactics may have reflected his indignation at the Spanish conquistadors being displaced as soldiers by half-Indians.

Although the Carios who came by way of familial relations to serve the conquistadors in Asunción were spared the wholesale destruction of their *tekó-ás*, they would not have been immune to the horror of seeing large numbers of women captives arriving from Paraná, nor to the abuse these women endured as they were exploited, gambled with, and bartered. Neither could the Asunción Carios have been content with being treated as *tapií* vassals whose sole function was to provide agricultural labour, and whose raiding practices the mestizos had appropriated by spearheading the *rancheadas*. In this context, Irala's organization of another *entrada* to the sierra after returning from Paraná can be seen as an additional strategy to retain the allegiance of the Asunción Carios by providing them with the opportunity to raid non-*avá* nations. In turn, the Carios' willingness to join his expedition in large numbers, whether out of respect or fear of the power Irala yielded through his kinship networks and mestizo allies, becomes a measure of his success of adapting indigenous norms to colonial ends. What transpired during the *entrada* further reveals the importance of Irala's stature as a war chief in retaining the Carios' allegiance.

This second and final expedition that Irala led to the sierra, which took place from sometime in early 1553 until the end of September in that same year, proved disastrous. In his 1555 letter, Irala states that after marching through flooded and deserted lands, he turned back to Asunción in order to avoid undue risk and losing his men.⁸⁶ To cast this dismal turn of events in a more positive light, Irala reports that on his return to Asunción he went to the Itatines' territory, which lay north of the Apa River and east of the Paraguay River, where he was able to "take possession of the land in the name of the King"⁸⁷ and obtain the Itatines' vassalage "without a single death or incident."⁸⁸ Telléz de Escobar corroborates Irala's account in part, relating that Irala journeyed to the interior with one hundred and twenty Christians and three thousand Carios but was forced to turn back because the route was inundated with water and depopulated.⁸⁹ He also reported that the Carios died in alarming numbers. González reports the same, calculating that on the return journey more than two thousand perished from hunger and cold.⁹⁰ Guzmán's later account of the *mala entrada*, as it became known for the great losses

incurred, offers an additional perspective on the Carios' fate. While his version of events does not negate the number of losses Telléz de Escobar and González allege the Carios sustained, it casts the high cost of their collaboration in a more complex light by reporting that they also deserted the Spanish en masse.

Guzmán, who provides the only narrative account of the *mala entrada*, relates that Irala led four hundred conquistadors and four thousand Guaraní warriors to Puerto de los Reyes, from where they moved inland and marched through the swamps of the Chaco Boreal until they reached the territories of the Nonogayes or Frentones south of present-day Santa Cruz de la Sierra.⁹¹ When the Nonogayes informed Irala that the Viceroyalty of Peru asserted control over the region, Irala turned back to Asunción. Taking a more northerly route, he veered toward the territories of the Chiriguana in eastern Bolivia, where the Itatines and other Guaraní-speaking groups had settled during their raids to the sierra in the late 1400s and early 1500s.⁹² Upon hearing the news of the Chiriguanaes' proximity, 1500 Cario warriors mutinied and deserted the expedition. Guzmán's claim that they "went in search of them [the Chiriguanaes], as they had done before in the year 1548,"⁹³ indicates the Carios had deserted during the previous *entrada* as well, although there is no mention in the contemporary accounts of this occurring.

While the Carios who left the expedition presumably found the Chiriguanaes, those who chose to remain perished. Guzmán reports that after the Carios mutinied, the conquistadors struggled through torrential rains and flooding as they returned to Asunción, "losing all of the horses, more than fifteen hundred allied warriors, and all of the service [captives] that had been acquired from enemy nations."⁹⁴ Testimonies recorded in 1562 by conquistadors who participated in the *entrada* confirm that Guzmán's dire description of the return journey was not a literary invention. They report marching on foot through swamps and flooded lands after the horses perished, suffering great hunger, and that many Indian allies died.⁹⁵ While all of the accounts of the *mala entrada*—from Irala's description of journeying through flooded lands to González's and Téllez de Escobar's reports of massive numbers of Carios dying en route—reveal how its failure must have undermined the Carios' willingness to serve Irala, only Guzmán's explicitly identifies the loss of their allegiance. When the opportunity arose to join the Chiriguanaes, they fled en masse.

Yet, despite their desertion, and the large number of warriors who died from hunger and cold, Guzmán relates that the Carios collaborated in another expedition Irala organized shortly after returning to Asunción to Guairá, a region located east of the Alto-Paraná River (the present-day Brazilian province of Paraná) named after its most powerful cacique and the most populous of the Guaraní territories in the Río de la Plata. As Guzmán tells the story, a delegation of caciques from Guairá arrived in Asunción to request Irala's assistance in mounting a joint raid against their enemies, the Tupíes of coastal Brazil, who had begun to encroach upon the caciques' *guáras* to seize captives for the São Paulo slave markets. Raising an army of Cario warrior "friends," Irala journeyed to Guairá, where together with the caciques he led a successful raid against the Tupíes and obtained their agreement to cease incursions in Guaraní lands. Once Irala turned back to Asunción, however, the expedition ended as disastrously as the *mala entrada*. A mestizo named Hernando Díaz deliberately misinterpreted the information the Guairá Indians provided about the terrain and convinced Irala to take a tributary of the Paraná that supposedly was easier to navigate. The river proved extremely dangerous, and after most of the rafts and canoes were swept away in rapids, the Cario warriors deserted the expedition. Then Guaraníes from another *guára* ambushed the remaining men and canoes on the Paraná and tried to push them into a giant whirlpool.⁹⁶

While the historian Rubio and the sociologist Service accept Guzmán's account of the Guairá expedition as historical evidence, there is no mention of it taking place in the contemporary sources at the time, including Irala's 1555 letter in which he outlines the *entradas* he undertook in the service of the Crown. Nor does Gandía address the expedition in the *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y del Paraguay*, except to state in a footnote that Guzmán may have confused it with the one to Paraná that González and Telléz de Escobar report occurred before the 1553 *mala entrada*.⁹⁷ By allowing for speculation that the Guairá expedition was in fact the earlier one to Paraná, Guzmán's account provides a context for analysing the transcultural dynamics of both the Paraná/Guairá expedition and the *mala entrada*.

From Guzmán's claim that the Guairá caciques had travelled to Asunción to meet with Irala, a more complex panorama emerges of Irala's alliances with Guaraníes whose *guáras* lay beyond the reach of the vassalage imposed on the Carios after the defeat of their insurrection. The

caciques' request for assistance in mounting a joint raid suggests that they perceived Irala as the *mburuvichá* of Asunción rather than a colonial oppressor. If this was the case, then Irala's pacification of the Carios' insurrection may have been viewed by the caciques as evidence of his military strength, while the raiding and captive-taking that took place during his *entrada* to the sierra from 1547 to 1549 consolidated his prestige as a powerful war chief. This explains how Irala was able to penetrate the previously unconquered Guaraní territories east of Asunción. Similarly, it elucidates how he was able to raise large armies of indigenous warriors for the *mala entrada*, whose numbers exceeded those who would have been bound by kinship ties to him and his sons-in-law.

The willingness of the Guairá caciques to mount a joint raid with Irala on the basis of his prestige as a war chief also makes Irala's claim that the Itatines submitted to colonial vassalage on his return from the *mala entrada* disingenuous at best. If Irala had obtained their allegiance at all, it would have been by offering to assist them in raids against enemy nations as he had done with the caciques from Guairá. Testimonies of the *entrada*'s participants record different versions of his encounter with the Itatines. While some support Irala's claim that he personally pacified the Itatines and took possession of their land, others assert that Irala sent one of his captains, Hernando de Salazar, to obtain their allegiance.⁹⁸ With the exception of one witness, all concur that the Itatines received the Spanish in peace. Ñuflo de Chaves, who was this lone witness, states that the Itatines initially were hostile and killed many of the Carios who went with the Spanish to their territory, and caused the rest to flee. Although he claims that after this confrontation, Hernando de Salazar obtained the Itatines' allegiance and they became loyal vassals of the King, he does not provide a reason for their change of attitude.⁹⁹ As all the testimonies were presented on behalf of Hernando de Salazar to provide evidence of the merits of his service to the Crown, they are not necessarily more reliable than Irala's own account of what transpired. However, if we take into account the disastrous losses sustained during the *mala entrada* before the expedition reached the Itatines' territories, and earlier descriptions of the bellicose Itatines by Irala's indigenous informants at Puerto de los Reyes in 1542, the most credible version of the encounter with the Itatines becomes Chaves's report that they attacked the Spanish.

If the Paraná/Guairá expedition that preceded the *mala entrada* is understood as a joint raid rather than as a conquest venture or an exercise in pillaging, Guzmán's description of Irala's return journey affords additional insights into the mestizos' collaboration and the Carios' "service" as warriors. Díaz's role as an interpreter points to the importance of the mestizos in negotiating, or in this case impeding, Irala's alliances with the Guaraní-speaking nations other than the Carios of Asunción. Guzmán's account of Díaz's treachery strikes a more cautionary note, suggesting how the mestizos' capacity to straddle worldviews still made them unreliable, despite having sided with the Spanish during the Carios' rebellion and becoming Irala's henchmen in the *rancheadas*. It also hints at how their raiding in Paraná may have challenged Irala's control as they burned villages and hanged old women. In light of the rampages that González and Telléz de Escobar also report occurred, Irala was unlikely to have journeyed as far as Guairá and launched a successful raid against the Tupías as Guzmán claims. However, it is not unreasonable to presume that some of the Carios in Irala's service accompanied him to Paraná. As appears to have occurred on the *mala entrada*, the Carios behaved less like submissive vassals than essential allies, whose desertion left Irala's expedition militarily weakened. By abandoning Irala after he led them astray down a dangerous river, they also demonstrated that their allegiance was contingent on Irala's competence as a *mburuvichá*. Finally, the whirlpool ambush hints at how resistance in Paraná may have been more forceful than just the urging of old women for the Indians to defend themselves, with retributive violence visited upon Irala's men and his mestizo collaborators once the Cario warriors deserted.

What actually happened on either the expedition to Paraná/Guairá or the *mala entrada* is, of course, unverifiable. In contrast to the 1547-49 *entrada*, documentation is sparse, and in the case of Guzmán's chronicle suspect. Written long after the events took place, Guzmán's descriptions of both expeditions are an amalgam of the settlers' memory of past events and what he knew of the Río de la Plata in the early 1600s. In this respect, the most we can glean from his chronicling of the expeditions are suppositions of their transcultural dynamics, such as the participation of Guaraníes who were not subject to colonial vassalage in the *mala entrada*, or the mestizos' potential for playing a double game with indigenous and Spanish allegiances. What we can also deduce from Guzmán's ideological agenda is that the Carios deserted as he claimed. As the mestizo grandson of Irala, Guzmán consistently portrays him in his chronicle

as a great general whose *amistad y alianza* with the Carios was the founding principle of Asunción's colonial society. This makes it unlikely that Guzmán would have cast Irala in a negative light by reporting that his Cario allies abandoned him unless there was an historical foundation to their actions.

While the Carios' desertions alert us to both the importance and the conditional nature of their allegiance, the plundering in Paraná provides a glimpse of the mestizos' cruelty. The combination of precarious indigenous allies and ruthless mestizo collaborators on whom Irala depended made it all the more imperative to affirm his prestige as a *mburuvichá* by mounting the 1553 *entrada*. In this respect, Gandía argues in his *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata* that Irala "did not have for an instant the idea to communicate with Peru"¹⁰⁰ by undertaking this *entrada*. Instead, Gandía attributes his motivation to a quest to locate "the land of riches (*tierra rica*) and also probably El Dorado."¹⁰¹ When the *mala entrada* is viewed as a joint raid as well as a search for the fabled City of Gold, the mythic dimensions of imperial conquest merge with the centrality of warrior norms in determining Irala's motives. By all accounts, it failed on both fronts. Irala encountered impenetrable swamps instead of the *tierra rica* for his men and depopulated lands instead of villages for his Cario allies to plunder. After the Carios deserted or perished en route, it irrevocably damaged his reputation as a *mburuvichá*.

The failure of the *mala entrada* had spiralling consequences for Irala's reliance on the Carios' allegiance to exert his authority as governor over the other conquistadors. It also marked a turning point in the transcultural dynamics of the Río de la Plata based on the centrality of warrior norms. By deserting the expedition, the Carios exposed how their allegiance was conditional on the opportunities Irala could provide for raiding and captive-taking. At the same time, the massive casualties they sustained dramatically reduced the number of warriors Irala could call upon to organize future raids. After 1554, Irala undertook no more expeditions from Asunción. Without prospects for raiding, the Carios who were not subject to colonial vassalage had no incentive to forge alliances with him, while the Carios who came by way of "familial relations" to serve the Spaniards had no reason to continue perceiving him as the most powerful cacique in Asunción. In turn, as Irala's indigenous power base diminished, so did his

leverage over the conquistadors, whose demands for the *repartimiento* (division) of the Indians in the region became more insistent.

For the conquistadors of Asunción, the *mala entrada* served to underscore what they had already learned in 1548: that the silver of the sierra was inaccessible and the Gran Chaco impenetrable. This made indigenous labour all the more valuable as the only source of wealth in Asunción. Shortly after Irala returned from the *mala entrada*, Pedro de Dorantes issued a *requerimiento* dated October 13, 1553, explicitly linking the expedition's failure to the Carios' labour as a source of wealth. Dorantes begins the *requerimiento* by castigating Irala for recklessly undertaking the *entrada*. He further holds him responsible for the loss of service of the large number of Carios who died on the expedition.¹⁰² He concludes by declaring that in order to prevent the ruin and destruction of the land, the royal officials had "asked and required of the said *señor* captain one and two and as many times as he could and should to make the villages of the Christians [subject to tribute] and to entrust not only the Indians who come to serve but also all the rest who are in the regions that the conquistadors want to populate."¹⁰³

The *encomienda* to which Dorantes refers in his *requerimiento* was a decentralized form of governance used by Spain to secure control over newly conquered territories and reward conquistadors for their service to the Crown. A specified number of Indians in a village or territory of a cacique were entrusted (*encomendado*) to the *encomendero*, who had the right to collect tribute from all the males over fifteen years of age in the form of money or goods-in-kind, including crops. In return, he was responsible for ensuring the wellbeing and Christian education of the Indians placed under his care, and providing military defence for the Crown. In most cases, a cacique collaborated with the *encomendero* to ensure that the men in his village complied with their tribute obligations. As *encomienda* Indians were free vassals, legally they could not be conscripted for labour or traded like slaves. However, in practice, the *encomienda* functioned in regions without silver or active trade, such as the Río de la Plata, as a system of labour tribute that compensated for the lack of money or goods. For this reason, the conquistadors of Asunción also used the term *repartimiento*, which technically was a requirement of tribute Indians to contribute labour services directly to the Crown, interchangeably with *encomienda* in their letters and accounts.¹⁰⁴

While there is no extant documentation concerning demands for Irala to grant *encomiendas* prior to Dorantes' 1553 *requerimiento*, contemporary accounts record efforts that were made by the conquistadors to force Irala to institute *encomienda* tribute when Ñuflo de Chaves returned from Peru to Asunción after the 1547-49 *entrada*. Telléz de Escobar, González, and the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) all relate that Juan de Camargo, who was the *procurador general* (general attorney) of Asunción, issued a *requerimiento* ordering that the Carios be enumerated (*empadronar*) and divided among the conquistadors. Irala's response was unequivocal. He summarily executed him and another conquistador, Miguel de Rutia, without the last rites of confession.¹⁰⁵ According to Telléz de Escobar, their deaths produced such agitation among the conquistadors that Irala agreed to permit some of them to go to the countryside and begin to register the Indians for labour tribute. But once he had obtained information about where the Carios' houses were and the names of each of them, he reneged on his promise to implement the *repartimiento*.¹⁰⁶ Instead, the anonymous *relación* reports that "he summoned the caciques and took from them the most beautiful women and daughters they had, and in this manner he divided the land."¹⁰⁷ Although the historian Rubio speculates that many of the *pueblos de indios*, or *tavas* located near Asunción, such as Itá, Yaguarón, Tobatí, Altos, and Ipané, were placed under the control of *encomenderos* at this time,¹⁰⁸ the anonymous *relación* points toward a different conclusion. By recording Irala's flagrant disregard for the conquistadors' colonial rights, the author reveals how Irala was able to subvert the *repartimiento* through his prestige among the Carios, with the caciques' willingness to hand over their women and daughters to him signalling their recognition of his stature as the *mburuvichá* of Asunción.

After the ruinous outcome of the *mala entrada*, Irala's attitude toward the conquistadors' demand for *encomiendas* was more conciliatory. Rather than engaging in summary executions and summoning caciques to take their women, he issued a written reply to Dorantes' *requerimiento* on November 19, 1553, in which he justified his reluctance to assign *encomienda* grants to the conquistadors. He explains that as the governor of the province he had been occupied with organizing and maintaining *entradas* to discover and conquer lands with gold and silver and large populations. The reason he had not concerned himself with the division of the Carios was because the land was poor and sparsely populated, and the Indians did not pay tribute to their caciques. Furthermore, he notes that the majority of the Indians had

given the conquistadors their daughters, sisters, wives, and relatives to serve them according to their old customs. As the Indians were thus indebted to them (meaning they were bound by reciprocal kinship obligations), the division of the Indians was a difficult task that could cause a scandal among them. He concludes by agreeing to review the merits of the *encomienda*, but qualifies this by warning that if any disturbances or harm resulted from instituting it, these would be the fault of the royal officials.¹⁰⁹

Irala's reply to Dorantes was clearly self-serving, in that he was a beneficiary of the "old customs" by virtue of his kinship alliances with the daughters of Asunción's powerful *tuvichás*. At the same time, Irala's concern that the *encomienda* would disrupt patterns of service established through kinship ties was not unfounded, especially as the mestizo children living with conquistadors now triggered the reciprocal labour obligations. His concern also had an ulterior motive. As Catherine Julien points out in her study of the *entradas* undertaken from Asunción in the 1500s, once Irala had awarded *encomiendas*, "instead of dealing with Guaraní leaders, he had to recruit Spaniards who had *encomiendas* and could supply the necessary soldiers for the trip."¹¹⁰ This, she argues, made further exploration "effectively impossible."¹¹¹ From a transcultural perspective, the loss of the Carios' allegiance during the *mala entrada* already had made future expeditions "effectively impossible" for Irala. In turn, this made it increasingly difficult for him to refuse the conquistadors' demands for *encomienda* Indians. What finally enabled the conquistadors to force Irala's hand was the arrival of *reales provisiones* (royal decrees) appointing him the governor of the Río de la Plata. No longer isolated from the purview of imperial authority, Irala could not afford to be seen as presiding over a rogue colony in which indigenous norms trumped the directives of the Spanish Crown.

In a convoluted turn of events, Irala's official recognition as governor began with the Crown's appointment of Juan de Sanabría as *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata in July 1547. When Sanabría died before departing from Spain, his son Diego de Sanabría became the heir to the appointment. He took charge of organizing the expedition to the Río de la Plata together with Sanabría's widow, Isabel Mencía de Calderón, who was his stepmother. In April 1550, Diego de Sanabría sent two ships with the expedition's members ahead to the Río de la Plata, and remained behind to lobby for better conditions for his appointment. Among the ships' passengers were Calderón and her daughters; Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza, who had

accompanied Cabeza de Vaca back to Spain in 1545; Hans Staden, who would publish an account of his captivity among the Tupínamba; and fifty *doncellas* (young virgin women) intended for marriage to the conquistadors of Asunción.¹¹² The ships reached the island of Santa Catalina off the coast of Brazil by the end of 1550. By August 1551, several members of the expedition had arrived in Asunción by travelling overland to bring news of the appointment of a new *adelantado*.¹¹³ While the exact date of Camargo's *requerimiento*, to which Irala had responded so ruthlessly, is unclear, it may have coincided with this news of Sanabría's appointment and been issued in anticipation that Irala's powers shortly would be curtailed.

Of the contemporary accounts, only Irala's 1555 letter mentions the arrival of these Spaniards from Sanabría's expedition. Irala states that after receiving them, he sent ships down the Paraná in September 1551 and again in January 1552 in order to find and assist the expedition.¹¹⁴ However, there is no corroborating evidence to support his claim. Rather, it appears that similar to his assertion that he obtained the Itatines' vassalage on his return journey from the *mala entrada*, Irala was fabricating a record of his loyal service to the Crown. A year later in July 1552, the captain Hernando de Salazar with thirty more men from the Sanabría expedition arrived in Asunción, bringing news that the Portuguese had detained the rest of the expedition and its ships had been lost. In his 1555 letter, Irala explains that when he received this news, he lost hope of the expedition's timely arrival and decided to organize an *entrada* to further explore the region in the service of the King.¹¹⁵ There is more than a trace of dissimulation in his explanation. With the delay of the Sanabría expedition, Irala had the opportunity to conquer and claim a new territory with his Cario allies before the new *adelantado* supplanted his rule of Asunción. After the failure of the 1553 *entrada*, the contemporary accounts convey a growing sense of Irala's desperation as he awaited the arrival of Sanabría. Telléz de Escobar reports that not only did Irala escalate his *rancheadas*, but also "sought to prevent any Christian from leaving any part of the land, for he did not want Your Majesty to be informed of the things that had happened in this land, and for this reason he kept the routes and ways that the Christians could leave by guarded."¹¹⁶

As it turned out, the new *adelantado* never arrived. Departing from Spain more than a year after the rest of his expedition in August 1551, Diego de Sanabría was shipwrecked in the Caribbean. From there, he traveled to Cartagena and then to Peru, where he ended his days in

Potosí as an unsuccessful miner.¹¹⁷ When the Crown learned of Sanabría's failure to reach the Río de la Plata, his position as *adelantado* was annulled in 1552 and Irala appointed governor in his stead.¹¹⁸ News was slow reaching Asunción. Irala states in his 1555 letter that he received notice in 1554 that he had been appointed governor, and that on June 2, 1555, he received copies of the *reales provisiones*, which had been sent by Crown's representative, Bartolomé Justiniano, from Brazil.¹¹⁹ According to both Escobar de Telléz and the author of the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556), these decrees ordered Irala to cease all further exploration of the region on pain of death, to desist from making *rancheadas*, and to institute the *repartimiento* of the land.¹²⁰

In the period from the arrival of the *reales provisiones* in June 1555 to Irala's completion of distributing *encomiendas* in May 1556 when he issued ordinances concerning their administration, the last stragglers from Sanabría's expedition reached Asunción.¹²¹ Juan de Salazar de Espiñoza, who had secured an appointment from the Crown as the royal treasurer while he was in Spain, reached Asunción in October, 1555.¹²² According to Guzmán's chronicle, he brought with him Paraguay's first cows.¹²³ Sometime in April of the next year, Sanabría's widow Mencía de Calderón, her two daughters, and thirty of the *doncellas* finally arrived. However, as most of these *doncellas* had married members of the expedition before reaching Asunción, the Spanish virgins who were to bring Hispanic values to "Mohamed's Paradise" never materialized.¹²⁴ In addition to these members of Sanabría's expedition, Martín de Orué, notary who had gone to Spain in 1545 with Cabeza de Vaca in order to lobby on behalf of Irala and the royal officials for aid, arrived with a flotilla of ships in the estuary of the Paraná River in early 1556. Orué sailed up the Paraná in one of these ships to bring supplies and the first Bishop of the Río de la Plata, Fray Pedro Fernández de la Torre, to Asunción, arriving on April 1, 1556.¹²⁵

During the months that the last members of Sanabría's expedition converged on Asunción and Orué's supply ship and the arrival of a Bishop brought the promise of colonial prosperity and order to the isolated outpost, Telléz de Escobar and the author of the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) charged that the tyranny of Irala's governance remained unchecked. They relate that contrary to the decrees that Irala had received from the King, he was seizing women and children from the *tekó-ás* in the vicinity of Asunción in anticipation of distributing

encomiendas. When Irala began to divide the Indians among the conquistadors, he did so in a partisan manner, giving most of them to his sons-in-law, the royal officials, and his supporters. As a precaution to prevent news of his illegal actions from reaching Spain, Irala issued yet another order prohibiting the conquistadors from leaving Asunción.¹²⁶ After the bishop arrived, Irala gave him a mule and many Cario women to serve him.¹²⁷ In return, the Bishop sanctioned his ill deeds. The author of the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) reports that the Bishop preached from his pulpit in favour of Irala's governance and reproached the conquistadors and priests who had written letters protesting Irala's rule.¹²⁸

The one exception Irala made to his order forbidding the conquistadors from leaving Asunción was to send Ñuflo de Chaves with a contingent of men to Guairá. Why Irala mandated this excursion and what transpired during it are disputed in the contemporary sources. Irala states in his 1555 letter that after receiving news of his appointment as governor, he sent Chaves to São Vicente to lobby the Portuguese authorities for Bartolomé Justiniano's release and to bring the *real provisiones* back to Asunción.¹²⁹ Chaves' 1559 *relación* contradicts Irala's account. Chaves claims that after the *reales provisiones* had arrived overland from São Vicente, he was sent by Irala to punish Tupíes who were attacking Spaniards trying to reach Asunción. He states that he was within fifty leagues of São Vicente when he received news that the Bishop and more dispatches from the King had already arrived in Asunción by ship, and so he turned back.¹³⁰ According to the anonymous *relación* (c. 1556), the reason for Chaves's journey was to *ranchear* Indians in Paraná in the territory of a cacique named Cotiguará. The author relates that Chaves and thirty men went to war against Cotiguará with Tupí warriors and brought more than three hundred Indian women captives back to Asunción.¹³¹ Telléz de Escobar offers the most polemical version of Chaves' journey. He states that Irala sent Pedro Molina, a Regidor (city councilor), with Chaves and thirty men for protection, to São Vicente to deliver dispatches on Irala's behalf to the Court in Spain. After Molina reached São Vicente, Chaves took some Tupíes with him on his return journey to Asunción. Upon reaching a part of the province (Paraguay) where there were Carios who earlier had fled Spanish service, Chaves launched a punitive raid against them in collaboration with the Tupíes. After killing and capturing many of the Carios, Chaves gave the Tupíes some of the Cario captives to eat and took a great many women and young male captives back to Asunción.¹³²

Guzmán's later chronicle amalgamates these accounts. He relates that Chaves was sent by Irala to Guairá to "conserve the peace and friendship of the Indians" there. After crossing the Alto-Paraná River, Chaves reached the frontier between the territories of the Guaraníes and the Tupíes, which he secured by giving the Guaraníes "papers and letters."¹³³ Returning to Asunción by another route, he was ambushed by a large group of Guaraníes in a *guará* called Peabeyú. They had been incited to attack by a socerer called Cutiguará, "whom they revered as a saint,"¹³⁴ and who told them that

the Spanish brought with them sickness and evil beliefs (*mala doctrina*), for which reason the Indians had been lost and consumed. As the only intention of the Spanish was to take away from the Indians their women and daughters, they came to explore these lands so that they could return to them to colonize and subjugate.¹³⁵

According to Guzmán, Chaves was able to repulse the attack and kill many Indians, after which he left Cutiguará's territory. Reaching the *guáras* of other Guaraníes, he pacified them with presents and barter, and brought some of their caciques and people back to Asunción, where they were welcomed and well treated by the Governor.

These various contemporary accounts of Chaves's excursion indicate that while Irala had lost his prestige as a *mburuvichá* by mounting the *mala entrada*, Chaves was gaining stature as a war chief. While we cannot know precisely why Irala sent Chaves to Brazil, or whether Chaves indeed gave the Tupíes rebellious Carios to eat, the accounts enable us to discern that Chaves was Irala's trusted collaborator. Chaves travelling through Guaraní territories, possibly fending off Indian attacks, and bringing captives back to Asunción, indicates that he was able to mount joint raids, either with the Tupíes, whom he rewarded with captives to eat or with Cario warriors who had accompanied him from Asunción. Although Chaves was not part of Irala's "confederation of sons-in-law and held no official position in Asunción's governance, after Irala's death he would assume Irala's mantle as leader of expeditions across the Gran Chaco, until he was killed and eaten by Itatines whom he assumed were his allies.

Guzmán's chronicle adds another dimension to an anticipatory future from the vantage point of looking backwards from the early 1600s. The words he puts in Cutiguará's mouth alert us to the European diseases that were sweeping through Brazil by the mid-1550s.¹³⁶ Remarkably,

Asunción was spared these epidemics until much later. References in the contemporary sources to Carios dying in large numbers from plague and other diseases do not occur until the early 1600s.¹³⁷ The absence of what Alfred W. Crosby has termed “ecological imperialism” would be a significant factor in the Carios preserving their territorial integrity and warrior norms throughout the 1500s.¹³⁸ Cutiguará’s decrying the *mala doctrina* foreshadows the evangelistic battles that the Jesuits were just beginning to wage with their shaman adversaries at the time that Guzmán was writing his chronicle in 1612. While the accounts of the 1500s mention the existence of such sorcerers, they describe a different dynamic. After the imposition of the *encomienda* in 1556, they report that Indians calling themselves God were convincing the Carios of Asunción to flee to the woods with them. These shamans were not the only ones to signal that the disturbances and harm that Irala had warned would result from the *encomienda* had come to pass. In the decades following Irala’s death in late 1556, widespread rebellion, exoduses from Asunción, uprisings of mestizos, and an escalation in slaving all reflected the *encomienda*’s disruption of kinship norms.

Irala’s correspondence to the Crown after he learned that he had been appointed governor of the Río de la Plata offers no such hint of future turmoil or of past conflicts. His 1555 letter, which was written shortly after he had received copies of the *reales provisiones*, emphasizes that he had “by the best measures possible, maintained good administration, peace, and government.”¹³⁹ Describing how he had ruled the land judiciously for the eleven years since the departure of Cabeza de Vaca by pacifying the Carios, undertaking *entradas*, and resolving disputes among the conquistadors, Irala concludes his letter by stating:

About the particular things of this land I have no more to say, except that the indigenous people live calmly in peace and harmony, without, it appears, contemplating other disturbances, and each day they are more instructed in the Christian faith. The settlers of this land are very peaceful and understand how to sustain themselves as best they can without the detriment or damages that have occurred in the past.¹⁴⁰

A little over a year later on July 4, 1556, Irala penned another letter to the Marquis of Mandéjar, the President of the Council of the Indies, in which he outlined his plans for

Asunción as a permanent settlement. He notes that in accordance with the orders of the King he had ceased to make incursions into Peru, but nevertheless proposed that it would benefit the Crown to further explore and colonize the area between the Paraguay River and the foothills of the sierra. In terms of what goods the land could produce for trade, he relates that there were cotton, otter pelts, deerskins, and the potential to grow sugar cane as was being done on the Brazilian coast. To justify why he had instituted the *encomienda* as a form of labour tribute, he relegates the Carios' warrior norms to a distant past, explaining that

the Indians did not have anything other than themselves to provide tribute, for in the old times they were only warriors and consumers of human flesh and were indomitable and lazy. Because of this and for their own good I divided the land between three hundred and twenty or more men in order that we could aid them in learning how to work and all of those said Indians that we divided numbered about twenty thousand.¹⁴¹

In his *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, Gandía concurs with Irala's assessment of Asunción as a fledgling settlement, marking the end of what he terms the "heroic" phase of the conquest of the Río de la Plata and the beginning of a settler society with the chronicler Schmidl's departure from Asunción on December 26, 1552.¹⁴² In their respective studies of the early colonial period in the Río de la Plata, Service and Roulet identify Irala's division of twenty thousand Carios among the conquistadors four years later as the pivotal event that transformed Asunción from an outpost from which to reach the riches of the sierra to a permanent settlement that set in motion the Guaraní's acculturation to Spanish mores. In the next chapter, I also identify the *encomienda* as a pivotal event, although I differ from Service and Roulet in my assessment of its consequences. In this chapter, I have identified the failure of Irala's *mala entrada* as a significant turning point in Spanish-Cario relations. By analyzing how kinship ties, indigenous alliances, and warrior norms were central to the post-rebellion period, I have argued that the Carios' agency as warriors and their perception of Irala as a *mburuvichá* enabled him to assert control over the conquistadors as the provisional governor of the Río de la Plata. The convergence of indigenous norms with colonial objectives in Irala's *entradas* and *rancheadas* made the transcultural dynamics of the Río de la Plata from 1546 to

1556 more *avá* than Spanish. Like García who preceded him in reaching the sierra, Irala's power base rested on the Carios' assimilation of him into their worldview. Once the Carios no longer perceived him as being *avá* by virtue of his prowess as a war chief, he could no longer rely on their allegiance to resist the conquistadors' demands to institute the *encomienda*. The imposition of the *encomienda*, with which Irala purported to turn the Carios from indomitable warriors into labourers, would not make transcultural dynamics more Spanish than *avá*, but it would complicate the perceptions of sameness and difference that determined the Carios' allegiance and opposition to the Spanish and their mestizo offspring.

Endnotes

1. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 608. *“muchos yndios quedavan cargados de hijos; y vistose tan trabajados, de puro pesar, se morian, no tan solamente él, pero los hijos que, de muy niños, cayan en los fuegos, y como no tuviesen madres, alli se tostavan y quemaban, pr ho aver quien los sacase, á otros, por no tener quien les dé comer, davanse á comer tierra, y asi acababan; otros, de muy niños y estar á los pechos de las madres al tiempo que las llevavan y ellos quedaban en aquellos suelos, algunas Viejas tomaban algunos dellos y tisanvanse last etas hasta tanto que sacaban leche, y ansi los criavan encanigados y mal abenturados.”*
2. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. GGV 81:7; BG: 264. *“las lenguas y gente que el enviava a la tierra de los yndios les quemaban las casas y les trayan las muheres paridas y les dexavan las criaturas Reciennacidas, diziendo a los padres que los criasen ellos de donde venian a morir las criaturas y los padres porque la costumbre de aquella tierra es que las mujeres travajan y hazen las comydas en el campo.”*
3. Carta de Juan Muñoz de Carvajal al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 15, 1556. CI: 598. *“avia tantos llantos, los maridos por sus mujeres y las muheres por sus maridos y por las criatures que dexavan, que paresçia ronper el çielo.”*
4. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 608.
5. Ibid., 609. *“é despues de jugada, la desnudaron, é sin vestido, la enviaron con el que ganó, porque dexia no aver jugado el vestido que traya.*
6. Anonymous relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 278.
7. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 608. *“pero paresçeme que serán casi çincuenta mill yndias, antes más que menos; y aora al presente estarán entre los cristianos quinze mill, y todas las demas son muertas.”*

8. Carta de Juan Muñoz de Carvajal al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 15, 1556. CI: 598. “y esto durado desde el dia de la prison del gouernador Cabeça de Vaca hasta el dia de la fecha desta, que ansi traen manadas destas mugeres para sus seruiçios, como quien va á vna feria y trae vna manada de ovejas, lo qual a sido cabsa de poblar los çimenterios de las yglesias desta çibdad y aver peresçido en la tierra más de veynte mill animas y averse despoblado gran parte de la tierra.”
9. Relación de Gregorio de Acosta, (c. 1572). DHG II: 486. The original document is undated. Blas Garay identifies the *relación* as written in 1545, which is wrong. Acosta’s reference to a conflict between the first Bishop of Asunción, Fray Pedro Fernández de la Torre, and Felipe de Cáceres means that it could not have been written before 1571. DHG dates the *relación* as 1572, which is a reasonable approximation of when it would have been written. Bibliographical information on Acosta is found in Parry and Keith, *The Iberian World*, 284.
10. Gandía, *Indios y conquistadores en el Paraguay*, 104.
11. Gandía devotes a chapter of *Indios y conquistadores en el Paraguay* to a scathing denunciation of González entitled “El P. Bartolomé de Las Casas,” 97-110. Gandía argues that as there were only five hundred and fifty conquistadors in Asunción, the figure González cites of fifty thousand Indian women being brought to Asunción for personal service is patently absurd. Bartolomé de Las Casas (1484-1566) was a settler turned crusading Dominican friar whose writings on the nature of the indigenous peoples and his denunciation of their abuse by the Spanish influenced imperial policy regarding the treatment of the Indians in Spanish America. In 1552, Las Casas published *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, which condemned the Spanish colonists’ cruelty towards the Indians. See Lewis Hanke's *Aristotle and the American Indian* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959).
12. Florencia Roulet, *La resistencia de los guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista española*, 11.
13. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias, July 24, 1555. CI: 572.
14. *Ibid.*, 573. I date Irala’s arrival at the Guapay River as late August to correspond with information that the Viceroy of Peru communicated with Irala in September 1548 and Schmidl’s claim that this communication occurred twenty days after the expedition’s arrival at the Guapay River. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista del Río de la Plata y Paraguay*, 239; Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 118.
15. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias, July 24, 1555. CI: 573.
16. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 102; Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 146. González states in his account that two hundred and fifty conquistadors and two to three thousand Carios participated in the expedition. Carta del Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, June 25, 1556. CI: 610-11.
17. Anonymous *relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata*, (c. 1556). BG: 274. “el cual los yndios tenian mucho amor por cabsa de la doctrina.”

18. Ibid.

19. Carta de Felipe de Cáceres, Anton Cabrera y Juan de Salazar á S.M., June 1556. BG: 284. *“de la otra vanda deste rrio avia una generacion que se dizen yapirus, y con eollos otras generaciones sus parientes y amigos y quando estos indios carios se rrevelaron entraron desta vanda en nuestra ayuda, y despues cada vez que eran menester hazian lo mismo, y agora a causa de las guerras que tenian otros yndios de la misma vanda se an venido a favorecer de los xpianos y estan desta otra vanda con sus mujeres y hijos.”*

20. Métraux and Susnik discuss the various indigenous nations that Schmidl identifies in his chronicle. Métraux, “Ethnography of the Chaco,” HSAI I: 214-226; Susnik, *Los aborígenes del Paraguay: Etnología del Chaco Boreal y su Periferia*. Siglos XVI y XVII, 46-75.

21. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 105.

22. Ibid., 106-109.

23. Ibid., 110-111.

24. Ibid., 112.

25. Ibid., 113-114.

26. Ibid. 114, *“nuestros amigos carios quedaron muy contentos porque habíamos ido en su ayuda.”*

27. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 611. *“estos yndios carios que fueron á la guerra.”*

28. Ibid. *“y no solamente fué la persecucion en los pueblos y casas, pero áun por los montes andaban buscando é persiguiendo.”*

29. Ibid., 611. *“fuimos adelante destruyendo y matando todos que topavan, lo qual, dado caso que los cristianos no lo hazian, los yndios, que para su serviçio llevavan, lo hazian, y ellos lo consentian y tenian por buenos; de cabsa, de los yndios por do yvan, les trayan presos, é para prendellos, hazian muy grandes daños, ansi en quitalles todo lo que tenian, commo en quemalles sus casas é arrancalles sus bastimientos.”*

30. Ibid. *“que fué gran lastima ver las criaturas muertas y los viejos é viejas, sino fueron los mançebos é moças que trayan para dar á sus amos en presente.”*

31. Ibid., 613.

32. Ibid., 611.

33. The Corocotoquis are the Gorgotoquí. Métraux, "Tribes of the Eastern Slopes of the Bolivian Andes," HSAI III: 382, 384.
34. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Relación de la jornada al Norte, Dec. 1542-Jan. 1543. DHG II: 318.
35. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 115.
36. Ibid. "quedaron muy tristes."
37. Ibid., 117.
38. Métraux discusses the Tomacosíes in "Tribes of the Eastern Slopes of the Bolivian Andes," HSAI III: 384.
39. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 118-119.
40. Hemming, *The Conquest of the Incas*, 271-272.
41. Catherine Julien cites Rafael Loredo, *Los repartos* (Lima: Bocetos para la Nueva Historia del Perú, 1958, 154-156) to note that Anzures was the *encomendero* of Pocona. Julien, "Colonial Perspectives on the Chiriguaná (1528-1574)," 39.
42. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 119.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid., 120.
45. Ibid., 118; Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 613. Gandía dates their departure as September 22, 1548. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 239.
46. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 121. "Nosotros sabíamos que los indios macasís tenían plata, pero, como estaban sometidos a un español, no pudimos hacer nada."
47. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias, July 24, 1555. CI: 574.
48. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 149.
49. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 15, 1556. CI: 613.
50. Anonymous relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata. (c. 1556). BG: 275.
51. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 123.

52. Ibid. “*estuvimos guerreando continuamente durante todo el viaje y en al camino ganamos como doce mil esclavos, entre hombres, mujeres y niños; por mi parte conseguí unos cincuenta.*”

53. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 149. “*Camando por sus jornadas con poco orden, y dividido por companies, fueron asaltados en el camino de los indios, que mataron á algunos españoles, recibiendo los demas mucho daño.*”

54. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 263. “*volvieron haziendo muy grandes crueldades, matando y cautivando los naturales de la tierra y cautivando a los yndios que les salian de paz a traer comida, haziase esto porque domingo de Yrala y sus seçaces y valedores no querian ovedecer a nadie.*”

55. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias. July 24, 1555. CI: 574. “*hazienda guerra á los que no la mereçian, y yo avia procurar conservar sin aver dellos otros yinterese más que el seruiçio de sus personas.*”

56. Anonymous relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 275. “*domingo de Yrala envio a sus criados con los yndios suyos que de su servicio llevaba a la guerra a traer esclavos.*”

57. Ibid., 275-276.

58. Carta de clérigo presbitero Antonio d'Escalera al Emperador Don Cárlos, Asunción, April 25, 1556. CI: 587.

59. Anonymous relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 274.

60. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias. July 24, 1555. CI: 572.

61. Información de fray Fernández, Obispo de las provincias del Río del Plata, Asunción, August 27, 1564. BG: 68, 71.

62. Ibid., 68, 72. Padre Paniagua was Francisco González Paniagua, who came with Cabeza de Vaca's expedition.

63. Domingo Martínez de Irala. Relaciones con los indios y policia, March 1547. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 433-35.

64. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 151-154; Carta de clerico presbitero Antonio d'Escalera al Emperador Don Cárlos, Asunción, April 25, 1556. CI: 588; Relación de Francisco Ortiz de Vergara, January 1, 1573. COR: 245. Schmidl relates that Irala left both Abreu and Mendoza in charge of Asunción, and that a confrontation ensued between them. Since Abreu was aligned with the *leales*, this seems highly unlikely and is contradicted by other sources. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 123-134.

65. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 155-7.

66. *Ibid.*, 158.

67. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 124.

68. Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 239. Rubio cites Félix de Azara, the early nineteenth-century naturalist who wrote about the history of the Río de la Plata, as presenting this conjecture.

69. Schmidl, *Viaje al Río de la Plata*, 125; Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 158; Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias, July 24, 1555. Lafuente Machaín, 504.

70. Relación de las provincias del Río de la Plata, Anonymous (undated, post 1558), 56.

71. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 158. The four marriages are recorded in Irala's will. Testamento de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 13, 1556. Fuente Machain, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 561.

72. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 267. “*hera la costumbre de los yndios de la tierra servir a los xpianos y de darles sus hijas o hermanas y venir a sus casas por via de parentesco y amystad y ansi heran servidos los xpianos porque tenian los xpianos muchos hijos en la gente natural de aquella tierra y a esta causa venian los yndios a servir a casa de parientes y sobrinos.*”

73. Carta del Doña Isabel de Guevara a la princesa gobernadora Doña Juana, Asunción, July 2, 1556. CI: 621.

74. Memoria de la Gente quell dia de oy se tiene por ser y son bibos en las provincias de los rios de la plata, Paraguay y parana, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 525-534.

75. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 616. “*no olvidó su mala costumbre de chinchorrear y quitar las yndias de los yndios, así para él, como para dar á otros.*”

76. Anonymous relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 276. “*Despues que vino nuflo de chaves del pirú, el Capitan domyngo de Yrala envio muchas lenguas para traer yndias a los que con el dicho nuflo de chaves venian.*”

77. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 264. “*enviaba el mesmo domyngo de Yrala las lenguas de la tierra y a sus criados y a ombres que para ello tenia en el pueblo a casa y tierra de los yndios a tomalles y quitalles sus mujeres e hijos e lo que tenian en sus casas.*”

78. Ibid. “*el mesmo domyngo de Yrala le dio yndios y yndias del a tierra a trueco de aquel hierro que el traya y dio lugar que sacase del pueblo e de la tierra yndios e yndias para llevar al brasyl á tierra del Rey de Portugal donde los Registraron y quitaron y tenian por esclavos.*”

79. Memoria incerto authore de cosas mal hechas que dize que haze Domingo de Yrala, July 2, 1556. BG: 229.

80. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 265.

81. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias, July 24, 1555. CI: 560. “*Permite el governador de San Viçente que los Yndios Carios que de aqui salen con algunos christianos foragidos se vendan y contraten y ponenlos de hierro y señal.*”

82. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 264.

83. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Cárlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 616. “*tornó á enbiar por la tierra personas, las quales desipaban y destruian, tomandoles sus mujeres y hijas é todo lo que tenian, é quemandoles las casas y arrancandoles los bastiminetos y haziendoles otros daños muy grande, porque no les querian dar sus mujeres é hijas.*”

84. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 263-4. “*hizo muy grandes agravios a los yndios tomandoles y quitandoles el y los que con el ivan todo lo que los yndios tenian en sus casas ansi mugeres hijas y todo lo que tenian en sus casas. Ahorcó en este viaje en una casa onze o doze viejas porque los yndios se pusieron en defensa, diziendo que las Viejas hablaban para que los yndios se defendiesen y que no diesen a los cristianos lo que tenian en sus casas.*”

85. Anonymous relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 273.

86. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias, July 24, 1555. CI: 577.

87. Ibid. “*tome la posesion de la tierra en nombre de V.A.*”

88. Ibid. “*sin muerte ni escandalo de ninguno della.*”

89. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 267.

90. Ibid. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Cárlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 616. “*En esta buelta, de hambre, frio y malos tratamientos, murieron dos mill yndios naturales desta tierra.*”

91. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 166.

92. For a discussion of the Chiriguaná see Julien, “Colonial perspectives on the Chiriguaná (1528-1574),” 17-76. Also see Métraux, “Tribes of the eastern slopes of the Bolivian Andes,” HSAI III: 465-485. Métraux employs the modern term Chiriguano. Following Julien’s lead, I

have chosen to use the term Chiriguaná, which is how these Guaraní-speakers were referred to in sixteenth-century colonial sources.

93. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 166. “*se fueron en busca de ellos, como lo habían hecho otra vez esta misma gente el año de 1548.*”

94. *Ibid.*, 167. “*perdieron todos los caballos, mas de 1500 amigos, y todo el servicio que habían adquirido de aquellas naciones.*”

95. Ynformación y ynterrogatorio sobre los servicios prestados á S.M. por el Capitan Hernando de Salaçar, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, December 29-31, 1562. BG: 376, 385, 396, 404, 409, 424.

96. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 171-2.

97. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 253.

98. Ynformación y ynterrogatorio sobre los servicios prestados á S.M. por el Capitan Hernando de Salaçar, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, December 29-31, 1562. BG: 376, 409, 386, 425.

99. *Ibid.*, 397.

100. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 270.

101. *Ibid.*

102. Pedro de Dorantes. Requerimiento que el factor hizo año 53 al governador que poblase pueblos y encomendase yndios y pone las razones de la conveniencia, October 12, 1553. COR: 205-6.

103. *Ibid.*, 206. “*pedia y rrequeria y pidio y rrequirio al dicho capitan una y dos y mas vezes quantas puede y debe que haga y made hazer los dichos pueblos de christianos y encomiende no tan solamente los ydios que estaban visitados mas todos los que mas ay en la tierra entre los conquistadores que quisieren poblar.*”

104. For an overview of the *encomienda* and its evolution as a colonial institution, see Charles Gibson, *Spain in America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 48-67; and Parry, *The Spanish Seaborne Empire*, 100-108.

105. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 265; Anonymous relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 277; Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Cárlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556. CI: 615. Guzmán also refers to Irala’s execution of Camargo and Rutia, claiming that they were punished for plotting to assassinate Irala. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 157.

106. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 265.

107. Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 278. “*llamó los principales e les sacó las hijas e mugeres hermosas que tenian e de esta manera se Repartio la tierra.*”
108. Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 266.
109. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Repuesta al Requerimiento que el factor hizo año 53 al gobernador que poblase pueblos y encomendase yndios y pone las razones de la conveniencia. October 12, 1553. COR: 207-8.
110. Julien, “Colonial perspectives on the Chiriguaná (1528-1574),” 32.
111. Ibid.
112. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 180-184; Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 240-251. Hans Staden also describes the Sanabria expedition. See Whitehead, *Hans Staden’s True History: An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil*, 31-38.
113. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias. July 24, 1555. CI: 575.
114. Ibid.
115. Ibid., 576.
116. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 265. “*Yrala de contino procuro que ningund xpiano saliese de la tierra por niguna parte, porque S. Magd. no fuese yinformado de las cosas que en aquella tierra pasavan proque de on contino tenia guardas en elos caminos o partes por done los xpianos podian salir.*”
117. Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 248.
118. Ibid., 250; Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 278.
119. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias, July 24, 1555. CI: 577.
120. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 269; Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 278.
121. Domingo Martínez de Irala. Ordenanzas sobre repartimientos y enconienas. May 14, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 512.
122. Carta de Juan de Salazar al Consejo Real de Indias, Asunción March 20, 1556. CI: 580.
123. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 184.

124. Carta de Juan de Salazar al Consejo Real de Indias, Asunción March 20, 1556. CI: 581. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 279. Mencía's arrival is mentioned in the Anonymous relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 280.
125. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 286.
126. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 269-271; Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 278-79.
127. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 272; Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 279.
128. Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 279-280.
129. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias. July 24, 1555. CI: 578.
130. Relación de Ñuflo de Chaves y Hernando de Salazar, Memoria y resolución de los casos y casas sucedidas en la tierra desde la governacion de Juan de Ayolas que sea en Gloria, 1559. BG: 286.
131. Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (c. 1556). BG: 280.
132. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 269.
133. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 196. "papeles y cartas."
134. Ibid. "que ellos tenían por santo."
135. Ibid. "los españoles traian consigo pestilencia y mala doctrina; por lo cual se habian de perder y consumir, y que todo la pretension de ellos era quitar á los indios sus mujeres y hijas, y reconocer aquellas tierra, para venirlas depues á poblar y sugetar."
136. John Hemming provides an overview of the reports of disease in Brazil by the 1550s in *Red Gold: The Conquest of the Brazilian Indians*, 139-160.
137. While some European diseases may have been present in the region before 1600, Rubio's and Kleinpenning's comprehensive histories of the colonial period do not address this possibility. By the 1600s, the earlier Jesuit *cartas anuas* and correspondence by Hernandarias (Hernando Arias de Saavedra), the first mestizo governor of Paraguay, contain many reports of plague outbreaks. For example, Hernandarias's letter from March 1606 states that there had been a great plague in January of that year. *Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional de Buenos Aires* 1:1 (January-March 1937), 104.

138. See Alfred W. Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972) and *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

139. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Consejo de Indias. July 24, 1555. CI: 571. “*me he mantenido por los mejores medios que para buena admynistraçion, paz, y gobierno he podido.*”

140. Ibid. 578. “*En las cosas particulares desta tierra no thengo que dezir más, sino que los naturales della biuen en paz y concordia, muy sosegados, sin pensamiento, á lo que pareçe, de otras alteraçiones, y cada dia se van más ynstruyendo en la fee catholica, y los pobladores desta tierra muy paçíficos y entienden en sustentarse lo más sin perjuizio que pueden, sin cosa alguna de los escandalos pasados.*”

141. Carta de Domingo Martínez de Irala al Marques de Mandéjar, July 4, 1556. DHG II: 484. “*Como los ydios no tienen otra cosa con q servir syno solam.^{te} sus psonas a causa q de tpo antiguo nunca han sido syno guerreadores y comedores de carne humana y ser indomitas y peresosos y por el bien dellos rreparty la trra en trez^os y veinte o mas ombres para q les ayuddaseu asbobrellebar sus trabajos y todos los dhos yndios q asi rrepartieron serian asta veinte mill yndios y avn no llegan y con todo ello se vibe tan trabajosma. q antes nos ayud^os*”

142. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 264.

Chapter Eight:
**Mestizos, Christians and Carios: The *Encomienda* and the Legacy
of *Amistad y Alianza*.
1556 -1580.**

On October 3, 1556, Domingo Martínez de Irala died from an unspecified pain in his side at some forty-odd years of age.¹ With the exception of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's brief rule from 1542 to 1544, he had governed Asunción for seventeen years, even though a conquistador of insignificant rank. By making kinship alliances with the Carios and adapting to their warrior norms, he had been able to assert his control over the fractious conquistadors and royal officials. When he could no longer depend on the Carios' allegiance to mount *entradas* to the sierras and was forbidden to do so by Spain, he used the authority invested in him as the official governor to distribute *encomiendas* to his sons-in-law and supporters. He had also ensured that the newly arrived bishop, Fray Pedro Fernández de la Torre, looked benignly upon his governance by giving him Indian women to serve him. To assure his political legacy, Irala's last testament, dated March 13, 1556, gave legal weight to his kinship alliances by recognizing ten of his mestizo offspring as his legitimate children, including his four daughters married to rival conquistadors.² In order that his children would rightfully inherit his goods and slaves, he made a detailed inventory of his belongings, including the iron he had accumulated for barter and the wood he had dismantled from Cabeza de Vaca's brigantine to make doors and windows.³ To safeguard his spiritual wellbeing in the afterlife, Irala ordered masses said and candles lit in all the churches, chapels, and monasteries of Asunción and its environs upon his demise.⁴

By initiating *amistad y alianza* with the Asunción Carios and presiding over the distribution of the *encomiendas*, Irala was also assured an historical legacy. Enrique de Gandía refers to him as the "Patriarch of Paraguay"⁵ for his leadership role in the heroic phase of conquest. Julián Rubio devotes four pages of his colonial history written in 1942 to an evaluation of Irala. He describes him as an exemplary conquistador and the first *caudillo* (strongman) of the Río de la Plata: at once ruthless with his rivals and rebellious Indians, and magnanimous to his supporters and Cario allies.⁶ Rubio observes that while the factionalism of the *leales* and

comuneros reflected in the documentation for the early colonial period in Asunción has precluded an impartial assessment of Irala's governance, his historical significance is indisputable.⁷ By virtue of forging alliances with the Carios that led to the "rapid and intensive propagation of a mestizo population,"⁸ Irala is lauded by Rubio as the true founder of Paraguay's unique mixing of races.

Elman Service, whose 1954 study of Spanish-Guaraní relations focuses on the material history of colonialism rather than on the victors of conquest, identifies Irala's division of twenty thousand Indians among three hundred and fifty conquistadors in 1556 as bequeathing to Paraguay its mestizo settler society. Service argues that the *encomienda* initiated the "transition from the temporary settlement of the exploratory phase to the direct and purposeful acculturation of the Indians."⁹ Asunción, he writes, "was now to become a true colonial society with its economy based on the exploitation of local Indians."¹⁰ He concludes that "by about 1580 the change from the exploratory period to the period of stable *encomiendas* had been effected in all essentials,"¹¹ and the foundation of Paraguay's distinctive national character as a mestizo society established.

From an anthropological perspective, Florencia Roulet's recent study recognizes the *encomienda* as central to the Indians' acculturation, but identifies Guaraní women rather than Irala or the *encomienda* as the principal protagonists of *mestizaje*. "Companions, lovers, servants, cargo bearers, farmers and cooks, slaves transformed into human merchandise and traded for arms or horses,"¹² these indigenous women, Roulet argues, "were in reality the true hinge of interethnic relations."¹³ While she acknowledges the Guaraní's resistance to Spanish domination after 1556, she views the messianic nature of this resistance as signaling an "increasing pessimism and desperation," in which the affirmation of ritual practices reflected the diminishing power of the *mburuvichás*.¹⁴ She argues that the defeat of these rebellions, which culminated in 1579 in an uprising by a cacique named Oberá, who declared himself the Son of God and urged his followers to dance and sing until they died of exhaustion, led to the Guaraní's resigned acceptance of their absorption into colonial society. For Roulet, Christian evangelization rather than the exploitation of *encomienda* labour was the ultimate instrument of pacification. She concludes that the "foundation of the first Franciscan reductions in the

1580s, and above all the mission work of the Jesuits between 1610 and 1630, had as its end result the definitive ‘pacification’ of a convulsive space and a population permanently at war”¹⁵

In this final chapter, I evaluate the historical legacy of *amistad y alianza* by focusing on how the imposition of the *encomienda* in 1556 altered the transcultural dynamics of kinship ties and warrior norms that had dominated Spanish-Guaraní relations since the arrival of the conquistadors in the Carios’ territories in 1537. In so doing, I do not dispute Rubio’s assessment of Irala as a prototype *caudillo*, but rather point out how the convergence of cacique and *caudillo* continued to influence the governance of Asunción after his death. Nor do I argue against Service’s emphasis on the *encomienda* as an economic instrument of colonial exploitation or Roulet’s identification of indigenous women as the crucial progenitors of *mestizaje*. Instead, I suggest how the social and gendered dimensions of racial intermixing were more fraught, and the boundaries between Spanish and Guaraní worldviews more porous, than Service and Roulet posit. Drawing primarily upon the corpus of letters that were sent back to Spain with a ship from Martín de Orué’s flotilla in 1556, I analyse how the imposition of the *encomienda* produced new hierarchies among and between the conquistadors, Carios, and mestizos living in Asunción and nearby villages. Utilizing the same time frame as Roulet and Service of 1556 to the 1580s, I argue that while these new hierarchies intensified the exploitation of indigenous labour, they also destabilized the “direct and purposeful acculturation of the Indians” and the consolidation of a mestizo settler society.

In my analysis of the transcultural dynamics engendered by the imposition of the *encomienda*, I question Roulet’s description of the Carios’ resistance to Spanish domination as increasingly desperate. By considering how Asunción’s nucleus of *mestizaje* was distinct from but interrelated to the larger region of Paraguay inhabited by Carios who evaded or resisted the *encomienda*, I argue that the Carios manifested a concerted refusal to relinquish an *avá* identity as warriors through strategies ranging from their continued collaboration with the Spanish in raiding and captive-taking to the adoption of new indigenous weaponry to launch a major rebellion in 1560. I further posit that the incidences of messianic resistance were neither atavistic nor a symptom of the weakness of the *mburuvichás*. Rather, they can be seen as a strategic appropriation of a European spiritual worldview by the Carios in order to distinguish being *avá* from forging kinship ties with the Spanish. To provide a context for the analysis of

the *encomienda*, *mestizaje*, and indigenous resistance, the chapter begins with a political overview of the period from 1556 to the 1580s.

In the weeks preceding Irala's death in October 1556, the ship that had remained in the estuary of the Río de la Plata from Martín de Orué's flotilla set sail for Spain with letters written by the disgruntled conquistadors of Asunción and thirty Spaniards whom Irala reluctantly had given leave to return to their native land.¹⁶ Its departure marked the last time during the colonial period that Asunción would have a direct relationship with the imperial centre. After 1556, official communication and trade were channeled through the Viceroyalty of Peru, although illicit bartering and slaving with the Portuguese in Brazil continued throughout the colonial period. In 1559, Asunción was placed under the jurisdiction of the Audiencia of Charcas, which was established by royal decree that same year in the city of La Plata (present-day Sucre). The Audiencia was responsible for Charcas (present-day Bolivia including the silver mines of Potosí), and the Río de la Plata (present-day Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay).¹⁷

The difficulty of crossing the Gran Chaco and the lack of silver to entice new settlers to Asunción meant that the Spanish presence in the Río de la Plata during the latter half of the 1500s was limited primarily to the conquistadors who had come before 1556. An anonymous *memoria* enumerates a total of 514 *gente* (men of European origin) residing in the Río de la Plata in 1556, of whom 154 were from Mendoza's armada and 191 from Cabeza de Vaca's expedition.¹⁸ In addition to these men, 56 more had come with Alonso de Cabrera (who had returned to the Río de la Plata in 1538), 18 had survived a shipwreck of the merchant Leon Pancaldo near the Buenos Aires fort in that same year, 52 were from Sanabría's expedition, 30 were from Peru, and 13 had come overland from São Vicente on the Brazilian coast.¹⁹ The *memoria* also notes that there were Spanish women, all of whom were married, along with more than 3000 children, most of whom would have been mestizos.²⁰

As a consequence of Asunción's isolation from Charcas and the lack of new settlers, the conquistadors from Mendoza's and Cabeza de Vaca's expeditions played a central role in governing the Río de la Plata for the decades following Irala's death. From 1556 to 1588, provisional governors who were aligned with Irala, or who had married his mestiza daughters, or who acted as representatives of *adelantados*, ruled the Río de la Plata for thirty out of thirty-

two years. The political instability that characterized this period is attributable in part to enmity among the Asunción conquistadors that dated from Cabeza de Vaca's imprisonment, the right to elect provisional governors granted by the 1537 *Real Cédula*, and judicial interventions from a distance by the Audiencia of Charcas. Initially, Irala's son-in-law, Gonzalo de Mendoza, assumed control of Asunción as the deputy governor.²¹ When he died shortly afterwards, another of Irala's sons-in-law, Francisco Ortiz de Vergara, was elected governor on July 22, 1558.²²

At the same time, the conquistadors sought to extend their territorial control of the region. Rui Díaz Melgarejo, who was a bitter enemy of Irala, mounted an expedition of one hundred men to Guairá in 1557, and founded Ciudad Real (near present-day Porto Guairá) at the junction of the Igatemi and Alto-Paraná Rivers.²³ Ñuflo de Chaves, who was a staunch ally of Irala and a political rival of Ortiz de Vergara, left Asunción in early 1558 to establish a settlement at the headwaters of the Paraguay River where the Xarayes lived. Together with the captain Hernando de Salazar, Chaves led a contingent of 158 men and a large number of Carios in 260 canoes, Chaves journeyed north to Itatín and made contact with the Xarayes. Although the Crown had prohibited the Asunción conquistadors from making incursions into Peru, Chaves then travelled westward towards the territories of the Corocotoquis and the Tomacosías that he knew of from participating in Irala's 1547-49 *entrada* to the sierra. After reaching the eastern lowlands of Bolivia in the present-day province of Chiquitos, Chaves's expedition met with fierce indigenous resistance and half of his men and 1500 Carios mutinied and returned to Asunción. The remainder of the expedition stayed in the vicinity of the Guapay River, where Chaves founded a settlement in August 1559 that he named Nueva Asunción.²⁴ In 1560, Chaves travelled to Lima to stake his claim to the Chiquitos area as part of the Río de la Plata, which was disputed by a conquistador from Peru, Andrés Manso, who had been given permission by the Viceroy to colonize the area. Upon returning from Lima, Chaves founded a second settlement, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, in February 1561, which was located about 260 kilometres west of the present-day site of the city near San José de Chiquitos.²⁵ Two years later, the Audiencia of Charcas intervened in the tacit war that was being waged between Manso and Chaves. The region was divided between the two conquistadors and became a political entity, the province of Mojos, that was distinct from the Río de la Plata.²⁶

Once Chaves had secured the governance of Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Asunción became drawn into the political orbit of Peru. In 1563, Chaves returned to Asunción and convinced three hundred men to leave the city and settle in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. The governor Francisco Ortiz de Vergara, the royal official Felipe de Cáceres, and the bishop Fray Pedro Fernández de la Torre also accompanied Chaves's expedition, which arrived in Santa Cruz de la Sierra in May 1565.²⁷ Ortiz de Vergara spent the next year in the city of La Plata (Sucre) seeking official recognition of his election as the governor of the Río de la Plata. Appointing Felipe de Cáceres as his deputy, he then travelled to Lima, and on to Spain to continue his lobbying efforts.²⁸ After Cáceres returned to Asunción with the bishop Fernández de la Torre, his governance proved controversial. It ended in 1572 when a mutiny of the Asunción conquistadors spearheaded by the bishop resulted in his imprisonment. Two years later, Cáceres was sent to Spain by the conquistadors to face charges of bad government. The bishop, who travelled with him to oversee the criminal proceedings, died en route in São Vicente, Brazil. After reaching Spain, Cáceres was absolved of all charges by the Council of the Indies and died in Madrid.²⁹

At the same time as the Asunción conquistadors were fighting among themselves over who would rule the city, the governance of the Río de la Plata was being decided on by officials in Lima. Juan Ortiz de Zárate, a conquistador who had come with Hernando Pizarro to Peru, negotiated an appointment to become *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata with the governor of Peru. In 1567, Zárate travelled to Spain to ratify his *capitulación*, which granted him the position of *adelantado* in return for a substantial financial investment and a commitment to bring families and soldiers from Spain, and four thousand cows, sheep, goats, and mares from Peru.³⁰ While Zárate was officially confirmed as *adelantado* by the Crown on July 10, 1569, he did not arrive in Asunción until February 1575, and died a year later. In his will, he stipulated that whoever married his daughter Juana, who resided in La Plata, would inherit the right to be *adelantado*.³¹ In 1577, Juan Torres de Vera y Aragón, a judge (*oidor*) of the Audiencia of Charcas, married Zárate's daughter Juana to become the fifth and last *adelantado* of the Río de la Plata. However, the Viceroy of Peru contested his right to take office and Vera y Aragón did not arrive in Asunción until 1587, only to remain in the city for a year.³² During his absence, Juan de Garay, who was from Charcas and had settled in Asunción, served as governor from 1578 to 1583. Garay was killed in an indigenous ambush in 1583 while travelling between

Santa Fé, which he had founded in 1573, and Buenos Aires, which he re-founded in 1580.³³ After Garay's death, it would not be until Hernando Arías de Saavedra (Hernandarias), a mestizo born in Asunción, became governor that there was any semblance of political stability. Hernandarias, who was instrumental in establishing the Jesuit presence in the region, and whose 1603 *ordenanzas* addressed *encomienda* abuses, governed Paraguay from 1602 to 1609, and again from 1615 to 1621.³⁴

This bewildering succession of interim rulers, exoduses to Peru, untimely deaths, and internal dissension was a contributing factor to the considerable indigenous unrest that occurred in Paraguay during the latter half of the 1500s. In Rubio's political history of the Río de la Plata, incidences of indigenous unrest are largely ignored, and in Service's socio-cultural study of Asunción and the *encomienda*, are completely absent. On the other hand, Roulet views indigenous unrest as a response solely to the colonial exploitation of *encomienda* labour. These authors' lack of acknowledgement of indigenous unrest as both multifaceted and integral to the politics of the region's governance is in part a reflection of scant references to rebellions in the contemporary sources. There is a brief mention of an uprising by the Asunción Carios soon after the *encomienda* was instituted in 1556, and there are brief reports of a major rebellion that threatened Asunción in 1560. One such report states that "when Francisco de Vergara was governing, certain Indians near the city and the province of Acay (north of Asunción) and in other parts rose up in rebellion, and he went four times to punish and reduce them."³⁵ In Guzmán's later chronicle, this uprising is described at length.³⁶ However, neither his chronicle nor the contemporary accounts mention the later Oberá Rebellion of 1579. Oberá's existence first enters the historical record in a poem published in Lisbon in 1602, which was written by an Asunción priest, Martín Barco de Centenera, and was elaborated upon by the Jesuit Pedro Lozano in his eighteenth-century history of Paraguay.³⁷

From a transcultural perspective, the indigenous unrest and political instability of the period from 1556 to 1580 are inseparable from the *encomienda*'s transformation of intercultural relations between the Carios, the conquistadors, and the mestizos of Asunción. The governance of the Río de la Plata by a succession of Irala's sons-in-law and royal officials, the establishment of settlements in Guairá and Charcas (Bolivia) by dissident conquistadors, and the indigenous rebellions of 1556, 1560, and 1580 all reflect the reconfiguration of power

dynamics produced by the introduction of a colonial administration of labour tribute in a local context where indigenous norms had dominated for twenty years. While the legal framework of the *encomienda* specifically addressed the relationship of the conquistadors to tribute Indians, it equally affected their mestizo children, who outnumbered the conquistadors by five to one in 1556. The *encomienda*'s transformation of Spanish-Guaraní relations would determine the social status of mestizos and how they would identify with the indigenous worldview of their mothers or the colonial ambitions of their Spanish fathers.

A close reading of the letters that were sent back to Spain with Orué's ship to register the conquistadors' discontent with the distribution of the *encomiendas* reveals that the reconfiguration of power dynamics in Asunción pivoted on how Irala's partisan allocation of Indians both reinforced existing kinship networks and violated them for political ends. The letters also reveal that the territorial reach of the *repartimiento* was considerably limited, and relatively few Carios were brought under the *encomienda* control of the conquistadors. Of these letters, only Bartolomé García's directly addresses how kinship played a role in determining the granting of *encomiendas*. In so doing, García provides insight into how the two forms of the *encomienda* in Paraguay, which became known as the *encomienda originaria* and the *encomienda mita*, were instituted. The *encomienda originaria* allocated Carios who were already providing service to the Spanish to specific conquistadors, and converted indigenous labour previously obtained through reciprocal kinship obligations into permanent year-round tribute. The Carios who were subject to this form of the *encomienda* became known as *originarios* or by the Incan term *yanacona*. The *encomienda mita* also appropriated Incan terminology. Often synonymous with the term *repartimiento* in the contemporary accounts, the *encomienda mita* assigned to the *encomendero* a designated number of Indians who had no previous kinship ties to the Spanish and lived in *tekó-ás* that were located some distance from Asunción. These Indians, who were called *mitayos*, were expected to provide labour services by turns for a number of months out of a year by travelling to Asunción. In both forms of the *encomienda*, the caciques were responsible for insuring that the Carios in their villages complied with tribute obligations and the *encomenderos* were entrusted with the Indians' welfare and their instruction in the Christian faith.³⁸

García's letter was written to protest his failure to receive due recognition for his many years of loyal service to the Crown, which included killing jaguars at the Buenos Aires fort when he first arrived in the Río de la Plata with Pedro de Mendoza's armada in 1535. He begins his letter by explaining that when he petitioned for an *encomienda*, Irala responded by asking how many children he had, for this was how Indians were assigned.³⁹ While García does not address whether he had attempted to bargain on Irala's terms, he reports that more than a hundred men from Mendoza's armada, who presumably would have had at least one Cario woman in their personal service and a few mestizo children, were given the worst *encomiendas*. García explains these were the furthest from Asunción, where there were few Indians, and none whom previously had provided service to the Spanish. For his part, he states that he was "given sixteen Indians eighty leagues (400 kilometres) from where we live, and others were given fifteen, twenty, or thirty, except for Irala's sons-in law and the sons-in-law of his sons-in-law and the royal officials, who took all of the land and the best in it."⁴⁰

From García's letter, a distinction can be discerned as to how and to whom Irala awarded *encomiendas* on the basis of kinship relations. Irala's rationale for assigning Indians obviously benefited his extended network of relatives and the royal officials, who had the largest number of mestizo children, hence, García's complaint. On the other hand, his letter makes clear that Irala's rationale was not applied equitably to other conquistadors. Despite having cohabited with the Carios for almost twenty years, two-thirds of Mendoza's men were allocated *mita* Indians who did not come by way of familial relations and who lived at a distance from Asunción. The paltry numbers of Indians they did receive indicates that although the lands nominally under *encomienda* control extended north to the Río Jejuí-Guazú and east towards the Alto-Paraná, the vast majority of the Carios who became subject to *encomienda* were *originarios* living in the vicinity of Asunción.⁴¹

That García and his fellow conquistadors were given the worst *encomiendas* can be attributed in part to their rank as common soldiers and the already established inequities of *amistad y alianza*, which had favoured kinship relations between the Spanish captains and royal officials and the Cario caciques. If the men from Mendoza's armada were aligned with the *leales*, then this would have been another reason for receiving so few Indians. According to Antonio D'Escalera, Irala "gave [*encomiendas*] to almost none of those who were or are his enemies."⁴²

A letter by Juan Pavón, dated June 15, 1556, provides an explanation for why they also received no *originario* Indians. Pavón claims that for the two or three months before Bartolomé Justiniano arrived, Irala had been dividing the land by “taking it from the old conquistadors and giving it those who had come fleeing from Peru because of the death of the Viceroy and the battle against royal authority, and among others, Frenchmen and Bretons.”⁴³ Pavón’s accusation is echoed in an *información* presented to the Council of the Indies in 1557 by Juan Salmerón de Heredia, who had returned to Spain with Orué’s ship. The witnesses called by Salmerón to testify confirm that Irala had given *encomiendas* to political fugitives from Peru rather than to the original (*primeros*) conquistadors. They also claim that while Mendoza’s men were denied *encomiendas*, Cabeza de Vaca’s men received them.⁴⁴ As D’Escalera accuses Irala of giving almost no *encomiendas* to his enemies, these must have been men from Cabeza de Vaca’s expedition who had sided with the *comuneros* and were rewarded for their loyalty.

Juan Muñoz de Carvajal’s 1556 letter similarly states that Irala allocated Indians to the conquistadors “who came from Peru and who had never provided service to the Crown in the Río de la Plata, leaving [without *encomiendas*] many of the old conquistadors who had conquered and discovered the land.”⁴⁵ Carvajal also reports that Irala gave *encomiendas* to “those whom he sent to rob the land,”⁴⁶ which may have referred to his mestizo collaborators. Like the other conquistadors writing to the Crown in 1556, Carvajal strongly protests that *encomiendas* were assigned to foreigners, among them “the French and Italians, as well as Venetians and Genoese and other nations outside the realms of Your Majesty, because they had helped and aided [Irala].”⁴⁷ While the anonymous *memoria* that enumerated the European-born *gente* residing in the Río de la Plata in 1556 does not identify countries of origin, thirty men who came from Peru and the nine from Sañ Vicente probably included some of the Frenchmen and Italians to whom Muñoz de Carvajal refers. A number of the foreigners also had come with Pedro de Mendoza’s expedition in 1535. As the Italian city-states were commercially involved in Peru, while France had been trading in competition with Portugal along the coast of Brazil since the early 1500s, Irala likely had trading relationships with the foreigners to whom he gave *encomiendas*.⁴⁸ Juan de Salmerón hints at such dealings in a *memoria* that he wrote while still in Asunción, stating that Irala assigned Genoese and other foreigners *repartimientos* because of “vested interests —*por cosas que anduvieron de por medio*.”⁴⁹ The anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) notes that in addition to giving tribute Indians to Genoese and Frenchmen,

Irala reserved some *repartimientos* “for certain persons who were doing business (*negocios*) for him in Spain.”⁵⁰

Irala’s taking away of lands from the old conquistadors to make new political allies and reward his trading associates attests to the enduring divide-and-rule strategy of his governance. It was also a measure of the scarcity of male Carios living in and near Asunción. Juan de Salazar, who had left Asunción as a captain allied with Cabeza de Vaca in 1545 and returned a decade later as the royal treasurer for the Crown, observed how their numbers had diminished dramatically. In a letter dated March 20, 1556, he reports that despite “being the first settler and founder of this city and land, and the many expenses, services, and work that I have undertaken in more than twenty years here —as the Royal Council has seen in reports — of the thousands of Indians who have been entrusted to me, no more than two hundred remain.”⁵¹ If Irala had awarded Salazar an *encomienda* on the basis of kinship relations, then these thousands of Indians probably refer to the Cario warriors aligned with the cacique Cupiratí, with whom Salazar had established an alliance during the founding of Asunción. That only two hundred remained reveals both the seriousness of Cupiratí’s rebellion, which Pedro de Estopiñán reported took place after the imprisonment of Cabeza de Vaca in 1544, and the degree to which the desertion of Cupiratí and other caciques by 1545 had altered the demographics of Asunción.

As the founder of Asunción, Salazar’s protestation that he had only two hundred Indians reveals that the *encomiendas* did not yield large numbers of Indians for any of the conquistadors. If Irala’s calculation in his 1556 letter to the Council of the Indies that he divided twenty thousand Indians among three hundred and fifty conquistadors is more or less accurate, and the hundred conquistadors who received between fifteen and thirty *mita* Indians and those who received none is taken into account, the remaining conquistadors who benefited from Irala’s partisan politics would have received an average of ninety Indians. As the letters sent to Spain in 1556 are unanimous in their complaints that Irala and his sons-in-law received the largest *encomiendas*, the number of Indians assigned to the royal officials, the political fugitives from Peru, foreigners, the conquistadors who supported him, and his mestizo henchmen was probably closer to fifty or sixty. If Irala had exaggerated his numbers to demonstrate his compliance with the Crown, their numbers would have been less. The

anonymous *relación* (c. 1556) states that Irala “took a quarter of the land for himself and his four sons-in-law, and gave between thirty and forty Indians to everyone else.”⁵² Whether the Indians allocated by Irala to *encomenderos* were thirty or three hundred, the *encomienda* grants were unusually small by colonial Latin American standards. As Juan de Salmerón points out in his 1556 *memoria*, *encomiendas* in Peru could number in the thousands of Indians.⁵³ In Paraguay, *encomiendas* were not only miniscule by comparison, but they were also granted much later, reflecting the transcultural dynamics of the conquistadors’ adaptation to indigenous norms that initially had resulted in alliances rather than conquest.

The rupture of these alliances during the Carios’ insurrection in 1545-6, and the deaths or desertion of the Cario warriors during the repression and the *entradas* that followed, make it unlikely that the majority of the *originario* Indians had kinship relations with the conquistadors dating to the first years of *amistad y alianza*. The male children of the women who had been taken from distant *tekó-ás* in the *rancheadas*, and were de facto slaves, would have numbered among the *originarios* distributed by Irala. This made the lands “belonging” to Mendoza’s conquistadors through kinship ties all the more valuable for access to the reciprocal obligations of the Carios who lived in them. It also meant that Irala’s confiscation of their lands through his distribution of the *encomiendas* had the consequence of altering power dynamics among the *originario* Indians as well as disenfranchising the original conquistadors and Irala’s enemies.

By giving “all of the land and the best in it” to his relatives and the royal officials, Irala reinforced their kinship ties with the Carios living in the vicinity of Asunción. This enabled these conquistadors to retain their status as *tuvichás* among the Carios with whom they had familial relations, and for the Carios’ daughters, sisters, wives, and relatives to continue to serve them according to custom. In turn, the caciques of the *tekó-ás* whose reciprocal obligations were converted to *encomienda* tribute accrued prestige as the middlemen who controlled the kinship networks of the Indians who served the *encomenderos*. These caciques became the indigenous elite of Asunción. A hundred years after the *encomienda* was instituted, Manuel Cabral of Corrientes provides a revisionist look backward at their incorporation into a settler society. Responding to the Crown’s intention to implement a policy requiring caciques to pay tribute, he testified in an *información* that from the time of the first *encomiendas* until now (1658) “the caciques are esteemed and are taken for nobles not only by their vassals as

they were before, but also by the Spanish and their *encomenderos*, and they keep their preeminence and are not subject to service or tribute like the rest of the plebian Indians and vassals.”⁵⁴ Cabral and other witnesses also noted the caciques’ ancestral rights, stating that their nobility and authority were ancient and hereditary, with succession from father to son.⁵⁵

At the same time, the Carios who were taken away from the old conquistadors and given to those who had newly arrived became an indigenous underclass. Legally bound to *encomenderos* with whom they had no kinship ties, they no longer were integrated into the reciprocal obligations that linked the cacique of their *tekó-á* and his extended kinship network to the *encomienda* through familial relations. In the colonial context of *encomienda* tribute, they were at best indentured labourers; at worst, they became de facto slaves like the male children of the women who had been seized in the *rancheadas*. In the indigenous context of the *tekó-á*, their obligation to provide service to Spanish masters rather than to the Spanish relatives of their cacique transformed them from *avá* to *tapií*. In the latter case, both the cacique and the *encomendero* became the enforcers of their colonial servitude.

Irala’s ordinances issued on May 16, 1556, concerning the administration of the *encomiendas* functioned to institutionalize the hierarchical difference between the *originarios* who retained their kinship ties with the conquistadors after the distribution of the *encomiendas* and those who did not. The ordinances also served to alter the social composition of the *tekó-ás* and the Carios’ ability to negotiate new kinship relations with the conquistadors. Service notes in his summary of the ordinances that most were “more or less typical of the Crown’s usual policy,”⁵⁶ requiring the *encomienda* Indians to live permanently in villages, and charging the *encomendero* to his treat his Indians well and to instruct and indoctrinate them in the Catholic faith. The exceptions he identifies as “local in character” were the emphasis on providing personal service as tribute, which was prohibited by Spanish law after 1549, and an injunction against the custom of indigenous women returning to the houses of their fathers after the death of their husband.⁵⁷ However, in light of Irala’s partisan distribution of Indians, some of the “typical” ordinances take on additional significance in a local context. Notably, the first two of Irala’s ordinances reversed the terms of previous edicts he had issued restricting the conquistadors’ freedom of movement and their capacity to forge kinship relations by applying these constraints to the Carios. Whether by design or necessity, the ordinances modified Irala’s

strategy of adapting indigenous norms to colonial ends; now it was colonial policy that dictated how indigenous norms were being transformed.

The first ordinance stipulated that *encomienda* Indians must obey their caciques and remain in their villages, and that if the cacique “should move to another place as an improvement, then all of them must move and go with him.”⁵⁸ It further states that “Indians from other *repartimientos* and *encomiendas* are not permitted to go or to move to where their own [Indians] are.”⁵⁹ By specifying that the Indians were obligated to follow their cacique to a new location, the ordinance appears to be sensitive to local conditions, in that it enabled the Carios to relocate their longhouses if their slash-and-burn agriculture had exhausted the jungle earth’s nutrients. In principle, this made the *encomienda* villages in Paraguay less permanent than in other parts of the Americas, such as those formed by the reduction of the highland Quechua- and Aymara-speakers into *pueblos de indios* initiated by the Viceroy of Peru, Francisco de Toledo, in the 1570s.⁶⁰ However, the stipulation that the Carios must remain with their cacique also had the consequence of rendering static the dynamic of territorial expansion, which enabled the Guaraní to establish breakaway communities when a kinship lineage became too large or competition arose between *tuvichás*. By mandating the Carios to obey the caciques who controlled the *tekó-ás* at the time of the granting of the *encomiendas*, Irala’s ordinance bestowed a hereditary political authority upon the caciques that was contrary to the indigenous norm of accruing prestige and followers through prowess as a war chief. Hence, these caciques and their descendants became “esteemed and taken for nobles” by their vassals, while the rival *tuvichás* in their *tekó-ás* had no option but to flee the territories under *encomienda* control.

The final stipulation of the first ordinance forbidding the Indians of other *repartimientos* and *encomiendas* “to go or move to where their own [Indians] are” was both restrictive and disruptive. It suggests that the Carios who were assigned to conquistadors with whom they had no previous kinship ties were physically displaced from their *tekó-á* to the one under the control of their *encomendero*. The stipulation also violated the kinship norm of matrilineal residence by preventing any male Cario who had established a conjugal relation with a woman from another longhouse or village from joining her father’s household. This meant that the Cario caciques could no longer accrue prestige through reciprocal obligations that obligated the

male relatives of these women to clear the fields and serve them as warriors, but only through their kinship ties with the *encomenderos*.

The second ordinance further curtailed the caciques' authority outside the *encomienda* system. Forbidding the Carios from serving or engaging in trade with anyone except their *encomendero*, it explicitly states that they could “neither give nor trade their wives, daughters, sisters, or relatives to any settler or conquistador at this time or in the future to avoid quarrels and arguments among them, for the Indians are very few and are distributed among many.”⁶¹ By preventing the Carios from initiating new kinship alliances with the Spanish through the offering of women and relatives, the ordinance ensured that existing ones with Irala's sons-in-laws and the royal officials could not be threatened, thereby consolidating a settler elite that mirrored an indigenous one. Conversely, the old conquistadors whose land and Indians had been taken away became economically impoverished. While they retained a social status superior to an indigenous underclass, potentially they wielded less power and authority than the caciques aligned with powerful *encomenderos*. Paralleling the situation facing the rival *tuvichás* in the *tekó-ás*, their economic and social standing could only be improved by leaving Asunción.

The effect of the ordinances on the conquistadors and the Carios whose kinship relations were disrupted was immediate. In his 1557, *relación*, Telléz de Escobar reports that because Irala had ordered that no conquistador “receive in his house any Indians who were not part of his *repartimiento* or take any thing the Indians brought to trade,”⁶² the Indians could no longer go to the “their daughters and sisters in the house of their nephews,”⁶³ meaning that they could not go to the houses of their Spanish and mestizo relatives. He further explains that “great harm was done to the Christians, for the Indians did not come to serve as they used to and when the bishop went [to them], the Indians of the land were on the verge of rebelling and fleeing because they had been taken from the Christians whom they were accustomed to serving.”⁶⁴ This “great harm” extended to both the conquistadors whose Indians were taken away and those who had been assigned them, for the Carios' rebellion and flight meant that the latter also lost their access to labour tribute.

While only Telléz de Escobar refers to how the disruption of reciprocal kinship obligations in 1556 provoked the Carios to rebellion, the Franciscan Martín González and Domingo Martínez, a conquistador from Mendoza's expedition who had become a candidate for the priesthood, both report disturbances of a spiritual nature. González wrote a separate letter to the Council of the Indies on July 5, 1556, in order to explain that:

We have something new [in that] among the Indians, in that one has risen up, with a child whom he says is God or the Son of God, and with this invention the Indians have returned to their old songs that they are inclined towards because of their nature (*naturaleza*). We have learned that many times in the past these songs destroyed them. For as long as the songs lasted, they did not rest in their homes, but like crazy people did nothing day and night but sing and dance, until they died of hunger and exhaustion, and there remained neither woman, man, nor child, and this is how the poor ones (*los tristes*) lost their lives and their souls.⁶⁵

Domingo Martínez presents a slightly different version of Indians becoming God. In a letter to the Emperor Don Carlos (Charles V), dated July 2, 1556, he describes how:

If an old woman or man, the most unfortunate among them, rises up and says he is God, and tells them that they are not baptized unless he baptizes them, all of them immediately depopulate the land to go to him to be baptized again or to listen to his words as if he were God. This happened only a few days ago and it was necessary to bring these Indians to justice, after which this matter ceased.⁶⁶

While both González and Martínez attribute the Carios' religious behaviour to their gullibility, González also casts blame on the newly arrived bishop, Fernández de la Torre. González explains that "according to what the interpreters say and all that we have seen, and moreover what the caciques have told me personally only a few days ago, this happened when the bishop excommunicated their children (*echó de la doctrina*), and hence 'if the bishop does not want their children to learn the ways of God, then they will learn the ways of the Devil.'"⁶⁷

The re-appearance in the contemporary accounts of shamans using aspects of Christianity for their own evangelization purposes for the first time since the early 1540s, when Andrade's *mal*

yndio from Brazil “had gone singing and saying to those whom he was able to attract that he could make them Christians,⁶⁸ alerts us to the disruption the *encomienda* had wrought to the spiritual co-existence of the Carios and Spanish. Telléz de Escobar’s description of the Carios’ intention to flee because they could no longer serve the conquistadors with whom they had kinship relations, and González’s report of the bishop’s excommunications, also reveal that there is no simple equation between messianic resistance and the colonial exploitation of indigenous labour. Rather, these accounts suggest that the shamans’ appropriation of baptismal rituals and the Carios’ return to their old songs was a reflection of how kinship and baptism, being *avá* and Christian, were entangled.

During the first years of *amistad y alianza*, baptism had served as a mechanism of incorporation, whereby the Asunción caciques took Christian names when they integrated the Spanish into their extended kinship networks as sons-in-law and equals. Hence, the initial alliances forged by Irala were predicated on a convergence of worldviews in which the conquistadors became *avá* and the Carios became Christian. By 1545, the conquistadors’ violations of kinship norms had provoked the Carios to terminate their alliances with the Spanish and rise up in insurrection. After the defeat of their rebellion, Christian priests had facilitated the reestablishment of warrior alliances through negotiating the Carios’ participation in the *entradas*, and brokering the marriages of Irala’s mestiza daughters to rival conquistadors. Mestizo children, who were baptized Christians, were the kinship liaison between the Spanish and the Carios. With the imposition of the *encomienda*, the disruption of these mestizo kinship lineages severed any identification between being *avá* and being Christian. Separated from the conquistadors whom they served as *avá* kin and their mestizo relatives, the Carios responded by “unbecoming Christian” through their re-baptism by their shamans. The bishop’s excommunications only reinforced this division between being *avá* and being Christian. Telléz de Escobar’s claim that “when the bishop went [to them] the Indians of the land were on the verge of rebelling and fleeing because they were taken from the Christians whom they were accustomed to serving” suggests that his excommunications not only were concerned with the errors of Christian faith. It appears that these were punitive measures in response to the Carios’ refusal to provide service to Christians with whom they had no kinship relations. In turn, González infers that the bishop’s intervention increased the power of the shamans, for as the

caciques had told him, “if the bishop does not want their children to learn the ways of God, then they will learn the ways of the Devil.”

In 1556, the shamans’ newfound powers as God or the Son of God in Asunción apparently were short-lived. After the Indians who were fomenting spiritual dissent had been brought to justice, presumably by being executed, Domingo Martínez reports that the “matter ceased.” However, an observation González makes in a report he wrote when he returned to Spain in the early 1570s reveals that baptism remained a marker of differentiation. González explains that non-baptized Carios refused permission for baptized Carios to travel through their territories and killed Christian Carios fleeing Asunción.⁶⁹ Paralleling the castaway García’s violation of indigenous norms during his trek across the Gran Chaco in the 1520s, which had led to his slaves being perceived as Christians, Irala’s violation of indigenous norms through his partisan disruption of *encomiendas* led to the Asunción Carios who served the Spanish being identified as Christian.

The disruption of kinship relations that had provoked the Carios to flee to their shamans in 1556 also resulted in the departure of conquistadors from Asunción. Both Rui Díaz Melgarejo’s founding of Ciudad Real in Guairá in 1557 and Chaves’s expedition to Peru in 1558 were undertaken to establish new sources of *encomienda* lands and labour for the conquistadors whose Indians no longer came to serve them or who had been denied *encomiendas*. Melgarejo, who was a bitter enemy of Irala, would not have received an *encomienda*, while Chaves reports that the men who joined his 1558 expedition were promised “land, building lots, and a *repartimiento* of Indians.”⁷⁰ Although most of Chaves’s men mutinied once they reached the Guapay River and returned to Asunción, more than half of the conquistadors were willing to leave the city again five years later and settle in Santa Cruz de la Sierra. As the silver mines of Peru were off-limits to the conquistadors from the Río de la Plata, the primary incentive for such a massive exodus was the acquisition of *encomienda* lands and Indians that could not be obtained in Asunción.

Although only male Indians were subject to *encomienda* tribute, the Cario women who provided personal service to the conquistadors and resided in their households also were implicated in the disruption of kinship relations. Because women planted and tilled the fields,

harvested the crops, and triggered the reciprocal obligations of their male relatives to clear the fields, what had made the conquistadors “rich” during the first years of *amistad y alianza* were the number of women they possessed. After the insurrection of 1546, the role of their mestizo children in triggering the kinship obligations of the *tekó-ás* made Cario women valuable as child bearers as well as servants, while the seizure of women through the *rancheadas* who were treated as slaves still equated the accumulation of wealth with female labour. Although the *encomienda* did not fundamentally alter this equation or prevent the use of women for personal service, it affected Cario women whose kinship ties to the *tekó-ás* had distinguished them from *tapií* slaves. Because the caciques rather than the mestizo children were now the guarantors of the Carios’ labour obligations, these Cario women’s maternal connection to the kinship reciprocity of the *tekó-ás* ceased to be of importance, which left them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

In turn, the social status of the mestizo children became dependent on their relationship with their Spanish fathers. While the conquistadors rarely sought to legitimize the mestizo children who resided in their households or on their lands, they did seek to marry their mestiza daughters to Spaniards in order to secure heirs for their *encomiendas*. Domingo Martínez, the conquistador who was a candidate for the priesthood, made a request to the Crown in his 1556 letter to permit him to give his *encomienda* to his mestizo children, as priests were prohibited from possessing tribute Indians. Anticipating that his children’s illegitimacy would present an obstacle to this request, he proposed that one of his mestiza daughters marry a Spaniard to whom his *encomienda* could be transferred.⁷¹ Martínez’s latter proposal reflected the social mobility afforded to the mestiza daughters of the conquistadors because of the small number of Spanish women, who, according to the 1556 *memoria*, were all married. By becoming the wives of Spaniards, mestizas conjoined the hierarchies of class and gender to blur the distinctions of racial difference. Those who married powerful *encomenderos*, as in the case of Irala’s mestiza daughters, became part of a settler elite and the social equals of Spanish women.

In contrast, the mestizo sons of the conquistadors lacked opportunities for social mobility. While Irala recognized ten of his mestizo children as his legitimate heirs in his will, he did not grant any of his sons *encomiendas*. Except for the possible exception of Irala’s henchmen, no

other mestizos received *encomiendas* in 1556. Nor did they inherit them. Because mestizas were able to marry Spaniards, it was far more attractive for the conquistadors to designate a daughter heir. As a result, the incorporation into Asunción's settler elite of the children born during the first years of *amistad y alianza* was limited to a few mestizas, while most mestizos became economically impoverished and the social inferiors of their Spanish fathers.

While this mestizo underclass increased in size, the number of Spaniards living in Asunción diminished. When Francisco Ortiz de Vergara was elected governor in July 1558, the document registering the vote lists 358 men residing in the city, a decline from the 514 men listed in the *memoria* two years earlier.⁷² After half the conquistadors went with Chaves to Santa Cruz de la Sierra in 1564, even fewer remained. A report from 1569 states that 230 men were living in the city, of whom 76 were from Pedro de Mendoza's expedition.⁷³ Ten years later, the royal treasurer of the Río de la Plata, Hernando de Montalvo, wrote to the King to alert him that "there is a great need in these provinces for Spanish people because the old conquistadors are very few and the children born here are many and are four-fifths of the population and every day are increasing."⁷⁴

The question of how mestizos, who were exempt from *encomienda* tribute but were given no *encomiendas*, were integrated into an economy based on labour tribute is left unanswered in the contemporary accounts from the latter half of the 1500s. By the time Guzmán penned his chronicle in 1612, he extols how mestizos "were raised in a sound Christian manner and government, and have served the King with honour, becoming *encomenderos* and occupying preeminent and honourable positions in this province."⁷⁵ However, the mestizos to whom Guzmán refers would have been few in number and, like Guzmán, were the sons of mestizas who had married Spaniards. In Guzmán's case, his mother Úrsula was one of Irala's mestiza daughters and his father was Alonso Riquelme de Guzmán, whose own father was a nephew of Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca.⁷⁶ The vast majority of mestizos in 1612 were the illegitimate sons of mestizo fathers and Cario or mestiza mothers. Branislava Susnik states in her ethnohistory of the Guaraní that by 1575 there were 10,000 mestizos living in Asunción who were not recognized as the "sons of Spaniards." and who constituted "freeloaders – *libres arrimados*" in the eyes of authorities.⁷⁷ Living either in the conquistadors' extended households or on their *encomienda* lands among the Carios, some worked as ranch or field

hands. Many more were judged indolent. Hernando de Montalvo's description of the Asunción mestizos in a 1579 letter as being "very dexterous with large arms like harquebuses and skilled on feet and on horse for working," and "the friends of war,"⁷⁸ infers that some at least must have constituted an informal militia.

The in-between status of these mestizos "freeloaders" and "friends of war," who were neither recognized as Spanish nor were tribute Indians, raises the further question of how they straddled the cultural influences of two worldviews. While Elman Service argues that mestizos identified with their Spanish fathers, the contemporary sources suggest otherwise.⁷⁹ Hernando de Montalvo's plea to the King in 1579 for more Spaniards to be sent to Asunción was framed by his concern that the "mestizos have very little respect for justice, and every day they do many things deserving of punishment and none is punished; they have very little respect for their fathers and elders, who have little confidence in them."⁸⁰ In his *relación* (c. 1572), Gregorio de Acosta echoes Montalvo's alarm at the mestizos' disregard for the colonial rule of law. Charging that the mestizos robbed the land and defamed women at will, Acosta describes how they entered houses and deflowered virgins, and then returned to threaten the girls' fathers if any attempt was made to punish them.⁸¹

Montalvo's and Acosta's descriptions of the mestizos' lawlessness and disrespect for their Spanish fathers alerts us to the consequences of their economic and social marginality. They also can be seen as expressions of an underlying fear that miscegenation had produced mestizos who were more acculturated as Indians than as Spaniards. In 1556, the conquistadors had warned of the mestizos' potential to "become" Indians in their letters to the Crown. Juan de Salazar wrote that because "this land is so remote from all governments, it seems clear that with the death of their fathers, the children could be left like Indians in their customs."⁸² Domingo Martínez devoted part of his 1556 letter to expressing his concern that the mestizos would end up "in the power of the Indians."⁸³ He complained that the mestizo children of the conquistadors shirked work at every turn, so that "whatever instruction you give them, they only demonstrate goodwill, and the work arrives late or never."⁸⁴ He stressed, moreover, their indifference to their dying fathers. What concerned him most was their susceptibility to being led astray from the Christian faith. According to Martínez, they also were swayed by the Indians who claimed to be God or the Son of God, being "so incredulous amongst themselves,

that even long after some of them have been baptized and come to Mass every holiday,⁸⁵ they went to the countryside to hear the shamans speak and be re-baptized.

The mestizo children's willingness to listen to the shamans indicates that they identified with their Cario kin at the time of the *encomienda*'s imposition. Whether a line can be drawn between the mestizos' lack of respect for their Spanish fathers twenty years later and their identification with an indigenous worldview is less certain. Although second-generation mestizos in Asunción whose father were mestizos and mothers indigenous were more racially Indian than Spanish, their exemption from tribute labour distinguished them from the *originarios* to whom they were related. The persistence of gender-specific indigenous norms of agriculture—in which men hunted, fished, and cleared the fields, and women planted, tended, and harvested the crops—had exacerbated the exploitation of Cario women in the personal service of the conquistadors. The gendered as well as racial divide of the exploitation of indigenous labour meant that the mestizos' identification with an indigenous worldview was inseparable from the vicissitudes of their indigenous mothers and grandmothers' colonial servitude.

In this respect, most of the tasks listed as eligible for *encomienda* tribute by Irala in his 1556 ordinances had conformed to an indigenous division of labour. His fifth ordinance states: “we order that the said Indians will be and are obliged to serve the persons to whom they are entrusted in building and repairing their houses, and in stock raising, hunting, fishing, and other farming activities that may be carried on in the country.”⁸⁶ It further prohibits “building houses or clearing fields to sell beyond those they [the *encomenderos*] need to live in.”⁸⁷ While “farming” can be taken to include work traditionally undertaken by women, the ordinance's identification of the traditional male tasks that could not be converted from use to exchange value suggests that these were more significant for *encomienda* tribute than tending crops. This made the personal service of the Cario women who resided in the conquistadors' households as essential to Asunción's agricultural economy as *encomienda* tribute.

References in the contemporary sources to women spinning cotton, making textiles, and working in primitive sugar mills indicate that personal service also was essential for producing

what few goods were bartered in Asunción. The Franciscan priest González describes this in his 1556 letter:

There are some [conquistadors] who make the poor Indians work all day in their fields, overseeing them to ensure they plant enough so that [the crops] can be sold. And this would be a good thing if the poor Indians were able to eat and at night to rest, but it is the opposite. They do not eat, but are brought from the fields and at night forced to sew clothes for their *señor* (master), and for him to sell. And not content with the continuous labour and fatigue of the [Indians], both in the fields and in the houses making carpets and other things to sell, at present their masters have given them yet another task, that of grinding sugar cane to make honey, which is not only drunk and eaten, but also sold.⁸⁸

Domingo Martínez presents a different perspective of personal service in his 1556 letter. Whereas other conquistadors protested as the foot soldiers and founders of Asunción about their lack of *encomienda* Indians, Martínez explains that he had received an *encomienda* for his loyal service to the Crown as an entrepreneurial producer of trade goods. He also appears to have been one of the *señores* with whom Irala had a vested interest, for he was amply rewarded with an allocation of sixty Indians. In summarizing his service to the Crown, Martínez explains that first he made fishhooks, then combs for men's beards, and scissors and needles for sewing clothes. He also made daggers and established the first mill to grind sugar cane.⁸⁹ While Martínez is optimistic about his own industriousness, he is despairing of the Indians' willingness to work. He reveals that coercion was used to obtain labour from the Cario men, observing that his daggers "have been and are very necessary, because many [Spaniards] have found themselves working with Indians, and being without any daggers, the Indians do what they want and affront them."⁹⁰ Of even greater concern to Martínez was the passive resistance of the Cario women "who have been among us for eighteen years."⁹¹ He laments that

one cannot trust them, even with an ounce of cotton to spin, for they burn it, or hide it, or give it away. Their desire is nothing less than to finish with the Christians, and destroy all there is, with no better reason than if you ask them for it [the cotton] they reply *erua*, which is to say, they do not know [where it is], even though they do. After they say no, even flogging them is of no use. In this manner, if they have to go

to weed fields, it is necessary to go with them, and if something is to be kept safe, it must be under lock and key.⁹²

In the decades following the imposition of the *encomienda*, further references to the personal service of Cario women—either in the vein of González’s denunciation of their “continuous labour and fatigue” or of Martínez’s description of subtle workplace sabotage—are absent from the scant documentation of the period. However, later sources enable us to deduce that personal service remained integral to Asunción’s economy. They also suggest that the exploitation of indigenous women had become an enduring reality. Half a century later, Hernandarias (Hernando Arias de Saavedra), the first mestizo governor of Paraguay, condemned in similar terms as González the abuse of personal service. In a series of *ordenanzas* issued on November 29, 1603, he states:

This provinces is being emptied of Indians because of how badly they are treated by the *encomenderos*. ... They are treated worse than slaves, and are bought and sold by the *encomenderos* and others. Some die from flogging and the women die from having such heavy work. Others and their children [die] from serving in the flour mills and sleeping in the fields, where they give birth and their children are raised and bitten by poisonous vermin. Many hang themselves and others die from ceasing to eat and others by taking venomous herbs. There are mothers who kill their children, saying that they do so in order to liberate them from the work that they will have to endure. In this way, the Indians have come to have a great hatred for Christians and think of the Spanish as deceivers and do not believe the things they teach them.⁹³

The importance of personal service to Asunción’s economy was reinforced by the large number of Cario women residing in the city, the scarcity of male Carios, and the exemption of mestizos from labour tribute. When the *encomienda* was instituted in 1556, the contemporary sources do not provide specific information that enable us to deduce how many Cario women were living in the conquistadors’ households. However, even if widely exaggerated, González’s claim that of the 50,000 women taken to Asunción by force after Irala became governor, 15,000 were still alive in 1556, indicates that their numbers were substantial. In

addition, there were the Cario women who cohabited with the conquistadors in conjugal relations established during the initial years of *amistad y alianza*. Irala's will, for example, listed seven different *criadas* (servants) as the mothers of his children.⁹⁴ By way of comparison, Ruy Díaz Melgarejo, who was a vehement enemy of Irala, alleges in a letter written to the Emperor Don Carlos V on July 4, 1556, that "there are missing more than 50,000 male Indians, for the most part still alive although dying of hunger from having their women or children taken from them, who have abandoned their houses and lands and retreated to the woods."⁹⁵ While Melgarejo's hatred of Irala makes his assertion as prone to exaggeration as González's, Juan de Salazar's consternation at the lack of *encomienda* Indians lends some credence to Melgarejo's alarming figures. Melgarejo's claim that most of the 50,000 Indians who were "missing" were still alive and had fled to the woods also suggests that there were as many Cario warriors who had evaded the *encomienda* as had been brought under its control.

Later documents directly address the number of women living in Asunción. In 1579, the royal official Hernando de Montalvo reports that there were more than 2400 women residing in the city.⁹⁶ In 1597, *ordenanzas* issued by the governor of Paraguay, Juan Ramírez de Velasco, state that there were 200 men and 2000 women in Asunción.⁹⁷ The large number of women who were residing in Asunción by the end of the 1500s raises the question of how personal service was secured once the *encomienda* had been instituted. The second of Irala's 1556 ordinances forbidding the "offering" or trading of women from the *tekó-ás* under *encomienda* control restricted the traditional means of accumulating women through kinship. The Crown also had explicitly prohibited *rancheadas* and further excursions to the sierra. Thus, while Irala, his sons-in-law, and the royal officials, who had taken "all of the land and most of the Indians," were able to retain their "wealth" in women accumulated before 1556, they and the other conquistadors no longer had recourse to their previous means of acquiring more women to serve them.

The most obvious answer to the question of how women were secured for personal service lies in the conquistadors' flagrant disregard of the law. By the 1570s, there are references in contemporary accounts to the trading of Cario women and their children that echo the scandalized denunciations of the pre-*encomienda* period. In an anonymous *relación* attributed to the Franciscan Juan de Rivadeneyra, who arrived in Asunción in 1580, the author states that

the Indians came to complain to him that the Spanish “take away their women and children, and trade them for horses and other things, and marry them; and the children belong to the Spanish as if they are slaves.”⁹⁸ If the conquistadors did not recognize the paternity of their mestiza daughters, they too were servants or de facto slaves. And the conquistadors’ repression of indigenous rebellions would have enabled them to continue the *rancheadas* under the guise of enforcing the *mita encomienda* or extending its reach. The royal official Pedro de Dorantes’ 1573 letter to the Council of the Indies, and a report written by the Franciscan priest González after he returned to Spain in the early 1570s, document more novel strategies for obtaining personal service and indigenous labour. Ranging from the expropriation of *encomiendas* to mandating Cario warriors to raid the sierra for captives, these strategies provide glimpses of how new hierarchies, old kinship ties, *mestizaje*, and the persistence of indigenous norms shaped the transcultural dynamics of the post-*encomienda* period.

Dorantes’ letter contains several specific accusations against Felipe de Cáceres, the acting governor of Asunción from 1567 to 1572, of illegally seizing *encomiendas* from the heirs of other conquistadors. According to Dorantes, when the Spaniard Cristobal de Pinto died, he left his *encomienda* to his mestiza daughter. However, Cáceres refused to recognize her as Pinto’s child, took everything she had, and gave it to his friends. In a separate incident denounced by Dorantes, Cáceres ignored the last testament of Pedro de Espiñar, who had in his service fifty persons, both young and old, and possessed horses, cows, houses, and fields. Espiñar stipulated in his will that his Indians were to be liberated from their *encomienda* tribute and could remain on his lands, and to this purpose were to be given axes to maintain the fields. Instead of honouring Espiñar’s will, Cáceres seized control of his *encomienda*, and gave it to one of his daughters who was about to be married. Presumably, she was betrothed to a Spaniard and the *encomienda* served as a dowry, although Dorantes is silent on such details.⁹⁹

Dorantes’ accusations were intended to cast aspersions on Cáceres’ governance of Asunción, which had resulted in a mutiny by the conquistadors. Nevertheless, the accusations were plausible enough in a context where being the mestiza daughter of a powerful Spaniard held greater sway than being Spanish. Cristobal Pinto’s status as a conquistador without rank made his *encomienda* vulnerable to expropriation and emboldened Cáceres to deny the paternity of his children. In turn, without the recognition of her familial relation to a conquistador and with

the loss of her *encomienda*, Pinto's mestiza daughter went from being almost Spanish to becoming Indian. Conversely, the mestiza daughter of Cáceres benefited from her father's position as governor. By having an *encomienda* bestowed upon her, she became part of a settler elite. In each case, the *encomiendas* were willed or given to mestiza daughters, demonstrating how the indigenous norm of women serving as social liaisons for kinship alliances had been incorporated into a colonial framework of patrimony.

Because *encomiendas*, rather than the kinship networks of the *tekó-ás*, were the source of wealth that facilitated social mobility, Espiñar's wish to free his Indians from their tribute obligations and bequeath his lands to them is surprising. It gives rise to the suspicion that Dorantes may have fabricated or misinterpreted the intent of Espiñar's will, although to have done so would have been of little benefit to his agenda to demonstrate Cáceres's nefarious dealings. If we accept Dorantes' account as historical fact, Espiñar's decision to leave his *encomienda* to his Indians could be interpreted as the benevolent gesture of a conquistador who recognized the injustice of tribute labour. Equally, Espiñar can be seen as identifying with an indigenous worldview after living so many years among the Carios, in that his decision may have stemmed from his unwillingness to privilege his mestizo children over the collective ethos of an extended kinship network. Alternatively, he may have feared that to do so would leave his children vulnerable to the same fate as Pinto's daughter. There also is the remote possibility that he had no mestizo children, although the likelihood of this being the case when cohabitation with indigenous women was an accepted norm, and had been essential to securing personal service before 1556, strains the limits of credulity. Even if Dorantes' version of Pinto's will was a fabrication, it still serves to draw attention to the tensions inherent in the *encomienda originaria* as a merger of indigenous norms and a colonial institution that was reshaping hierarchies among the Spaniards, the Carios, and their mestizo children.

Dorantes' letter contains a further account of a conflict over *encomienda* Indians that highlights these tensions from a different vantage point. Dorantes relates that upon travelling to Peru, he left a friend in charge of his *encomienda* and all of his Indians rebelled. When the Asunción authorities sent a captain, Pedro Corral, to subdue (*reducir*) them, he found their village deserted. Corral then sent the Indians he had brought with him from Asunción to talk to the cacique of Dorantes' rebellious Indians. Corral's Indians were charged with persuading the

cacique to return with his people to their houses and fields with assurances that no punishment would be exacted. The next day smoke in the deserted village signaled that Dorantes' rebellious Indians had returned, and Corral sent a *lengua*, Juan Martín, together with certain *mancebos* (mestizos), Indians, and slaves to meet them. While most of Dorantes' Indians, who numbered twenty or twenty-five, had arrived at the village with their women and children, five or six more and their families, having taken a wrong turn and slowed by carrying baskets, were still en-route. Isolated from the larger group, they were attacked by Indians from another village. These Indians, who had not rebelled and served the pilot Paulo Silles, killed one of the tribute Indians belonging to Dorantes and seized all the women and children. Silles then took five of the women captives to Asunción to trade for fifty yards of cotton cloth and kept the rest in his house.¹⁰⁰

Dorantes' account of his rebellious Indians alerts us to the blurring of boundaries between kinship and servitude, and raiding and slaving that was occurring in Asunción. As Dorantes was one of the original conquistadors, most likely he had kinship ties to his Indians. Hence, once a stranger took control of their village, they rebelled, signalling that their willingness to provide service was contingent on these kinship ties. Because the Indians who accompanied Corral from Asunción were able to mediate the conflict, they may have been related through kinship networks to the rebellious cacique. In turn, Corral's choice to subdue Dorantes's rebellious Indians through persuasion rather than repression reveals that the Spanish did not view the flight of *originario* Indians as necessarily oppositional. Alternatively, it indicates that they could not risk deploying aggressive measures and sparking a larger rebellion of the Carios in the vicinity of Asunción. The impetus for the attack by Silles' Indians is ambiguous. It is not clear from Dorantes' account whether Silles had ordered them to raid Dorantes' *encomienda* or whether his Indians had taken the initiative on their own accord. In either case, their raid reveals that the *encomienda* had not succeeded in transforming the Carios from warriors to docile labourers, nor had it diminished the animosity between rival *tekó-ás*. The impunity with which Silles was able to sell the women captives as slaves in Asunción and keep the rest in his house also indicates that such a raid was far from anomalous.

González's report from the early 1570s adds another dimension to how the indigenous norms of raiding and captive-taking became manifest in the post-*encomienda* era. He relates that conquistadors in Asunción were sending non-baptized Carios

to go and make war against other nations that live in the sierra of Tucumán and Peru, in which they kill males above the age of thirteen and old women as well. All the rest they take to the Spanish, selling them for clothes and some swords or other things.¹⁰¹

It is possible that these Carios were *originarios* who were being used as proxy raiders, as had Silles to seize Dorantes's Indians. However, González's observation that non-baptized Carios refused permission for baptized Carios travel through their territories indicates that they resided in *guáras* they controlled rather than in *tekó-ás* subject to the *encomienda*. While the Cario raiders may have been *mitayo* Indians whose service constituted obtaining captives, by selling these captives they were participating in a barter economy rather than providing tribute. Most probably, the raiders were Carios who had evaded or resisted the *encomienda* but who had participated in Irala's *entradas* and Ñuflo de Chaves's expedition to Peru in 1558. In respect to the latter, while Dorantes reports that he authorized Chaves to take twenty-four Indians from Asunción for his expedition, Chaves's promises of lands and tribute Indians to the conquistadors who went with him would suggest that most of these men had not been granted *encomiendas* and had no Carios to take with them.¹⁰² This meant that some of the Carios who accompanied Chaves's expedition in 260 canoes (which would place their number at over 2000) must have been non-*encomienda* Indians.

The Carios' undertaking of independent raids to the sierra reveals that while the *encomienda*'s ordinances had restricted the movement of tribute Indians, Chaves's 1558 expedition had the effect of expanding the Carios' territorial mobility that had begun with the arrival of the Spanish in 1537. When Cabeza de Vaca undertook his journey to Puerto de los Reyes in 1543, there is no evidence that the Carios had ever ventured across the Gran Chaco or had made contact with the Itatines who were organizing war parties to the sierra. Ten years later, the Carios were raiding the sierra through their collaboration in the *entradas* and had deserted Irala during his 1553 expedition to go in search of the "Guaraníes of the mountains," the Chiriguanaes of the Bolivian foothills whom Cabeza de Vaca had failed to locate. While we do

not know whether the Carios succeeded in finding the Chiriguanaes in 1553, we do know from Chaves's *relación* of his journey across the Gran Chaco in 1558 that his expedition had several encounters with "friendly Chiriguanaes" as he crossed the Pantanal. According to Chaves, some of these Chiriguanaes joined the expedition "because they wanted to enter that land [and] because many of their ancestors had been killed there."¹⁰³ The Carios had their own reasons for accompanying Chaves. One was the opportunity his expedition provided for raiding and captive-taking, although Chaves does not report that either occurred. Another is suggested by Julien's study of colonial perceptions of the Chiriguaná. She contends that Chaves's "friendly Chiriguanaes" went with him to Peru because they "hoped to trade for their relatives who were prisoners there."¹⁰⁴ Perhaps, then, the Carios also were hoping to find their relatives who had gone in search of the Chiriguanaes during Irala's *mala entrada*.

That the Carios from Chaves's expedition also deserted once they reached the eastern frontier of Peru raises the question whether all of them returned to Asunción, as Chaves states in his *relación*, or whether some integrated into the autonomous groups of Chiriguanaes who were settled in the region. Julien notes that these peoples were raiding the lowlands to supply captive labour for the silver mines, which would have provided the Carios with an incentive for joining them.¹⁰⁵ She also states that the Carios who did not desert the expedition remained with the conquistadors in Nueva Asunción, which was attacked by Chiriguanaes in 1565 and its inhabitants exterminated.¹⁰⁶ Whether this attack was motivated by animosity towards the Carios, the Spanish, or both, is unknowable. Similarly, whether the Carios had engaged in raiding to capture slaves during the five years that the settlement survived or had served the Spaniards as pliant labourers is unascertainable. What is more certain is that Chaves's contact with the "friendly Chiriguanaes" of the Pantanal contributed to the Carios' facility to travel between Paraguay and Peru and become intermediaries in the trafficking in slaves by the time González wrote his report in the early 1570s.

The outbreak of a major rebellion in 1560 led by Carios who had deserted Chaves's expedition and returned to Asunción reveals that their journey to the sierra had yielded more than the potential to become independent raiders. While we have no access to eyewitness accounts of this rebellion that are comparable to Schmidl's chronicling of the Carios' major insurrection fifteen years earlier, there are enough references in the contemporary accounts to deduce that it

was similar in scale and threat. Francisco Ortiz de Vergara, who had been elected governor by the conquistadors in 1558, briefly describes the rebellion in his summary of his services to the Crown. He attributes its cause to Chaves's expedition, reporting that

the Indians of the land rebelled, not because of being badly treated [by the conquistadors in Asunción] but because the Indians who returned from Chaves's expedition were angered by his bad treatment of them. These Indians rose up and agitated all the Indians within a hundred leagues, [causing] those who were in peace and in our service to rebel.¹⁰⁷

Ortiz de Vergara states that his first course of action in response to the rebellion was to leave Asunción “in the middle of the night with fifty Spaniards to free a priest called Martín González and two Spaniards who were among the Indians.”¹⁰⁸ He then pursued these Indians, killing and punishing many of them, until he had pacified twenty leagues of the land. While Ortiz de Vergara wanted to continue his repression of the rebellion, the bishop, the royal officials, and the *lenguas* strongly protested, “in writing and in words, against punishing the Indians, for this risked losing the land.”¹⁰⁹ Ortiz de Vergara clearly did not heed their warning, for he states that he “went personally to punish the Indians six or seven times.”¹¹⁰ He also records an instance of vigilante violence, stating that against the wishes of many Spaniards, a certain Peño de Perinelo organized a war party of Indians, who attacked a fortified village of the Carios and destroyed their outlying houses and fields.¹¹¹

By reading between the lines of Ortiz de Vergara's brief account of the rebellion, a panorama emerges of a local context in which the conquistadors' control over their *encomienda* lands and Indians was tenuous at best. While the presence of the Franciscan priest González among the Indians suggests that a rudimentary effort to educate the Indians in the Christian faith was under way, the necessity to rescue them either points to the limits of this evangelization or Ortiz de Vergara's concern that they may have sided with the rebellious Indians. Ortiz de Vergara's first course of action, which was to attack the Indians in the middle of the night, is similar to the indigenous norm of ambushing their enemies in pre-dawn raids, which raises the question whether Cario warriors or mestizos had assisted him. The royal officials' and *lenguas*' protestations against repressing the rebellion can be taken as a sign of the threat that the *mitayo* Carios posed to Asunción; equally, it may have been an expression of their concern that to do

so would destroy the residual kinship loyalties on which Asunción was dependent for the cooperation of the *originarios*. Peño's leading of an Indian war party makes him more of a cacique than a *caudillo*; in turn, his Indians' attack on a fortified village suggests that the rebellion included a dimension of internecine indigenous warfare between the Asunción Carios and other *guáras*. While Ortiz de Vergara's casting blame upon Chaves for the rebellion and denying that it had anything to do with the abuse of *encomienda* labour appears self-justifying, it also cautions us against reducing rebellion to a defensive reaction against colonial servitude.

Guzmán's lengthy description of the rebellion in his later chronicle attributes its cause to a different motive than Chaves's bad treatment of the Carios. Directly linking the uprising to the Carios' acquisition of indigenous weaponry from peoples living near the Peruvian frontier. Guzmán relates that Don Pedro and Nazario, who were the baptized sons of a cacique named Curupiratí from Paraná, had accompanied Chaves's expedition and brought back a large quantity of poisoned arrows used by the Indians there. With the promise of a new weapon to defeat the Spanish, Pedro and Nazario were able to convince the Carios to advance on Asunción and attack the villages in its vicinity.¹¹¹ While the contemporary accounts do not mention the Carios' possession of these poisoned arrows, there are numerous descriptions of how lances with poisoned tips were used against Chaves's expedition as they neared the Guapay River, which lends credence to Guzmán's account.¹¹²

According to Guzmán, the rebellion plunged Asunción and its environs into turmoil for almost five months. The Carios were finally defeated in an open battle that pitched eight thousand rebellious warriors against Spanish forces composed of cavalry, infantry, and Guaycurú and Cario allies.¹¹³ In his eighteenth-century history, Lozano adds to Guzmán's tale of poisoned arrows being used to foment insurrection by reporting that the unrest continued through sporadic ambushes after the Carios' defeat in open battle.¹¹⁴ Lozano's claim that the Carios were not pacified in 1560 is corroborated by a letter written by Hernandarias, who reports in 1607 that "there are six thousand Indians in the area above the city, rebellious and obstinate, as I have advised your Majesty, who have sustained their wars for more than forty years, robbing and killing on the roads."¹¹⁵

Guzmán's description of Chaves's second journey from Asunción to Santa Cruz de la Sierra in 1564 reveals that the Carios were not the only Guaraní nation to take advantage of Chaves's journeys to Peru. Guzmán relates that Chaves left Asunción for Santa Cruz with three hundred men and two thousand Carios, who "provided service in their houses, as well by countless more Indians from their *encomiendas*."¹¹⁶ When Chaves reached the territory of the Itatines, he persuaded more than three thousand of their warriors to join him with "fine words and promises."¹¹⁷ Although most of the Itatines perished on the journey across the Gran Chaco from hunger and thirst, those who survived settled thirty leagues from Santa Cruz de la Sierra, refusing to let pass any Spaniards coming from Asunción.¹¹⁸ In a reverse twist of fate, Guzmán reports that Chaves was ambushed and killed by Itatín caciques, whom he assumed were his allies, when he entered their territories east of the Paraguay River four years later in 1568. To avenge his death, a captain, Diego de Mendoza, launched a punitive raid. Slaughtering the Itatines without mercy, he quartered the caciques he had captured and impaled them on stakes along the roads.¹¹⁹

While the imposition of the *encomienda* marks an historical discontinuity in the transcultural dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations in Asunción, Chaves's second journey to Santa Cruz de la Sierra and his death at the hands of the Itatines reveals significant continuities in the dynamics of joint Spanish-Guaraní expeditions to the sierra since the castaway García made his trek across the Gran Chaco and was killed by the Itatines forty years earlier. Following the first journeys by Solís's castaways and García to the sierra in the 1520s, the conquistadors' kinship alliances with the Carios of Asunción had enabled them to undertake subsequent expeditions to the sierra. While the conquistadors had gunpowder and indigenous wives, the Carios' allegiance still was contingent on the opportunities for raiding and captive-taking presented by the *entradas*, and on their perception of the conquistadors' captains such as Irala as competent war chiefs. After Irala's death, Chaves became heir to this contingency. During his 1558 expedition, 1500 of his Cario warriors deserted him when they encountered fierce resistance from indigenous peoples near the Guapay River.

Chaves's second journey across the Gran Chaco in 1564 with the Itatín warriors also demonstrated the contingency of indigenous alliances. While the testimonies presented on behalf of Hernando de Salazar in 1562 emphasized that the Itatines were loyal vassals of the

king, after their warriors who accompanied Chaves perished in 1564 they became adversaries of the Spanish. With the death of Chaves at the hands of the Itatín caciques and Diego de Mendoza's retaliatory raid, the Itatínes were in permanent rebellion and no settlements were established in their territories until the Jesuits founded transitory missions in the 1620s. As for the Itatines' willingness to follow Chaves in the first place, one can only speculate that these bellicose warriors, who had been raiding the sierra before the arrival of Europeans in their territories, were less persuaded by Chaves's "fine words and promises" than by the opportunity his guns afforded to obtain captives to trade. The fate of the survivors who settled near Santa Cruz de la Sierra is more certain. They and their descendents became Chiriguanaes, the Guaraní-speakers who inhabited the eastern fringes of the Viceroyalty of Peru —described by a judge from La Plata in 1561 as a "a cruel and warlike people, who eat human flesh and fight with neighbouring peoples who live on the plains."¹²⁰

Guzmán's chronicling of Chaves's journeys to Peru provides a valuable glimpse of the transcultural dynamics of indigenous migrations across the Gran Chaco after 1556. It also serves to unsettle the view of the establishment of the *encomienda* as the cornerstone of Paraguay's development as a settler society. The exodus from Asunción in 1564 by the Carios who provided personal service to the conquistadors, which would have included women and children, "as well by countless more Indians from their *encomiendas*" must have caused considerable damage to the agricultural base of Asunción's economy. That the Spanish took with them their *encomienda* Indians reveals that they were still in need of warrior allies to cross the Gran Chaco, which in 1564 superseded the Carios' importance as labourers. The 1560 uprising may also have played a role in this exodus, motivating the conquistadors to leave Asunción in search of a less rebellious source of *encomienda* tribute. The conquistadors who chose to stay were faced with the unrest of the *mitayos* in more distant *guáras*. A letter written by Martín de Orué in 1573 reports that thirty leagues from Asunción the Indians were in rebellion.¹²¹ Guzmán relates in his later chronicle that by 1569 Carios within twenty-six leagues of Asunción were preventing the Spanish from entering their *guáras* and ambushing them.¹²² The difficulty of enforcing the *mita encomienda* tribute was underscored by Orué's assessment of the state of Paraguay in his 1573 letter. He describes how the conditions for settlement were ideal except for the lack of Indian labour, for "in every part there are metals (iron), grazing lands for cows, land for crops, woods for charcoal, and abundant and good

water, only the natives (naturales) of this land are people without God and master more inclined to go to war and to eat human flesh than to labour and care for cows.”¹²³

By the late 1560s, the mestizos' lack of integration into an agricultural economy based on the *encomienda* labour of *originarios* and the personal service of Cario women was a source of open conflict in Asunción. A report of a mestizo uprising in an anonymous *relación* (c. 1581) attributed to the Franciscan Juan de Rivadeneyra reveals how divided their loyalties had become. He explains that

as they (mestizos) did not have *repartimientos* for they were not given any, they planned to rebel and kill the Spaniards and their fathers as they had wanted to do twelve years before, more or less. Because they were not given Indians, they congregated one night to kill the [Spanish] children and their fathers while they were sleeping and everyone else. And two Indians who understood they were serving God told me, and I was able to prevent it. If they had risen up there would have been great damage in all the neighbouring provinces because they [the Indians] already knew how [to fight] and the Chiriguanaes of the sierra are their uncles.¹²⁴

Whether or not such a conspiracy existed, Rivadeneyra's report reveals that the mestizos' economic marginalization and resentment towards the Spanish was compounded by their lack of participation in the conquistadors' expeditions after 1556, despite their reputed dexterity with firearms and being “friends of war.” Mestizos do not appear to have accompanied Chaves on either of his expeditions in large numbers. Neither Guzmán's chronicle nor Chaves's *relación* acknowledges their presence as soldiers, although Chaves does mention their role as interpreters. While a few mestizos may have accompanied Rui Díaz Melgarejo in 1557 to Guairá, further settlement of the region became difficult. By 1561, the Guaraní were in open revolt and the sole settlement of Ciudad Real was never more than a small outpost of renegade conquistadors who had left Asunción before 1556.¹²⁵ Guzmán's description of an ambush of the Guairá caciques in 1569 reveals that Nicolás Colman, the soldier-deserter from Asunción who had fought against the Spanish with his army of Guairá warriors in 1556, was still functioning in the region as a caudillo turned cacique some fifteen years later.¹²⁶

The mestizos' frustration at not being given *encomiendas* or being taken to found new settlements reveals that by 1580 Asunción was a highly volatile and deeply divided nucleus of *mestizaje*. The non-*avá* captives whom the Cario raiders brought to Asunción to barter added a dimension of interethnic mixing to these fraught dynamics of *mestizaje*. González notes in his report from the early 1570s that there were many Guaycurú children in the service of the Spanish.¹²⁷ Within a generation, these Guaycurúes would have been absorbed into the larger Cario population. The scarcity of *encomienda* Indians that had provoked the mestizos to rebellion also made slavery integral to Asunción's economy. Non-*avá* captives became an important source for obtaining women for personal service, and both they and Cario Indians were sold as slaves to Portuguese traders.¹²⁸ By the early 1600s, and probably much earlier, the indigenous nations of the Gran Chaco had also begun selling captives in Asunción. Ordinances issued in 1611 by Francisco de Alfaro, who had been sent as an inspector (*visitador*) from La Plata, noted that in Asunción "there are some Indians who have been sold [to the Spanish] by the Guaycurúes, and others by Indians who have been or are at war."¹²⁹ Alfaro also identifies as slaves "Indians who have been brought to Asunción by the *malocas* (Portuguese mestizo slavers), or traded and bought among the Spaniards."¹³⁰

The conflicts between mestizos and the Spanish; the intermixing of Carios, Spanish, mestizos, and non-*avá* captives; and the exploitation of personal service and slaves in Asunción belie a linear trajectory of Asunción's evolution from a temporary settlement to a settler city sustained by *encomienda* labour. Guaraní rebellions in Guairá and Itatín, the major Cario rebellion of 1560 that reached the outskirts of Asunción, and the continual unrest in the *tekó-ás* and *guáras* that were nominally subject to the *encomienda mita* belie the waning power of the *mburuvichás* and the weakening of their *avá* identity as warriors. What an analysis of the transcultural dynamics of the period from 1556 to 1580 reveals instead is a chaotic emergence of new hierarchies and conflicts stemming from the *encomienda*'s disruption of kinship relations in 1556 and the increasing mestizo population.

By 1580, the 10,000 mestizo children and grandchildren of the conquistadors and the Carios who resided in Asunción and its environs had become the principal protagonists of *mestizaje*. Formed by the incorporation of a few mestizas into a settler elite and the economic and social marginalization of most mestizos, this *mestizaje* reinforced class distinctions at the same time

as it blurred racial boundaries between being Indian and being Spanish. It reinforced the exploitation of Cario women at the same time as it blurred the cultural boundaries between the warrior norms of the Carios and the settler norms of Spanish colonialism. It also isolated Asunción from the larger region of Paraguay. The Carios who once had been willing to make kinship alliances with the Spanish and incorporate them into their *tekó-ás* had responded to the *mestizaje* born from *amistad y alianza* by rebelling, refusing to permit Spaniards and baptized Carios to enter their *guáras*, killing Cario Christians, and ambushing mestizos and Spaniards. When the mestizos left Asunción after 1580 to obtain the *encomienda* Indians their Spanish fathers had denied them, they founded the cities of Corrientes and Buenos Aires on the Paraná River and in the estuary of the Río de la Plata rather than in the *guáras* along the Paraguay River or east of Asunción in Paraná and Guairá.

The later accounts by the poet Barco de Centenera and the Jesuit Pedro Lozano of the Oberá Rebellion in 1579 provide a more conclusive ending to my evaluation of the transcultural dynamics from 1556 to 1580. Their descriptions of Oberá's becoming God link the spiritual disturbances of 1556 to a climactic uprising thirty years later. Oberá's simultaneous assimilation and inversion of the Christian doctrine also anticipates the spiritual battleground of the Jesuit's evangelization project. Neatly lodged chronologically between the imposition of the *encomienda* in 1556 and the arrival of the Jesuits in the early 1600s, and coinciding with the establishment of the first Franciscan reduction in Paraguay of Altos near Asunción in 1580, the Oberá Rebellion offers a counterpoint to the messiness of *mestizaje* and the extensiveness of indigenous unrest in Paraguay.¹³¹ It signals the emergence of a new identity formation that pivoted on the Carios' shamanistic rituals and would enable the Jesuits to be perceived of as shamans with crosses and words. At once legendary and empirically dubious, the Oberá rebellion does not serve the materialist historian well. What it does provide is a speculative touchstone to consider how a spiritual *mestizaje* emerged from a mimetic mirroring of sacred and material realms. As this speculative touchstone, the Oberá Rebellion is the focus of the conclusion to this study of the transcultural dynamics of the Río de la Plata.

Endnotes.

1. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 202. Gandía dates Irala's year of birth as 1512, which made him forty-four years old when he died, *Historia de la conquista*, 14-15. Roulet dates Irala's year of birth as 1509, which would have made him forty-seven, *La resistencia de los guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista española*, 275. Rubio states that he was sixty years old in 1556, although he provides no evidence to support this claim, *Exploración y Conquista del Río de la Plata*, 181.
2. Testamento de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 13, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 560-1.
3. *Ibid.*, 553-560.
4. *Ibid.*, 549-552.
5. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 264.
6. Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 275-279.
7. *Ibid.*, 275.
8. *Ibid.*, 279.
9. Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay*, 40.
10. *Ibid.*, 41.
11. *Ibid.*, 7.
12. Roulet, *La resistencia de los guaraní del Paraguay a la conquista española (1537-1556)*, 277. "Compañeras, amantes, criadas, cargadoras, madres, agricultoras y cocineras, esclavas transformadas en mercancía humana trocada por armas o caballos, las mujeres guaraníes fueron protagonistas principales de esta historia."
13. *Ibid.* "fueron en realidad la verdadera bisagra en al relación interétnica."
14. *Ibid.*, 282-3.
15. *Ibid.*, 266. "la fundación de las primeras reducciones franciscanas-en la década de 1580-y, sobre todo, la labor misional de los jesuitas-entre 1610 y 1630-, tuvieron como fin lograr la definitiva 'pacificación' de un espacio convulsionado y de una población permanentemente en pie de guerra."
16. Gandía, *Historia de la conquista*, 298.
17. Enrique de Gandía, *Historia de Santa Cruz de la Sierra una nueva republica en sud*

américa (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos Argentinos de L. J. Rosso Doblas, 1535).

18. Memoria de la Gente quell dia de oy se tiene por ser y son bibos en las provincias de los rios de la plata, Paraguay y parana, 1556. Lafuente Machain, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 525-534. All the men are by name, including eight priests who came with the two expeditions.

19. *Ibid.*, 529, 532-534.

20. *Ibid.*, 534.

21. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 202.

22. *Ibid.*, 214. Documentation of Ortiz de Vergara's election, including the list of men who voted, is published in *Actas capitulares y documentos del Cabildo de Asunción del Paraguay, Siglo XVI*. (Asunción: Municipalidad de la Ciudad de Asunción, 2001), 59-68.

23. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 197-198. Guzmán states that Malgarejo was accompanied by one hundred men and that in Guairá, they were joined by men already in the region. These men may have included some of the soldier-deserters led by the Englishman Nicolás Colman.

24. Relación de Ñuflo de Chaves y Hernando de Salazar, Memoria y resolución de los casos y casas sucedidas en la tierra desde la governacion de Juan de Ayolas que sea en Gloria, 1559. BG: 288-293. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 199-201; Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 292-3. An English translation of the *relación* is found in Parry and Keith, *The Iberian World*, vol. 5, 451-455. Both Chaves and Guzmán state that the expedition left Asunción in 1557. However, John Parry and Robert G. Keith concur with Rubio that the date was February 1558. As Chaves did not found Nueva Asunción until August 1559, the later departure would appear to be more accurate, providing Chaves with a year and a half to complete the journey.

25. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 209-212; Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 294-297. Santa Cruz de la Sierra was re-founded in its present location in 1605. Nueva Asunción was destroyed by an indigenous attack in 1565.

26. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 227-230; Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 304-309.

27. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 234-235; Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 311-314.

28. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 251-256; Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 315-326.

29. Rubio, *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 325.

30. *Ibid.*, 312.

31. Ibid., 345-363.

32. Ibid., 375-379, 407-412.

33. Ibid., 397-400.

34. Hernando Arias de Saavedra, who is known as Hernandarias, is viewed in the historiography of the Río de la Plata as a great defender of the Indians. Rubio provides a good overview of his governance in *Exploración y conquista del Río de la Plata*, 529-577. Also see Walter Rela, *Hernandarias* (Montevideo: El Galeón, 2001).

35. Información sobre los servicios de Pedro Dorantes, La Plata, January 31, 1566. COR: 164. “*el tiempo que francisco de vergara a governado en la dicha governacion se revelaron ciertos yndios de cerca de la ciudad y de la provincia del accay y de otras partes el qual fue a los castigar y reducir quarto vezes.*”

36. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 216-223.

37. Martín Barco de Centenera, *Argentina, conquista del Río de la Plata con otros acontecimientos de los Reynos del Perú, Tucumán, y Estado del Brasil* [1602] (Buenos Aires: Instituto Literatura de Hispanoamericano de la Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1998). Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay* III, 210-232.

38. Kleinpenning and Service discuss the specific character of the *encomienda* in Paraguay. Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870: a thematic geography of its development* I, 604-7; Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay*, 4.

39. Carta de Bartolomé García al real Consejo, Asunción, June 24, 1556. CI: 601.

40. Ibid., 600. “*me dió diez y seys yndios, ochenta leguas de donde biuimos; á otros les dió á quinze, á veinte, á treinta, sino fue á sus yernos y otros yernos de sus yernos y a los oficiales de V.A., que destos y para sí tomó toda la tierra y lo major de toda ella.*”

41. Guzmán states that divided among the conquistadors were “27,000 warriors to be found from the territory of the said city of Asunción to fifty leagues north, and many others east towards the Paraná River.” He also notes that many of the *encomiendas* had between thirty and forty Indians. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 192. “*se hallaron 27,000 indios de guerra, desde el territorio de la dicha ciudad de la Asumpcion, hácia cincuenta leguas norte, y otras tantas para el este y mediodia, hasta el rio Paraná.*”

42. Carta de clerico presbitero Antonio d'Escalera al Emperador Don Cárlos, Asunción, April 25, 1556. CI: 591. “*no dió casi á nadie de los que a tenido y tiene por enemigos.*”

43. Carta de Juan Pavón al licenciado Agreda, fiscal del Consejo de Indias, Asunción, June 15, 1556. CI: 595. “*quitando á los conquistadores viejos y dandolo á los que vinieron huyendo del Peru por la muerte del Virrey y dar batalla al estandarte Real de S.M., y entre otros, françeses y bretones.*”

44. Información hecha por Salmerón de Heredia, Seville, January 28, 1557. BG: 240-242.
45. Carta de Juan Muñoz de Carvajal al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 15, 1556. CI: 598. “*á otros que del Peru vinieron, que allá ni acá an hecho ningun serviçio á V.M.; dexando á muchos conquistadores viejos que an conquistado y descubierto la tierra de V.M.*”
46. Ibid. “*los que enbiava á robar la tierra.*”
47. Ibid. “*entra estrangeros, ansi françeses como ytalianos, como veneçianos y ginoveses y de otras naçiones fuera de de los reynos de V.M., porque le an ayudado y fauoresçido á hazer estas cosas.*”
48. Hemming, *Red Gold*, 35, 119.
49. Memoria de Salmerón de Heredia á S.M., Asunción, 1556. BG: 235.
50. Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (circa 1556). BG: 279. “*dexando Repartimyentos guardados para ciertas personas en españa estavan haziendo sus negocios.*”
51. Carta de Juan de Salazar al Consejo Real de Indias, Asunción March 20, 1556. CI 581. “*por ser el primer poblador y fundador desta çiudad y tierra y por muchos trabajos, gastos y serviçios que en ella é hecho a más de 20 años, como en ese Real Consejo se a visto por ynformaçiones, los millares de yndios que se me an encomendado son avn no dozientos.*”
52. Anonymous Relación de las cosas que han sucedido después que Cabeza de Vaca fue traído de las provincias del río de la plata, (circa 1556). BG: 279. “*e tomo para sy’e sus yernos el quarto de la tierra e dio a treynta e a quarenta yndios á los más.*”
53. Memoria de Salmerón de Heredia á S.M., Asunción, 1556. BG: 236. For a discussion of Pizarro’s distribution of *encomiendas* in Peru, which began in 1534 soon after he conquered Cuzco in 1534, see Rafael Varon Gabai and Auke Pieter Jacobs, “Peruvian Wealth and Spanish Investments: The Pizarro Family during the Sixteenth Century,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 67:4 (1987), 657-695.
54. Informe del Maestre de Campo Juan Arias de Saaverdra. Ciudad de Santa Fé, April 13, 1658, Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro y la condición social de los indios*, 543. “*desde entonces hasta agora los dichos caciques son estimados y tenidos por nobles y principales no solo de sus vasallos como antes lo heran, sino tambien de los españoles y de sus encomenderos, y le guardan sus preeminencias sin pretender que les sirvan y tributen como los demas plebeyos y vasallos.*”
55. Ibid., 532.
56. Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay*, 44.

57. Ibid., 45.

58. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Ordenanzas sobre repartimientos y encomiendas. May 14, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 512. “*si sus principales o mayores se mudare por mejoría a otra pte o asiento q ay mismo todos se muden y pasen con el.*” An English translation of the ordinances is found in Parry & Keith, *Coastlines, Rivers, and Forests* V, 308-312. My translation differs slightly.

59. Ibid., “*e ay mismo nno consienta q yndios de otros Reptimie^o y encomiendas no se pasen ni mude a do los suyos estuviere.*”

60. Don Francisco de Toledo, who was the Viceroy of Peru from 1569 to 1581, undertook an ambitious program of consolidating Indians into settlements. See Steven J. Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest*, 76.

61. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Ordenanzas sobre repartimientos y encomiendas. May 14, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 512. “*ni mso dar ni contratar las mujeres hijas ni hermanas ni parientas co nin^a psona poblador ni conquistor estante ni avitante asi por los dhs yndios ser muy pocos y entre muchos retidos como por evitar pasiones y diferencias entre unos y otros.*”

62. Relación de Diego Telléz de Escobar, 1557. BG: 270. “*de tener ni Recivir ninguno yndio en su casa que no fuese de su Repartimiento no tomar ninguna cosa que los yndios les truzesen.*”

63. Ibid. “*a casa de sus hijas y hermanas en casa de sus sobrinos.*”

64. Ibid. “*los xpianos han Recivido muy grande daño porque vienen a servir como solian y ansi estavan para levantarse y yrse los yndios de la tierra cuando fue el obisco porque les quitavan que no sirviesen ni fuesen a casa de los xpianos que solian servir*”

65. Carta de Martín González al Consejo de Indias, Asunción, July 5, 1556. CI: 632. “*Tenemos nueva que entre los indios se ha levantado uno, con un niño que dice ser Dios o hijo de Dios, y que tornan con esta invención a sus cantares pasados, a que son inclinados de su naturaleza: por los cuales cantares tenemos noticia que en tiempos pasados muchas veces se perdieron, porque entretanto que dura, ni siembran ni paran en sus casas, sino, como locos, de noche y de día, en otra cosa no entienden, sino en cantar y bailar, hasta que mueren de cansancio, sin que quede hombre ni mujer, niño ni viejo, y así perden los tristes la vida y el ánima.*”

66. Carta de Domingo Martínez al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, July 2, 1556. CI: 625. “*Sy vna vieja o yndio, el más malaventurado entre ellos, se levanta y dize que es Dios, o que no son bautizados si él no los batiza, luego la tierra se despuebla toda por yr á él á tornar á batizar, o á oyr su palabra commo Dios. Y ansi a aconteçido, pocos dias a, que fué menester hazer justiçia de algunos dellos, y luego çesa la cosa.*”

67. Carta de Martín González al Consejo de Indias, Asunción, July 5, 1556. CI: 632.

“segun las lenguas dizen y todos lo vemos, nuestro Obispo, porqué á má proporo an dicho yndios prinçipales, no a muchos dias, que fué quando echo á sus hijos de la doctrina, «pues que no queria el Obispo que sus hijos aprendiesen las cosas de Dios, aquellos aprenerian las cosas del diablo».”

68. Carta de Francisco de Andrada, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 416.

69. Relación de Martín de González (early 1570s). GGV: Vol. 83: 32.

70. Relación de Ñuflo de Chaves y Hernando de Salazar, Memoria y resolución de los casos y casas sucedidas en la tierra desde la governacion de Juan de Ayolas que sea en Gloria, 1559. BG: 289.

71. Carta de Domingo Martínez al Emperador Don Cárlos, Asunción, July 2, 1556. CI: 624.

72. *Actas capitulares y documentos del Cabildo de Asunción del Paraguay, Siglo XVI*, 55.

73. Memoria de Francisco Ortiz de Vergara, 1569. BG: 101-104.

74. Carta de Tesorero del Río de la Plata Hernando de Montalvo al Rey, Asunción, November 15, 1579. COR: 317. *“tienen gran neçesidad estas provincias de jente española por que los viejos conquistadores ay muy pocos y los hijos naçidos en la tierra son muchos por que ay de çinco partes las quatro dellos.”*

75. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 109. *“criaron en buena doctrina y policia, y S.M. ha servido de honrarlos, haciéndolos encomenderos, y ocupándolos en cargos honrosos y preeminentes en aquella provincia.”*

76. *Ibid.*, 14.

77. Susnik, *Etnohistoria de los Guaraníes*, 89.

78. Carta de Tesorero del Río de la Plata Hernando de Montalvo al Rey, Asunción, November 15, 1579. COR: 317. *“son muy quriosos en las armas grandes arcabuzeros y diestros a pie y a cavallo son para el trabajo y amigos de guerra.”*

79. Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay*, 62.

80. Carta de Tesorero del Río de la Plata Hernando de Montalvo al Rey, Asunción November 15, 1579. COR: 317. *“mestizos tienen muy poco rrespecto a la jusriçias açen cadal dia muchas cosas dinas de castigos y no se castiga ninguna tienen poco rrespecto a sus padres y amiores tienese muy poca confiança dellos.”*

81. Relación de Gregorio de Acosta, (c. 1572). DHG II: 489.

82. Carta de Juan de Salazar al Consejo Real de Indias, Asunción, March 20, 1556. CI: 581. *“esta tierra, pues está tan remota de todas las governaciones, pues aquí parece claro que, muertos los padres, los hijos quedarian como yndios en sus costumbres.”*
83. Carta de Domingo Martínez al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, July 2, 1556. CI: 625. *“en poder de los yndios.”*
84. Ibid. *“en qualquier correçion que se les haze, la voluntad solamente muestran, pero la obra viene tarde o nunca.”*
85. Ibid. *“tan credulos entrellos que, con aver tiempo que algunos dellos son bautizados y vienen aui á misa cada dia de fiesta.”*
86. Domingo Martínez de Irala, Ordenanzas sobre repartimientos y encomiendas. May 14, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 515. *“otrosy ordenamos q los dhs yndios han de ser y sean obligados a servir a las psonas a quien fueren encomendados en sus edifiçios labores y reparos labranças y crianças caças y pesqrias y otras granjerias q en la trra se pueda tener.”*
87. Ibid. *“proybimos y defendemos a las tales psonas q no hagen casas ni roças pa vender mas de aqllas q pa sus morrados abita^{on}”*
88. Carta de Martín González al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, June 25, 1556, 608. *“que ay algunos que á la prove gente haze todo el dia cabar en sus haziendas y labores, andando sobre ellas para senbrar mucho para poder vender; y esto seria bueno, si las proves comiesen y de noche descansasen, pero al contrario, que no comen, sino es alguna mala ventura que traen de las haziendas, y de noche toda la más della les pasa en hilar para vestir al señor que las tiene y tener para vender. No contentos con estos trabajos y continuas fatigas como tenian, ansi en sus haziendas como en hazer casas de tapias para vender é otros trabajos, al presente tienen otro mayor que les a sobrevenido, en moler cañas duçes para hazer miel, la qual, no tan solamente veben y comen, pero avn venden.”*
89. Carta de Domingo Martínez al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, July 2, 1556. CI: 623.
90. Ibid. *“que an sido necesarias y son, porque a avido muchos que se an visto con los yndios en trabajo, y á no tener vna daga, hazen dellos los yndios lo que quieren y afrontan.”*
91. Ibid., 626. *“pues las indias que están entre nosotros diez y ocho años.”*
92. Ibid. *“que avn van honça de algodón no se les puede fiar, sino por peso, para que lo hilen, porque lo an de quemar or esconder o dar; que su gloria no es syno echar á perder á los christianos, y destruyr cuanto ay, syn más cuenta ni razon, y que, si les preguntan por ello, y dizen dellas erua, que es como quien dize no sé, y sacarlas de alli, avnque lo sepan, despues que dizen no, avnque las desuellen, es por demas; de manera, que, si an de yr á escardar, es meneter que vayan con ellas, y si algo a de aver, que sea con llave, y an de hilar, que sea por peso al dar y al reçebir.”*

93. Ordenanzas para el buen gobierno del Río de la Plata (Hernandarias de Saavedra), November 29, 1603. Published in Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro y la condición social de los indios*, 347. “*esa prouincia se va acauando los indios naturales de ella por los malos tratamientos que sus encomenderos les hazen ... los Tratan peor que esclauos y como tales se allan muchos Vendidos y Conprados de Vnos encomenderos a otras y algunos muertos a açotes mujeres que mueren y rrebientan con las pesadas cargas y a otras y sus hijos les Hacen seruir en sus ganjerias y duermen en los campos y alli paren y crian mordidos de sauandijas Ponçoñosas y muchos se ahorcan y otros se dejan a morir sin comer y otros toman yeruas Benenosas y que ay madres que matan a sus hijos enpariendoles diciendo que hacen por librarlos de los trauajos que ellos Padezen y que an conceuido los dichos indios mui grande odio al hombre cristiano y tenien a los españoles por engañadores y no creen en cosas de los que enseñan.*”

94. Testamento de Domingo Martínez de Irala, March 13, 1556. Lafuente Machaín, *El Gobernador Domingo Martínez de Irala*, 560-1.

95. Carta de Ruy Díaz Melgarejo al Emperador Don Carlos, Asunción, July 4, 1556. CI: 630. “*faltan desde entonces más que cinquenta mill, y esos que ay, la mayor parte biben uidos, por lo menos muertos de anbre, sin mujeres ni hijas, que todas se las an saqueado; y por esta cavsa, los tristes, muchos han sus casas y la tierra desanparado y en los bosques sean abezindado.*”

96. Carta de Tesorero del Río de la Plata Hernando de Montalvo á S.M., Asunción, November 15, 1579. COR: 324.

97. Cited in Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay*, 40.

98. Carta Anonima, que parece ser del padre Rivadeneyra Comisario de la Orden de San Francisco, Asunción, (c. 1580). BG: 703. Louis Necker provides biographical information for Rivadeneyra, who was the first Franciscan to arrive in Tucumán in 1566, and who founded the first Franciscan convent in Asunción. Necker, *Indios Guaraníes y chamanes Franciscanos*, 266.

99. Carta de Pedro Dorantes al Consejo de Indias, Asunción, April 8, 1573. BG: 138.

100. *Ibid.*, 140.

101. Relación de Martín de González (early 1570s). GGV: Vol. 83: 25. “*para que vayan a hazer guerra a otras naciones que habitan hazia a las sierras del Peru y Tucuman con que aquello que tomaren de yndios varones de treze años arriba los matan todos porque se les buelvan, y a as viejas también las matan y a todas las demas las traen a los españoles y se venden a trueco de ropas y algunas espadas y otra cosas.*”

102. Pedro Dorantes, Testimonio sobre la jornada de los jarais, February 26, 1558. COR: 227.

103. Relación de Ñuflo de Chaves y Hernando de Salazar, 1559. BG: 289.

104. Julien, "Colonial perspectives on the Chiriguaná (1528-1574)," 41.
105. Ibid., 47.
106. Ibid., 44.
107. Provanzas de los méritos y servicios de Francisco Ortiz de Vergara, Asunción, 1567. BG: 473. "*quando se levantaron los yndios de la tierra no fue por malos tratamientos que les hiziesen, sino porque vinieron de la Jornada de nufrio de chaves muchos yndios naturales de la tierra que venian agraviados de malos tratamientos que les avian hecho e aquellos yndios alzaron y rrevelaron a los demas yndios que estaban en paz y servian de mas cien leguas.*"
108. Ibid., 474. "*salio a media noche con cinquenta hombres y libro un clerigo llamado martin gonzalez y dos españoles que estaban entre los yndios.*"
109. Ibid. "*hizieron muchas protestaciones al dicho governador, por escrito y por palabras que no fuese al castigo las naturales.*"
110. Ibid. "*salio al castigo de los naturales seis o seite vezes personalmente.*"
111. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 216.
112. Ynformación y ynterrogatorio sobre los servicios prestados á S.M. por el Captain Hernando de Salaçar, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, December 29-31, 1562. BG: 387, 393, 398, 406, 426.
113. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 217-220.
114. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 3, 64-65.
115. Carta de Hernandarias de Saavedra, Asunción, May 4, 1607. DHG I: 181. "*estan deSeis mil yndios Para, ariba, rebelados y obsyandos que como tenho auisado a V, M, se sustentaron mas de quarenta As^o consus guerras, robando y matando Por los caminos.*"
116. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 228.
117. Ibid.
118. Ibid.
119. Ibid., 237.
120. Cited in Julien, "Colonial perspectives on the Chiriguaná (1528-1574)," 46.
121. Carta de Martin de Orué para S.M. dandole cuenta del estado de la tierra, Asunción, April 14, 1573. BG: 160.

122. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 246.

123. Carta de Martín de Orué para S.M. dándole cuenta del estado de la tierra, Asunción, April 14, 1573. BG: 164. “*en qualquiera parte que ay metales ay pastos para ganados tierras para bastimientos leña para carbon y aguas en abundancia y buenas, solo los naturales desta tierra es gente sin señor y de behetria inclinados mas a la guerra y a comer carne human que a la labrança y crianza de los gandaos.*”

124. Carta Anonima, que parece ser del padre Rivadeneyra Comisario de la Orden de San Francisco, Asunción, (c. 1580). BG: 706. “*por no tener Repartimyento de yndios como no se los dieron se han de levantar y matar los españoles y a sus padres como lo quisieron hazer abra doce años poco mas o menos porque no les dieron yndios estava entrellos concertado una noche matar los hijos a sus padres durmyendo y los demas a los otros, y dos yndios que lo entendieron fue dios servido me lo dixeron e yo puse el rremedio, y si se levantan a de ser gran daño para las mas provincias comarcanas porque ya saven el como y los chiriguanaes de la siera son sus tios.*”

125. Guzmán, *La Argentina*, 248-250. Although Guzmán claims that the settlement was a success and more than 40,000 Indians were brought under *encomienda* control, Kleinpenning notes that the number could not have been more than 4000. He also states that the settlement had no more than fifty Spaniards, the rest being mestizos. By 1607, only thirty citizens (*vecinos*) were registered. Kleinpenning, *Paraguay 1515-1870: a Thematic Geography of its Development*, vol. 2, 181-183.

126. *Ibid.*, 245.

127. Relación de Martín de González (early 1570s). GGV: Vol. 83:28.

128. Carta de Tesorero del Río de la Plata Hernando de Montalvo al Rey, San Salvador, March 26, 1576. COR: 289.

129. Ordenanzas de Don Francisco de Alfaro, 1611. Published in Pablo Hernández, *Organización social de las doctrinas Guaraníes de la Compañía de Jesús*. (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1913), vol. 2, 663. “*hay algunos indios que se hayan venido por los Guaycurús, ó por otros indios estado ó estan en guerra.*”

130. *Ibid.* “*ó otros indios que se han traído de malocas, o trocados ó comprados entre españoles.*”

131. Louis Necker, *Indios guaraníes y chamanes franciscanos*. (Asunción: Biblioteca Paraguaya de Antropología, 1990), 63.

Chapter Nine: The Oberá Rebellion of 1579: Reflections on Transculturation.

Oberá is how he was called and called himself,
which means in Spanish brilliant gleam (*resplendor*)
in the great Paraná he lived,

baptized as a Christian,
who did not keep his promised faith
but with a bestial disregard of God,
the tyrant said he was conceived by the virgin,
and the virgin had given birth to him.

The hand is trembling to write this,
to tell the truth of the lies he told
with such crazy presumption that this little devil,
was more devilish than the devil himself.
The Indians began to follow him
from all the villages they came,
in this way he attracted many warriors
with whom he wrought great damages upon the land.

Thus leaving his own territory and home,
he went preaching throughout the region,
so that there did not remain in any *encomienda* Indians
who did not follow his voice and crude leadership.
With this heathen speech and falsehoods,
all the land rose in rebellion,
and there was no one left to serve as usual,
because of the liberty he had promised everyone.

He sent his followers to dance and to sing,
fortunately they did no other thing,
and as the poor things had ceased
to plant and harvest as usual,
and were busy only in singing,
they died of hunger from dancing
and singing praises and elegies
to the cursed Oberá and his powers.

He had a son who was called
by the name Guiraró, which means bitter stick.
And he bragged that his son was the Pope.
With this, the father, said, "I discharge
the great obligation that has befallen me,
by giving the Pope the mission."
Which was to go baptizing
and changing the names of everyone.¹

Of all the major rebellions the Carios mounted in response to Spanish rule in the Río de la Plata in the 1500s, the Oberá uprising in 1579 is the only one in which a shaman rather than a cacique figures as the central protagonist. That the only eyewitness account of the rebellion was penned by a secular priest, Martín de Barco Centenera, in his 1602 epic poem, *La Argentina*, also makes Oberá's existence a subject of dispute that mirrors the divide between settler and Jesuit in the historiography of colonial Río de la Plata.² The Argentine historian Paul Groussac, whose seminal two-volume work devoted to the founders of Buenos Aires, *Mendoza and Garay*, was published in 1950, denounces Pedro Lozano's inclusion of the rebellion in his mid-eighteenth *Historia de de la conquista del Paraguay* as a textual ruse. He accuses Lozano of validating the literary "invention" of the magician Oberá in the "twenty tedious pages" that paraphrased Centenera's rhymed account of the rebellion and its repression.³ In contrast, the Jesuit Bartomeu Meliá, who is the foremost ethnographer and linguist of the Guaraní working in Paraguay at the present time, draws upon Centenera's poem as empirical evidence of the spiritual forces that animate colonial history. In a 1980 essay on Oberá published in *El Guaraní conquistado y reducido*, Meliá argues that "all of Oberá's deeds can be considered a typical case of Guaraní prophetism in which the Guaraní religion revitalized the strength of anti-colonial rebellion."⁴

In this concluding chapter, I analyse Centenera's Canto XX on the Oberá Rebellion, from which five of its seventy-five stanzas are excerpted above, as a way to reflect upon the entanglement of indigenous and European worldviews that I have examined from Juan de Solís's first encounter with hostile Indians in the estuary of the Paraná River in 1516 to the conflict of mestizos and Spaniards in Asunción in 1580. While Centenera's rhymed account of the rebellion constitutes for Groussac an affront to the empirical rigor of the modern historian, and for Meliá an affirmation of spiritual resistance in the pre-modern era, in the context of this study it provides a synthesis of the transcultural dynamics of kinship ties and warrior norms that underlay the formation of Paraguay's *mestizaje*. As both an historical record and a literary work, Centenera's account of the Oberá Rebellion demonstrates how the spiritual and material dimensions of this *mestizaje* are inseparable. By choosing to conclude this study with a poem of uncertain historical merit, I also underscore how evidence of transcultural dynamics is embedded in published chronicles as well as archival documents, and in the Jesuits' ethnography of their *cartas anuas* and histories as well as in political petitions of the

conquistadors' *relaciones* and letters to the Crown. Similar to Guzmán's tales of Lucía Miranda and La Maldonada, Schmidl's fantasy of one-breasted women and fabulous riches, and the *Comentarios*' account of tigers and crosses, Centenera's portrayal of Oberá unsettles the cultural boundaries that define scholarship as well as worldviews. Located at the crossroads of the historiographical divide between Jesuit and settler, the Guaraní missions and Asunción's *mestizaje*, the Oberá Rebellion brings history and anthropology into dialogue. To this end, my interpretation of the rebellion draws on both of these arenas of scholarship. I also suggest how the transcultural dynamics of this rebellion are reflected in the Jesuits' accounts of their evangelization in the 1600s and descriptions of the Guaraní's shamanistic customs.

What is immediately striking in Centenera's poetic enumeration of the "lies" that Oberá told is the resemblance between the rebellion of 1579 and Domingo Martínez's and Francisco González's accounts of the religious disturbances of 1556 in which shamans became God. Centenera directly acknowledges the link between them, castigating González as an "idiot cleric," whose weak grasp of the mysteries of the Christian faith propagated through his sermons planted the seeds of Oberá's rebellion.⁵ While Centenera's casting blame on an incompetent Spanish priest implies that Oberá's "bestial disregard for God" was a case of evangelization gone bad, the doubling function that naming and kinship serves in Oberá's strategy of resistance evokes a far more complex conflation and inversion of temporal and sacred worlds.

Chronologically, Oberá takes us back in time to the very first *mal yndio* who promised to make the Carios Christians. In Oberá's call for his son to re-baptize all the Carios in the land, we find an echo and inversion of the priest Andrade's concern to baptize his multitude of neophyte converts to counter the *mal yndio*'s nefarious influence. Andrade describes how "it became opportune to give them the baptism water because of the danger of *un mal yndio* (evil Indian) whom they called *entigura*."⁶ Oberá's baptismal strategy of resistance to Spanish rule also brings us forward to the Jesuits' battles with powerful shamans in the early 1600s. The mimetic inversion of baptism and naming in the Oberá rebellion finds a resonance in Ruiz de Montoya's description of a confrontation between Nezá, a powerful shaman in Tape, and the Jesuit missionary Roque González in 1628. In *La conquista espiritual del Paraguay*, Ruiz de Montoya describes how after killing the defenceless Father, Nezá

to appear as a Priest, even if a false one, donned the priestly vestments and displayed himself to the people. He had babies brought before him and with his own barbarous rites attempted to erase the indelible character impressed on their souls in baptism. He scraped their tongues, which had tasted the salt of the Spirit of wisdom; he also scraped their breasts and backs to rub off the holy oils by which they had been prepared for the struggle.⁷

Ruiz de Montoya relates that Nezá's followers also desecrated González's painting of the Virgin. Named *La Conquistadora*, it "was a beloved possession of the holy Father Roque and the companion of his travels."⁸ Despite Nezá's determination to erase the traces of the Christian faith from his people, he failed to excise the power of the Jesuits' sacred realm. Instead, the Indians who had been baptized by Roque González attacked Nezá and his followers, forcing him to retreat alone to a remote area far from the mission towns. Oberá's uprising against the Spanish also ended in military defeat. But in contrast to Nezá, Oberá was able to conserve the shamanistic prestige he had accrued through his direct kinship relation to the Virgin. According to Lozano, he continued to instruct acolytes in his heathen ways beyond the reach of the authority of Church and King.⁹

Oberá's name of *resplendor* conjures up another source of power. Alluding to the brilliant gleam of the copper breastplates that the Guaraní wore in battle, *resplendor* invokes the prowess of a warrior ethos that parallels the spiritual power bestowed upon Oberá as the Son of God. Born of the Virgin Mary, Oberá circumvents kinship ties that once sustained the Carios' warrior alliances with the Spanish, but preserves the prestige they conferred by claiming a direct kinship lineage to God. Oberá's naming his son the Pope allowed him to claim the temporal as well as spiritual powers of the Catholic Church as his own. His son's

supreme authority as Pope mirrors Oberá's divine manifestation as the Son of God, while his instruction to his son to rename his followers challenges the authority of Spanish priests. That Oberá assigned his son the "mission" of re-baptizing his followers differentiates him from previous shamans becoming God. Oberá's is the ultimate power of naming by virtue of his kinship to the Virgin Mary. His son's second-generation kinship ties to the divine, diluted through his father's union with a Guaraní woman, makes him a kind of spiritual mestizo to whom Oberá confers the responsibility, in Lozano's words, "to erase all the names that the Christians had imposed on his nation, and to grant them names through new baptisms, according to their ancient rituals."¹⁰

While we cannot know the degree to which Oberá's strategic appropriation of a Christian worldview was historical fact or an "invention" of Centenera's own making, what we can discern is that Oberá's "ancient rituals" resonate with what we know of the Guaraní's shamanistic practices from the key Jesuit sources of the 1600s. The first record of the Guaraní's religious beliefs recorded by the Jesuit Alonso Barzana in 1594 directly addresses the influence of Oberá fifteen years after his rebellion had been defeated:

All of this nation is very inclined to religion, true or false, and if the Christians had provided a good example and various sorcerers had not deceived them, they would not only be Christians, but devoted ones. They know all about the immortality of the soul and greatly fear the *anguera*, which are souls that have left dead bodies, and they say that these go about terrifying people and causing harm. They have the greatest love and obedience for the Fathers if they see them as good examples, and the same or more for the sorcerers who deceive them with false religion, so much so that if the sorcerers order them to do so, they not only give them their lands, sons and daughters, and serve them as labourers, but do so of their free will. This propensity to obey the religious leaders has not only caused many infidel Indians to pretend that amongst them are the children of God and teachers, but also Indians raised among the Spanish who have fled to hostile tribes call themselves popes, and others Jesus Christ, and for their depravity have made monasteries of nuns *quibus abuntuntur* (in which they are abused). And even today, those that are in service of the Spanish, and those that are not, have sown thousands of idolatries and superstitions and rituals of

these teachers, whose principle doctrine is to show them how to dance, day and night, until they die of hunger, having abandoned their fields.¹¹

Ruiz de Montoya's *La conquista espiritual del Paraguay* contains a chapter on the customs of the Guaraní in which he describes their spiritual beliefs. He writes how

the superstitions of the magicians are based on the divination by bird songs, about which they have invented numerous fables, as well as on fraudulent treatments of the sick. ... The worst and most pernicious are the buriers. Their trade is killing. In the house of a person they want to kill they bury leavings from his meal—a fish, a coal, or the like. They sometimes bury toads with fish bones stuck through them: this slowly debilitates the person they want to kill and he dies without any other accident.¹²

Lozano provides a lengthy discussion of the three types of sorcery practiced by these magicians in his *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*. The first was the art of healing. The second was the ability to cast spells that Montoya described. The third was the power to control the elements and divine the future, which was exercised by the wandering shaman or *karai*.¹³ The Jesuit *relaciones* in the mid-1600s contain several references to the *Yeroquihara*, the followers of these powerful shamans. A *carta anua* from 1635 reveals how their shamanistic teachings connected agriculture and hunting to the spirit world, and a warrior ethos to jaguars. The Jesuit explains that when he

asked the Indians where they had been and why had left their houses, they told me that some *yeroquiharas*, who were wandering about the villages (*tetãmini*), deceived them by saying that this mission could be destroyed. They preached against and made fun of what we taught, saying that they were gods, and cared for the corn plants and food and they were masters of the phantasms of the forests, of the itaquçeyes (stone axes) and of the *ybitipos* (inhabitants of the hills), and that the tigers stalked according to their will and killed whomever they wished.¹⁴

In Centenera's account of the Oberá Rebellion, Oberá's leaving his territory and home to agitate the land identifies him as a wandering shaman or *karai*. The appearance of a comet

confirms his stature as a prophet and alludes to the shamanistic powers of controlling the elements and jaguars. Lozano describes how Oberá told his people that “the principal weapon that he had to defeat the Spanish enemies was a terrifying sign, a horrible comet that had appeared suddenly a few days before, which he had hidden in order to reserve it for the right time so that he could avenge his beloved Guaraníes.”¹⁵ Lozano’s claim that the comet was Oberá’s “principal weapon” also raises the possibility, however speculative, that his followers associated Oberá’s powers with the primordial jaguar or *yaguareté* of the Guaraní’s cosmology first mentioned by Ruiz de Montoya in *La conquista espiritual*. In his chapter on the customs of the Guaraní, Ruiz de Montoya states that “they held as a quite certain doctrine that there is an enormous tiger or dog in the sky, and that, in certain fits of wrath, it devours the sun and moon—what we call eclipses.”¹⁶ While Lozano—and Centenera from whose poem he is drawing on—identify a comet rather than an eclipse as the source of Oberá’s shamanistic power, they demonstrate an awareness that the Guaraní incorporated astrological events into their cosmology.

In this respect, Nimuendajú’s 1914 study of the Apapokúva-Guaraní provides a context for the “certain doctrine” Ruiz de Montoya describes. According to Nimuendajú, the primordial tiger is said to resemble a beautiful dog, and is a marvelous celestial blue. He rests beneath the hammock of Ñanderuvusú (also known as Ñamandú—our First Father), the Guaraní’s most divine entity, and awaits the order to devour mankind. The day that the tiger descends to earth, even the most valiant warrior will not be able to defend himself against its fury.¹⁷ To equate Oberá’s comet with a blue tiger passing through the heavens, and his “principal weapon” with the tiger’s capacity to devour mankind, strays dangerously close to collapsing a colonial past into an ethnographic present. At the same time, it serves to illuminate aspects of an indigenous cosmology that Oberá was drawing upon in concert with a Christian one to agitate the land. It also adds to the interpretation of the *Comentarios*’ story of tigers and crosses, suggesting that Cabeza de Vaca may have understood far more of the Guaraní’s cosmology than we can know from the written record. By painting crosses on the backs of the Cario warriors during the Guaycurú raid, he may also have been the progenitor of a spiritual *mestizaje*.

In this same vein of the intriguing, if unknowable, correspondences between the Guaraní’s belief system as a warrior nation in the 1500s and what anthropologists have documented of

the Guaraní's cosmology in the twentieth century, the brilliant gleam of the warriors' breastplates finds a resonance in the Guaraní shaman's sacred songs recorded by the Paraguayan ethnologist León Cadogan in the 1950s. Cadogan believed the songs, which were kept secret from Europeans, to be "genuinely autochthonous."¹⁸ Egon Schaden, the Brazilian anthropologist goes further than Cadogan in considering them to be "without modification from Christian influences, whether from the time of the Jesuits, or in more recent epochs."¹⁹ The first few verses of the songs are as follows:

Our Father, Ultimate-ultimate First,
 created his body
 from the primordial mists.
 The divine plants of his feet,
 the small round seat,
 in the midst of the primordial mists
 were created by him in the course of his evolution.

The reflection of his divine wisdom, (eyes)
 the divine to-hear-all, (ears)
 the divine palms of his hand with the staff-insignia, (*vara-insigna*)
 the divine palms of his hands with flowering branches, (fingers)
 were created by him in the midst of the primordial mists. (night)

From the divine and sublime crown of his head,
 the flowers of his feather headdress
 were drops of dew.
 In between the flowers of the divine adornment of feathers,
 the primordial bird, the hummingbird,
 flew, circling.

While our first Father
 created, in the course of his evolution, his divine body,
 he existed in the midst of the original winds,
 before to have known his future terrestrial abode,
 before to have known
 his future firmament, his future world,
 that originally sprouted,
 [as]the hummingbird refreshed his mouth;
 what gave sustenance to Ñamandú with the products of paradise
 was the hummingbird.

Our Father Ñamandú, the first,
 before having created, in the course of his evolution, his future paradise,
 did not see the mists:
 even though the sun did not yet exist,
 He existed illuminated for the reflection of his own heart,
 until the sun served to illuminate
 the wisdom contained within his own divinity.²⁰

In this last verse, Ñamandú's self-illumination mirrors the brilliant gleam of the warriors' copper plates that shielded their hearts and blinded their enemies, turning day into night. The cosmological association evoked by Oberá's invocation of *resplendor* to illuminate his divinity as the Son of God strongly suggests that these sacred songs also draw creatively from Christian influences. What reading the Oberá Rebellion both against and along the grain of contemporary ethnography permits is a speculative glimpse of how a spiritual *mestizaje* infused this rebel's "ancient rituals" and how it continues to infuse the shaman's world today.

The layering of Christian and shamanistic beliefs in the Oberá Rebellion also serves to complicate Alfred Métraux's foundational work on the Tupí-Guaraní migrations led by shamans during the latter part of the 1500s.²¹ Hélène Clastres, who expanded upon Métraux's analysis in *Land-Without-Evil: Tupí-Guaraní Prophetism*, argued that these migrations were inspired by a prophetic opposition to colonialism and constituted a nativist quest to reach the mythical earthly paradise— for *yvy-marâne* 'y or the Land Without Evil—where Ñamandú came to reside after the primordial mists had cleared.²² Yet, the transcultural dynamics of kinship and naming in the Oberá rebellion suggest another source of inspiration for such a messianic prophesy. In his study of the Apapokúva-Guaraní, Nimuendajú describes the shaman's essential role in the ceremonial naming of children by travelling to the spirit world to find where their souls have come from. To make this journey, the shaman relies on the young men and women in the village, whose dancing and singing assist him to temporarily leave the material world.²³ During the Oberá rebellion, the responsibility he gave to his son to rename all of the Guaraní in the region would have required such ceremonies to be held continuously. Like Cabeza de Vaca's marking of 10,000 Cario warriors with crosses, certain missions required extraordinary efforts. In this light, the frenzied dancing and singing of Oberá's followers may have had more to do with "unbecoming Christian" than with a quest to reach an earthly paradise.

While Centerera's poetic accounting of Oberá's "heathen speech and falsehoods" offers an elusive glimpse of how shamanism and Christianity had converged in a spiritual *mestizaje* by 1580, and a textual space that brings anthropology and history into dialogue, it would be misleading to solely focus on religious dimension of the rebellion. Out of seventy-five stanzas

that comprise Centenera's Canto XX on the Oberá Rebellion, only fifteen are devoted to Oberá's role in agitating the land. The rest describe the caciques' organization of armed resistance through their war councils after Juan de Garay, the governor of Río de la Plata, organized an expeditionary force in Asunción to march against Oberá, and the ensuing battles fought between Guaraní warriors and Spanish forces. The central role that the caciques played in the rebellion caution us against privileging the spiritual over the material realm of engagement between worldviews, as does Melià in claiming the "Guaraní religion revitalized the strength of anti-colonial rebellion," or the equation of Oberá's shamanistic call to arms with the waning power of the *mburuvichás*, as pursued by Roulet in her study of Guaraní resistance to Spanish rule. What an analysis of the Oberá Rebellion in its entirety reveals is that the difference between the religious disturbances in 1556 and Oberá's major insurrection in 1580 was the caciques' decision to go to war against the Spanish.

Lozano's lengthy account of the rebellion relates that as Garay's expedition began to march from Asunción in search of Oberá, the major cacique of the region, Tapuy Guazú, held a meeting of all the caciques and urged them to unite in opposition to the Spanish. In this war council, Urambía, who was the oldest cacique present, questioned Oberá's claim to divinity, saying:

We have heard the promises of the new God, Oberá, but we have not seen confirmed any miracle or any works more prophetic than those of our magicians. The feast allows us to remember our liberty. It is enjoyable for all. But liberty is not a matter as achievable as he believes it to be in his crazy fantasy, for we have to face the armed might of the Spanish.²⁴

Urambía's warning presages what came to pass. The caciques' decision to resist the Spanish resulted in a series of fierce battles that Centenera describes with poetic vengeance, and ended in their defeat. As in the great insurrection of 1545, the failure of the caciques to maintain a united front was their undoing. The detail with which Centenera chronicles the rebellion's repression also provides glimpses of the differences that marked the two.

One of the more curious, and distinctive, events that occurred during the confrontation between the Spanish soldiers and the Guaraní warriors was the sacrifice of a calf. After the first of the

battles, in which the Guaranies were victorious, a calf was slaughtered and burned. According to the Jesuit Lozano, “the ashes scattered in the wind, which was a sign according to this superstitious ceremony that when the ashes rose and disappeared into the air that they would vanquish all the Spanish.”²⁵ While the biblical associations evoked by sacrificial calves make it tempting to dismiss this detail as a rhetorical flourish, the introduction of cattle into the region in the 1550s may have provoked its ritual slaying. An ordinance issued by Juan de Garay in 1578, the year before the rebellion began, states that cows “cause great harm to the fields of the Indians who live around the city, who are suffering great shortages and hunger, and who are fleeing their places and going to remote parts of the country, separating themselves from the doctrine of Christian service of the Spanish, with whom they are obliged to provide service.”²⁶ The sacrifice also may have been a Christian-inspired substitution for ritual cannibalism. Ruiz de Montoya reports in *Conquista espiritual* that “a sort of baptism or name giving” occurred through eating captives taken in war. He describes how after the captive was slain,

they distribute pieces of his body throughout the region. The piece is boiled in a large amount of water and made into a potage. Each person receives a mouthful and takes his name. Women give a bit of gruel to their nursing children, giving each one its name. This is a solemn festival among them, performed with great ceremony.²⁷

While as chroniclers and priests, both Centenera and Ruiz de Montoya viewed the Guaraní through the filter of their own religious beliefs, the sacrificed calf can equally be seen to signify that the cows’ material damages to the *tekó-ás* had made these animals adversaries of the Guaraní.

Weaponry imported from the highlands and mestizos also had their roles to play in Centenera’s poetic chronicling of the rebellion. While Oberá’s “principal weapon” was a comet, the caciques’ weapon of choice was the *macana*, a Chiriguaná lance from Charcas. Similarly, the mestizos’ participation in the rebellion reflected the specificity of intercultural relations in 1580. In the Carios’ first major rebellion against the Spanish in 1545, the castaway mestizos from Brazil had sided with the Spanish; thirty-five years later, Asunción’s mestizos, who were related by kinship to the *encomienda* Indians, joined Oberá’s rebellion. As in 1556, when the mestizo children of the conquistadors fled to the countryside to hear the shamans speak and be

rebaptized, in 1580 they were receptive to a spiritual *mestizaje* that conjoined shaman and God. They also were motivated to fight alongside the Guaraní by their resentment of the Spanish and their economic marginality, and took advantage of the uprising to stage their own rebellion. Centenera ends his Canto XX by lamenting that the pleasure of Oberá's defeat was followed by sorrow when the mestizos mutinied in Asunción.²⁸ As for Oberá, it appears that his call to rebellion was an enduring one. In 1594, the Jesuit Alonso Barzana reports that while “the majority of these people have died from pestilence, bad treatment, and war; many thousands more have for thirty years risen up against this city and obeyed their sorcerers and have not admitted the Fathers.”²⁹

In its entirety, Centenera's epic tale of Oberá, with its Chiriguaná lances and mestizo sympathizers, sacrificed calf and primordial jaguar, and inversions and confluences of Christian doctrine and shamanistic ritual, does not provide a counterpoint to the messiness of *mestizaje* documented by the less empirically-questioned sources of the era. Instead, it highlights the degree to which the messiness of this *mestizaje* had permeated the Guaraní's spiritual worldview by 1580. As a literary work, Centenera's poem serves to represent this *mestizaje* as a fluid contestation and negotiation of worldviews rather than as the purely unidirectional acculturation of the Guaraní to Hispanic norms. As an historical record, it reveals how the specificity of *avá* identity was constituted in relation to the legacy of *amistad y alianza*. In the mirroring of the sacred and material realms in Oberá's kinship relationship to the Virgin Mary and his naming as *resplandor*, there emerges a play of sameness and difference that has been central to this study of transcultural dynamics in the Río de la Plata—from Spaniards becoming warriors and Carios becoming Christian to the formation of kinship alliances and the violation of long-established indigenous norms. As such, the rebellion's complex convergence of warrior norms, kinship ties, and Christian evangelization marks an ending of sorts, a chronological event that captures the consequences of the Carios' initial kinship alliances with the conquistadors. Just as importantly, the confluence of worldviews the Oberá's rebellion demonstrates signals directions for future inquiry.

In an essay written prior to undertaking this study of the early colonial period in the Río de la Plata to 1580, I explored aspects of the Jesuit mission project. I argued that the success of the Jesuits' evangelization of the Guaraní pivoted on the slippage between spiritual worldviews,

with the Jesuit's appropriation of the shamanistic realm enabling them to win their battles against rebellious caciques for Guaraní souls.³⁰ The Oberá Rebellion raises the question whether the Guaraní were not equally adept at appropriating a Christian worldview and the mission project for their own ends. It brings to the forefront the importance of considering what role kinship ties and a warrior ethos played in the evangelization process, and whether the caciques' collaboration with the Jesuits was as influenced by the arming of mission Indians as by Christian indoctrination.

This study began with the intention of answering the fundamental question of Guaraní agency posed by the Oberá Rebellion. Its genesis led to an examination of the multivalent origins of Paraguay's *mestizaje* that preceded the arrival of the Jesuits. In so doing, I hope to have laid the groundwork for a re-evaluation of the Jesuit missions that will account for the influences of an earlier colonial period. I have also worked to establish a historical context for understanding how the legacy of *amistad y alianza* resonates to the present day in the popular beliefs and social mores of Paraguay and the Argentine province of Corrientes.³¹ In this study, I have explored how the entanglement of indigenous and European worldviews in the 1500s reaches beyond a binary view of Spanish-Guaraní relations as either a history of spontaneous cooperation or of subjugation and acculturation. From a close reading of the documentation of the period, a cast of historical agents has emerged— *avá* and non-*avá* indigenous nations, priests and shamans, *adelantados* and low-ranking conquistadors, Cario women and mestiza daughters, castaways and mestizo sons, caudillos and caciques—all of whose interactions reveal how the Guaraní exercised as much influence, or more, than their conquerors in the formation of a hybrid culture.

This diversity of historical agents suggests another direction for future inquiry that is methodological in orientation. The heterogeneity of these agents' evolving relations during the early colonial period of the Río de la Plata confirms Serge Gruzinski's assertion that "the first wave of conquest occurred under the sign of chaos and *mélange*."³² It also calls into question what interpretative framework best represents this history of chaos and *mélange*. In choosing transculturation as an interpretative framework to sift and order the archive of Spanish-Guaraní relations, I sought to avoid the racial signification traditionally attached to *mestizaje*, and to respond to a historiography that views the colonial dynamics of Spanish-Guaraní relations as

leading to acculturation. In the end, however, the *lenguas* and mestizos had an insistent presence in my analysis of Spanish-Guaraní relations, and my interpretation of the archive depended on acknowledging their interventions as intermediaries between worldviews. They revealed that the formation of *mestizaje* in the Río de la Plata was socially and culturally rather than racially determined, always in the process of changing, like the shape-shifting jaguar-shamans, and fractured by class, affinity, spiritual beliefs, and material conditions.

Their persistent presence raises the issue of whether *mestizaje* can and should be re-theorized by insisting upon its multivalent origins, and whether in so doing can produce an arena of discourse and dialogue for the re-evaluation of nationalist histories. While Susana Rotker observes in *Captive Women: Oblivion and Memory in Argentina* that “scarcely a trace can be found in the streets, in textbooks, or in national narratives”³³ of Argentina’s mestizo past, Elman Service asserts that the “true Paraguayan was, and is, a mestizo with a distinctive national language and culture.”³⁴ Yet ethnologists focus on the few remaining racially-identified Guaraníes in search of a past untainted by European contact, while historians concern themselves with affirming how European mestizos are. This study points to the potential to dislodge such racial categories, and instead to reflect on how *mestizaje* may have resonance, and significance, for interpreting the shared past of indigenous and culturally-mixed peoples of Paraguay and Argentina, and hence envision a collective future.

Endnotes.

1. Martín Barco de Centenera, *La Argentina, conquista del Río de la Plata*, in *Colección de obras y documentas relativos a la historia antigua y moderna de las provincias del Río de la Plata*, vol. 2 (Buenos Aires: Imprento de Estado, 1836-37), 216-7.

*Oberá, como digo, se llamaba,
que suena resplandor en castellano:
en el Paraná grande éste habitaba,
el bautismo tenía de cristiano:
mas la fe prometida, no guardaba,
que con bestial designio a Dios, tirano,
su hijo dice ser, y concebido
de virgin, y que virgen lo ha parido*

*La mano esta temblando de escribillo
mas cuento con verdad que decía*

*con loca presunción aquel diablillo
que más que diablo en todo parecía.
Los indios comenzaron a seguillo
por todas las comarcas do venía,
atrajo mucha gente así de guerra,
con que daños hacía por la tierra*

*Dejano, pues, su tierra y propio asiento,
la tierra adentro vino predicando:
no queda de indio algún repartimiento,
que no siga su voz y crudo mando.
Con este impio pregón y mal descuento
la tierra se va todo levantando,
no acude ya al servicio que solía,
que libertad a todos prometía.*

*Mandóles que cantasen y bailasen,
de suerte que otra cosa no hacían,
y como los pobretes ya dejasen
de sembrar y coger como solían,
y sólo en los cantares se ocupasen,
en los bailes de hambre se morían,
cantándoles loores y alabanzas
del Obera maldito y sus pujanzas.*

*Un hijo que este tiene, se llamaba
Por nombre Guiraró, que es palo amargo,
Del mobre Papa aqeste se jactaba.
Con este al padre, dice, “yo descargo
La grande obligacion que à mí tocaba,
Con darle de pontífice el encargo.”
Aqeste es el que viene bautizando,
Y los nombres à todos transmutando.*

2. According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Centenera accompanied the expedition of Juan Ortiz de Zárate to the Río de la Plata as a chaplain, and became the archdeacon of Asunción. He went to Lima in 1582, and then returned to Europe where he wrote *La Argentina*. He died shortly after it was published in 1602. A. F. Bandelier, *Martín del Barco Centenera*, in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907). Retrieved October 10, 2010 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02292a.htm>

3. Paul Groussac, *Mendoza y Garay*, vol. 2, 271. The twenty tedious pages Groussac refers to are from Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay, Río de la Plata y Tucumán*, vol. 3, 210-229.

4. Melià, *El Guaraní - conquistado y reducido*, 40. “Toda la acción de Oberá puede ser considerada como un caso típico de profetismo guaraní que encuentra en la religión guaraní revitalizada la fuerza para su rebelión anticolonial.”
5. Centenera, *La Argentina*, 215.
6. Carta de Francisco de Andrada, March 1, 1545. DHG II: 416. “y muy enportunado dellos le diese al agua del bautismo y por el peligro de vn mal indio q. se dezia entigura.”
7. Ruiz de Montoya, *La conquista espiritual del Paraguay*, 229. Translation from McNasby, *The Spiritual Conquest*, 153.
8. *Ibid.*, 227. Translation from McNasby, *The Spiritual Conquest*, 152.
9. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 3, 228.
10. *Ibid.*, 212. “con cargo de que fuese borrando los nombres que á toda su nacion habian impuesto los cristianos, y confiriéndoles con nuevo bautismo, nuevos nombres segun sus antiguos ritos”
11. Cited in Bartomeu Melià, *El Guaraní - experiencia religiosa* (Asunción: Biblioteca Paraguaya de Anthropología, 1991), 23. “Es toda esta nación inclinada a religión, verdadera o falsa, y si los cristianos los hubieran dado buen ejemplo y diversos hechiceros no hubieran engañado, no sólo fueran cristianos, sino devotos. Conocen toda la inmortalidad del alma y temen mucho las anguera, que son las almas salidas de los cuerpos, y dicen que andan espantando y haciendo mal. Tienen grandísimo amor y obediencia a los padres, si los engañan en falsa religión, tanto, que si lo mandan ellos, no sólo les dan su hacienda, hijos e hijas, y los sirven pecho por tierra, pero no se menean por su voluntad. Y esta propensión suya a obedecer a título de religión, ha causado que no sólo muchos indios infieles se hayan fingido entre ellos hijos de Dios y maestros, pero indios criados entre españoles se han huido entre los de guerra, y unos llamádose papas, y otros llamádose Jesucritso, y han hecho para sus torpezas monasterios de monjas quibus abutuntur; y hasta hoy, los que sirven y los que no sirven (a los españoles) tienen sembrados mil agüeros y supersticiones y ritos de estos maestros, cuya principal doctrina es enseñarles que bailan de día y noche, por lo cual vienen a morir de hambre, olvidadas sus sementaras.”
12. Ruiz de Montoya, *La conquista espiritual del Paraguay*, 80. Translation from McNasby, *The Spiritual Conquest*, 51. “las supersticiones de los magos se fundan en adivinaciones por los cantos de las aves, de que han inventado muchas fábulas ... Los peores y más perniciosos son los enterradores, cuyo oficio es matar, enterrando en la casa del que desea matar algunas sobras de su comida, cascarras de fruta y pedazos de carbon, etc. A veces entierran sapos atravesados con alguna espina de pescado, con que se va enflaqueciendo el que desean matar, y sin otro accidente muere.”
13. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 1, 401-4.

14. Carta de padre Francisco Dias Taño para el superior de Tape, Jesus Maria, September 26, 1635., in *Jesuitas e bandeirantes no Tape (1615-1641)*, vol. 3., edited by Jaime Cortesão (Rio de Janeiro: Biblioteca Nacional, 1969), 106. “*preguntando un dia a los yndios q donde estavan y q era la causa de perderse sus casas me dixeran q unos yeroquihas q andaban por los temaminis los engañaban diciendo q este pueblo avia de destruir y q predicaban contra nosotros hacienda burla de lo que enseñabamos y deçian q ellos eran dioses y criaban los maisales y comida y eran señores de las fantasmas de los montes de los itaquiçeyes y de los ybitipos y que los tigres andaban a su voluntad y mataban a los q ellos querian.*”

15. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 3, 212. “*la principal arma con que habia de vencer á los españoles sus enemigos, era la señal espantosa, y horrible cometa que pocos dias antes aparecio á la parte occidente y se desapareció súbitamente, porque la escondió para reservarla para que a su tiempo vengase á sus queridos guaraníes.*”

16. Ruiz de Montoya, *La conquista espiritual del Paraguay*, 77. Translation from McNasby, *The Spiritual Conquest*, 49. “*Tenían por muy cierta doctrina que en el cielo hay un tigre o perro muy grande, el cual en ciertos acontecimientos de enojo se comía la luna y el sol, que son los que llamamos eclipses, y cuando sucedían, monstraban setimiento y admiración.*”

17. Nimuendajú, *Los mitos de creación y de destrucción del mundo como fundamentos de la religión de los Apapokuva-Guaraní*, 71.

18. León Cadogan, *Ayvu Rapyta. Textos míticos de los Mbyá-Guaraní del Guairá* (Asunción: Biblioteca Paraguaya de Antropología, 1997), 17.

19. Egon Schden, Nota preliminar, in Cadogan, *Ayvu Rapyta. Textos míticos de los Mbyá-Guaraní del Guairá*, 11.

20. Cadogan, *Ayvu Rapyta. Textos míticos de los Mbyá-Guaraní del Guairá*, 25.

*Nuestro Padre Ultimo-último Primero
para su propio cuerpo creó
de las tinieblas primigenias.*

*Las divinas plantas de los pies,
el pequeño asiento redondo,
en medio de las tinieblas primigenias
eos creó, en el curso de su evolución,*

*El reflejo de la divina sabiduria,
el divino oye-lo-todo
las divinas palmas de la mano la vara-insigna,
las divinas palmas de las manos con las ramas floridas,
las creó Ñamandú, en el curso de su evolución,
en medio de las tinieblas primigenias.*

De la divina coronilla excelsa

*las flores del adorno de plumas
eran gotas de rocío.
por entremedio de las flores del divino adorno de plumas
el pájaro primigenio, el Colibrí,
volaba, revoloteando.*

*Mientras nuestro primer Padre
creaba, en el curso de su evolución, su divino cuerpo,
existía en medio de los vientos primigenios:
antes de haber concebido su futura morada terrenal,
antes de haber concebido
su futuro firmamento, su futura tierra,
que originariamente surgieron,
el Colibrí le refresca la boca;
el que sustentaba a Ñamandú con productos del paraíso
fue el Colibrí*

*Nuestro Padre Ñamandú, el primero,
antes de haber creado, en el curso de su evolución, su futuro paraíso,
el no vio tinieblas:
aunque el sol aún no existiera,
el existía iluminado por el reflejo de su propio corazón;
hacia contenida dentro de su propia divinidad.*

21. Métraux, "Les migrations historiques des Tupi-Guaraní."

22. Clastres, *The Land-Without-Evil. Tupí-Guaraní Prophetism*, 22.

23. Nimuendajú, *Los mitos de creación y de destrucción del mundo como fundamentos de la religión de los Apapokuva-Guaraní*, 52.

24. Lozano, *Historia de la conquista del Paraguay*, vol. 3, 218. "He odio las promesas de ese nuevo dios Oberá, pero ni les veo confirmadas con alguna maravilla ni sus obras esceden cuando mas portentosas las que obran nuestros magos. El convite que hace á recobrar la libertad, es gustoso para todos, pero no es asunto tan asequible, como le parece á su loca fantasía, porque hemos de disputar con todo el poder armado de los españoles, al cual, no ha poder contrastar nuestra nacion."

25. *Ibid.*, 223. "cenizas las esparcieron al viento, queriendo significar con esta supersticiosa ceremonia, que como la ceniza se disipaba por el aire, así habian de acabar ellos á todos los cristianos."

26. Juan de Garay, Ordenanza del 17 de octubre de 1578, in Juan Francisco de Aguirre, *Discurso histórico sobre el Paraguay*. Cited in Necker, *Indios guaraníes y chamanes franciscanos*, 65. "hacen daños a las rozas y labranzas de los Indios comarcanos de esta Ciudad, que se padezcan grandes necesidades y hambres, y deamparen sus asientos y se vayan

a partes remotas, apartándose de la doctrina cristiana y servicio de los españoles, a quienes están encomendados.”

27. Ruiz de Montoya, *La conquista espiritual del Paraguay*, 77. Translation from McNasby, *The Spiritual Conquest*, 49. “*por la comarca reparten pedazos deste cuerpo, el cual pedazo cocido con mucha agua, hacen unas gachas, de que tomando un bocado, toma cada cual su nombre; las mujeres dan a sus hijos de teta un poquita desta mazamorra, y con eso les ponen el nombre; es fiesta muy célebre para ellos, que hacen con muchas ceremonias.”*

28. Centenera, *La Argentina*, 215.

29. Cited in Bartomeu Melià, *El Guaraní - conquistado y reducido*, 38. “*La mayor parte de esta gente unos se han muerto de pestilencia, malos tratamientos y guerras y otra gran suma donde hay muchas milares, ha treinta años que ésta alzada contra esta ciudad y obedecen a sus hechieros y no adminten Padres.”*

30. Dot Tuer, “Old Bones and Beautiful Words: Spiritual Contestation Between Jesuit and Shaman in the Paraguay Missions,” in *Colonial Saints in the Americas 1500-1800*, edited by Allan Greer and Jodi Bilinkoff (New York and London: Routledge, 2003).

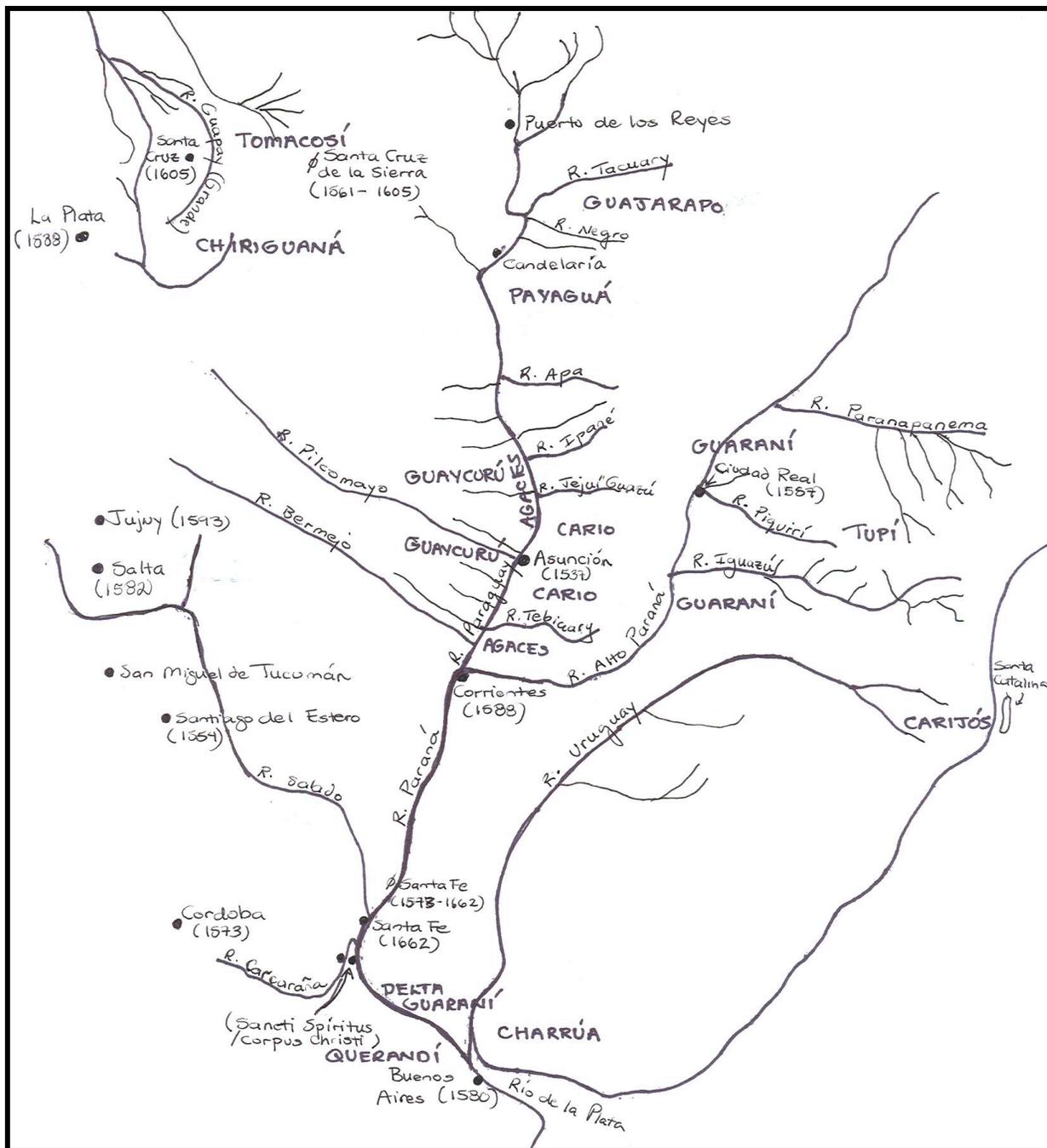
31. In an essay about the cult of San La Muerte, I drew on colonial sources to link the rituals associated with this saint to transcultural dynamics from the early colonial period. Dot Tuer, “Transculturality and the Colonial Legacy of Popular Belief in North-East Argentina,” in *Transcultural Americas /Amériques transculturelles*, edited by Afef Benessaïeh (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2010)

32. Gruzinski, *The Mestizo Mind*, 14.

33. Rotker, *Captive Women: Oblivion and Memory in Argentina*, 6.

34. Service, *Spanish-Guaraní Relations in Early Colonial Paraguay*, 7.

Map of the Río de la Plata (First settlements, major rivers, and indigenous groups)
 (adapted from Maeder, Ernesto, and Ramón Gutiérrez. *Atlas histórico del nordeste Argentino*)



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