

Resistance and Rebellion on the Spanish Frontier: Native Responses to Colonization in the Colombian Chocó, 1670–1690

Caroline A. Williams

By the mid-sixteenth century, Spanish conquest of the major Indian societies in the Americas was more or less complete. There were, however, many indigenous societies that still remained outside the orbit of Spanish control, usually because they were in remote and inaccessible regions, had no obvious economic resources to exploit, or were able to mount effective resistance to Spanish incursions. Some of these societies continued to exist beyond the boundaries of the Iberian world throughout the colonial period; for others, those boundaries were broken down as Spanish colonial settlement expanded from its early bases and extended into regions that the Spaniards had initially found too difficult to colonize. Movements of this kind on the frontier of Spanish settlement occurred throughout Hispanic America, as missionaries and settlers carried Spanish influence and Spanish government into peripheral regions from northern Mexico to southern Chile.¹ Frontier expansion of this kind also occurred in areas of New Granada (modern Colombia), where settlers pushed into previously uncolonized regions both to the east and to the west of the major settlements in the interior. One significant direction in which the frontier expanded was into the Chocó, the large lowland region on New Granada's Pacific flank. Here, Spanish penetration was driven by both missionary zeal and, more powerfully, by the search for gold.

1. There has been a renewed interest in recent years in the experience of indigenous peoples on the frontiers of Hispanic America. See, for example, David J. Weber and Jane M. Rausch, *Where Cultures Meet: Frontiers in Latin American History* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1994); Jane M. Rausch, *A Tropical Plains Frontier: The Llanos of Colombia, 1531–1831* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 1984); and David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1992).

As a result of this expansion, during the eighteenth century, rich and previously untapped sources of gold were incorporated into the viceroyalty, reviving the mining sector and revitalizing external trade.² The effects of the rapid growth of gold mining in the Chocó were particularly strong in the cities of the Cauca Valley, most notably in Popayán. Indeed, the expansionary movement into the Chocó was largely organized by members of the leading families of the Cauca region, who became the Chocó's principal slaveholders and miners. The towns of the Cauca Valley were linked to the gold-mining economy in another way as well: certain valley towns, such as Cali and Buga, developed significant trading activities in the Chocó, selling dried and salted meat, tobacco, wheat, and sugar products, all of which could not be produced on the frontier.³ And, of course, the gold of the Chocó also greatly enriched the local mine administrators, royal officials, and priests.

The main purpose of this article is not, however, to consider the impact of mining activities in the Chocó on the viceregal economy. Rather, it has two other purposes. First, it aims to contribute a specific case study of late-seventeenth-century frontier colonization in Spanish America. Colonial historians have long been aware that Spanish colonization in frontier regions differed markedly from that of the central areas. Outside the central areas, Spaniards often confronted indigenous peoples who, aided by the more fragmented nature of their society as well as a taxing topography and climate, found it easier to repel unwanted intrusions. The nature and duration of the resistance offered by these groups, and the methods Spaniards employed to subdue and control them, varied from region to region and depended on a wide variety of factors, such as whether the indigenous peoples were semi-sedentary or nonsedentary, the strategic importance of the territories they occupied, and the desirability of the resources that they controlled.⁴ In the Chocó,

2. See William Frederick Sharp, *Slavery on the Spanish Frontier: The Colombian Chocó, 1680–1810* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1976). For the greater repercussions of Spanish expansion into the Chocó on New Granada's development, see Anthony McFarlane, *Colombia before Independence: Economy, Society, and Politics under Bourbon Rule* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1993), esp. chap. 3.

3. See Germán Colmenares, *Cali: terratenientes, mineros y comerciantes: siglo XVIII* (Cali: Univ. del Valle, 1975), 143–49, and *Historia económica y social de Colombia*, vol. 2: *Popayán, una sociedad esclavista, 1680–1800* (Bogotá: La Carreta Inéditos, 1979), 144–52.

4. For a stimulating discussion of types of Iberian colonization in the noncentral areas, see James Lockhart and Stuart B. Schwartz, eds., *Early Latin America: A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), 52–57, 253–304.

where gold had been discovered early in the sixteenth century, the methods the Spaniards used to subdue the population also varied over time. These methods included privately financed *entradas* (expeditions of conquest); the proselytizing activities of missionary priests; and, eventually, the use of force, the only method that ultimately succeeded in pacifying a population whose continuing resistance prevented Spanish settlers from exploiting the valuable resources of the Chocó.

The second purpose of this article is to examine the nature of late-seventeenth-century Indian resistance to Spanish colonization efforts. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Spanish and foreign travelers to the Chocó were portraying the indigenous inhabitants as “mild,” “docile,” and quite different in character from the bellicose Indians of Darién and Río de la Hacha.⁵ But a close examination of earlier contacts between Spaniards and Indians in the Chocó reveals not only that indigenous groups were far from docile, but that they proved remarkably successful in resisting Spanish domination. For more than a century after initial contact at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Chocó peoples repeatedly repulsed Spanish attempts to penetrate into their territory.⁶ By the early decades of the seventeenth century, a combination of factors, including indigenous demographic decline and more frequent contacts between native peoples and Spanish explorers from the cities of the Cauca Valley, enabled colonizers to establish a foothold in the Chocó. This they did in the 1630s, when Spaniards first settled among one of the smaller indigenous groups of the region, the Noanama. After this time, contacts between Spaniards and the remaining Indian groups in the Chocó undoubtedly increased, although these contacts did not result in pacification.

5. See, for example, “Relación del Chocó . . . en que se manifiesta su actual estado . . .” in *Historia documental del Chocó*, ed. Enrique Ortega Ricaurte (Bogotá: Ed. Kelly, 1954), 210; and Gaspar Mollien, *Travels in the Republic of Colombia in the Years 1822 and 1823* (London: C. Knight, 1824), 306–7.

6. The main sources for the earliest Spanish explorations of the Chocó are Carl Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966); Jorge Orlando Melo, *Historia de Colombia*, vol. 1: *El establecimiento de la dominación española* (Bogotá: Ed. La Carreta, 1978); Robert Cushman Murphy, “The Earliest Spanish Advances Southward from Panama along the West Coast of South America,” *HAHR* 21 (1941); Kathleen Romoli, “El descubrimiento y la primera fundación de Buenaventura,” *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades* (Bogotá) 49 (1962), and “Apuntes sobre los pueblos autóctonos del litoral colombiano del Pacífico en la época de la conquista española,” *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 12 (1964); Fray Pedro Simón, *Noticias históricas de las conquistas de Tierra Firme en las Indias Occidentales*, 7 vols. (1637; reprint, Bogotá: Banco Popular, 1981–82); and Ortega Ricaurte, *Historia documental del Chocó*.

Over the next half century, Spanish domination proved to be partial and far from secure. It was not until the 1690s that, following a major but ultimately unsuccessful Indian rebellion, Spanish occupation and colonization of the Chocó began in earnest. Thereafter, Indian resistance became more passive, taking the form of flight from Spanish settlements, resistance to acculturation or hispanicization, and rejection of Christianity.⁷

To identify and explain the forms of native resistance to white incursions and exploitation, this article will concentrate mainly on events in the Chocó “province” of Citará. The Citaraes, who inhabited a stretch of territory extending approximately from the Arquía River, a tributary of the Atrato, to the Andagueda River, were among the most resilient of all Indian groups in the region. Consequently, they were among the last to be pacified. My purpose is to look closely at the ways in which Spaniards and Citaraes interacted over the 20 years between the early 1670s and the early 1690s. These two decades are particularly significant because they coincide with a period of considerable Spanish activity in the region. The early 1670s marked the beginning of more determined campaigns on the part of successive governors in Popayán and Antioquia, supported by royal cédulas of 1666 and 1674, to achieve the pacification of all the Chocó peoples. These were also the years during which a small group of Franciscans was sent from Spain, in the wake of another royal cédula in 1671, to establish a mission among the Indians of the provinces of Citará and Tatamá. Finally, the early 1670s marked the beginning of a more concerted effort by miners from the cities of the interior—Popayán, Antioquia, and Cali—to initiate mining operations in the Chocó.

The interaction of priests, viceregal officials, and miners with the native inhabitants of the Chocó during this 20-year period enables us to examine not just the purposes of Spanish colonization and the methods employed to achieve it, but also the difficulties Spaniards encountered and their responses to them. These two decades of early contact reveal how the characteristics of indigenous societies in the Chocó hindered Spanish efforts to bring the region under crown control. The fact that this was a region inhabited by small communities with weakly centralized political systems, a dispersed settlement pattern, and slash-and-burn agriculture, meant that the process of congregating the Indian communities, converting them to Christianity, and putting them to work to support the new settlers was remarkably difficult, and at

7. See Caroline A. Hansen, “Conquest and Colonization in the Colombian Chocó, 1510–1740” (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Warwick, 1991), 266–366, upon which this article is based.

times well-near impossible.⁸ The frustration of missionaries in the face of indigenous resistance to congregation and conversion led them to rapidly change their attitudes toward the native population and to adopt more coercive methods in dealing with the Indians. However, equally important in hindering Spanish efforts to control the Chocó were the terms under which colonization was carried out. The missionaries did not enjoy complete freedom to pacify and convert the Chocó's native population. Miners and royal officials, more concerned with exploiting precious metals and obtaining access to Indian labor than with furthering crown interests, were present in the region from the very beginning, making intolerable demands on the native population, undermining the efforts of the missionaries, and creating a climate of oppression that made peaceful pacification seem a remote possibility. Furthermore, the fact that this was an isolated region, quite distant from the centers of royal viceregal authority from where it was never properly administered, made it possible for local crown officials and missionaries to act with almost absolute impunity in their dealings with the indigenous inhabitants and other settlers, exacerbating tensions and leading to increasingly violent confrontations, not just between whites and Indians, but also among Spaniards.

Early Contacts and Indigenous Demographic Decline

By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, only five Indian groups were left in the Chocó region: the Soruco, Burgumia, Noanama, Citará, and Tatamá. Knowledge about the region was still scarce, and what was "known" was perhaps more speculation than fact. In 1677 two of the five groups, the Soruco and the Burgumia, were believed to occupy a vaguely defined stretch of territory lying south of Panama, between the Pacific coast and the Bojaya River.⁹ The size of the Soruco and Burgumia populations was not known. In April 1669 the governor of Popayán estimated that the Soruco "nation" com-

8. Sven-Erik Isacson refers to the type of agriculture used in the "rain-soaked" Chocó as "slash-mulch," and distinguishes this unique form of cultivation from the more common slash-and-burn method; see his "The Egalitarian Society in Colonial Retrospect: Emberá Leadership and Conflict Management under the Spanish," in *Natives and Neighbours: Anthropological Essays*, eds. Harald O. Skar and Frank Salomon (Göteborg: Göteborgs Etnografiska Museum, 1987).

9. Sven-Erik Isacson identified a third Indian group that remained outside Spanish control at midcentury: the Membocana; see Sven-Erik Isacson, "Fray Matías Abad y su diario de viaje por el río Atrato en 1649," *Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades* 61 (1974): 467–68.

prised some 5,000 adult men, but three months later he had revised his estimate downward, to 3,000. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that this group could have been as numerous as the governor suggested, given that both the Soruco and the Burgumia are rarely mentioned in contemporary documents. At various times during the 1660s, Spaniards made plans to conquer these “nations,” particularly the Soruco, who were considered to be “such warlike Indians that they never let go of their arms. They continuously and without pause organize wars and attack the peaceful Indians.”¹⁰ But it appears that no campaign of conquest was ever launched—at least not from the interior of New Granada—and that the Soruco and Burgumia remained outside the Spanish sphere of influence for the remainder of the century.

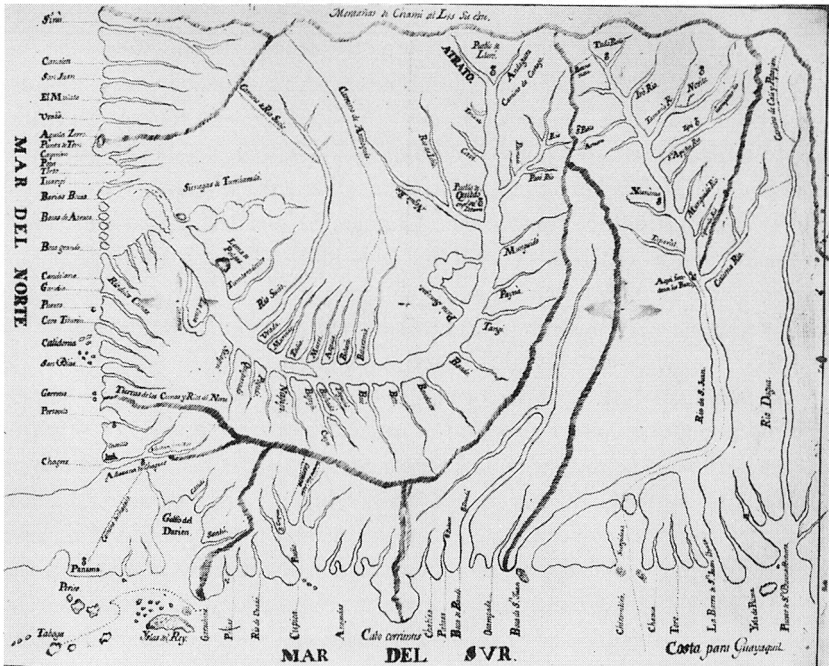
The other three groups are somewhat easier to identify, as one of these (the Noanama) came under crown control in the 1630s, and the other two (the Citará and the Tatamá) fell under Spanish control during the late 1670s.¹¹ The identity of the Tatamaes, however, is less clear than that of the other two groups. In the 1660s and 1670s, the Spaniards used the names Tatamá, Chocó, and, more rarely, Poya, without distinction in referring to the indigenous inhabitants of the area surrounding the upper San Juan and headwaters of the Atrato. Kathleen Romoli has shown that in the 1570s the Tatamaes and Chocoes were two distinct groups, but since there is insufficient evidence to indicate whether both survived as separate and independent peoples a century later, they will, for the sake of clarity, be referred to throughout this study as the Tatamá.¹²

These five Indian provinces were merely the remnants of the multiplicity of Indian groups that inhabited the Chocó when Spaniards first entered the

10. Governor Díaz de la Cuesta to Crown, Popayán, 8 Apr. 1669, 24 Apr. 1669, 28 July 1669, 20 July 1672; and Auto de Oficio, 9 May 1672, all in Archivo General de Indias, Seville (hereafter AGI), Quito, leg. 67. See also Governor Miguel García to Crown, Popayán, 26 June 1674, *ibid.*; Governor Miguel García to Crown, Popayán, 22 Nov. 1674, AGI, Quito, leg. 16; and “Testimonio de autos sobre el alzamiento de los indios chocoes, su reducción y pacificación. . . .” AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 1, fols. 189–90.

11. Robert C. West, *The Pacific Lowlands of Colombia: A Negroid Area of the American Tropics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1957), 93. In 1678 the Jesuit Antonio Marzal reported that the Noanama had been permitting Spaniards to enter their territory for 40 years; see Antonio Marzal, “Informe sobre el Chocó,” in Juan Manuel Pacheco, *Los Jesuitas en Colombia*, 3 vols. (Bogotá: n.p., 1959–89), 2:495–96.

12. See Kathleen Romoli, “El Alto Chocó en el siglo XVI. Parte 2: las gentes,” *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 20 (1976): 27. For a discussion of the confusion regarding Spanish identification of the indigenous inhabitants of the Chocó, see Hansen, “Conquest and Colonization,” 72–76.



Map 1: "Mapa de la costa desde el Puerto de San Buenaventura hasta Panama [y] curso de los Rios de San Juan y Atrato . . .," 1779?, AGI, Panamá, Quito 193.

region at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Unfortunately, we have no data that indicates the size of the Indian population of the Chocó during this period of initial contact, and the evidence for the latter part of the century is incomplete. Romoli's analysis of the evidence available for the Upper Chocó, the region stretching from Cape Corrientes to Buenaventura, shows that in the 1570s as many as 19 independent indigenous groups inhabited this area alone, and that the total population for the region may have ranged between 35,000 and 40,000.¹³ There are, however, no population estimates for the Lower Chocó, a region that extended from Cape Corrientes northward to Panama. By the 1670s Spanish reports indicate that only a few independent groups had survived the century and a half of contacts with the Spanish, how-

13. Romoli, "Las gentes," 37–48. Romoli identified the following Indian groups: Botabirá, Burgalandete, Cagacimbe, Cirambirá, Cobira, Coponama, Chanco, Chocó, Ebirá, Eripede, Guarra, Morirama, Noanama, Orocubirá, Sima, Tatamá, Tatape, Tootuma, Yaco, and Yngará.

ever infrequent these may have been. As we have seen, estimates of the size of the Soruco are unreliable, and there are no estimates for the Burgumia. But in 1678, Father Antonio Marzal, a Jesuit priest who had been involved in missionary activity in the Chocó since 1662, provided the first reliable estimates for the remaining three groups. According to Marzal, the total population was at most 3,850. Of these, 650 were Noanama, while the remaining 3,200 were evenly divided between Tatamaes and Citaraes.¹⁴ Considering that these three groups totaled less than 4,000, and that only five groups can be identified by this time, it is clear that over the previous 150 years the indigenous population had undergone a serious demographic decline, one comparable to that which occurred in other areas of Spain's American empire.

Epidemic disease accounts for part of the decline. Romoli found evidence of rapid depopulation in the region to the south of the Chocó (i.e., south of Cape Corrientes) in the 1560s and 1570s, apparently the result of a smallpox epidemic that struck the area in 1566–67.¹⁵ In 1590 the Spaniard Melchor Velásquez led an expedition against the Noanama, whom he found to have been completely decimated by “a cruel pestilence that had overcome them one year earlier.”¹⁶ Disease continued to strike the population well into the seventeenth century. In 1669 the Spaniard Francisco de Quevedo reported that he had come across two Indians suffering from smallpox in the small settlement of Poya; they had apparently been abandoned there by the rest of the community because of the fear that the outbreak of the illness provoked.¹⁷ This may have been the same epidemic reported by the priest Luis Antonio de la Cueva and the Spaniard Lorenzo de Salamanca. The former claimed that his first attempt to build a church among the Noanama had to be abandoned “because they all became ill of a great disease that struck them”; the latter wrote of an outbreak of smallpox that spread across the region near the end of 1670.¹⁸

Intertribal warfare also contributed to demographic decline. According to Romoli, by the end of the sixteenth century relations among the 19 independent groups that occupied the southern half of the Chocó were characterized by distrust, hostility, alliances among certain groups, and occasional wars

14. Marzal, “Informe sobre el Chocó,” 2:494–95.

15. Romoli, “Apuntes sobre los pueblos autóctonos,” 269.

16. Simón, *Noticias históricas*, 6:240.

17. Francisco de Quevedo, San Joseph de Noanama, 15 May 1669, AGI, Quito, leg. 67.

18. For the statement by Luis Antonio de Cueva, see “Testimonio de Autos”

(Audiencia), AGI, Quito, leg. 67, fol. 14; for Lorenzo de Salamanca, see Auto de Oficio, Popayán, 9 May 1672, AGI, Quito, leg. 67.

between others. However, the arrival of the Spaniards transformed relations among the indigenous communities. The fact that, in exchange for assistance against their rivals, some communities were prepared to collaborate with the Spanish expeditions that began to penetrate Indian territory after 1570 increased the incidence of intertribal warfare. This, in turn, may help account for the disappearance of some groups, such as the Yngará and the Tootuma. According to Romoli, the founding of a short-lived Spanish settlement at Toro in 1573, made possible by the collaboration of the Yngará, provoked a violent response from other indigenous groups in the Chocó, who terrorized their neighbors for having consented to the occupation. The Tootuma were also known to have collaborated and may have suffered a similar fate.¹⁹

Colonization and Conversion: The Franciscans in the Chocó

In the early 1670s, Spaniards began to penetrate the Chocó, encouraged by the determination of the crown, as reflected in several royal cédulas, to finally bring the region under Spanish control. The Citaraes and Tatamaes, perhaps in part because of their shrinking population, offered no resistance. The crown had two objectives in the Chocó. First, it wished to promote the exploitation of the region's valuable economic resources, which had come to be regarded as key to the economic recovery of the entire viceroyalty of New Granada. Second, it desired the peaceful pacification and conversion of its indigenous peoples. These goals were clearly stated by the fiscal of the Council of the Indies, who in 1669 insisted that although the pacification of the Chocó would undoubtedly benefit the royal treasury and promote commercial activities in surrounding regions, the crown's principal objective remained the conversion of the native population.²⁰

In accordance with these wishes, a small team of Franciscans was dispatched from Spain in order to establish a mission among the Indians of the Chocó. The Franciscans did not receive financial assistance from the crown beyond the costs of travel and of commencing their activities in the region, an arrangement that was to significantly affect the future of the mission and of

19. Kathleen Romoli, "El Alto Chocó en el Siglo XVI," *Revista Colombiana de Antropología* 19 (1975): 22, and "Las gentes," 32–33, 35. For details of cooperation between Indians and Spaniards from the 1620s to the 1640s, see Isacson, "Fray Matías Abad," 457–75.

20. These remarks were noted on a letter from the governor of Cartagena. See Don Benito de Figueroa to Crown, Cartagena, 2 July 1668, AGI, Quito, leg. 67. The fiscal's comments are dated 24 May 1669.

relations between Indians and priests. The missionaries were expected to obtain the support of the communities among which they worked, although they were forbidden to solicit stipends or other kinds of remuneration. In addition, the Indians were granted a 10-year exemption from tribute. The role of the Franciscans, in this as in other regions of Spanish America, was to begin the congregación, or *reducción*, of the Indians. This policy involved the forced migration of small, often scattered, native communities into larger permanent settlements, where their instruction in the “mysteries of the Catholic Faith” could be carried out. As the *Recopilación de las leyes de los reynos de las Indias* explicitly stated, “the Indians should be reduced to villages and not be allowed to live divided and separated in the mountains and wildernesses, where they are deprived of all spiritual and temporal comforts, the aid of our ministers, and those other things which human necessities oblige men to give one another.”²¹

The crown’s objectives squarely coincided with the almost identical interests of royal officials and Spanish miners, who had also increasingly begun to settle in the region by the early 1670s. Several sources suggest that at the beginning of the decade many Spaniards, whose precise identity remains a mystery, moved into the Chocó to begin mining operations; at the same time, some slave gangs were apparently transferred to the region from Anserma and Antioquia.

Spanish miners did not intend to employ Indians in mining activities; for this, slaves would be imported. But the local Indians were to be assigned a central role in the emerging mining economy. They were to provide foodstuffs for the mining camps (given that the high cost of transport over difficult terrain made it impossible to obtain adequate supplies from elsewhere), serve as guides and carriers, and build dwellings for both miners and slaves. To enable Indians to fulfil these roles, the small scattered communities would have to be brought together in larger settlements close to the mining camps. Thus, when in 1674 Governor García informed the crown that for the royal treasury to benefit from the riches of the region two to three hundred slaves would need to be imported as laborers, the secular priest Luis Antonio de la Cueva, who also had considerable experience in the Chocó, insisted that the Indians of the region should be resettled close to the slave gangs, for the specific purpose of providing food.²²

21. Quoted in W. George Lovell, *Conquest and Survival in Colonial Guatemala: A Historical Geography of the Cuchumatán Highlands, 1500–1821* (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Univ. Press, 1985), 75–76.

22. Governor Miguel García to Crown, Popayán, 22 Nov. 1674, AGI, Quito, leg. 16. Luis Antonio de la Cueva was one of several priests who had been active in the region in the years prior to the arrival of the Franciscan mission.

The crown, the clergy, and the miners, therefore, all coincided in the need to settle the Indian population in areas where they might be most easily indoctrinated in the Christian faith and most usefully employed in supporting and provisioning the Spanish settlements. However, the process of *reducción* proved far more difficult than even the enthusiastic young missionaries who arrived in the region in 1673 had expected. When they arrived in the Chocó, eight of the nine Franciscan missionaries were divided into two groups. One group of three was to stay among the Tatamá, and the other group of five was to move to the province of Citará. All were to begin the process of congregating the dispersed communities in a small number of permanent settlements.

From the very beginning, the Franciscan missionaries experienced severe difficulties in carrying out the congregaciones. The leader of the mission, Fray Miguel de Castro Rivadeneyra, whose role appears to have been that of a peripatetic overseer of the activities of his fellow Franciscans, reported that soon after arriving in the area he traveled to an Indian community on the banks of the Atrato to inform its inhabitants that he had come in the name of the king to celebrate Mass and to instruct them in the Holy Faith. In exchange, the Indians were to choose a site for their new village, build a church, and settle there. The Indians apparently did choose a location for a settlement, which was named San Francisco de Atrato, and even agreed to build the friar a church. But as soon as the church was completed, the Indians abandoned the chosen site.²³

Evidently the difficulties that the Franciscans encountered in establishing permanent settlements in these early days of missionary activity among the Tatamaes and Citaras were in part the result of the Indians having misunderstood the intentions of the newcomers. But these complications were also partly due to the nature of indigenous settlement patterns, which consisted of small dispersed communities composed of several extended families, often separated from each other by distances of two to three leagues.²⁴ These scattered settlements, moreover, were not permanent: the communities regularly shifted their location in accordance with their agricultural needs. As Governor García of Popayán complained to the king in 1674, no attempt to congregate the Indians in permanent settlements could be successful while the Indians were left to their own devices, for they “built new dwellings at the time of each harvest.”²⁵ This was clearly a feature of slash-and-burn agriculture in the Chocó.

23. “Testimonio de Autos” (Franciscans), AGI, Quito, leg. 67, fol. 44.

24. See, for example, *ibid.*, fol. 16.

25. Governor Miguel García to Crown, Popayán, 22 Nov. 1674, AGI, Quito, leg. 16.

In 1678 the Jesuit Antonio Marzal observed that a tract of land could not produce two consecutive crops. Referring specifically to the Noanama, Marzal explained that the Indians frequently withdrew from their settlements for long periods of time because “where they cultivate [maize] once they cannot immediately cultivate it again.”²⁶ Traditional settlement patterns and agricultural practices, therefore, constituted important obstacles to the friars’ attempts to resettle the population.

The fragmented Indian social organization, based on small communities composed of individual family units, also hindered the Franciscans’ efforts. The missionaries clearly would have preferred to work through native chiefs in their efforts to resettle the dispersed population, but they were confounded by the apparent absence of clearly identifiable leaders. This is not to say that there were no leaders in the Chocó, for some Indians were referred to time and again in the documents as *capitanes*. But the *capitanes* were men whose reputations had been made in warfare against enemy groups, and who had no permanent authority over their communities. As Marzal again observed, the Indians “are a people without leaders, who do not obey nor respect anyone even in war, and if they have *capitanes* it is not because they obey them in anything, but because they have a reputation for being brave.”²⁷ The *procurador general* of the Franciscan province of Santa Fe also understood that the acephalous nature of Indian society in the Chocó hindered the process of *reducción*, and might even impede it altogether. He suggested two possible solutions to this dilemma. Either the colonial officials could select an individual from among the Indians whom the communities would recognize as their leader and who would therefore have the authority to bring about resettlement; or a company of armed men could be sent to achieve through fear or force what could not be achieved by peaceful means. “Unless they recognize some authority in their own lands,” he asserted, “[the Indians] will return to live in those places where they used to [live] and no one’s life will be safe.”²⁸

The characteristics of Citará social organization, therefore, obstructed the missionaries’ task. However, the indigenous population also offered outright resistance to the activities of the Franciscans. Indian resistance manifested itself in a number of ways. They refused, for example, to accept the friars’ authority or to attend catechism. As Fray Bernardo Ramírez complained, “no progress . . . will be made until a way is found to make the Indians obey the

26. Marzal, “Informe sobre el Chocó,” 2:494.

27. *Ibid.*, 2:501.

28. “Testimonio de Autos” (Franciscans), AGI, Quito, leg. 67, fol. 16.

religious. . .[and] to attend [the teaching of the] Christian Doctrine.” Fray Miguel de Vera, who met so much resistance in the small hamlet of Taita that he eventually abandoned the Chocó mission, also reported that the Indians resisted any form of subjugation, and that he was failing completely in his attempts to teach the Christian doctrine to the Indians. When required to attend catechism they not only refused, but they permanently fled from their settlements.²⁹

Another particularly serious problem was that from the very beginning of their activities, the Franciscans expected the Chocó Indians to supply them with food. These expectations were seldom met, despite Franciscan efforts to secure provisions through bartering beads, bells, axes, and other goods. Indeed, hunger was one of the factors that drove some friars, such as Miguel de Vera, out of the region.³⁰ Some Franciscans, for example Miguel Tabuenca, found a few Indians who were willing to barter, although only for certain goods, particularly tools such as machetes, knives, axes, and scissors. However, even those missionaries who did find Indians with whom to barter found that they could not count on supplies (which in any case consisted of little more than maize and plantains) being available at all times.³¹ Indians would often sell food only when they had a surplus. Many others, as already mentioned, refused to trade at all in the hope that they could starve the settlers out.

At times Indians also challenged the missionaries with direct and violent resistance. In May 1674, for example, Marzal reported that the Indians of the settlement of Lloró had taken up arms against the leader of the Franciscan mission, Castro Rivadeneyra.³² In September of the same year, Castro Rivadeneyra himself confirmed violent confrontations between Spaniards and Citaraes in Lloró when he reported that the Indians had *again* attempted to kill the Spaniards.³³ Two years later, in 1676, the president of the Franciscan hospice in the city of Antioquia, Fray Francisco Caro, reported an incident involving another missionary in the Chocó, Fray Francisco García, who was apparently attacked for ordering an Indian to pray.³⁴ Such attacks were clearly part of more widespread resistance to white incursions, as all Spaniards in the Chocó

29. *Ibid.*, fol. 23.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, fols. 77, 79–80.

32. *Ibid.*, fol. 80.

33. *Ibid.*, fols. 113–14.

34. “Testimonio . . . sobre el alzamiento . . .,” AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 1, fols. 6–8. Fray Joseph de Córdoba also reported this incident; see “Testimonio de Autos” (Franciscans), AGI, Quito, leg. 67, fols. 113–14.

appear to have felt at risk. The miner Domingo de Veitia y Gamboa, for example, wrote from Lloró in September 1674 that “the Indians . . . every day say they want to kill us.”³⁵

Thus, the first years of Franciscan activity in the Chocó were marked not by proselytization, but by repeated though unsuccessful efforts to carry out congregaciones and to barter with Indians for food. Such difficulties had a predictable effect on the missionaries. By 1674, just a year after their arrival, some Franciscans had concluded that they should leave the region. Juan Tabuena was among those who advocated abandoning the mission. In May 1674 he wrote to Castro Rivadeneyra advising a withdrawal from the Chocó; he thought it would do greater credit to the Franciscan order to leave right than be forced to leave years later without having accomplished its stated goals.³⁶ Others argued that the *reducciones* would fail unless the friars were permitted to use more coercive methods in dealing with the Citaraes; they specifically requested that they be allowed to punish recalcitrant Indians. As Joseph de Córdoba, who was to have a particularly difficult relationship with the Citaraes in later years, insisted, the Indians “do nothing [except] by force.”³⁷ Even the Jesuit Antonio Marzal, who by the mid-1670s had over a decade of missionary experience in New Granada, expressed similar thoughts.³⁸ Because they were “so barbarous,” he argued, no good could be expected of the Indians unless some form of punishment were used to enforce obedience to the missionaries. It was a mistake to believe that the Indians would, as he put it, “understand the truth through . . . spiritual means,” for they were “lacking in reason,” and were characterized by excessive “malice.”³⁹

Although the Franciscans, supported by royal officials in the Chocó and Popayán, blamed the Indians for the failure of evangelization, others questioned the very competence of the friars themselves. For example, in its negative reply to a royal cedula of August 24, 1674, that asked whether additional missionaries would be required in the Chocó, the Audiencia of Santa Fe commented that the original goals of the mission remained unfulfilled. Rather than blaming the resistance of the native inhabitants to evangelization, however, the Audiencia targeted the Franciscans and their lack of “wisdom” in dealing with the Indians. They thus concluded that at least for the moment

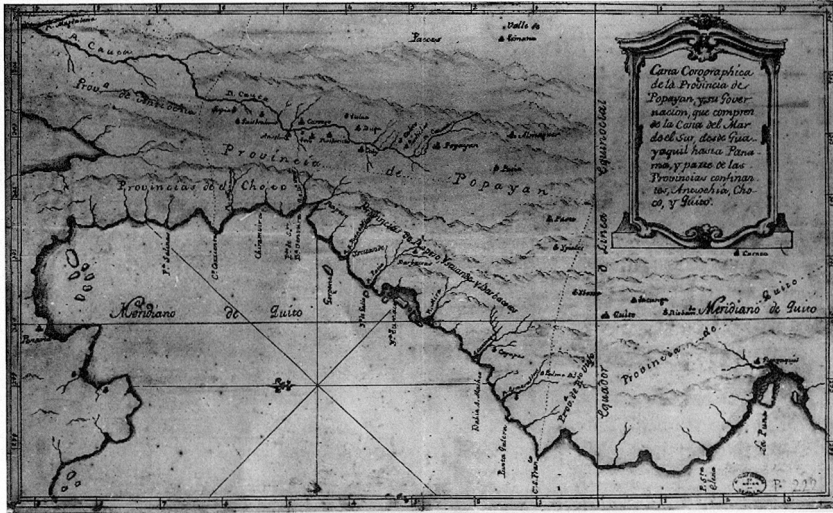
35. “Testimonio de Autos” (Franciscans), AGI, Quito, leg. 67, fol. 112.

36. *Ibid.*, fol. 78.

37. *Ibid.*, fol. 113.

38. Marzal, “Informe sobre el Chocó,” 2:486.

39. “Testimonio de Autos” (Franciscans), AGI, Quito, leg. 67, fol. 80.



Map 2: "Carta corográfica de la Provincia de Popayán, y su Governación, que comprende la costa del Mar del Sur, desde Guayaquil hasta Panamá . . ." 1798, AGI, Mapas y Planos, Panamá, Santa Fé y Quito, 222.

additional missionaries should not be sent.⁴⁰ The Audiencia's response was disturbing enough for the Council of the Indies to pass it on to Fray Juan Luengo, general of the Franciscan order. Luengo agreed that the Chocó mission had brought meager results, and that the young men who had been sent to take charge were too inexperienced to deal with the problems they faced—a difficult terrain, hunger, and intractable Indians. However, he also pointed out that the Franciscans had embarked upon the Chocó mission against the better judgement of the order in Santa Fe, which had previously and unsuccessfully attempted the *reducción* of the area's native population. The main reason for the friars' lack of success, he argued, was their inability to provision themselves in this sterile region inhabited by "cimarrones" who even lacked proper dwellings in which to live.⁴¹

While the young friars may have been too inexperienced for their entrusted task, Indian resistance in the Chocó was the main obstacle to Spanish colonization and evangelization. Such resistance was not always violent.

40. Audiencia de Santa Fe to Crown, Santa Fe de Bogotá, 17 June 1675, AGI, Quito, leg. 67.

41. Fray Juan Luengo to Francisco Fernández Madrigal, n.p., 23 Apr. 1676, *ibid.*

Nor was it confined to the missionaries alone, for other Spaniards faced considerable difficulties in dealing with the Indian population. For example, miners also sought to provision themselves locally and also repeatedly complained about unstable prices and supplies. Like the Franciscans, they occasionally suffered shortages; at other times food supplies from the Indians were only available at excessive and arbitrary prices. Many miners were forced to send their slave gangs out of the Chocó as a result.

In fact, however, it was the very presence of miners in the Chocó that undermined the work of the Franciscan missionaries. For the miners were not simply interested in purchasing produce from the Indians in order to provision themselves and their slaves. By the mid-1670s they were more concerned with creating a permanent role for the Indians in the gold-mining economy of the region. As a request made by two Spanish miners in the province of Tatamá reveals, miners wanted the Indians to be assigned, for the foreseeable future, the task of provisioning all mining camps. As the petition noted, “[native peoples] only cultivate once each year,” an agricultural cycle that yielded too little to sustain the settlers. The two miners asked that in the future the Indians be forced to cultivate two maize crops annually, and that “they should generally give maize to all the slave gangs that are [there now] and might be [in the future] . . . threshing the maize, putting it in baskets, and taking it in their canoes to the mining camps or stores assigned for this purpose.”⁴²

Despite their efforts, in the mid-1670s Spanish control over the Indian population of the province of Citará still remained extremely weak. The miners faced severe problems and some had been forced to withdraw. The Franciscan missionaries had also failed to make much progress, either with the congregaciones or with religious conversion, and most of the original group had abandoned the enterprise. But a few Franciscans, as well as several miners and a handful of royal officials, did remain. In the years that followed, despite the crown’s expressed wishes that the colonization of the Chocó should be carried out by peaceful means, the missionaries, supported by local crown officials, implemented more coercive methods to subdue the native population, which appear to have finally brought some success to the process of *reducción*. By the end of the decade three permanent Indian settlements had been established—San Francisco de Atrato, Lloró, and Negua. At the same time, however, reports about the conduct of the missionaries, who were

42. “Testimonio . . . sobre el alzamiento . . .,” AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 1, fols.

114–15.

alleged to be ill-treating the native population and illegally demanding stipends, from which the Indians were, by repeated royal cédulas, exempt, began to reach Antioquia and Santa Fe with alarming frequency. By early 1680 it had become clear that both the Franciscans and the officials appointed to administer the new settlements had begun to use considerable violence against the Indians. This, in turn, exacerbated tensions in the region, leading to further conflict and, eventually, to confrontation.

Indian Protest, 1679–1680

In 1679 conflict broke out in the province of Citará as the Indian population and a sizeable group of Spaniards began to lodge complaints against the Franciscan missionaries and a recently appointed royal official. The first indications of trouble came in September, when seven or eight Indian representatives of the province's three main settlements—Negua, Lloró, and San Francisco de Atrato—appeared before the governor of Antioquia to lodge a formal complaint against two Franciscans, Joseph de Córdoba and Pablo Ruiz.⁴³ Between April and October 1680, the governor received further complaints, not just against the Franciscans but also against a recently appointed *teniente de gobernador*, Lope de Cárdenas.⁴⁴ Although the Indians of Citará rarely made specific complaints, having in the past only vaguely referred to the “extortions” of Lope de Cárdenas and ill-treatment at the hands of Joseph de Córdoba, now a Spaniard, a certain Roque de Espinosa, offered testimony as to the true nature of the Citaraes’ objections when he stated that the Indians held the *teniente* responsible for having killed one of their people.⁴⁵

During 1680 the inhabitants of two of the smaller settlements in the region, Taita and Guebara, also lodged quite specific grievances against both Cárdenas and Córdoba in regard to the impending transfer of their communities to a larger settlement on the banks of the Atrato, some four to five days’ journey from their fields. In order to enforce the order to relocate, the aforementioned Spaniards had confiscated the Indians’ tools and slaughtered their animals. In addition, Joseph de Córdoba had threatened to destroy their crops,

43. *Ibid.*, ramo 3, fols. 1–2.

44. Lope de Cárdenas probably began his activities in the region as a miner, given that in 1674 he was said to have been living in the Chocó since 1671; see “Testimonio de Autos” (Franciscans), AGI, Quito, leg. 67, fol. 154.

45. Juan Manuel Pacheco, *Historia eclesiástica*, vol. 2: *La consolidación de la Iglesia, siglo XVII* (Bogotá: Ediciones Lerner, 1975), 673.

which would leave the Indians with no option but to resettle at the chosen site. He was also accused of having beaten them with a stick.⁴⁶

Given that both secular and religious Spaniards clearly admitted their goal of congregating the dispersed population of the Chocó, in his response to the governor's inquiry, Lope de Cárdenas felt no need to deny that he had tried to force the Indians to relocate. In his defense he argued that these communities, as well as three or four other *sitios* in the area, were in fact little more than a couple of dwellings. Therefore, he added, it was necessary to move their inhabitants to the larger settlements. However, he did deny all the other charges against him, and advised the governor that these allegations should not be taken seriously, as he had never "bothered nor harassed" the indigenous population. Far from having abused the Indians, he even claimed to have been holding back in the hope that the Indians would voluntarily accept relocation.⁴⁷ A Franciscan friar residing in the province, Cristóbal de Artiaga, denied the accusations made against his fellow friars and claimed that all reports about their conduct were "sinister" and "false." But the events that followed suggest that the missionaries and the *teniente* had indeed adopted new methods to subdue the Indians, including physical punishment.

The strongest evidence that the authorities had adopted more coercive methods in dealing with their Indian charges came not from the native population but from other Spanish residents in the Chocó. During 1680 at least 20 Spaniards wrote letters, signed petitions, or personally traveled to Antioquia to support the Indians in their dispute with Cárdenas and Córdoba. One, Francisco de Borja, even advised Governor Radillo de Arce that unless Lope de Cárdenas was replaced, all the Spaniards would abandon their activities in the Chocó.⁴⁸ The reasons for the Spaniards' opposition to the *teniente* were never specified in the written reports, and are thus difficult to establish. But their petitions to the governor suggest that, above all, they feared that their own safety and the activities of other settlers in the region were being endangered by the tension and discontent created by the conduct of Lope de Cárdenas and the Franciscan missionaries.

After July 1680 the situation in the Chocó became more explosive and violent. Conflict—which had at first taken the form of letters and petitions for the removal of Cárdenas and Córdoba—became confrontation. In July and August 1680, two incidents took place that forced Lope de Cárdenas to ask

46. "Testimonio . . . sobre el alzamiento . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 3, fol. 7.

47. *Ibid.*, fols. 15–17.

48. *Ibid.*, fol. 10.

Santiago de Arce Camargo, a fellow *teniente de gobernador* in the province of Noanama, to act against his enemies, both Indian and Spanish. The first confrontation involved the Franciscans. After Fray Joseph de Córdoba left the province, apparently to seek aid in Popayán, a group of Indian *capitanes* decided, after widespread consultation, to prevent his return to Negua, the settlement where he was based. The *capitanes* also warned that Córdoba would be killed should he attempt to return to Negua. The Spaniards who supported the Indians recognized that they and their slaves were in a vulnerable position, given that most Citaráes were armed and many were said to be “ready for war.” To avoid a confrontation, they persuaded Córdoba to leave the province, which he and his fellow Franciscans agreed to do.⁴⁹ The second incident involved Lope de Cárdenas, who now, again according to the evidence of Spanish residents in the Chocó, had attempted to garrote an Indian, allegedly without justification. Believing that this act would jeopardize all the progress that had been made among the Citará peoples and put their own lives in danger, the Spaniards decided to deprive Lope de Cárdenas of his staff of office, a symbol of his authority. They further justified having removed the *teniente* from office because it was “what was requested by the said Indians,” whom the Spaniards feared.⁵⁰ It was principally as a result of this event that Cárdenas sought the aid of Arce Camargo.

To punish an act that both *tenientes* considered to be treasonous, Arce Camargo led an expeditionary force of 30 armed men from the province of Noanama into Citará territory, where he arrived on August 28, 1680. The expedition also included the Franciscans who had previously been expelled. Once in Negua, Arce Camargo proceeded to assist Cárdenas in taking revenge against those Spaniards most responsible for the affray over the staff of office. Diego Díaz de Castro, the Spaniard held most directly accountable, was the first to suffer the consequences: he was arrested and later executed.⁵¹ Clearly, the earlier violence against Cárdenas and his office moved the *teniente* to respond with even greater violence against the Spanish settlers, significantly heightening tensions in the region. Fearing for their lives, some Spaniards fled the province; others, less fortunate, were detained. Although most were later released and exiled from the Chocó, at least one, the silversmith Joseph Enrique, was ordered to remain and forced to serve Fray Joseph

49. The most active of the *capitanes* were don Rodrigo Pivo and don Pedro de Bolívar; *ibid.*, fols. 22–24.

50. *Ibid.*, fol. 19.

51. *Ibid.*, fols. 66–68.

de Córdoba.⁵² Thereafter, Cárdenas and Córdoba proceeded to confiscate the assets of all the Spaniards who had fled, been exiled, or were still under arrest. One of these, Manuel de Burgos, reported that many possessions, mines, and slaves had been confiscated. Another, Juan Nuño de Sotomayor, reported that Cárdenas had appropriated the mine of a certain Captain Juan de Guzmán, which he was operating in partnership with Jacinto Roque, having appointed another miner to oversee the blacks. Other witnesses added that Córdoba was appropriating all the gold extracted from the mines, and that along with Cárdenas he was personally carrying out the confiscations as well as collecting debts owed to the Spaniards who had opposed the *teniente*.⁵³

The violence with which Cárdenas and Córdoba proceeded against other whites also worsened relations with the Indians. There were reports that the armed men of the expedition led by Cárdenas and Arce Camargo had stolen essential food supplies from the communities—maize, plantains, hens, and pigs—and that as a result many Indians were dying of hunger.⁵⁴ The return of the missionaries to Negua in August 1680 provoked further resistance. Many Indians moved away from the settled areas; as they left they torched the congregated settlement of Lloró and blocked the paths from Anserma and Popayán into the Chocó. The Indians now demanded that both Cárdenas and Córdoba be replaced, that the former should be required to compensate the Indians for the stolen goods and, most interestingly, that in the future priests should not be allowed arms or dogs. Furthermore, the Indians threatened that if their demands went unheeded, they would all retreat to the still unconquered territory of the Soruco.⁵⁵ Previously the Indians had appealed to the governor of Antioquia for redress; now they were prepared to take direct action.

Initially, these acts of Indian resistance prompted conciliation. In October 1680, Governor Radillo de Arce sent don Juan Bueso de Valdés, a former governor, to the Chocó with instructions to calm the province and return the Indians to their settlements. He was also instructed to replace the friars Córdoba and Ruiz and to entreat Lope de Cárdenas to show some restraint in his actions. The Indians were to be compensated for all the damage they had suffered, and the Spaniards whose property had been confiscated were to be allowed to testify against both Cárdenas and the missionaries.⁵⁶ But by Nov-

52. See *ibid.*, fols. 27–28, 37–39, 45–46.

53. See *ibid.*, fols. 37–39, 45, 72.

54. *Ibid.*, fols. 39–40.

55. *Ibid.*, fols. 41–42.

56. *Ibid.*, fols. 47–48.

ember 1680, just before Bueso de Valdés arrived in the province, Lope de Cárdenas had executed two more Spaniards, Nicolás de Murcia and Sebastián García. This incident led the former governor to detain Cárdenas, who was taken to Negua and placed under arrest.⁵⁷ Bueso de Valdés then took action against the Franciscans Joseph de Córdoba, Pablo Ruiz, and Francisco Moreno, all three of whom were arrested and sent to Santa Fe de Bogotá to appear before their provincial.⁵⁸ The new missionaries sent to replace them—Esteban Alvarez de Aviles, Dionisio de Camino, and Joseph Flores—were entrusted with the task of reconstructing the settlements and churches and carrying out the *reducción* and conversion of the Indians.

The reports of Bueso de Valdés to the governor of Antioquia clearly indicate that Cárdenas, as *teniente*, had used excessive force in dealing with both whites and Indians in the Chocó. “It is difficult,” the former governor observed, “to explain the violence and harm he has done . . . and [ignore] the clamorings of Indians and Spaniards.” As for the Franciscans, the new leader of the mission, Alvarez de Aviles, found that the “delinquent religious” had made little progress in converting the native population. The Indians, he claimed, were unable even “to cross themselves.” Indeed, he alleged, the children “do not know how to pray because the priests were busy in collecting money for the clothing they sell.” The changes in personnel did, however, return calm to the region. According to Bueso de Valdés, by the time of his departure “the Indians, with their families, and the Spaniards have come out from the hills.”⁵⁹

Indian Rebellion, 1684–1687

The calm that resulted from Spanish attempts at conciliation in 1680 did not endure. On January 15, 1684, a large-scale rebellion broke out in the settlement of Negua; the revolt spread through Citará territory and resulted in the massacre of most Spanish inhabitants and their servants: missionaries, miners, and Spanish traders, as well as mestizos, mulattos, slaves, and Indian porters from the interior.⁶⁰ More than one hundred people were killed in the violence,

57. Ibid., fols. 57–58.

58. Ruiz and Moreno had originally been working among the Tatamaes, not the Citaras.

59. “Testimonio . . . sobre el alzamiento . . .,” AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 3, fols. 44, 56–57, 60–61.

60. Ibid., ramo 2, fols. 2, 28, 31.

which involved hundreds of Indians and spread rapidly across the province.⁶¹ The rebels burned down settlements and churches, and took church ornaments and the possessions of Spanish residents.⁶² In Negua, for example, all the Spanish and mestizo inhabitants were slaughtered—four of the eleven victims were decapitated, and the body of the Franciscan missionary was burned—and all their possessions stolen.⁶³

In the entire Citará province, only six Spaniards survived the rebellion. Having been forewarned, they had managed to take refuge, along with some 70 slaves and free people, at one of the mining camps in the province. They were rescued on July 24 by one of two separate expeditions that had been sent out shortly after the revolt started to assist the survivors, pacify the population, and punish the rebel leaders.⁶⁴ One company was led by Juan Bueso de Valdés, who departed from Antioquia with 48 soldiers and more than 40 Indians.⁶⁵ A second force, of more than 100 armed men aided by 160 Indians, was sent out from Popayán under the command of Juan de Caicedo Salazar.⁶⁶ A third, even larger expeditionary force was later sent out from Popayán; it comprised 200 Spaniards and 200 Indians and was led by Cristóbal de Caicedo.⁶⁷

Between July and October 1684, Bueso de Valdés led *correrías* (expeditions to capture rebels) into the region around the Murri and Bojaya Rivers, where many of the principal leaders were believed to have escaped.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, Caicedo Salazar and his men built a fort and carried out additional *correrías* in and around Lloró. Many Indians were seized by these expeditions shortly

61. A close reading of the statements made by both the survivors and the Indians captured in the aftermath of the rebellion show that at least 112 people were killed. However, in 1689 the governor of Popayán reported to the crown that in one day more than 126 Spaniards had been killed; this figure does not include slaves or Indians; see don Gerónimo de Berrio to Crown, Popayán, 2 Mar. 1689, AGI, Quito, leg. 75.

62. "Autos criminales obrados por . . . Bueso de Valdés contra los indios chocoes levantados . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 6, fols. 8–9.

63. *Ibid.*, fols. 22–23, 27, 31.

64. *Ibid.*, fols. 22–24, 27.

65. "Testimonio . . . sobre el alzamiento . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 5, fols. 1–5.

66. In return for their assistance in putting down the Citará revolt, the Noanamás were promised exemption from tributes for a period of ten years. See "Autos obrados por . . . Bueso de Valdés sobre la retirada de . . . Juan de Caicedo . . .," *ibid.*, ramo 7, fols. 1, 3.

67. Don Gerónimo de Berrio to Crown, Popayán, 2 Mar. 1669, AGI, Quito, leg. 75.

68. See "Autos obrados . . . sobre la retirada de . . . Juan de Caicedo . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 7, fols. 2–3; and "Testimonio . . . sobre el alzamiento . . .," *ibid.*, ramo 5, fol. 30.

after they began their mission, but most of the leading *capitanes* were not captured until after 1687, when the severed head of an Indian named Quirubira, thought to have been the principal rebel leader, was sent to the king as proof that the Indians had finally been defeated in a war that had lasted from January 15, 1684, to August 31, 1687.⁶⁹ Testimony of Spanish survivors and of Indian rebels provides information on events leading up to the revolt and on how it actually occurred.

Unlike 1680, in 1684 there was no cooperation between Indians and Spaniards. The rebels killed as many Spaniards as they were able to surprise, as well as all other outsiders associated with the colonization of the area—slaves, servants, women, children, itinerant traders. The witnesses' statements give no specific reasons for the rebellion, and this makes it difficult to discern the immediate motives for revolt. The only indication of a possible cause comes from reports that the Spaniard Martín de Ardanza killed an Indian and wounded another not long before the outbreak and that another Spaniard, Domingo de Veitia, had threatened all Citará *capitanes* with being put to death.⁷⁰ These events may indeed have been the immediate causes for rebellion, for they might have proved to the Citaraes that their earlier negotiations with the authorities in Antioquia had failed to lead to any real change in the conduct of Spanish residents. What is definitely clear, however, is that the rebellion was not a spontaneous act. Rather, it had been well planned, involved widespread Indian participation, and was carried out quickly and successfully.

The rebellion began on January 15, 1684, when Indians launched a surprise attack on the settlement of Negua, where they killed all the Spaniards, including the Franciscan friar Alvarez de Aviles.⁷¹ At the same time, similar offensives were launched against the two other main settlements of Lloró and San Francisco de Atrato. The rebellion soon spread to outlying settlements as several mining camps were attacked, including Naurita and Ingipurdú as well as those said to belong to the Spaniards Joseph Díaz and Domingo de Veitia. Spaniards living along the riverbanks were also killed.⁷² Some survivors gave a

69. Don Gerónimo de Berrio to Crown, Popayán, 11 Mar. 1689, and certification of don Carlos de Alcedo Lemus de Sotomayor, 21 Sept. 1687, AGI, Quito, leg. 75.

70. "Autos criminales . . . contra los indios chocoes . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 6, fol. 25. According to Azcárate del Castillo, these claims had been made by the Indian Quirubira, who was thought to have been the principal leader of the rebellion.

71. *Ibid.*, fol. 9.

72. See, for example, *ibid.*, fols. 24–25, 30–32.

specific figure of 59 people killed, but other witnesses named slaves, including several women, and Indian servants, *pajes*, carriers, and *mozos* who totaled many more. It would appear that at least 112 colonists were killed when the rebellion broke out. There were no reports of casualties among the rebel Indians.⁷³

The rebellion was planned well in advance and was organized and led by a small group of *capitanes* from all three of the main villages who, in the days before January 15, traveled to each of the three major settlements in an effort to involve as many Indians as possible in the impending uprising.⁷⁴ In this they were clearly successful. Indeed, it was precisely because so many Indians (and not only *capitanes*) from all across Citará territory participated that the rebellion was so swiftly and successfully carried out. Several Indians captured in the following months readily admitted to having participated in the massacres, each claiming that he had been ordered to kill a Spaniard. One Indian, for instance, claimed that he had been sent to eliminate a group of four Spaniards who were traveling into the Chocó from Anserma.⁷⁵

Despite the killings, it seems that many Indians participated in the rebellion to loot rather than to kill. The testimony indicates that apart from female slaves, who were particularly prized, Indians took church ornaments and chalices, clothing and gold, which one Indian admitted he had later used to buy axes.⁷⁶ And when the men of Bueso de Valdés captured several canoes on the Murri River in August 1684, they found them to be carrying church ornaments, bedclothes, hammers, machetes, axes, steel, and salt. In September the family of another Indian was captured and found to be in possession of 16 axes, machetes, a relic on a chain, three pesos in gold dust, and old clothing, among other items.⁷⁷

But even though the rebellion did enjoy widespread support, a core group of Indians remained loyal to the colonists throughout the events of January

73. *Ibid.*, fols. 3–4, 9, 10, 11–12, 14–16, 24–25, 30–31, 32, 43.

74. For details of the population of the settlements, see “Testimonio . . . sobre el alzamiento . . .,” in AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 1, fols. 75–79, 85–90, 131–43.

75. This Indian’s name was Juananui; see “Autos criminales . . . contra los indios chochoes . . .,” in AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 6, fols. 14–16, 44, 47.

76. See, for example, *ibid.*, fols. 3–5, 12, 14–16, 19, 41, 44. The taking of slaves appears to have been customary among the Citaras. A census carried out by Bueso de Valdés during his first *entrada* to the Chocó region in 1676 shows a significant number of slaves among the population. These were Indians captured in wars against enemy groups.

77. “Testimonio . . . sobre el alzamiento . . .,” in AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 5, fols. 34, 50.

1684, opting out of the rebellion altogether. At the time of the uprising, some of these Indians were absent from the three major settlements; indeed, the attacks may even have been deliberately timed to coincide with the absence of Indians whose loyalty to the Indian communities was in doubt. This group of loyal subjects was in fact very small, but they were crucial to the survival of many Spaniards: some carried letters, others supplied food, and others even returned some of the slaves whom the rebels had captured.⁷⁸ The most prominent of the Indians who helped the colonists were the *capitanes* don Rodrigo Pivi and don Juan Mitiguirre, who provided Bueso de Valdés with information that facilitated the capture of many Indians. For this, both Pivi and Mitiguirre were later threatened by the rebels.⁷⁹

It is unclear why some Indians remained loyal to the colonists, particularly since at least three of them had been directly involved in the conflict with Cárdenas and Córdoba just a few years earlier. One had threatened to kill Joseph de Córdoba should he return to Negua; another had threatened to burn down the church of Lloró; and a third had sought the assurance of the governor of Antioquia that the Franciscan missionaries would be expelled.⁸⁰ However, an observation that Bueso de Valdés made in 1684 suggests one possible reason for the divisions among the Indians. In commenting on his disbelief that the rebellion had occurred, Bueso de Valdés mentioned that some Chocó Indians had been honored by the governors of Popayán with the titles of Indian *gobernadores* of the new settlements.⁸¹ The fact that many Indians adopted Spanish names (don Rodrigo Pivi and don Juan Mitiguirre, for example), and the fact that Pivi was later rewarded with the title of hereditary cacique for his role in assisting the pacification process, lends support to this argument.⁸² Other Indians, such as those who traded with Spaniards, may have preferred to maintain good relations with the colonists for the benefits such contacts brought.⁸³

The rebellion, therefore, provoked some divisions among the Indian population of Citará province. Several leading *capitanes* remained loyal to the

78. Ibid., fols. 23–24, 27.

79. Ibid., fols. 30, 35.

80. Ibid., ramo 3, fols. 22–24, 41–42, 44.

81. “Autos criminales . . . contra los indios chocoes . . .,” AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 6, fols. 8–9.

82. Sven-Erik Isacson, “Emberá: territorio y régimen agrario de una tribu selvática bajo la dominación española,” in *Tierra, tradición y poder en Colombia: enfoques antropológicos*, ed. Nina S. de Friedmann (Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1976), 31.

83. See, for example, “Testimonio de Autos” (Franciscans), AGI, Quito, leg. 67, fol. 62.

colonists while many other Indians, though offering no direct assistance to the Spaniards, took no part in the massacres. But obviously there was widespread support for the rebellion, for hundreds of Indians were thought to have actively participated. For example, 12 days after the outbreak of violence, a force of approximately three hundred Indians (representing one-fifth of the entire population of the province) returned to the mine of Naurita, where the survivors had taken refuge, in an attempt to complete the massacre.⁸⁴ The rebellion clearly aimed to obliterate all traces of Spanish presence in the Chocó.

In the months that followed, many Citaraes withdrew from the territory they had occupied. At least seven rebel *capitanes*, accompanied by a large contingent of men, retreated to a region 150 leagues from the main area of settlement, from where they continued to attack the Spanish expeditionary forces sent to pacify the Chocó. Nevertheless, the defeat of the rebels was only a matter of time. Several hundred Indians were captured soon after the expeditions arrived, and many of them were tried and sentenced to death. Fernando Tajina, for example, was publicly hanged, his property was distributed among the soldiers, and his children were condemned to ten years of service to the Spaniards. The Indians Guaguirri, don Pedro Paparra, and others received similar sentences, while more lenient punishments—including forfeiture of property, whippings, and forced personal service—were meted out to Indians whose crime was limited to looting.⁸⁵ The principal objective was, after all, to prevent further disturbances rather than to destroy the very population upon which Spaniards depended for their livelihood. As for the rebels who had succeeded in holding out until 1687, their defeat was assured when the Audiencia appointed don Carlos de Alcedo Sotomayor to take over full control of the pacification campaign. Alcedo offered amnesty in exchange for surrender, thereby creating serious divisions among the rebels. Many Indians turned themselves in; others retreated further into the jungle, taking refuge among either the Soruco or the Cunacuna. Another group, led by Quirubira, remained in a fortification that they had built to defend themselves against the Spaniards. But once the Indians had divided and disbanded, each

84. "Autos criminales . . . contra los indios chocoes . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 6, fol. 32. According to Bueso de Valdés, by Oct. 1684 some 600 Indians had been captured, leaving 900 still to be accounted for. See "Autos obrados . . . sobre la retirada de . . . Juan de Caicedo," *ibid.*, ramo 7, fol. 4.

85. "Autos criminales . . . contra los indios chocoes . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 6, fols. 7–8, 13–14, 17, 20–21, 40, 49, 51, 53–54, 56.

separate group was swiftly defeated. By the end of August 1687, Quirubira and one other *capitán* had been killed; four more were killed soon afterward.⁸⁶

In the wake of the violence, the leaders of the expeditionary forces sent into the Chocó to defeat the rebels seemed remarkably unwilling to contemplate possible reasons for the revolt, nor even to reconsider the methods that had been employed in the colonization of the region. Instead, the Spaniards sought to explain the Indian's behavior by the very nature of native society in the Chocó. Diego de Galvis, the lawyer appointed to defend the Indian prisoners, considered that the cause of the revolt lay in the inherent tendency of the Citaras to kill, which they "did not consider a crime." The Indians, he asserted, "spend all their lives in this exercise of killing and capturing [Indians] of different provinces and nations situated among these hills." He attributed their interest in the possessions of Spaniards to the fact that they were "greedy" and "attracted to anything novel."⁸⁷

Finally, the testimony of the Citaras themselves probably contributed to the ease with which the Spaniards could attribute the rebellion to the nature of indigenous society rather than the result of the actions of the colonists and the process of colonization. In their statements, the Indian prisoners demonstrated a surprising willingness to both confess their crimes and inform on relatives involved in, or present at, the massacres, a tendency that the Spaniards seemed to take as indicative of a great acceptance of violence within indigenous society.⁸⁸ Even Bueso de Valdés noted the inherent truthfulness of the Indians when he observed that "these Indians very rarely deny what they have done."⁸⁹ The *defensor* Diego de Galvis also believed the witnesses, stating that "they are so truthful that none denies having committed a crime [despite] knowing from experience that they are to be killed."⁹⁰ The reasons why they should have been so willing to make these admissions may have resided in the importance that indigenous society in the Chocó seemed to attach to the capture and killing of the enemy. This was a feature of Citará society that even Marzal had identified. As he noted in 1678, "they go to war out of the vanity of being considered brave . . . for he who kills the

86. Don Gerónimo de Berrio to Crown, Popayán, 2 Mar. 1689, and certification of don Carlos de Alcedo Lemus de Sotomayor, n.p., n.d., both in AGI, Quito, leg. 75.

87. "Autos criminales . . . contra los indios chocoes . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 6, fols. 38–39, 49, 50.

88. See, for example, *ibid.*, fols. 11, 14–15, 19, 20, 36, 37, 42, 43.

89. *Ibid.*, fol. 37.

90. *Ibid.*, fol. 53.

most is considered the most brave."⁹¹ Thus, in his confession, don Fernando Tajina informed Bueso de Valdés that he was a *capitán* "because he had killed five Cunacunas and Burgumias." And an Indian named Guaguirri described his occupations as "cultivating maize to maintain his children and going to war."⁹² Given the centrality of war alone, Galvis's interpretation may have been close to the truth.

Conclusion

The rebellion of 1684 and the subsequent pacification campaign marked a turning point in the history of the indigenous population of the Chocó. The defeat of the rebels signaled the end of the last Indian attempt to forcibly rid the region of Spaniards. In 1690 it was reported that a group of six Indians were conspiring to kill the colonists. But these plans came to nothing, having been uncovered by the newly appointed lieutenant, don Antonio Ruiz Calzado. To ensure that no such attempt would occur again, Ruiz Calzado acted quite ruthlessly against the potential rebels, detaining eighty and sentencing four to death. It was precisely at this time that the Indians of the province of Citará adopted flight as the only remaining way to resist the Spaniards.⁹³ The pacification marked a turning point in another sense as well. Starting in 1690 slaveholders from the province of Popayán became increasingly involved in mining activities in Citará. In that year alone, for example, four of Popayán's largest slaveholders transferred slave gangs to the Chocó in the company of a substantial number of Spanish miners.⁹⁴ The number of miners and slaves in the Chocó grew rapidly thereafter, and the Indians of Citará, just like those of the neighboring provinces of Noanama and Tatamá, were soon drawn into the mining economy. They began to build dwellings and canoes, transport goods, and supply foodstuffs. Despite their early resistance, therefore, the Indian communities were ultimately unable to stem the Spanish advance into their territory and its subsequent conversion into a major mining region of late colonial New Granada.

91. Marzal, "Informe sobre el Chocó," 2:501.

92. "Autos criminales . . . contra los indios chocoes . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 204, ramo 6, fols. 11, 14.

93. Don Rodrigo Mañosca to Crown, Popayán, 2 Mar. 1689, AGI, Quito, leg. 75. See also "Cuaderno . . . sobre la entrada al río Murri y descubrimiento de nuevos minerales de oro . . .," AGI, Santa Fe, leg. 307, fols. 81–82.

94. Don Rodrigo Mañosca to Crown, Popayán, 16 May 1690, AGI, Quito, leg. 75.