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## PANARE BASKETRY: MEANS OF COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

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### INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

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A thorough study of the arts and crafts of the contemporary indigenous population of Venezuela is long overdue and would be of great interest simply on account of its ethnographic value. However the need for such a study is particularly vital in the light of the fact that many indigenous groups now derive a substantial income from the sale of artefacts as objects of artistic interest to non-indigenous members of the national society. Under the right conditions, the commercialization of indigenous craftwork could fulfill two valuable functions si-

1. The data that form the basis of this essay were collected during the period February 1975 - June 1976. During this time Henley spent approximately 11 months amongst the Panare. This fieldwork was financed principally by the British Social Science Research Council. Further generous financial help was received from the Venezuelan Academia de Ciencias, the Fundación Raúl Leoni and the Horniman Foundation of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain. The author would like to thank all these bodies for their support and Dr. F. Kerdel Vegas in particular for sponsoring his applications to the Academia de Ciencias and the Fundación Raúl Leoni. Many other individuals and institutions helped the author during the time he was in Venezuela and his debt to them will be fully and properly acknowledged in a subsequent and more complete publication of the results of his fieldwork. Here the author would only mention the personal and institutional backing he received from Dr. N. Arvelo-Jiménez and the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Científicas and the unstinted hospitality shown him whilst in Caracas by Sra. R. de Castro, Dr. L. Castro and their family. Finally, Henley would like to thank Queens' College, Cambridge and the Corporación Venezolana de Guayana for providing him with funds during the period that the final draft of this paper was written. In specific connection with this essay, both authors would like to express their gratitude

multaneously: whilst encouraging indigenous groups to maintain and develop their artistic traditions it can at the same time provide them with a means of deriving the income they need to buy industrial goods which involves less disruption of traditional social and economic relations than cash cropping, cattle rearing or wage labour. But so far there have been very few attempts by anthropologists to examine the commercial potential of Venezuelan indigenous craftwork in detail. Even the most basic information concerning the type and range of artefacts produced by indigenous artisans is lacking for most of the indigenous groups of Venezuela. Information on the present or potential effect of the commercialization of craftwork on indigenous economies and on the artistic quality of the artefacts themselves is even more scarce<sup>2</sup>.

This essay is intended to rectify this deficiency of information in so far as it affects Panare basketry. A large part of the essay is dedicated to the discussion of the basket known in Spanish as the "guapa" since it is this type of basket that is the most important in the basket trade and which from a technical and aesthetic point of view is the finest basket that the Panare weave. The essay is divided into five sections. In Section I, the social context of the basket trade is described. In Section II, the production of basketry for exchange with the criollos is considered from an economic point of view and the effect of the basket trade on the Panare's traditional system of economic relations is assessed<sup>3</sup>. In Section III, the stylistic diversification that has occurred in Panare guapawork following commercialization is described. In Section IV, the guapa is considered as vehicle of artistic expression and the manner in which recent technical innovations have affected its value as such is examined. The concluding section of the essay, Section V, considers the relation between commercialization and the artistic innovations that have occurred in Panare guapawork. A catalogue of the

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to Dr. Mary T. Kalin for some of the botanical identifications made in the text and to Sr. Miguel von Dangel, Dr. Walter Coppens, the Sociedad La Salle and the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences of the Universidad Central de Venezuela for access to their collections of basketry. The authors would also like to thank C. de Bruyne, G. Owen and D. Nedelka for taking some of the photographs used in the illustrations. The authors are greatly indebted to Prof. R. Lizarralde for many things including advice on the preparation of the maps used in this publication. Finally, the authors would like to thank the following for their critical remarks on the text: Prof. J. A. Barnes, M. Pickering, H. A. Reid.

2. A recent attempt to deal with some of these issues is the article by Hames and Hames (1976) published in an earlier number of *Antropológica*.
3. As it is used in this essay, the term "criollo" refers to all non-Indians, regardless of social class or ethnic background. Hence it does not have quite the same connotations as the English term "creole".

graphic motifs encountered in Panare guapas is provided in Appendix I.

In certain parts of this essay a large number of technical terms are used to describe basketry. The present authors have been obliged to invent some of these terms since the terms used in previous studies of basketry were found to be insufficiently specific for the purposes of this essay. Rather than allow definitions of these terms to break up the text, the majority have been relegated to a Glossary to be found in Appendix III. When reference is made to a type of basket for the first time, in addition to an English term, the Spanish and Panare terms will be added in parentheses and will be indicated by the capital letters "S" and "P" respectively<sup>4</sup>. There is one exception to this procedure. There is no satisfactory English term for the type of basket described in this essay as the "guapa". The term "guapa" is currently used in Venezuelan Spanish but is almost certainly a loan word from some indigenous Carib language. The Panare term for this type of basket is "wapa". However since this essay will refer not only to Panare baskets of this type but also to those woven by other Guianese indigenous groups, it seems more appropriate to use the term employed in Spanish, the *lingua franca* of the Venezuelan Guayana<sup>5</sup>. A short description of

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4. The symbols used to transcribe Panare words have the same value as in English with the following qualifications and exceptions:

š = alveolar groove fricative having the same value as the English letter 's' except that in certain contexts it can become an affricated stop as in the English word "hats".  
n = as in English except before a consonant or at the end of a word in which case it is velarized as in the English word "pang".  
č = affricated alveopalatal stop as in the English word "chat"; in certain contexts, not yet fully understood, this becomes an alveopalatal groove fricative as in the English word "shop".  
h = velar slit fricative, as in the English word "home".  
' = glottal stop. No English nor Spanish equivalent.  
ē = unrounded mid central vowel as in the English word "hurt".  
a = unrounded low central vowel as in the English word "hart".  
ī = unrounded high back vowel. No English nor Spanish equivalent.  
o = rounded mid back vowel as in the English word "hot".  
u = rounded high back vowel as in the English word "hoot".

5. In this essay, the term "Guiana" refers to the "island" enclosed by the Atlantic Ocean, the Orinoco River, the Casiquiare Canal, the Rio Negro and the River Amazon. In addition, reference will be made to various subdivisions of this area: "Venezuelan Guayana", the territory presently administered by Venezuela; "Guyana", the territory formerly known as "British Guiana"; "Surinam", the territory formerly referred to as "Dutch Guiana"; and finally, "Guyane", the territory sometimes referred to as "French Guiana". A large part of Guiana is also administered by Brazil but no specific reference is made in this essay to that particular subdivision of the region. In view of the Venezuelan claim on the part of Guyana that lies to the west of the Essequibo River, some readers may regard the proposed terminology as unsatisfactory. However until 1982, when the boundary treaty currently recognized by both the Venezuelan and Guyanese governments comes up for renewal, it is only correct in formal legal terms to describe the whole of former British Guiana as "Guyana". In order to avoid confusion with any of its subdivisions, the adjectival form used in connection with the term for the region as a whole, "Guiana", will be "Guianese".

the guapa and all other types of Panare basketry mentioned in the text will be found in Appendix II.

When botanical species are mentioned in the text for the first time, a procedure similar to that employed for basket types will be followed. In some cases however, the English and/or Spanish terms are not known and are therefore omitted. When the scientific Latin name is known, it will be included in parentheses and indicated by the capital letter "L"<sup>6</sup>.

## I. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE PANARE BASKET TRADE

### I.1 *An Ethnographic Sketch of the Panare*

The Panare are a Carib-speaking indigenous group of between 1,500 and 1,700 individuals living on the northwestern fringe of the Guianese Shield. Before the latter half of the last century, when they began to expand to the north and west, they were confined to the middle and upper reaches of the Cuchivero river. Present Panare territory covers a roughly triangular area of 18,000 kms<sup>2</sup>, extending as far west as the Suapure river and almost as far north as the banks of the Orinoco river (cf. Map N° 1). The Panare have also begun to expand to the south of the headwaters of the Cuchivero at the expense of the neighbouring Hoti.

The Panare are not the only inhabitants of this area; only in the southeastern corner of their territory in the upper reaches of the Cuchivero river are their settlements isolated from those of the criollos. In the remainder of Panare territory, most settlements are less than half a day's walk from a criollo house. There are a few large criollo cattlebreeding ranches in the area but the majority of the criollo inhabitants are peasant smallholders engaged in agriculture and cattle breeding. In most parts of Panare territory, the close proximity of the Panare to the criollos has not been the result of the invasion of the former's territory by the latter. Both the criollos and the Panare have moved

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6. Only those identifications marked with an asterisk (\*) were made by Dr. M. Kalin de Arroyo of the Botanical Department of the Biology School of the Universidad Central de Venezuela. These identifications were made on the basis of dried specimens brought from the field. In some cases, the samples were not good enough to make completely certain identifications and allowance should be made for a small margin of error. The botanical identifications not marked with an asterisk and the faunal identifications were made by the authors with the aid of the standard manuals written by L. Schnee (1973) and E. Röhl (1956). Since the authors have training neither in botany nor in zoology, these identifications should be regarded as tentative.



features provide three principal ecological environments: the savanna, the forest and the rivers. The plains are covered with savanna vegetation and are crossed by numerous watercourses fringed with gallery forest. The rocky flanks of the mountains do not favour the growth of dense vegetation and the forest and the river. The plains are covered with savanna vegetation cover. Hence the forest becomes abundant only on the relatively flattened summits of the mountains (cf. Dumont 1972: 80).

The Panare economy is oriented to all of the three principal ecological environments mentioned. Hunting takes place principally in the forest located both on the plains and on the summits of the mountains. In most parts of Panare territory, fishing takes place on the plains since the steep slopes of the mountains prevent all but the smallest fish from getting up towards the sources of the rivers. Gardens are cut either in the forest on the plains or in the forest on the mountain summits. The Panare consider the gardens cut in the mountains to be more productive. The savanna environment itself is not rich in resources. On the plains, it is mainly the pockets of forest that they exploit rather than the savanna. It is for this reason that the Panare and the criollos, who use the savanna for their cattle breeding activities, can cohabit more or less peaceably the same region.

The traditional Panare settlement pattern reflects the orientation of the economy to all these environments. However, the sharp contrast between mountains and plains means that in most parts of Panare territory it is impossible to build a house that is simultaneously close to all ecological resources. There is considerable variation in the strategies that individual communities have adopted to overcome this problem. Some have built houses on the plains near to a stretch of gallery forest or the forest at the foot of the mountains. In these pockets of forest, they cut their gardens. From the plains they make sorties to the mountains for game. These sorties can last as long as a month or even more, in which time they simply sling their hammocks amongst the trees or erect a temporary shelter. Other groups have built their houses and cut their gardens in the mountains and make sorties to the plains in search of fish. Some groups even have two houses and two gardens, one of each in the mountains and one of each on the plains. Generally speaking however, the traditional settlement pattern has been the second of those mentioned. But in recent years, the first of these patterns has become more common, i.e. to build houses on the plains and make sorties to the mountains. The reason for this move down to the plains is to be closer to the criollos.

## I.2 Local Economic Development and the Basket Trade

Trade and social relations with the criollos are nothing new for the Panare. As long ago as 1885, Chaffanjon observed some Panare bring agricultural produce to a criollo town on the lower Cuchivero river (Chaffanjon 1889: 73). But the sale of the tonka bean has been more important than the sale of agricultural produce in Panare-criollo economic relations. Certainly by 1910, if not before<sup>7</sup>, the Panare were engaged in the collection of this wild fruit (L: *Dipteryx* sp.; S: *sarrapia*; P: *woin*<sup>8</sup>). They would not work as peons for criollo masters but brought baskets of the bean which they had collected on their own account to a number of collecting stations. At the stations, they exchanged the tonka bean for industrial goods, medicines, salt, etc. Until the early 1960s, the sale of the tonka bean was the Panare's principal means of acquiring such goods. The collection and sale of the tonka bean was compatible with their traditional settlement pattern. The fruit grew in the mountains and it could be exchanged for industrial goods either at the trading posts which were often located very close to Panare settlements or with itinerant merchants. But in the early 1960s, the market for the tonka bean collapsed, the trading posts in Panare territory closed down and they were obliged to find other means of acquiring the industrial products on which they had become dependent.

With the collapse of the tonka bean market, the Panare were left with two types of goods which they could exchange for industrial products: agricultural produce and basketry. As long as any Panare can remember both these resources have been exchanged with the local criollos. But until recently, these exchanges were on a very small scale. The criollos who lived in the rural hinterland of Caicara, close to the Panare, were not a good market for the goods the Panare had to exchange. Most of the criollos grew their own food and they had little use for Panare basketry. With them, the Panare were able to exchange only small quantities of agricultural produce and various pieces of functional basketry: manioc presses, manioc sieves and cheese moulds (cf. Antolínez 1952). The oldest Panare say that there was also a market

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7. Chaffanjon (1889: 68) reports that Indians brought baskets of tonka beans to sell in Caicara when he visited the town in 1885. However one cannot be sure that he is referring to the Panare in this passage.

8. The tonka bean is a forest fruit from which certain chemicals used in the manufacture of cigarettes and perfumes can be extracted. Various species have been identified in Venezuela, of which *Dipteryx punctata* (Blake) is the most important. The tonka bean is sometimes identified as *Coumarorouna* sp. (cf. Schnee 1973: 657-658).

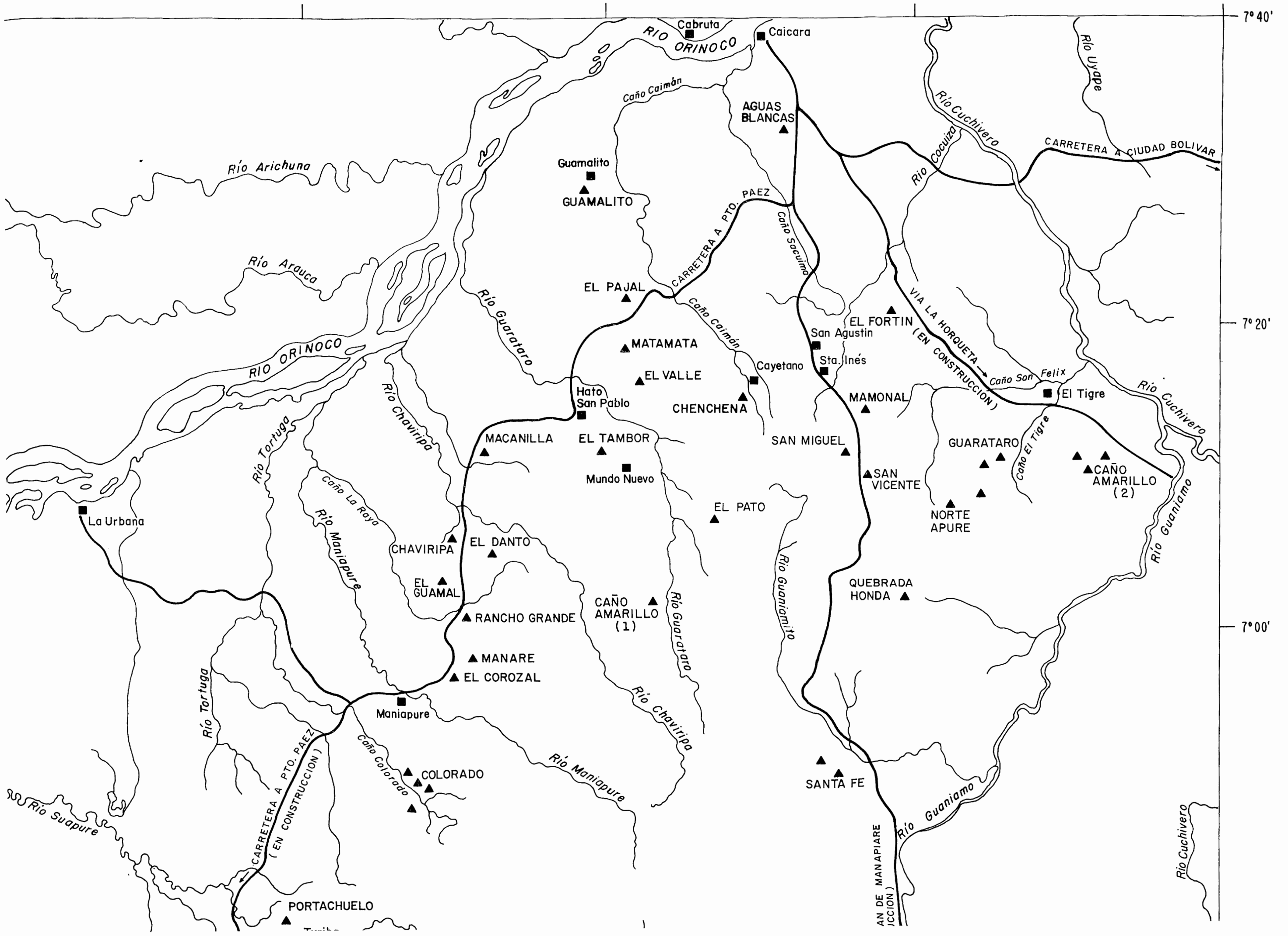
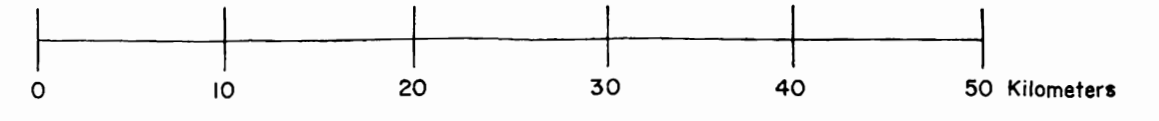
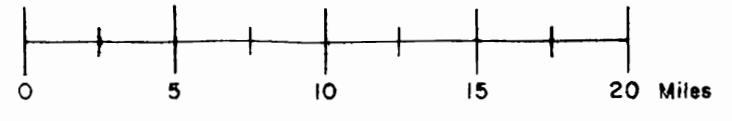
for guapas even when they were young men but that it was a very small one. The small local towns, Caicara and La Urbana, which were better markets for Panare products and richer sources of industrial goods than the local *campesinos*, were a long way off for the Panare since there were very few roads which connected them with the hinterland in which the Panare live. Even so, they did visit these towns on foot. The journey from the settlements in the valley of the Colorado river to Caicara, nowadays a three-hour trip by jeep over an unsurfaced road, used to take an able-bodied Panare three days of hard walking.

But over the last fifteen years or so, a number of significant changes have taken place in the social and economic organization of the local criollos. According to the statistics of the Malaria Control Division of the Ministry of Health the population of Caicara has more than trebled in the last fifteen years whilst the number of households has more than doubled. Paved roads now connect Caicara to the industrial centres in the north of Venezuela and around the mouth of the Orinoco. Radiating south from Caicara, three new roads, cutting through Panare territory—the Vía La Horqueta, the Vía de Guaniamo and the road to Pto. Páez—have been built during the last six years or are in the process of construction (cf. Map N° 2). In 1960, Caicara was a sleepy little town isolated from the rest of the country; now it is in the process of becoming something of a regional commercial centre in which a relatively wide range of goods and services are available.

The road running south from Caicara now makes it relatively easy, in the dry season at least, either for criollo merchants to come to the Panare settlements or for the Panare to go themselves to Caicara. Another effect of local economic development has been to increase the number of potential customers for the goods the Panare produce. A large part of the population increase in Caicara is a result of the migration of *campesinos* from the rural hinterland to the town. In Caicara the former *campesinos* find employment in the developing service and commercial sectors of the local economy. The exodus of these men from the rural areas has led to a decline in agricultural production in the vicinity of Caicara and foodstuffs have to be imported from other parts of Venezuela. Consequently the cost of living in Caicara has risen dramatically. This situation presents potential economic benefits for the Panare since local traders are now more interested to seek any agricultural produce that the Panare are disposed to sell and to pay a better price for it. Certain Panare individuals are now actively engaged in cash cropping. One man in the community of Santa Fe for example, has an annual contract with a shopkeeper in Caicara for some



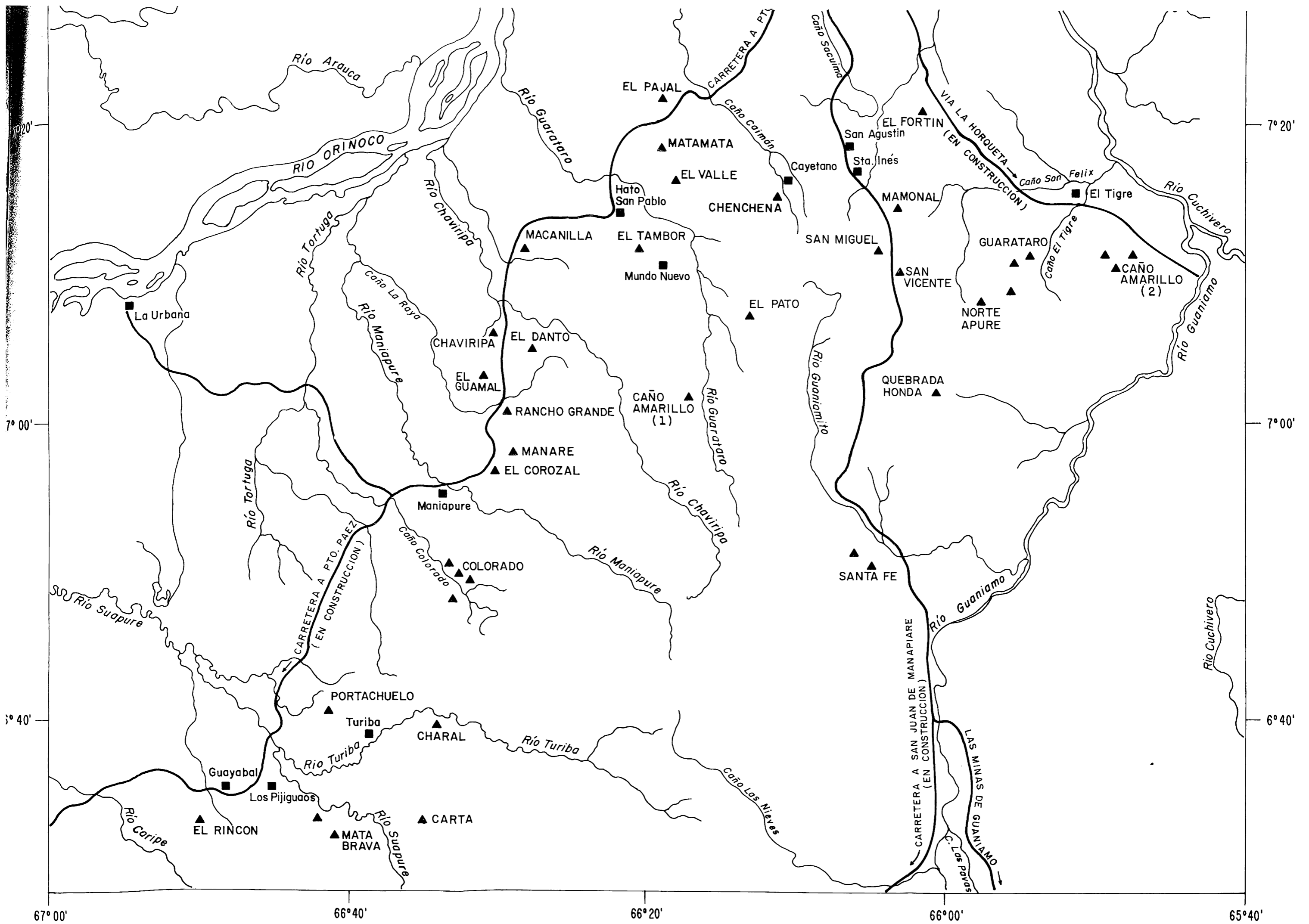
- ▲ = Panare Community
- = Criollo Community
- = Major Highway



7° 40'

7° 20'

7° 00'



**MAP N° 2**  
**THE PANARE COMMUNITIES INVOLVED IN THE BASKET TRADE**  
**(June, 1976)**

2,500 kgs. of *maíz desgranado*. But such individuals are exceptions to the general rule.

The Panare as a whole have taken greater advantage of the increase in demand for basketry. The increase in demand is not for the functional basketry that they have always sold to the *campesinos* but rather for the basketry that the criollos use for decorative purposes only, in particular for guapas. Although the Panare sell most of their basketry in Caicara or to traders operating out of Caicara, the ultimate destination of most decorative baskets are the urban centres of Venezuela. The local buyers of Panare basketry resell it to visiting tourists or take large batches of it to Caracas or to Ciudad Bolívar where it is sold in souvenir shops. Sometimes the Panare living in the southwestern corner of Panare territory; south of the Suapure river, go to Pto. Ayacucho to sell their baskets. These are also resold to people who come from outside Pto. Ayacucho itself. A small number of baskets are sold to the tourists who visit Panare territory during the dry season and buy directly from the artisans.

The new roads have played a very important part in stimulating the basket trade. The roads running south of Caicara facilitate the sale of baskets to local criollos and the roads running north of Caicara facilitate their resale by the latter in the urban and industrial centres of Venezuela. Furthermore, it is the new roads that have permitted the penetration of the area by tourists who come to buy baskets in the dry season. There are still some areas of Panare territory that are not easily reached by road, even in the dry season. In these areas, the basket trade is small or non-existent. The basket trade in the communities to the south and east of the Guaniamo river is still confined, where it exists at all, to the sale of functional basketry. It would appear that in this area there was not even the limited demand for decorative basketry that there was in the northern and western parts of Panare territory even before the construction of the new roads. Consequently, there are very few Panare in the communities to the southeast of the Guaniamo river who know how to weave decorative baskets. It is for this reason that those who live close to the newly established Guaniamo diamond mines do *not* sell baskets to the criollo population of the mines which numbers some 10,000 individuals. Although the Panare of these communities showed themselves to be familiar with guapas and even ready to offer interpretations of the meaning of the graphic motifs of guapas woven by other Panare, not one guapa was to be found in their own settlements. On account of the minimal participation of these groups in the basket trade, unless otherwise stated, the

generalizations made about Panare society in the remainder of this essay will not refer to those groups living to the south and east of the Guaniamo river.

Within the remainder of Panare territory, the importance of the basket trade as a means of exchange with the criollos varies considerably. West of the Chaviripa river, baskets are far and away the most important means of exchange (cf. Map N° 2). East of the same river, cash cropping is as important as the sale of baskets as a means of exchange with the criollos. In the communities around El Tigre, some Panare breed pigs for sale to the criollos. But in no part of Panare territory have the Panare ever been willing to sell their labour except on a very temporary basis.

There is also variation in the type of basket that is the most important trade basket. West of the Chaviripa river, the most important trade basket is the guapa. There is also a small trade in painted storage baskets (S: *canasta*; P: *tawahëmën*) and an even smaller trade in pegalls (S: *petacas*; P: *tupupukumën*). Amongst the groups around the Hato San Pablo, the guapa is still the most important type of trade basket but the Panare of this area also sell painted storage baskets, latticework baskets (S: *cesta jaula*; P: *ëwe'*) and other less important types of basket work: model Panare houses, satchels, plaques that look like table mats, etc.<sup>9</sup>. The most important trade basket around the Vía Guaniamo is the latticework type. Amongst the Panare living around El Tigre, where the basket trade is small compared to other parts of Panare territory, both guapas and latticework baskets are made.

Taking the Panare as a whole, the greatest volume of trade is in the guapa since it is the groups for whom the guapa is the most important trade basket who are the most active basket makers. With the exception of the manioc press and the pegall, neither of which play more than a very minor role in the present day basket trade, from a technical point of view the guapa is the most complex basket that the

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9. In the community of El Pajal, a great variety of basket types are woven. In addition to the types already mentioned, the Panare of this community also make criollo-style hats and round carrying baskets with handles. Some of the Panare of the communities around the Hato San Pablo also make gaudily decorated bows and arrows. The bow and arrow is not an important weapon amongst the Panare. The principal Panare weapons before the introduction of the shotgun were the blowpipe and the lance. These painted bows and arrows are of very poor quality and are destined exclusively for sale to the undiscerning tourist whose stereotype of the Indian requires him to be armed with bow and arrow. But fake bow and arrow sets of this kind are not as important as basketry as a trade item. The groups around the Hato San Pablo also used to sell necklaces made up of strings of seeds and/or of monkey teeth. The sale of necklaces is not as common as it used to be, possibly because the raw materials are only found in the mountains and the Panare do not go to the mountains as frequently as they used to.

Panare make. Furthermore, the guapa represents the plastic medium in which the quality and originality of the artistic abilities of the modern Panare are best expressed. On account of its commercial importance and its artistic pre-eminence it is with the guapa that the remainder of this essay will be principally concerned.

Around the year 1964, more or less contemporaneously with the demise of the tonka bean trade, the Panare began to copy the guapawork of the neighbouring Ye'kuana. The Ye'kuana work was first introduced to them by an Evangelical missionary of the Orinoco River Mission, Charles Olvey. He brought samples of guapawork from Ye'kuana communities in the Caura river drainage and encouraged the Panare to copy them. A number of the men from the communities in the valley of the Colorado river in the southwestern corner of Panare territory spent several weeks living in the garden of Olvey's house in Caicara attempting to reproduce the Ye'kuana work. Having mastered the basic techniques, they returned to their communities where this knowledge was passed on to others. Since then the Ye'kuana type of guapawork has spread further afield. The core of the present community of Portachuelo, near the criollo village of Turiba, is made up of individuals who previously lived in the Colorado valley and brought the knowledge of the Ye'kuana type of guapawork with them. The weaving of guapas in other communities that have regular social relations with Colorado and Portachuelo has also been affected to some degree by the Ye'kuana type<sup>10</sup>

### I.3 *Relations with the criollos*

In the part of Panare territory where the basket trade is important, the Panare have been in regular social and economic contact with the criollos since the beginning of this century. As a result, some communities have begun to adopt certain criollo customs. During the last decade, this process of change in traditional patterns of behaviour has become more rapid. Although the relation of the basket trade to this phenomenon will not be considered until Section II. 3, it is convenient

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10. The class of guapas referred to as the "Ye'kuana type" includes all those guapas that owe something to the adoption of Ye'kuana techniques. As will be shown in Sections III — IV of this essay, there are three distinct "styles" of Panare guapawork that owe something to the adoption of Ye'kuana techniques. The term "Ye'kuana type" therefore embraces all these three "styles". The three "styles" in question are the Pseudo Ye'kuanoid, the Ye'kuanoid and the Modern Panare (cf. Table № 4).

to give a brief account at this point of the extent of these changes in the communities involved in the trade.

Taking into consideration *only* those communities involved in the trade, it is possible to show that the extent of the change that has gone on in a community in recent years is, roughly speaking, inversely proportional to the importance that basketry has for that community as a means of exchange with the criollos. West of the Chaviripa, the most obvious change that has taken place is the tendency to leave the mountains and settle on the plains. This is a recent phenomenon, most groups having established their principal houses on the plains only during the last five years. By 1976 however, almost all groups had done so. Although the motive for this change in settlement pattern is to be closer to the criollos for economic rather than social reasons, the move to the plains has been associated with a surreptitious reluctance to endure the hardships that the traditional pattern of settlement in the mountains implies. The Panare say that they have left the mountains because there are too many snakes there and the paths are bad and steep. These reasons figure in their explanations for the change in settlement pattern as frequently as do reasons to do with the material benefits of living close to the criollos.

When a group moves down to the plains there is a tendency for the traditional Panare communal house to break up into a cluster of nuclear family dwellings. Some Panare say that this is because there is not enough thatching palm on the plains. This is not strictly true since the kokorito palm, one of the palms most frequently used by the Panare for thatching, is found in extensive stands both in the gallery forest and in the forest at the foot of the mountains. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that several small houses would require less thatch than one communal house. In any case, it is clear that living close to the criollos is more important than living under the same roof. But apart from this change in settlement pattern and a concomitant shift of emphasis from silvine to riverine subsistence resources, the way of life of the Panare living to the west of the Chaviripa river is much as it was at the turn of the century when they first settled there. Although members of the settlements established on the plains may live under several roofs, their houses are usually not more than a few yards from one another. They still act together as a community and continue to take communal meals together. Recruitment to these residential groups still works along kinship lines and there is almost universal compliance with the marriage rule. Amongst these Panare, the basket trade is by far and away the most important means of exchange with the criollos.

In the communities east of the Chaviripa river, where cash cropping is also an important means of acquiring industrial goods, the changes that have gone on in recent years have been more extensive. These groups moved down to the plains earlier than those living west of the Chaviripa. Since the beginning of the century there has been a substantial criollo community in the vicinity of the present site of the Hato San Pablo (cf. Map N° 2). This criollo community has acted as a magnet to draw the Panare out of the mountains. In many of the Panare communities in the region around San Pablo the traditional collective house has given way to a number of smaller dwellings and the consumption of food is less communal than it is west of the Chaviripa. Huts with *babareque* walls in the criollo style are more frequent and most members of these communities wear criollo clothes most of the time. Certain parts of the kinship terminological system appear to have fallen into disuse and some young men no longer regard it as important to conform to the traditional marriage rule.

Yet despite the fact that the Panare have moved closer to the criollos both physically and in some senses culturally, they are far from becoming part of local criollo society. The Panare may interact with the criollos more frequently than they did in the past but their relations continue to be primarily economic. Even from an economic point of view they remain highly independent. In no community do the Panare meet their subsistence needs by means of buying food out of wages gained by working for the criollos. If they sell their labour it is to buy industrial goods with their wages and not food. It is very rare for a Panare to go very far from home in order to work as a labourer and also rare for a Panare to work for more than two or three days. This is a source of irritation to the criollos who regard their reluctance to work as casual labourers as an indication of their congenital laziness and even of their savagery. Even those local criollos who are favourably disposed towards the Panare usually insist on the need to "civilize" them by means of "teaching them how to work". The Panare of course see it differently. They dislike the treatment they receive from the criollos whilst they are working for them and regard the criollos as mean for the low wages they pay. Local criollos in the western part of Panare territory import Piaroa and Guahibo when they seek cheap labour for harvesting<sup>11</sup>.

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11. When wages are exceptionally high, the Panare are prepared to work for quite long periods as wage labourers. The authors have known young Panare work for several weeks picking cotton on the banks of the Orinoco and in agricultural plots near the Guaniamo diamond mines. In both these cases, the wages paid by the employers were higher than the wages normally paid to unskilled labourers.

Very few Panare speak anything more than the most elementary trade Spanish and even less have left their communities to live permanently amongst the criollos. As a whole they remain suspicious and reserved, even disdainful, in their attitude towards the criollos, more so, probably, than vice versa. Panare women, with good reason, are particularly suspicious of the criollos and in the part of Panare territory dealt with in this essay, there is no extant case of marriage or even of a stable sexual union between Panare and criollo<sup>12</sup>.

Despite, or perhaps because they now have more frequent contact with one another than they did in the past, relations between the Panare and criollos have become strained in recent years. This is partly due to the fact that the Panare are now fiercely determined not to allow themselves to be cheated as they have been in the past. The cumulative effect of years of dealing with criollo merchants has made them adept at commercial exchanges and they now drive a very hard bargain. The criollos, referring to the traditional distinction between *racionales* and *indios*, describe this new determination of the Panare by saying that the *indios* have now become more rational than the *racionales*. The general deterioration of Panare-criollo relations is exemplified by the decay of the *compadrazgo* relationship that used to operate between many individual Panare and criollos. Most of the older Panare men, in addition to their Panare name, have a Spanish name which they acquired when they were baptised by a criollo and given the latter's name. The baptism sanctified a relationship that consisted basically of the preferential exchange of goods and services (cf. Dumont 1972: 82-83). In contrast, many young Panare have no Spanish name since the criollos are now reluctant to enter into any new *compadrazgo* relationship. The criollos complain that whilst the Panare are only too ready to ask for favours from their *compadres* they are never willing to do or give anything in return, free of charge.

The attitude of criollos to the Panare varies greatly, running from the generous and considerate to the frankly exploitative. However the Panare seem to work on the assumption that all criollos are intent on cheating them. They do however maintain fairly amicable relations with those who live in the neighbourhood of their settlements. This is particularly true of the older Panare some of whom have been on friendly terms with certain old criollos for as long as fifty years. Indeed, the

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12. Despite criollo boasts to the contrary, there is no evidence to suggest that Panare women ever engage or ever have engaged in prostitution. Criollos of the region do however relate cases of the rape of Panare women by criollo men.



Panare are very well informed about the kin ties and biographies of the local criollos even though they only speak rudimentary Spanish and the criollos even less Panare.

Even the young Panare of the relatively traditional communities who are often openly disdainful of the criollos, are interested to learn about the criollo world beyond the limited horizons they know. To this end, they are interested in maintaining relations with the criollos that go beyond mere exchange of goods. But since the principal basis of Panare-criollo relations is economic, the tensions that arise in the assessment of the material value of the goods exchanged tends to dominate Panare criollo relations whatever the context<sup>13</sup>.

If the Panare are interested in developing closer social relations with the criollos, so far it seems that it is only on their own terms that they are prepared to do so. Until very recently, there had been no direct attempt to put pressure on the Panare to change their ways. With the establishment of three missions in Panare territory between 1969 and 1974 (two mission stations belonging to the New Tribes Mission and the other to a Roman Catholic order of nuns), and the awakening interest of various government agencies in the Panare, this is now changing. Nevertheless, even today, at least seventy years after the establishment of regular social relations with the criollos, the Panare remain highly independent of criollo society. Economically, they remain self-sufficient from the point of view of their subsistence needs whilst socially their relations with the criollos are in some sense getting worse rather than better. Yet in spite of this independence, the Panare have begun to adopt certain patterns of behaviour that are similar to those of the criollos<sup>14</sup>.

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13. This interest in finding out about what happens beyond the narrow confines of their world is manifested in the enthusiasm with which the Panare of Colorado have responded to the efforts of the New Tribes Mission to teach them to read. Although one of the strongest motives for this interest is a desire to learn about Jesus and hence go to God's House, they also appear to be concerned to acquire the powers that reading and writing skills bring with them.

14. There is a danger that Panare-criollo relations will deteriorate even further in the future. Whilst the Panare are in the process of moving their principal houses and gardens down to the plains, the criollos are simultaneously beginning to exploit the region more intensively, increasing the number of head of cattle on the plains. The vicious circle that has ended up in murder and dislodgement of the Cuiva and Yaruro in Apure State threatens to start turning in Dto. Cedeño: criollo cattle enter the Indians' gardens and the Indian kill the cattle. When the National Guard go to investigate the case, the Indians, afraid, receive them with shotgun blasts. In July 1975, there was a case of this kind in Panare territory and there have been other potentially explosive situations. These problems can only be avoided by means of the careful legal definition and enforcement of rights over resources.

## II. BASKETRY AS A MEANS OF EXCHANGE

### II.1 *The Place of Basketry in Panare Society*<sup>15</sup>

Traditionally, Panare men wove baskets whilst Panare women made pots. Now pottery is only made in the Panare communities in the Cuchivero drainage in the eastern part of Panare territory. In western Panare territory, women are sometimes co-opted to do subsidiary tasks in the preparation of basket material. Although basketry remains essentially a male task, there are at least two cases of women who have learnt to weave guapas under the stimulus of the basket trade.

A Panare boy begins to learn to weave when he is about 10 to 12 years old. As in most fields of Panare expertise, he receives no formal instruction. At first, he merely watches older men. The next step is to weave a part of an older man's basket. Finally the novice will experiment with a basket of his own. If a young boy gets into trouble with his basketwork, he may consult his father or a kinsman but he will never set the work of another down in front of him and systematically copy it.

The amount of time spent in weaving and the type of basket woven varies according to age in Panare society. The most prolific basket makers are men between the ages of 15 and 25 years. The baskets they weave are mostly guapas which are woven exclusively for sale to the criollos. Men of this age group have few responsibilities, being either unmarried or having only a small family. The greatest part of the income that they derive from this activity is spent on "luxuries" — trips to Caicara, transistor radios, battery-operated record players, bicycles, expensive leather belts, perfumes, etc.—, only a small part is spent on utilitarian goods. Fathers of unmarried boys complain that their sons spend their time making baskets rather than working in the gardens. But their complaint is not a serious one. There is a general pattern of indulgence in Panare society towards the young and socially irrespon-

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15. The generalizations made in this section about Panare basket making activities refer exclusively to those communities involved in the basket trade. Furthermore these generalizations are based principally on data collected in the Panare communities in the valley of the Colorado river. Although the authors spent most time in Colorado, they also visited almost all the other communities involved in the basket trade and have no reason to suppose, unless otherwise stated, that the generalizations made here are not true of these communities also. It should be borne in mind however that the Colorado communities are atypical of the communities involved in the basket trade as a whole since it was in Colorado that guapawork of the Ye'kuana type was first introduced. Where this atypical feature affects the practice of guapawork, it will be indicated in the text.

sible. It is assumed that, with time, they will come round to behaving in the appropriate manner.

Men over the age of 25 years, who will typically have two or three children and even perhaps a second wife, spend less time making guapas destined for sale and more time making functional basketry for domestic use. Some types of functional basketry require skills that not everyone has, this being particularly true of the manioc press. But it is not only because it is difficult to weave that the manioc press is only made by older men. The finer examples of guapawork woven by young men require skills as complex, although different, from those involved in the weaving of the manioc press. The phenomenon is better explained by referring to their general social behaviour. Age amongst the Panare brings responsibilities rather than privileges and it is only the older men who are prepared to spend their time on the task of making a manioc press for the general use of the community rather than a guapa exclusively for their own benefit.

In the communities where the guapawork has been influenced by the Ye'kuana type, the most competent artisans are between the ages of 20 and 40. The men in this age group were under 30 when the Ye'kuana type was first introduced and since then have had 12 years to develop their skills. Men presently over the age of 40 seem to have been too settled in their ways to have bothered to learn how to weave in the new fashion. Men of this age group do not however continue to weave guapas in the traditional Panare manner. The basket types that they most frequently weave for sale to the criollos are the painted storage basket type or functional pieces of basketry such as cheese moulds and manioc sieves<sup>16</sup>.

The amount of time dedicated to the production of trade baskets also varies with the seasons and between communities. All these variable factors make it difficult to generalize. However, as a rough guide one can say that an adult Panare in the valley of Colorado spends an average of between one and two days a week engaged in basketmaking activities. The best time to weave is at night or in the early morning since the dampness in the air makes the raw material more malleable. These times would normally be used only for resting or chatting. Every

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16. This is not universally true: the oldest man in Colorado, probably in his sixties, weaves guapas of the Ye'kuana type. This is something of an exceptional case since he has retired from active life and has more time to experiment with new basketry techniques. Perhaps it is also significant that his sons are extremely good basket makers, one of them probably the best in the valley.

second or third day, an adult Panare stays at home to rest from his subsistence activities. This rest is often used for basket making. Adolescents may stay at home making baskets rather than working in the gardens but they spend just as much time at home doing nothing except a little casual bird-shooting practice with a blowpipe.

Basketmaking amongst the Panare is an almost entirely secular activity, whether the basket be for sale or for domestic use only. The only metaphysical belief associated with basketmaking involves the idea that certain stands of the reed that provides the raw material for several types of basket, including the *guapa*, cannot be exploited since they are said to belong to a supernatural entity, *amana*, half human and half animal, that manifests itself in the form of a huge land snake<sup>17</sup>. The role of basketmaker brings no special privileges. The greatest social reward that an expert basketmaker can expect is a certain informal prestige<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless, in Colorado at least, a good basketmaker takes great pride in his work and is very ready to criticize mercilessly the shoddy work of less talented men.

For many Panare living in the Colorado valley, *guapawork* is more than simply the production of a means of exchange with the *criollos*. Even though the commercial value of basketwork is the principal reason for doing it, the artisans also take pride and even pleasure in what they are doing. *Guapawork* can sometimes seem like nothing more serious than a pastime. It is common to see a man return in mid-afternoon from hunting or gardening, and having bathed, to set about casually weaving a *guapa* whilst chatting to the others about the events of the day. A sure way to acquire a shoddy *guapa* is to bespeak it. Then the artisan is reminded that basketmaking is essentially a commercial enterprise and will run up a *guapa* as quickly as possible. If there is no immediate buyer in view, he takes his time and does a better job of work.

Since the *criollos* of the region do not make basketry of any kind, within the local context of Caicara and its hinterland, basketry serves

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17. Only the *i'yan*, the Panare headman and shaman, can determine whether a stand of the reed should be exploited. One young Panare informant, whilst in the Andean town of Mérida in order to help one of the authors with linguistic material, encountered a stand of plants very similar to the reed used in Panare basketwork. When it was suggested to him that he cut them and use them to weave *guapas*, he explained that he could not since, not being an *i'yan*, he was unable to tell whether they belonged to *amana*. It should be stressed that this belief is not universal amongst the Panare. The Colorado Panare, generally more traditional than the Panare of the community where the informant normally lived, are unfamiliar with this belief.

18. A Panare cannot for example gain shamanic power by virtue of being a master basketmaker as can a Warao (cf. Wilbert 1975: 82-83).

as a marker of Panare identity<sup>19</sup>. The Panare consider basketmaking to be an exclusively Panare skill and seem to regard the criollos' inability to weave as confirmatory evidence of their general stupidity. When one of the authors began to learn to weave guapas, the Panare of the settlement where he was living thought it a great joke at first and were clearly sceptical that anyone who was not a Panare could possibly learn to do so. However, having shown that he was serious in his intention to learn, they gave him a great deal of encouragement and showed the result of his efforts with great glee to the Panare from other communities who came visiting.

The foregoing remarks refer to the place of basketry in Colorado, one of the most traditional of the Panare communities involved in the basket trade. In the communities located to the east of the Chaviripa river, where a greater degree of social change has taken place in recent years, the place of basketry is not so elevated. In these communities it is simply a means of exchange and a laborious task at that. When one asks the men of these communities why they do not weave more guapas, they respond by enumerating all the separate processes involved, as if to emphasize the generally tedious nature of the work by this minute description. The relationship between this attitude to basketry and the extent of social and cultural change that has recently taken place in these communities will be discussed below.

## II.2 *The Economic Value of Guapawork*

Before passing on to estimating the exchange value of the labour invested in guapawork, it is essential to describe the collection and preparation of the raw material since this takes almost as much time as the weaving itself.

All the baskets that the Panare sell to the criollos are made principally from strips of itiriti (L: *Ischnosiphon obliquiformis* Loes.\*; S: *tirita*; P: *manankye*). This reed-like plant grows in the mountains in stands of several thousands along the banks of streams. The collection of itiriti is an arduous task for the savanna-dwelling Panare since it is very heavy in its unelaborated form and the nearest source of supply is

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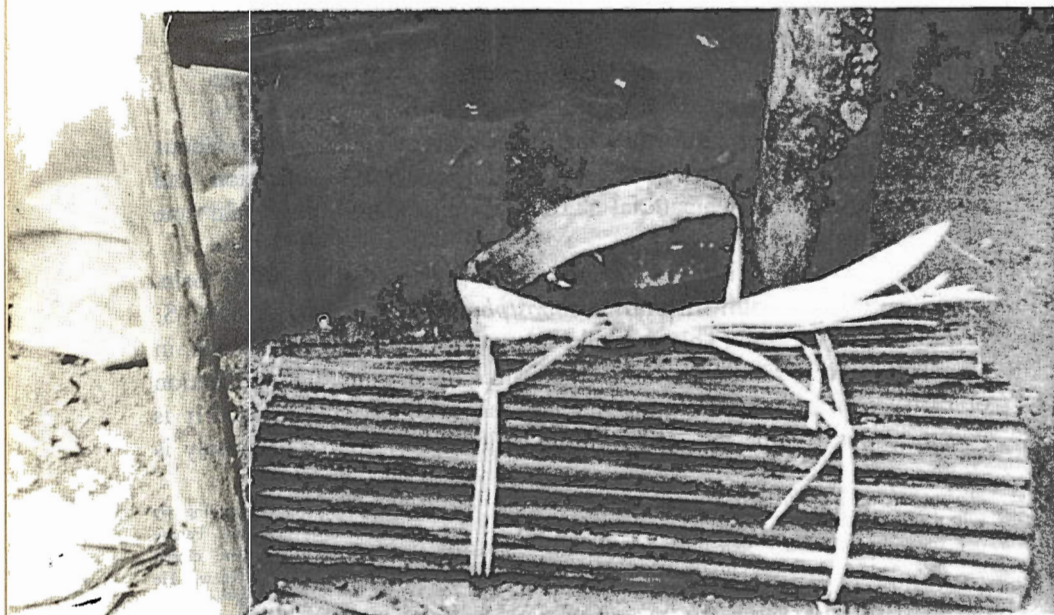
19. An anecdote illustrates the point. On one occasion, one of the authors was standing by the side of a road, accompanied by a Panare man. A truck passed by and the Panare commented that there were Panare in the truck. Since the sides of the truck were closed and it was impossible to see the passengers, the author asked him how he knew. He said that he knew there were Panare present because he had seen the type of carrying basket known in Spanish as a "mapire" (P: *tawa'*) tied to the vehicle.



a. collecting itiriti

PLATE No. 1

b. rods of itiriti



rarely closer than half a day's hard uphill walk away. Furthermore, in some places, the volume of basket production is so great that the itiriti is being cut at a rate faster than it regenerates so that every year the Panare have to go further to find it. The Panare consider the collection of itiriti to be not only arduous but also dangerous, in part because of the presence of snakes in the mountains but also because the dark wooded slopes are the dwelling place of the *usukensa'*, the malignant spirits of dead Panare. Due to the difficulties involved in collecting itiriti, the savanna-dwelling Panare sometimes use the stem of a similar plant that grows on the savanna (L: *Ischnosiphon Arouma* (Aubl.) Koern.; S: *casupo*; P: *kěšu'*)<sup>20</sup>. But this material is less easy to work and guapas woven from it go brown after a time. The Panare of Colorado regard it as ugly and deride guapas in which it has been used.

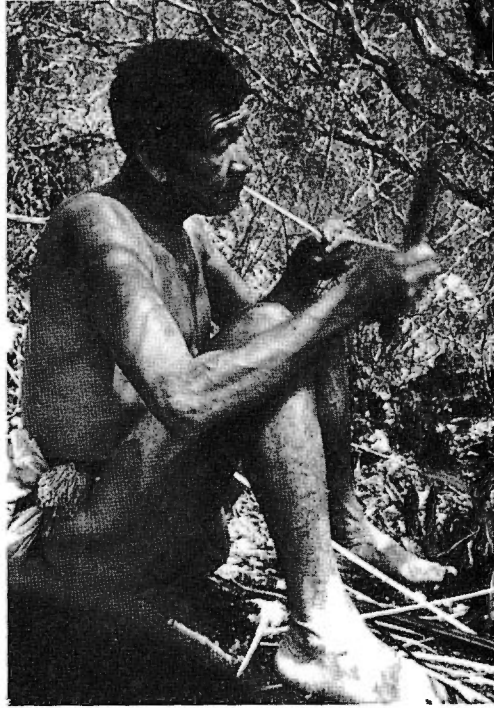
When a Panare goes to the mountains to collect itiriti, he already has an idea of the size and type of basket that he intends to weave. He carefully selects the plants that he wants—they can be neither too old nor too young—and cuts the stems of the plant into rods of the appropriate length. After he has returned to the settlement, the first step in the preparation of the guapa elements is the removal of the green outer cortex. This is done with a knife as illustrated in Plate No. 2a. The peeled rods are then varnished. The Panare use two different varnishes: the most frequently employed is a brownish-black varnish they call *mabto*; less common is a red varnish known as *kehto*. *Mabto* is derived from a tree that grows in wooded clumps on the savanna as well as in the forest (L: *Myrcia* sp.\*; S: *guayabito*; P: *anoé*). The outer bark is peeled off and mashed in water. The resulting liquid is strained and stored in a bottle. *Kehto* is derived from a very common savanna tree (L: *Byrsonima crassifolia* H.B.K.\*; S: *chapparro*; P: *taričo'*); it is prepared in a manner similar to that described for *mabto*. When the Panare employ *mabto*, the first layer is applied to the rods of itiriti mixed with a special sort of charcoal dust. This charcoal is derived from the bark of another tree, also common on the savanna (L: *Casearia silvestris* (Sw.) Berth.\*; S: *macapiritu*; P: *këremëtë*). The rods are left to dry in the sun and then another layer is applied, this time without charcoal. In total, three or four layers are applied until the rod is black and shiny. *Kehto* is applied in a similar manner but without the addition of charcoal.

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20. Another plant very similar to the itiriti plant is also used to manufacture baskets. This plant, which the Panare call *tamu*, grows in the mountains and is unknown to the authors.

PLATE No. 2

- a. removing the final  
layer of pith



- b. varnishing itiriti

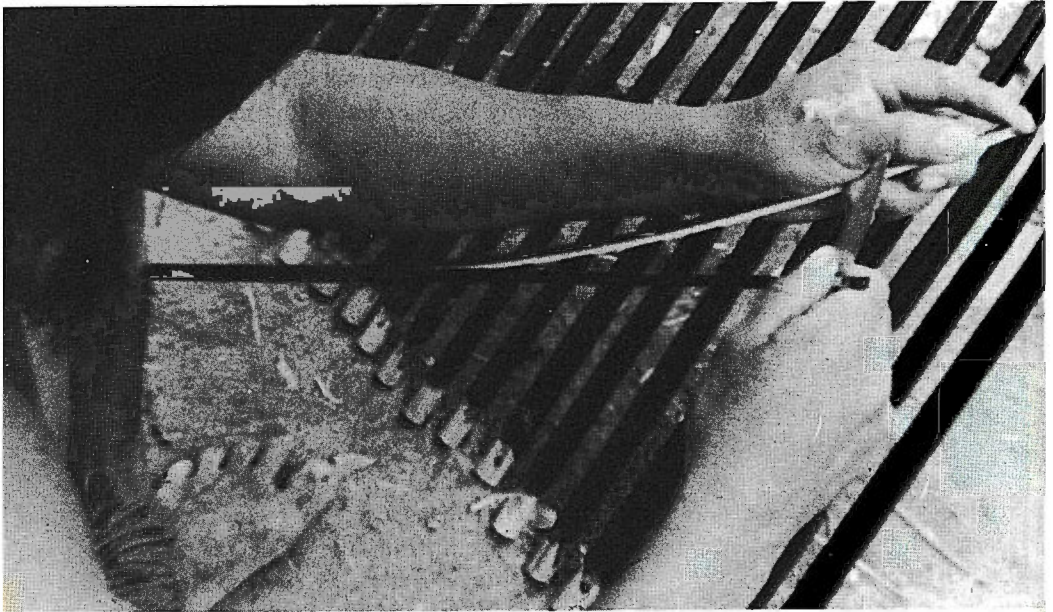




When the varnished rods have completely dried, they are split into several lengths with a knife. The inner pithy core of each rod is separated from the cortex. Although most of the core can be removed with a knife, the final layer of pith can only be removed with the aid of the teeth (cf. Plate No. 2a). This final stage is not reported in the classic description of the technique of preparing basket elements (Roth 1924: 137-139) and its practise by the Panare may be due to the inferior quality of the itiriti available in Panare territory.

Several other materials play a minor role in the production of guapas. Binding is made from silk grass thread (L: *Ananas erectifolius* L.B. Smith.; S: *curagua*; P: *kawa'*), cotton or the inner bark of certain trees (P: *kë'nētē*). The first two bindings mentioned are spun from plants sown in the Panare's own gardens, although nowadays cotton is often bought from the criollos. These threads are coated with a resinous gum (S: *peramán*; P: *makiya*) which the Panare receive from itinerant Piaroa in exchange for curare. The hoops used to form the rim of the guapa are fashioned from slivers cut from the ridge of a branch of the coroba palm (L: *Jessenia polycarpa* Karst.; S: *coroba*; P: *kuruwa*) or the kokorito palm (L: *Maximiliana regia* Mart.; S: *cucurito*; P: *wë'sae*).

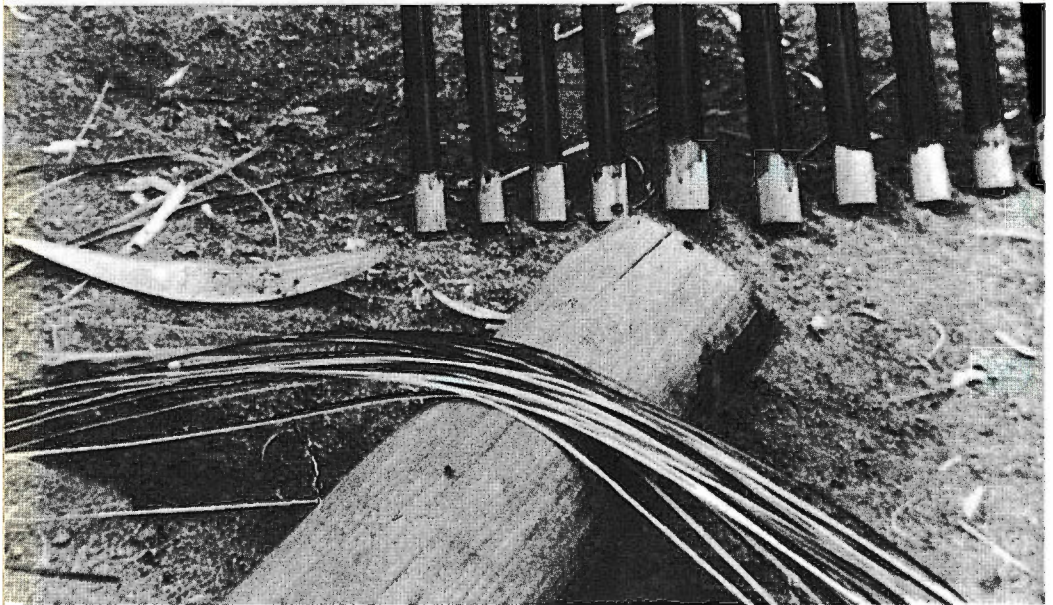
Having described the processes involved in the preparation of the raw materials, one is in a better position to appreciate how much labour is invested in guapawork. Even so, it is still difficult to make anything more than a rough estimate of the average time spent on a guapa of a given size. Firstly, although the preparation of the raw material takes place immediately, the weaving may take place on and off over a period of days or even weeks. Furthermore, the Panare weave at all times of day and night. Sometimes, a man will get up at three in the morning to weave. It therefore requires almost total dedication to the activities of one individual over a period of several weeks to make an exact calculation of the time that he spends weaving. The authors were not able to do this. Secondly, the time it takes to weave a guapa varies with the skill of the artisan and the complexity of the design that he is weaving. Thirdly, it is difficult to give a time value to the preparation of the dyes and the binding. These materials will often be collected by means of a detour on a hunting trip and a supply will last for several bundles of itiriti. The figures given below are no more than rough estimates based on spot checks made on a number of different individuals at different stages of the guapa-weaving process and on the experience that one of the authors gained by learning to weave himself. The time invested in the production of a guapa of a given size will be expressed



a. cutting itiriti

PLATE No. 3

b. elements ready to be used



in terms of "day(s) of work". A "day of work" is here taken to mean approximately eight hours dedicated to guapawork regardless of whether this time is put in consecutively or intermittently over a period of days or weeks.

The size of guapa that is most commonly sold by the Panare of Colorado is between 30 and 35 cms. in diameter and at current prices (June 1976) sells for Bs. 15. To weave six guapas of this size, one needs to bring back about 15 kgs. of itiriti from the mountains. This represents one hard day's work. The processing of the itiriti rods into guapa elements and the collection and preparation of ancillary materials (varnish, binding, etc.) can be considered to represent between one and two days' leisurely work. The weaving itself requires between three and four days' work. Thus in total, six days' work are required to weave six guapas that can be sold for a total of Bs. 90. In other words, the exchange value of a day of guapawork is about Bs. 15 (about US \$ 4.00).

These figures apply to Colorado which is not typical of the communities involved in the sale of guapas, because it is one of the few communities where guapas of the Ye'kuana type are woven. A guapa of the traditional Panare type sells for approximately half the price that a guapa of the Ye'kuana type of the same dimensions sells for. But the elements employed in the traditional type of guapa are wider and more loosely woven so that, in fact, there are roughly half the number of elements in a traditional guapa as there are in a Ye'kuana type guapa of the same diameter. Consequently the labour time invested in a traditional guapa is roughly half the time invested in a Ye'kuana type of guapa. Thus despite the lower prices that the traditional guapas command, the exchange value of the labour invested in traditional guapawork is about the same as the exchange value of the labour invested in guapawork of the Ye'kuana type.

By co-incidence, the exchange value of the labour invested in Panare guapawork is more or less equivalent to the wages paid to unskilled agricultural labourers in the region where the Panare live. Nevertheless many local criollos feel that the Panare charge unreasonably high prices for their basketry. The criollos do not realize how much work is invested in the production of a guapa and base their attitude not so much on the present price of guapas as on the rise in the price of guapas that has occurred in the last few years. The increase in the price the Panare ask for their guapas can be gauged by comparing the present prices of guapas with the price list of the collection of guapas

made by R. Lizarralde in 1969<sup>21</sup>. The comparison indicates that the present price of guapas is three to five times the price of guapas in 1969.

The price increase is in part the Panare's response to inflation and in part the result of an increased valuation of their own work. The Panare are now quite accustomed to the idea of inflation and like everybody else complain that goods are so much more expensive now than they used to be. On one occasion, when one of the authors was buying a basket for Bs. 20, the artisan pointed out that the basket was cheap now but would cost Bs. 25 the following rainy season, Bs. 30 the following dry season, Bs. 35 the rainy season after that and so on. There is a tendency for the Panare to see inflation as part of a plot by the local criollos to swindle them and there is a distinct element of revenge in the high prices they now demand. In the rainy season of 1975, a number of Panare in Colorado agreed not to sell any more cheese moulds to the local criollos. The Panare laughed amongst themselves at the thought of the criollos using old sacking for moulds. They explained that they had started this embargo because the criollos were charging high prices for their cheese. The fact that they, the Panare, do not eat cheese and the majority of them consider it disgusting, did not matter; it was the principle that they objected to. But the agreement did not last long and by the dry season of 1976, everybody was selling cheese moulds to the local criollos once again.

But whilst the guapas have increased in price between three and five times in the last seven years, there are few goods that they buy that have more than doubled in price in the same period. The Panare explain that the baskets that they now weave are of much better quality than the ones they wove in the past. Therefore the criollos should pay more for them. When justifying this price increase the Panare show a certain truculence that stems from the feeling that guapawork is hard and skilled work that should be properly value by the criollos.

The Panare calculate the price of guapas on the basis of the diameter. This is measured against the span between outstretched thumb and third finger. This unit of measurement, which the Panare call *yapun*, varies according to the size of the hand of the man doing the measuring and the degree to which he feels like stretching his fingers when doing it. But as a rough guide, one can say that a *yapun* corresponds to about 15 cms. Table N° 1 gives a list of current prices in Colorado (June 1976). The sizes most frequently sold are those

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21. This collection was made for and is presently held by the Ethnography Section of the Research Institute of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences of the Universidad Central de Venezuela.

valued at Bs. 15, Bs. 20, and Bs. 40. Sizes both larger and smaller than those listed in the table are also found but these are rare. The manufacture of guapas greater than 4 *yapun* in diameter is a very recent phenomenon. It should be borne in mind that these prices refer to guapas of the Ye'kuana type.

TABLE N° 1

*Current prices of Ye'kuana type guapas in Colorado*  
(June 1976)

<i>Price</i>	<i>Diameter (in yapun)</i>
Bs. 10	two
Bs. 15	two and a "bit"
Bs. 20	almost three
Bs. 25	three
Bs. 30	three and a "bit"
Bs. 35	almost four
Bs. 40	four
Bs. 45	four and a "bit"

As the table shows, the Panare do not always compute the price of a guapa against whole *yapun*. For example, if a Panare counts aloud when measuring a guapa valued at Bs. 15, he will say: "One *yapun*, two *yapun* and a little bit". The "bit" can vary considerably in size depending on what the artisan feels like charging for his work.

The Panare calculate sums of money in terms of *fuertes*, a traditional Venezuelan sum of money equivalent to Bs. 5 (approx. US \$ 1.25). In rural areas, the criollos also frequently calculate sums of money in terms of *fuertes* although this custom is becoming somewhat anachronistic. It suits the Panare well to calculate in terms of *fuertes* since their own system of enumeration is based on units of five. They are very unwilling to subdivide a *fuerte*. This is where the variable "bit" comes in handy. For example, if the diameter of a guapa falls somewhere between two *yapun* and three, they will merely vary the size of the "bit" in order to put the price up to Bs. 20 or down to Bs. 15 as the mood takes them, rather than charge, say, Bs. 18.

When judging the quality of a guapa, the Panare pay great attention to its technical features. They consider carefully the weave, the width of the elements and the binding around the rim. They also pay

great attention to the pattern woven into the rim of the guapa even though this is very difficult to see once the rim has been attached to the main body of the guapa by means of a hoop on either side of it.

There is a quite evident disharmony between the way that the Panare estimate the value of a guapa and the manner in which the criollo traders who come to their settlements do so. Not only does the criollo feel that the quality of individual guapas should affect the price, but his way of judging what constitutes a good guapa is different from that of the Panare. The criollo assesses the quality of a guapa on its graphic features rather than on the underlying technical features (cf. Appendix III.2). Some criollos, unaware of the technical difficulties involved, ask the Panare to make the graphic designs on the surface of their guapas more anecdotal: "Look, *compai*, why don't you put a tiger here and a man there and make the tiger look as if he's going to jump upon the man and eat him?". The criollo is also only really interested in the main body of the guapa. To him, it is more or less the same whether the basket rim has a pattern or not.

But the Panare are very unwilling to alter the price of a guapa on account of the complexity or quality of the graphic features. The criollo feels that a guapa of a given size with a simple graphic design should be worth less than one of the same size with a complex graphic pattern. Similarly, he feels that if there are obvious mistakes in the pattern or if the elements are shoddily prepared (which gives rise to waviness in the graphic lines), the guapa should be worth less. But the Panare do not recognize these arguments. If pressurized for a lower price for simple or defective guapas, they will respond by threatening to increase the price of the guapas that the criollo values more highly and not by reducing the price of the ones he considers of lesser quality.

They are also unwilling to recognize that the criollo traders have to make a profit if they are to continue in business. The Panare will not normally reduce the price of guapas bought in bulk. On the contrary, they sometimes even ask for more for large batches of guapas than the total price would be if the trader paid for each guapa in the batch individually. The Panare explain that they want a great deal of money for the batch because in total the batch represents a great deal of work. The criollo finds this reasoning totally illogical. Nor will the Panare reduce the price of their guapas in consideration of the fact that the criollo trader has come to the settlement to buy them. They know that the criollo increases the price of the guapas when he resells them and want therefore to charge him the price that he charges others. The criollo for his part complains that the Panare do not take into account

that if he did not come to the settlement to buy the guapas they would have to pay to get to Caicara to sell their work.

The criollos find trading with the Panare very frustrating on account of the dissonance in their respective ways of computing value and declare the Panare's trading behaviour to be a sure sign of their "irrationality". On account of the frustrations that he encountered trading with them, one of the principal criollo traders has given up the business of buying and selling guapas and has turned instead to buying and selling the cheese produced by the local criollos. But his retirement from the field is a pyrrhic victory for the Panare attitude to trading since they now find it more difficult and sometimes impossible to sell their guapas in Caicara<sup>22</sup>.

The reason the Panare now find it difficult to sell their guapas in Caicara is that the criollo intermediaries who deal in them are now finding it hard for their part to re-sell them in the urban centres of Venezuela. There appears to be an upper limit to the price that urban customers for indigenous artefacts are prepared to pay for a basket which Panare guapas, by the time they are placed in the gift shops, now stand in danger of going beyond. This is particularly true of the large Ye'kuana type guapas. Even when the customer buys directly from the artisan, a large Ye'kuana type guapa of 4 *yapun* (i.e. about 60 cms. in diameter) costs him Bs. 40 (approx. US \$ 10), a price that many are reluctant to pay. But by the time that a guapa reaches Caracas it is worth considerably more.

The following data come from one of the dealers in Caracas who in 1975 used to distribute Panare guapas around the gift shops and other outlets in Caracas. He worked in collaboration with the criollo trader mentioned above. The trader, based in Caicara, used to take the baskets to Caracas where he sold them to the distributor making a surcharge of Bs. 3 on each basket. When the distributor re-sold them to the gift shops, he would put on a further surcharge of Bs. 3 or Bs. 4. But when the gift shops sell the guapas, they at least double the price they paid to the distributor. Thus a basket that the Panare sells for Bs. 15 is sold for about Bs. 45 in a Caracas gift shop. If the same price mark-up is made on a basket that the artisan sells for Bs. 40, the cost

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22. The Panare have not always been as adept as they are now at the arithmetic involved in computing prices. In the early days of the basket trade, the Evangelical missionary in Caicara who was largely responsible for starting the basket trade, used to buy from individual Panare artisans in bulk. When the Panare gained a little experience, they realized that they could get more if they sold their baskets one by one to various buyers rather than in a batch to one person. As a result, they began to ask the missionary for more for their work. This price increase also caused the missionary to give up buying baskets.

in Caracas would be about Bs. 100. But the gift shop owners find that Bs. 100 is higher than most of their customers are prepared to pay and are thus obliged to reduce their rate of profit. Consequently, they are not longer willing to handle the larger Ye'kuana type guapas.

By militating against the production of the larger Ye'kuana type guapas, this pattern of demand is also militating against the production of what are, from an aesthetic point of view, the best guapas the Panare weave. This is because the larger the guapa, the greater the area the artisan has to develop the graphic potential of the medium. Moreover, because the larger guapas are usually only attempted by the most competent artisans, they are generally very well finished from a technical point of view.

The pattern of demand in the urban centres for Panare guapas filters back to the artisans via the criollo intermediaries. But even though the intermediaries have been urging the Panare to produce smaller guapas since as long ago as 1974, they have only responded to this demand in the most limited way. Many continue to produce large guapas with complex graphic designs even though they are well aware that guapas of this type have become difficult to sell for what they consider to be a just price. Indeed, in 1976, the Panare of Portachuelo were producing Ye'kuana type guapas of well over 4 *yapun* in diameter, larger than any Ye'kuana type guapas woven by the Panare before.

The failure of the Panare artisans to respond to the exhortations of the criollo intermediaries is due to the fact that for many of them, guapas are more than a means of material exchange with the criollos. A skilled artisan likes to express his competence in a large and graphically intricate guapa. He also likes to think of the handful of *fuertes* that he will receive, hoping that he will be the lucky one to find a rich buyer. But in the long term the Panare cannot remain impervious to the demand for their guapas. Unless some means can be devised to circumvent the price mark-up that takes place under the present system of marketing guapas between the artisan and the urban customer, the Panare will see themselves obliged to give up producing the best quality guapas, if, that is, they do not give up producing guapas altogether.

### II.3 *The Basket Trade and Social Change*

In the relatively traditional communities located west of the Chaviripa river, the income derived from selling baskets to the criollos is used for purchasing a wide variety of industrial goods. Although young



men tend to spend a large part of their income on "luxuries", older and more responsible men spend their income on more prosaic goods: cooking pots, fishing hooks and line, cloth for *pabellones*, fire arms, shot, powder, leaf cutter ant poison, garden tools, aspirin, soap, kerosene, etc. In recent years, the Panare have begun to acquire bicycles. They do not travel by canoe since the rivers in Panare territory are mostly unnavigable and they find bicycles useful for hunting and fishing trips. Although bicycles are used for traditional purposes, they are symptomatic of the present tendency to settle on the plains since the steep and broken paths of the mountains make bicycles totally impractical there.

The Panare of these communities spend very little on alcohol and nothing on clothes. The only foods on which they spend money are sugar and certain unimportant items such as bread, biscuits and soft drinks which are eaten for pleasure rather than sustenance. The income derived from guapas is almost never used to meet basic subsistence needs. In 1975, when the Panare of Colorado were hungry at the height of the rainy season when their old gardens were spent but their new gardens had not yet come into production, they were extremely reluctant to spend the money earned through the sale of guapas on food.

Although they may be reluctant to spend their money on food, the Panare of the relatively traditional communities west of the Chaviripa river are always ready to spend their money on beads. These beads are imported into Venezuela and by the time they reach the Panare have become very expensive. In recent years, the import duty on these beads has increased greatly and the price of the beads has risen sharply. The Panare are very bitter about this development and blame the local criollos. Nevertheless, whenever they can, they buy beads. Many women wear strings of beads around their necks worth several hundred *bolivares* at current prices.

The goods on which the Panare of the communities west of the Chaviripa river spend their money are largely destined to meet needs generated by or compatible with the traditional form of Panare society. Amongst the communities located east of the Chaviripa river, there is a greater tendency to spend their income derived from other sources as well as from basketry, on goods such as clothes and alcohol that are indicative of a certain degree of adaptation to criollo ways. Nevertheless, even in these communities, the cash derived from exchanges with the criollos is very rarely used for buying food.

The goods that the Panare acquire through trade with the criollos

may lead to social and cultural changes in Panare society in the long term. There is already evidence to suggest that the fact that many Panare now own shotguns may in the long term lead to a drastic reduction in the quantity of game in the immediate vicinity of their present settlements. Should this in fact turn out to be the case, if the Panare are to continue to eat meat, they will either have to return to the mountains where game is more abundant or turn to domesticated animals as a source of protein. But the Panare have become too accustomed to living within easy access of criollo goods and medicines ever to return to living in the mountains on a more or less permanent basis. The practice of animal husbandry, a mode of livelihood that many local criollos are engaged in, and the decay of the importance of hunting, will probably have far reaching social consequences.

However one should be careful to distinguish the impact that alien goods and technology have on an indigenous group from the consequences that flow from the maintenance of the trading relationship by means of which these goods are obtained. The literature on the effect of the introduction of alien goods and technology on the indigenous groups of lowland South America indicates that the goods are generally acomodated to the indigenous context (cf. Harner 1968; Lizot 1971). In the long term these goods may alter the relationship between the society and the natural resources of the region in which they live and hence give rise, indirectly, to changes in the social relations and cultural features of the society. But the trading relationship by means of which alien goods are obtained is likely to have a more immediate and profound effect. Firstly, the trading relationship often involves increased exposure to the way of life of the national society which can result in the diffusion of cultural features of the latter to the indigenous group. Secondly, the trading relationship can affect the internal economic relations of the indigenous group both at the level of production and at the level of consumption.

The production of commercial baskets interferes in no significant way with the internal economic relations of Panare society. For many Panare communities, the sale of basketry has merely taken over the place of the sale of the tonka bean as the principal form of exchange with the criollos. Some local criollos claim that in the tonka bean era, the Panare had even more cash than they do now. Nevertheless the development of the basketry trade has been contemporaneous with the movement of many Panare residential groups from the mountains down to the plains.

Yet this change in settlement pattern cannot be attributed to the

basket trade *per se*. If one compares the tonka bean trade and the basketry trade, there are no conclusive grounds for asserting that the former trade was compatible with settlement in the mountains whilst the latter is not. Both tonka beans and basket raw material grow in the mountains and basket making would require less hard work if the Panare lived close to the source of the raw material. In the days of the tonka bean trade, the criollos set up trading posts that were often very close to the Panare settlements. Now the Panare have to go further to sell their products, if not necessarily to Caicara itself, at least to the nearest criollo hamlet. Yet this difference is not sufficient to explain the move down to the plains. Against the convenience that living on the plains means in terms of marketing basketry, one has to measure not only the inconvenience of going to the mountains to get basket raw material but also the fact that the mountains are a richer resource than the plains for all aspects of the traditional Panare economy with the sole exception of fishing.

The phenomenon that differentiates the tonka bean era from the present and explains the changing settlement pattern of the Panare is the general economic development of Caicara and its hinterland<sup>23</sup>. The development of the basket trade is, to a large degree, merely an epiphenomenon of this process. As a result of local economic development, the criollo world has far more to offer the Panare, not only in material terms but also in the sense of a more varied and interesting alternative way of life to that they have known of the criollo in the past. It is in order to take advantage of these new perspectives, and not merely to be in a better position to sell their baskets, that the Panare have moved closer to the criollos.

The correlation made above between the extent of recent social change in a given community and the importance of basketry as a means of exchange with the criollos is only a rough one and needs to be refined. In the communities east of the Chaviripa which are those that have undergone most change, most men are engaged in some cash

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23. Another new element is the presence of missions in Panare territory. There are currently three missions operating in and around Panare territory. The mission stations have contributed to the process of bringing the Panare down out of the mountains, if for no other reason, than simply on account of the fact that they are a source of cheap industrial goods and medical attention. But the changing settlement pattern of the Panare cannot be attributed to the missions exclusively since this change is occurring all over Panare territory regardless of the presence or absence of missions in the immediate locality. Furthermore, although C. Olvey of the Orinoco River Mission played a very important part in stimulating the basket trade, at the present time, neither his Mission (now staffed by a successor) nor the New Tribes Mission in Colorado form more than a minor part of the market for Panare basketry.

cropping and some commercial basketry but the importance given to each varies with age. Young adolescent men and old men tend to make baskets for exchange whilst mature adult men prefer cash cropping. Heavy agricultural work is beyond the strength of old men, whilst young men regard agricultural work as simply too laborious and tedious. Mature men on the other hand say that it is basket work that is tedious and laborious and point out that whereas cash crops can be sold to local criollos living in the immediate vicinity of the Panare settlements, guapas have often to be taken to Caicara in order to be sold.

The explanation for this variation in attitude towards commercial basketwork is quite straightforward. Mature men have wives and children on whom much of the burden of the work involved in cash cropping can fall. Young men do not and would have to do all the work themselves. Furthermore, although it may be true that cash crops are easier to sell than baskets in the immediate vicinity of the Panare communities, young Panare are interested in going to Caicara just for its own sake, to *pasear*, and it is clearly easier to do so carrying a bundle of baskets than it is humping 50 kg. sacks of agricultural produce. But in the more traditional communities west of the Chaviripa river, no Panare are engaged in cash cropping, not even those with wives and children to whom much of the work involved in cash cropping could be left.

The preference that some Panare of the communities east of Chaviripa show for cash cropping can only partly be explained on economic grounds. At local prices in the dry season of 1975-1976, a 50 kg. sack of rice sold for Bs. 32. On the basis of the calculations made above, one can estimate that the same income could be derived from approximately two days of guapawork. No exact statistics were collected on this matter, but judging from the personal experience that one of the authors gained harvesting rice with the Panare, it seems likely that a 50 kg. sack of rice sown, harvested and thrashed by the unmechanized methods of the Panare represents more than two days' work. But statistics of this kind are only of limited value. The Panare themselves do not choose one means of exchange over another on the basis of any exact computation of the time invested in production measured against the exchange value of the product. The preference for one means of exchange over another is explained by the fact that some Panare see basketry as pure drudgery whilst others, although considering basketry to be hard work that deserves an adequate reward, take pride and even pleasure in it. This difference in attitude is most simply explained as a

function of the adoption of criollo cultural norms. In the local context of Caicara and its hinterland, basketry is an exclusively Panare activity whilst cash cropping is the way in which the majority of rural criollos make their living. It is consistent therefore that the Panare of the relatively traditional communities should continue to practice commercial basketwork whilst some of the Panare of the less traditional communities where certain features of criollo dress, settlement and consumption patterns have already been adopted, should also adopt cash cropping, a characteristically criollo means of producing a surplus for exchange.

In contrast to basketry, cash cropping interferes with traditional economic behaviour. Unlike basketry, cash cropping cannot be performed at moments that would otherwise be used merely for resting or chatting. Although the extra work involved in cash cropping may fall largely on the shoulders of women, cash cropping also interferes with the subsistence activities of the men, particularly at the time of preparing the gardens and at harvesting. Even so the present level of involvement of the Panare in cash cropping does not prevent them from engaging in other subsistence activities nor from spending a considerable amount of time in the dry season either preparing for, engaged in or recovering from dances and drinking bouts<sup>24</sup>. Comparative evidence however suggests that in the long term, cash cropping is likely to have far reaching social consequences for the Panare communities that practice it<sup>25</sup>.

It is probable that in the next few years the Panare living west of the Chaviripa will also adopt some form of cash cropping. In 1976, those of Colorado began selling agricultural produce in Caicara, either directly, or indirectly through a criollo intermediary. Strictly speaking, this could not be considered as cash cropping since the Panare were merely selling what they felt they could spare and had not cut extra large gardens the previous year with the specific intention of selling the surplus product. Yet, for reasons outlined above, there is now a better

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24. Hames and Hames (1976: 32-33) argue that cash cropping may have actually reduced the amount of time that Ye'kuana men spend working. They point out that whilst the Ye'kuana women do most of the extra work involved in cash cropping, the technology the Ye'kuana purchase with the income derived from the sale of cash crops reduces the amount of time that the men need to spend in fulfilling traditional male subsistence tasks.

25. Cf. Heinen 1975, for a case parallel to that being examined here: "...neither the presence of money as such nor the introduction of new agricultural techniques significantly affected the social structure of the Warao. The introduction of cash crop agriculture and wage labour on the other hand, had a frankly disintegrating effect on Warao society" (*ibid.*: 41).

market for agricultural produce in the region of Caicara and the experience of 1976 opened the eyes of the Colorado Panare to the economic potential of cash cropping.

Whether this experience will start a trend towards the partial or total replacement of basketry by cash cropping as a means of exchange in the traditional communities will depend on a number of factors. Firstly, the Panare will only go on producing guapas if they continue to receive what they regard as a fair price for them. At the present juncture, it seems unlikely that this condition will hold for very long unless some government body intervenes in the basket trade so as to eliminate the intermediaries and ensure that the artisans receive a greater proportion of the sum paid by the urban customers for their work. Secondly, if the preference for cash cropping over guapawork is not so much a consequence of the superiority of one over the other as an economic resource but rather a function of the degree to which a community has adopted criollo customs, then the future importance of cash cropping in the traditional communities to the west of the Chaviripa river will depend on the cultural effects of their present continual exposure to local criollos and missionaries.

Since the collapse of the tonka bean trade in the early 1960s, the basket trade has allowed the Panare to meet their needs for industrially produced goods in a manner that involves very little disruption of traditional social relations. Furthermore, the basket trade has had a stimulating effect on Panare guapawork considered as an artistic activity. As will be shown in detail in Sections III-IV of this essay, the commercialization of Panare guapawork, far from resulting in the bastardization of traditional skills, has been contemporaneous with the development of a highly innovative and technically superior form of guapawork. Yet whatever the benefits of the basket trade, it must be recognized that dependence on this source of income makes the Panare extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in the market for "primitive" artefacts. Intervention in the market by government bodies could only compensate for fluctuations of this kind to a limited degree.

The advantage that cash cropping has over basket production is that the market for cash crops is far more reliable. But cash cropping also has disadvantages. The fact that market conditions in the local region of Caicara currently favour cash cropping has not escaped the notice of local criollo entrepreneurs. There are several agricultural enterprises now in the process of being established that will be larger and more mechanized than anything known in the region before. The entry of these entrepreneurial elements into the local economy could well un-

dermine the potential economic benefits of cash cropping for the Panare.

Overdependence on any single means of exchange makes an indigenous group extremely vulnerable to fluctuations in the local, national and even in the international economy. The Panare experienced the effect of the international economy when the tonka bean market collapsed. Had it not been for the development of the basket trade as a substitute, the consequences of the collapse of the tonka bean market would have been far more serious for the Panare. In the authors' view, any policy designed to strengthen the economic position of indigenous communities within the national society should involve the promotion within indigenous communities of diverse means of producing a surplus for exchange. In the Panare case, such an economic strategy would imply not only the promotion of cash cropping and basketry in the communities that do not yet practice them but also the encouragement of other possible forms of producing a surplus for exchange including animal husbandry and the exploitation of renewable natural resources.

### III. THE STYLES OF PANARE GUAPAWORK

#### III.1 *The Guianese Tesselate Basketwork Tradition*

In the first quarter of this century when Roth was studying the arts and crafts of indigenous Guiana, basketwork of the class to which the Panare guapa belongs was widely distributed throughout the region. Roth termed this class of baskets "circular trays" and reports their manufacture amongst the "Arawak, Wapishana (who call it wo-pa), Warrau, Akawai, Makusi, Arekuna, Taruma, etc." (Roth 1924: 320). In the absence of any modern general survey of indigenous arts and crafts in Guiana, it is impossible to know whether basketwork of the guapa variety is still widely distributed throughout the region. In Venezuela, in addition to the Panare, guapas are made by the Ye'kuana, the Pemon and the Warao. Cruder specimens made by the Baniwa, the Piapoco and the Piaroa are sometimes encountered. It could well be that other groups of the Venezuelan Amazonas continue to manufacture guapas, but nothing has been published on this subject.

Roth regards the weaving technique employed in guapawork as a form of "twilled" basketwork. According to the definition cited by Roth, the diagnostic characteristic of twilled weaving is that "each element of the weft passes over and under two or more warp elements". But Roth himself notes that "in Guiana twilled basketry the warp and weft would appear to be sometimes indistinguishable". (Roth 1924:

139). In defining the types of basketry encountered in Guiana, Roth was following "as nearly as possible" the system of classification devised on the basis of the study of North American Indian basketwork. In this system of classification, an important distinction is drawn between woven basketwork and plaitwork. Whereas in woven basketwork, a series of relatively active elements (the weft) can be distinguished from a series of relatively passive elements (the warp), in plaitwork no such distinction can be made, all the elements employed being more or less equally active or passive. But as G.G. Simpson has pointed out, the most common and typical forms of South American basketwork cannot be fitted neatly into the categories developed on the basis of North American material. Panare basketry is a case in point belonging to the large class of South American baskets that Simpson describes in the following terms:

"...these baskets can be made with all elements more or less equally 'active' or 'passive' and can thus be considered plaitwork, but the method and the result are not essentially different from those of basketry that has been 'woven' in the most literal sense of the term and cannot logically be considered to belong to a large and distinct category" (Simpson 1940: 474. Authors' translation).

Simpson then proposes the term "woven plaiting" to cover this important class of South American basketwork. This category he further subdivides into three:

i) *checked woven plaiting* in which two sets of elements oriented in different directions are woven in such a way as to create a pattern of squares as on a draughts board. The weaving technique employed in checked woven plaiting is usually 1/1/1 although other techniques can in theory be employed (cf. Appendix III.7).

ii) *twilled woven plaiting* in which two sets of elements oriented in different directions are woven in such a way as to create a pattern of stepped rectangles or some more complicated design. The weaving technique of twilled woven plaiting cannot be 1/1/1 but can, in theory, be any other.

iii) *lattice woven plaiting* in which three or more sets of elements oriented in different directions are woven into a lattice (Simpson 1940: 469-471).



In Table N° 2, the principal Panare basket types are classified according to Simpson's scheme<sup>26</sup>. All Panare basket types with the exception of hexagonal latticework baskets (S: *cesta jaula*; P: *ëwe'*) belong to the category of twilled woven plaiting. Checked woven plaiting does not appear in the Table since none of the basket types produced by the Panare fall into this category. Simpson's twilled woven plaiting category is further subdivided in the Table into "tesselate work" in which coloured elements are used and "non-chromatic work" in which coloured elements are not used. The reasons for the use of the term "tesselate" are explained in Appendix III.1.

The Ye'kuana type of guapawork to which the Panare were first introduced in 1964 by the Protestant missionary living in Caicara belongs to a tradition of tesselate work that is found all over Guiana. This tradition, which will be termed the "Guianese Tesselate Tradition", is defined by a number of technical and graphic characteristics. In the basketwork of this tradition, all members of one set of elements, forming one axis of the weave, are coloured whilst those of the other set of elements, disposed at right angles to the first set, are uncoloured (cf. Appendix III.5). Graphic forms are achieved by manipulating the weave pattern whilst the chromatic sequence remains constant (cf. Appendix III.6, 10). In addition, certain rules concerning the manipulation of the weave pattern are observed. These rules might be termed the "technical conventions" of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition. The purpose of these technical conventions is to ensure a tight weave, an essential quality if the basketry is to be strong and resistant. Although Guianese tesselate basketry is often very beautiful, it also has to be sturdy since in many Guianese indigenous groups it is put to functional domestic use. It is only as a result of the partial economic integration of Guianese indigenous groups into the national societies with which they are in contact that indigenous artisans have begun to weave tesselate basketry exclusively for sale as decorative basketry.

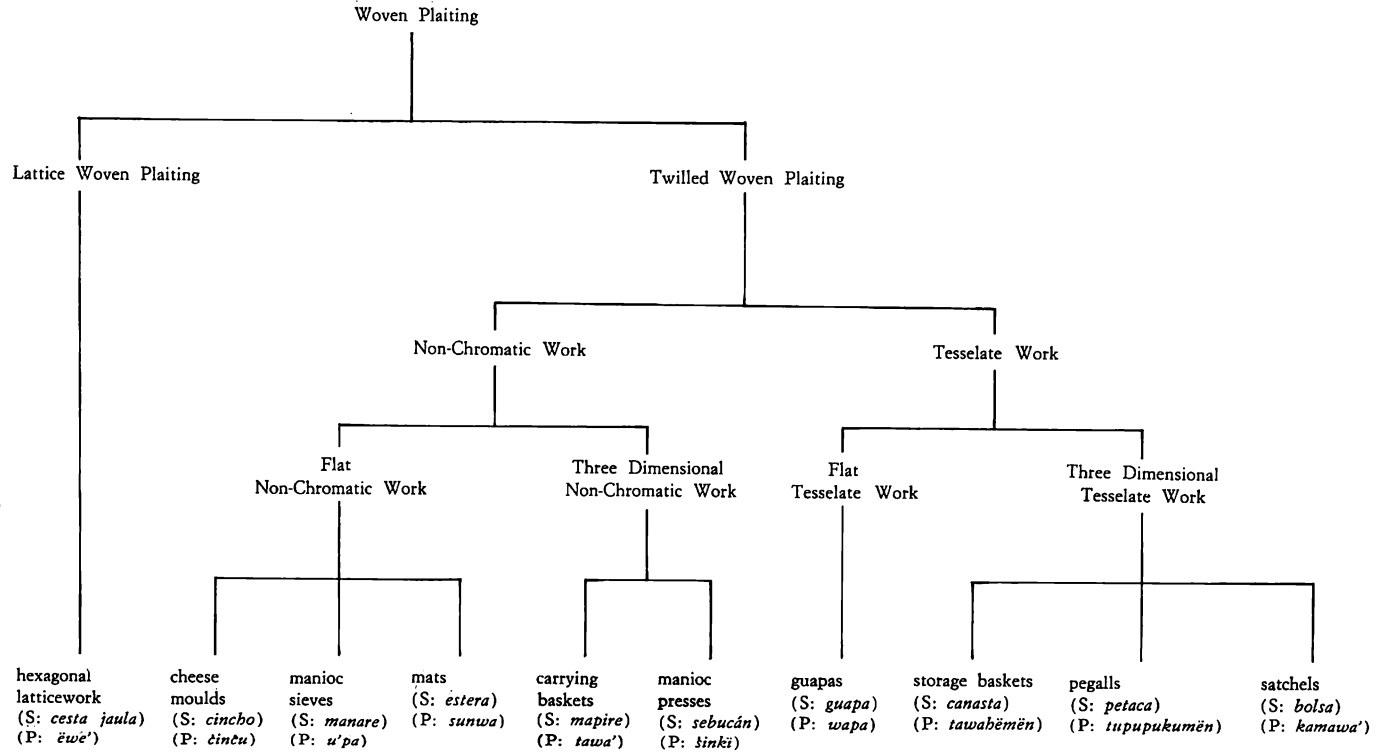
The most important technical convention of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition can be summarized as follows:

i) *Technical Convention N° 1 (TC 1)*: the number of spans made by the tesserae in the surface of a guapa or other example of tesselate work should ideally be three and where variation on this basic principle

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26. Although it includes almost all known basketry techniques, Simpson's system of classification was developed from "the particular perspective of the work of the Kamarakoto and those indigenous groups that are closely related to them culturally" (Simpson 1940: 468. Authors' translation). The Kamarakoto are a subdivision of the Pemon who are Carib speakers, like the Panare.

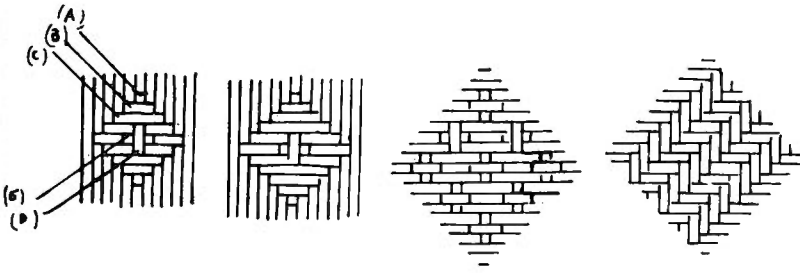
TABLE N° 2 A Technical Classification of Panare Basketry



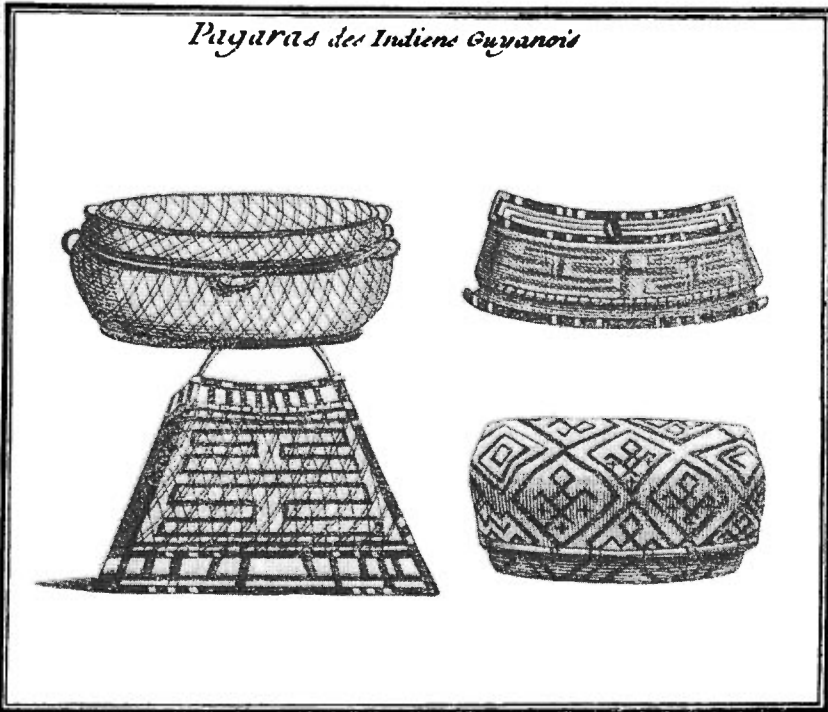
is necessary for graphic effect, the tesserae should make one span or five spans (cf. Appendix III.8).

TC 1 can be seen in operation in the "tortoise shell" construction illustrated in Fig. 1a (cf. Appendix III.11). This construction is one of the most fundamental constructions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition. All the tesserae in this construction make 1, 3 or 5 spans.

FIG. 1. TESSELATE CONSTRUCTIONS



1a, 1b, 1c, 1d

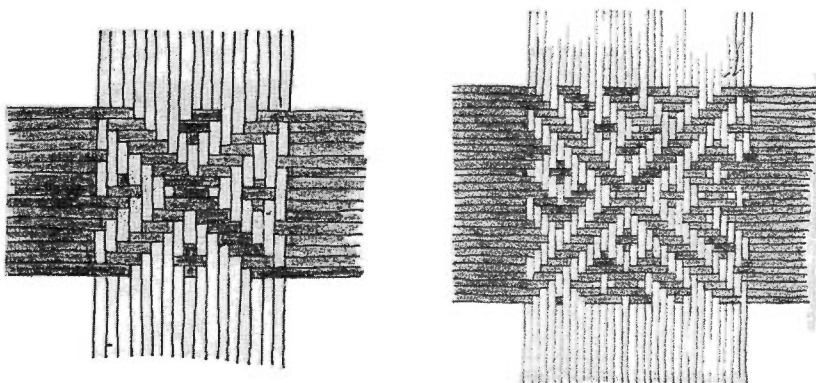


Galibi Pegalls

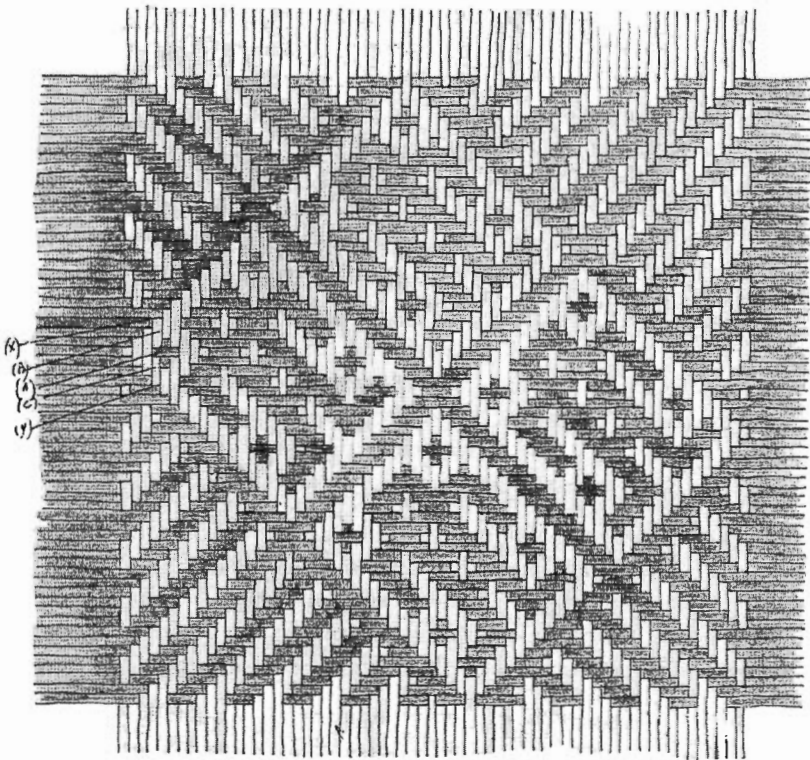
Many of the graphic forms of Guianese tessellate basketry are merely by-products of conformity to TC 1. Each of the Man figures in Fig. 4c is accompanied by four cross-shaped motifs (cf. Appendix III. 11). The purpose of these motifs is technical. The motif marked (A) in the diagram breaks up what would otherwise have been a tessera of 7 spans between the points marked (X) and (Y). With the introduction of this motif, the distance between points (X) and (Y) is broken up into two tesserae of three spans each (B and C) and one tessera running along the transverse axis (marked A). All of the 16 cross-shaped motifs in Fig. 4c have this technical function. *Post hoc* these constructions may be given representational meaning—they may be said to represent butterflies or birds for example—but their *raison d'être* is technical.

Fig. 4a-c illustrates three stages in the weaving of a section of conventional tessellate basketry. The diagrams are oriented in the way that the artisan looks at his work as he weaves, one set of elements being horizontal and the other set of elements being vertical to him. These two sets of elements form the weave axes. In Fig. 4 it is the uncoloured set of elements that forms the vertical axis of the weave and the coloured set of elements that forms the horizontal axis. The positions relative to one another of the two sets of elements in the diagram could just as easily have been reversed. In practice, the artisan will vary the position of the two sets of elements during the course of weaving. However, one set of elements is always vertical and the other always horizontal.

FIG. 4. THE MAN FIGURE



4a, 4b



4c

The graphic pattern of the section of tessellate basketry illustrated in Figure 4 runs obliquely to the axes of the weave. In order to set the Man figure in the diagram on a horizontal plane, one would need to turn the diagrams through an angle of 45 degrees. The dimensions of the graphic pattern that would be horizontal and vertical if this operation were carried out, form the graphic axes of the weave. In other words, the weave axes and the graphic axes are offset in relation to one another by an angle of 45 degrees (cf. Appendix III.5, 9).

In Guianese tessellate work, the graphic axes and the weave axes are always obliquely disposed to one another in this way. Furthermore, all graphic lines in tessellate figures run along one or other of the graphic axes. If they ran obliquely to the graphic axes, they would in fact be running along the weave axes and a loose weave would be the

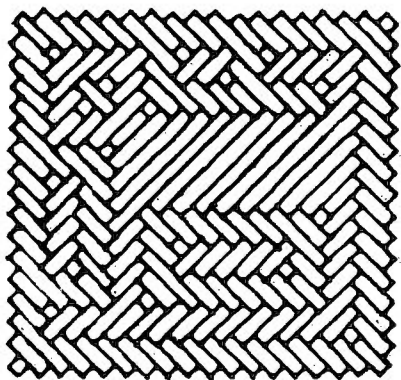


FIG. 5. THE DOG FIGURE

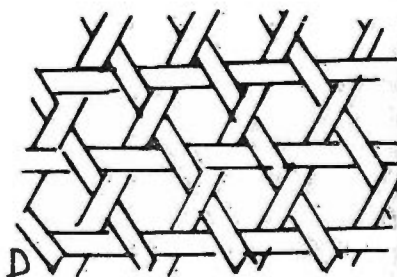


FIG. 6. HEXAGONAL LATTICEWORK  
(AFTER SIMPSON 1940: 475)

result. Very occasionally, in the weaving of ancillary motifs, the lines of the graphic pattern of Guianese tessellate work *do* run along the weave axes. However, oblique lines never occur in graphic *figures* (cf. Appendix III.11 for the distinction between “motifs” and “figures”).

This universal feature of the basketwork of the Guianese Tessellate Tradition can be summarized in the form of a second technical convention.

ii) *Technical Convention N° 2 (TC 2)*: all the graphic lines in tessellate figures must either run parallel or at 90 degrees to one another. Diagonal lines are not permitted.

Although the principal function of TC 1 and TC 2 is to ensure that the weave of tessellate basketry be tight, they also have a useful mnemonic function. Due to the oblique disposition of the weave axes and the graphic axes, the artisan cannot concentrate on one graphic motif at a time and carry it to its conclusion. After he has passed the very early stages of weaving a tessellate pattern, any element that he inserts into the weave will probably effect two or more motifs and he must advance all simultaneously. In effect, this means that he has to anticipate the form that the motifs will take and make sure to weave the extremities of motifs before the main body is visible.

It is in this situation that TC 1 can help the artisan. An artisan weaving the example of tessellate work illustrated in Fig. 4a and in the process of inserting the element marked (Z) will be confronted with

a series of seven elements in the transverse axis between the point marked (X) and the point marked (Y) on the box that encloses the figure. Bearing TC 1 in mind, the artisan knows that the distance should not be covered by a single tessera. Indeed the only way that this series of elements can be spanned is by means of two three-span tesselae either side of a tessera in the transverse axis. By following the convention therefore, the artisan does not omit to insert the extremity of the foot of the Man figure (cf. Fig. 4c), since this extremity is the single tessera in the transverse axis that TC 1 obliges the artisan to put in.

As long as he conforms to the technical conventions, it is not necessary for an artisan to have a fully developed image in his head of a graphic pattern before he actually weaves it. If one asks a Panare what motif he intends to weave just as he is beginning to work on a guapa of the Ye'kuana type, he may well reply that he does not yet know. Keeping within technical conventions, he will advance little by little to begin with until what he has done suggests some overall pattern to be followed. Thus, in practice, the technical conventions can play a large part in generating the form of the graphic motifs of tesselate basketry.

With reference to the wide range of motifs encountered in Guianese tesselate work, Roth remarked:

“These patterns, my informants tell me are handed down from father to son and it is certainly remarkable that in the absence of any working model, these Indians will execute so many and such varied designs with so much accuracy” (Roth 1924: 353-354).

In fact, the phenomenon is not quite as remarkable as Roth supposed. Although the range of different motifs that occur in Guianese tesselate work may be very wide, almost all motifs conform to the two technical conventions that have been defined above. It is these conventions rather than the comparatively complex finished motifs that are passed down from father to son. Furthermore, by imposing constraints on the range of possible variations on a given motif, it is the technical conventions that explain the “accuracy” of execution from one generation to the next.

The Guianese Tesselate Tradition is highly conservative. In a book published in 1743, Barrère illustrates four baskets woven by the Galibi of Guyane (Barrère 1743: 138, cf. Figure 1). One of these baskets is quite clearly a pegall bearing a motif identical to one encountered in Surinam at the beginning of this century (cf. Roth 1924: 361,

Plate 175.B). A similar indication of the conservatism of Guianese tessellate work can be gained by comparing the baskets collected by Koch-Grünberg between 1911 and 1913 during his journey in northern Brazil and southern Venezuela with those produced in the same area today. The material collected by Koch-Grünberg could quite easily have been woven by present day artisans. One of the Ye'kuana baskets illustrated by Koch-Grünberg (1923: Plate 24.12) is almost identical to one collected by Simpson in the same region over twenty five years later (cf. Simpson 1940: Plate 56.b). Another of the Ye'kuana baskets illustrated by Koch-Grünberg (1923: Plate 22.10) features a design encountered by Hames and Hames (1976: 21). The modern Ye'kuana call this design "*Kasu's idea*" after the Ye'kuana from the Upper Padamo river who is supposed to have invented the design over a century ago.

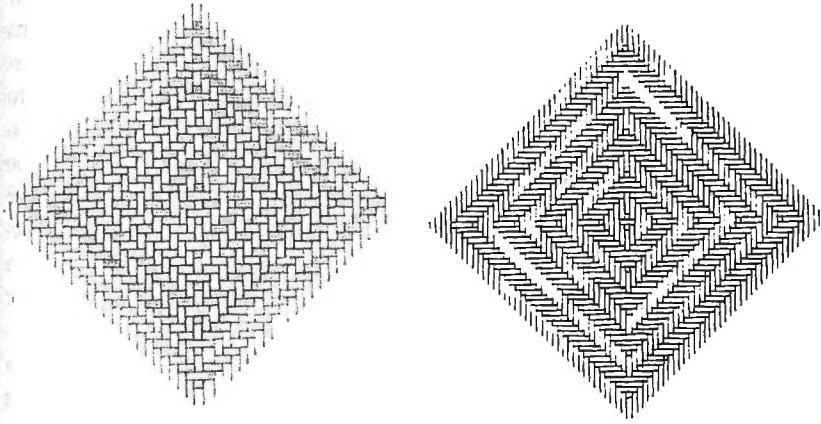
### III.2 *The Panare Tradition of Guapawork*

The traditional Panare type of guapawork, although it is a form of tessellate basketwork in the sense that coloured elements are used in the weave for graphic effect, lies outside the Guianese Tessellate Tradition. The way in which the graphic forms of traditional Panare guapawork are achieved is quite different to the way in which those of the guapawork of the Guianese Tessellate Tradition are. Whereas in the latter, graphic forms are achieved by manipulating the weave pattern whilst the chromatic sequence remains constant, in the traditional Panare type of guapawork, it is the chromatic sequence that is manipulated whilst the weave pattern remains relatively invariable (cf. Appendix III.6, 10).

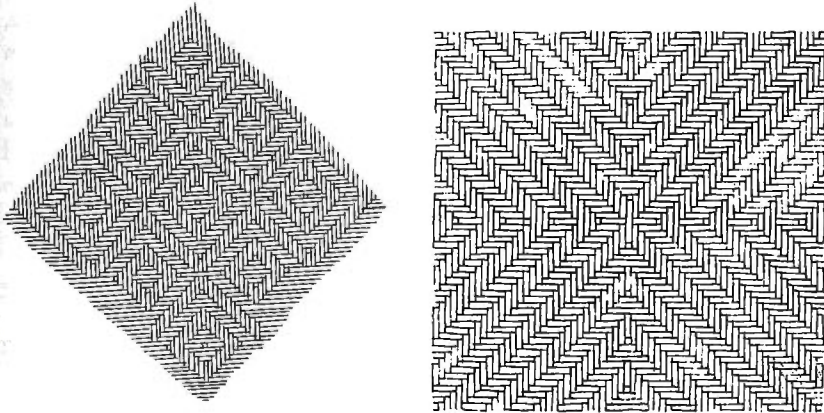
All guapas of the traditional Panare type either have one of three basic weave patterns illustrated in Fig. 2b-d or some minor variation on these patterns. These weave patterns appear to have been directly adapted from the weave patterns of the manioc sieve. Fig. 2a shows the weave pattern of the Panare manioc sieve. The weave of the manioc sieve is usually open, but in this diagram it has been closed and one of the axes has been shaded so that the weave pattern can be better discerned. Although the weaving technique of the Panare manioc sieve is predominantly 1/2/2 whilst that of the traditional Panare type of guapa is predominantly 1/4/4 (cf. Appendix III.7), there is an evident similarity between the manioc sieve weave pattern illustrated in Fig. 2a and the guapa weave pattern illustrated in Fig. 2b. The other two weave patterns most frequently encountered in traditional Panare



FIG. 2. TRADITIONAL PANARE WEAVE PATTERNS



2a, 2b



2c, 2d

guapawork (Figs. 2c, d), can be identified with manioc sieve weave patterns on the basis of comparative evidence. Ahlbrinck (1931: Plate 45) illustrates the weave patterns most frequently produced in the manioc sieves of the Surinamese Caribs. Three of these correspond to the basic weave patterns present in the traditional Panare type of guapawork. This suggests that the weave patterns illustrated in Figs.

2c, d may have had their origin in manioc sieve weave patterns that are no longer woven by the Panare<sup>27</sup>.

Variation in the graphic pattern of the traditional Panare type of guapawork is achieved by selecting one of these three weave patterns and then by manipulating the chromatic sequence. Figs. 3a-d illustrate how the manipulation of the chromatic sequence can give rise to different graphic effects. All four of the sections of guapawork illustrated in Fig. 3 have the same underlying weave pattern which is the weave pattern illustrated in Fig. 2b consisting of a central "tortoise shell" construction enclosed by a concentric series of "box" constructions (cf. Appendix III.11). But each section of guapawork has a different chromatic sequence and consequently the final overall graphic effect varies considerably.

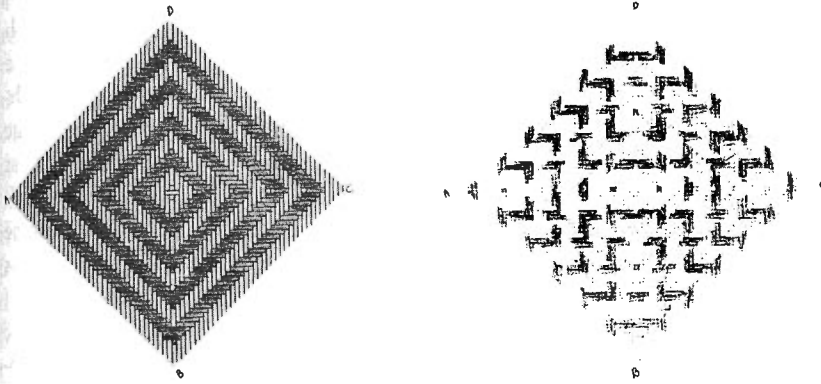
The weave axes of the sections of guapawork illustrated in Fig. 3 run from the top left hand corner of the diagram to the bottom right (A - C) and from the bottom left to the top right hand corner (B - D). In the section of guapawork represented in Fig. 3b, the chromatic sequence is as follows: in each axis there is a central band of nine uncoloured elements and on either side of this central band, bands of two coloured elements alternate with bands of four uncoloured elements. In each axis of the section of guapawork illustrated in Fig. 3c, there is a central band consisting of seven coloured elements and on either side of this central band, bands of three uncoloured elements alternate with single coloured elements. In Fig. 3d, each axis has a central band of three coloured elements and either side of the central band, bands of two uncoloured elements alternate with bands of two or three coloured elements.

This technique of varying the graphic effect by means of manipulating the chromatic sequence characteristic of the traditional Panare guapa, is alien to guapawork of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition. In guapawork of the latter kind, the chromatic sequence is invariable: all the elements in one axis are coloured whilst all the elements in the other axis are uncoloured. Fig. 3a illustrates how the weave pattern common to all the sections of guapawork represented in Fig. 3 would appear if the chromatic sequence characteristic of the Guianese Tesselate Tradi-

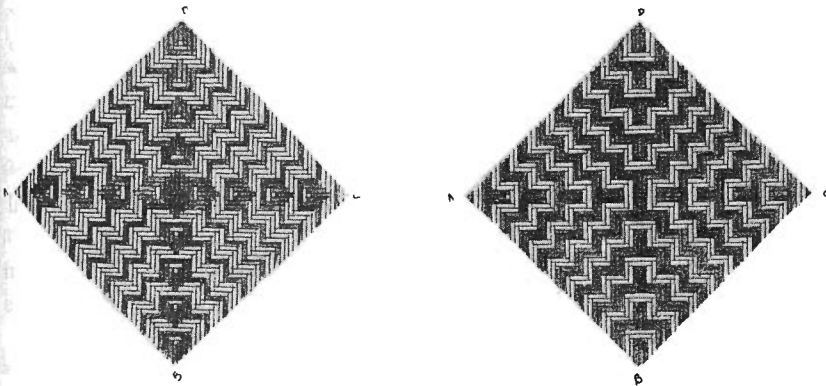
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27. In the ethnographic collection of the Sociedad de Ciencias Naturales La Salle, there is a small collection of Panare basketry made by J. M. Crucent in 1948. In this collection, the baskets that would be termed *wapa* by the present day Panare are described by Crucent as *ugpas*. This suggests that in 1948, the Panare made no linguistic distinction between the basket they now term *wapa*, i.e. the decorative basket sold to the criollos, and the manioc sieve, which the present authors would prefer to transcribe as *u'pa*. Thus the contemporary Panare term *wapa* could be a corruption of the Ye'kuana term *waba* introduced into the Panare language at the same time as guapawork of the Ye'kuana type.

FIG. 3. THE MANIPULATION OF THE CHROMATIC SEQUENCE



3a, 3b



3c, 3d

tion were employed: the graphic pattern in Fig. 3a is simply a reproduction of the underlying weave pattern.

Another fundamental difference between the traditional Panare type of guapawork and the Guianese Tesselate Tradition is the weaving technique employed. Whilst in the latter the tesserae are predominantly three spans long, or failing that, one or five spans long, the tesserae of the traditional Panare type of guapawork are predominantly four spans long. When the weave pattern requires some sort of variation on this

basic principle, tesserae of one, three, five, seven or even of nine spans occur (cf. Appendix III.1, 8).

Figure 1b illustrates the "tortoise shell" construction woven with the traditional Panare technique. By comparing this construction with the "tortoise shell" construction woven with the Guianese Tesselate Tradition weaving technique, one can understand why the 1/3/3 technique is associated with a type of tesselate work in which the graphic forms are varied by means of manipulating the weave pattern whilst the 1/4/4 technique is associated with a type of tesselate work in which the weave pattern is relatively invariable. Firstly, the 1/4/4 "tortoise shell" construction is larger, there being 11 elements in each of its axes. There are only 9 elements in axes of the 1/3/3 "tortoise shell". Thus within a given area, the 1/3/3 technique characteristic of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition allows the greater elaboration of constructions. Secondly, the variation in the length of the tesserae that make up the 1/3/3 "tortoise shell" construction is smaller than the variation in the length of the tesserae in the 1/4/4 "tortoise shell" construction. In the 1/3/3 construction there are one, three and five span tesserae only. In the 1/4/4 construction, there are one, three, four, five and seven span tesserae. Not only is the variation in the length of the tesserae greater in the 1/4/4 construction, but the variations all make an odd number of spans (1, 3, 5, 7) whilst the predominant span is even (4). This comparison exemplifies a general point of difference between the Guianese Tesselate Tradition and the traditional Panare type of guapawork: variation in a 1/4/4 weave not only requires more space but is also a more complex intellectual operation than variation on a basic 1/3/3 weave. It is for this reason that in the traditional Panare type of guapawork, in which the weaving technique is predominantly 1/4/4, the manipulation of the weave pattern is kept to a minimum and the graphic pattern varied by means of manipulating the chromatic sequence.

### III.3 *The Distribution of the Styles of Panare Guapawork*

Considerable diversification has occurred in Panare guapawork since the Ye'kuana type of guapawork was first introduced in 1964. The guapas currently produced by the Panare can be grouped into four distinct classes of guapawork, distinguishable from one another on the basis of a list of diagnostic technical and graphic features. These diagnostic features are summarized in Table N° 5. The majority of Panare artisans continue to produce guapawork that conforms to the graphic

and technical features of the traditional Panare type. Guapawork of this kind will be termed "Traditional Panare" or the TP style. Only in the communities of Colorado and Portachuelo do Panare artisans regularly produce guapas that fully conform to the general characteristics of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition. It was in these communities that the Ye'kuana type of guapawork was first adopted. This second class of guapawork will be termed the "Ye'kuanoid" style or the YD style<sup>28</sup>. A third class of Panare guapawork, which will be termed the "Pseudo-Ye'kuanoid" or PY style, combines the features of both the traditional Panare type of guapawork and the Ye'kuana type. Finally, in Colorado and Portachuelo, some artisans produce guapas that evidently owe much to the Ye'kuana type of guapawork but do not conform to the technical conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition that are fundamental to the YD style. Yet these guapas owe nothing to the traditional Panare type of guapawork either. This class of guapawork will be termed the "Modern Panare" or MP style.

The boundaries between these "styles" of guapawork do not represent absolute discontinuities. These "styles" are merely a convenient way of dividing up the spectrum of present day Panare guapas that range from those that conform entirely to the Panare tradition of guapawork (those of the TP style) to those that are most alien (the guapas of the MP style).

Table N° 3 gives details of the synchronic distribution of Panare guapawork styles. Only the Panare communities involved in the basket trade are included in the table. The table does not therefore refer to the Panare communities located to the south and east of the Guaniamo river (cf. Map N° 1). In the table, the communities involved in the basket trade are classified according to which of the various styles of Panare guapawork is the most common in each. The fact that a particular style is the most common in a given community does not preclude the occasional production of guapas that might be classified in a style other than the most common one. For example, in the communities east of the Chaviripa river, guapas that belong to the PY style are sometimes produced. In Colorado and Portachuelo, guapas of both the

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28. When a class of Panare guapawork is said to be "Ye'kuanoid", this does not mean that it is identical to the guapawork of the Ye'kuana. Panare guapawork of the "Ye'kuana" style is very similar to Ye'kuana guapawork from which it has developed since both conform to the technical conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition. However, the Ye'kuana guapawork can generally be distinguished from Panare guapawork on the basis of the finer technical finish of the former. Furthermore, certain graphic motifs that are very common in Ye'kuana guapawork do not occur in Panare guapawork and vice versa.

TABLE N° 3  
*The Synchronic Distribution of Panare Styles*

TRADITIONAL PANARE	PSEUDO YE'KUANOID	YE'KUANOID	MODERN PANARE
All communities located east of the Chaviripa river Chaviripa Manare (El Corozal)	El Guamal El Danto Rancho Grande Carta El Rincón Mata Brava	Colorado Portachuelo (Charal)	Colorado Portachuelo (Charal)

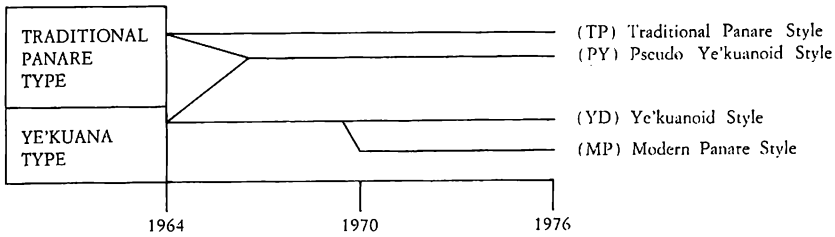
YD and the MP styles are frequently produced and these communities therefore appear in more than one column.

The boundaries between these "styles" of guapawork are somewhat artificial. There are many PY guapas that feature the chromatic sequence and the weave pattern that is characteristic of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition, making them very similar in general appearance to the YD and MP styles. Such guapas only belong to the PY style on account of one or two minor features that are normally associated with the traditional Panare type of guapawork. The boundaries between the YD and MP styles are even more artificial. Many artisans in Colorado and Portachuelo can produce guapas in both styles. A Portachuelo artisan might for example produce a MP guapa one week and a YD guapa the next or vice versa. There is however one absolute discontinuity in the distribution of Panare guapa styles: the MP and YD styles are never encountered in the communities where the TP styles is the most common, nor the TP style encountered in Colorado and Portachuelo where the YD and MP styles are the most common<sup>29</sup>. Even so, in view of the artificiality of the boundaries between these classes of guapawork, they cannot be considered "styles" in the rigorous sense this term has been defined in some modern archeological literature. Nevertheless, for the limited purposes of this essay it is convenient to retain this term.

Table N° 4 illustrates the relationship between the "types" and the "styles" of Panare guapawork. The term "Ye'kuana type" em-

29. The information presented concerning the distribution of the "styles" of Panare guapawork is the product of field notes made during visits to Panare communities and of interviews with the principal buyers of Panare basketry in Caicara. Although the authors visited almost every community involved in the basket trade, no systematic survey was carried out. Such a survey might reveal one or two discrepancies in the pattern of distribution described in Table N° 3. Nevertheless, there is no doubt in the authors' minds that the major division placed between the guapawork of the communities located east of the Chaviripa river and the guapawork of the communities located west of the same river is accurate.

TABLE Nº 4  
*The Diversification of Panare Guapa Styles*



braces the three styles that owe something to the introduction of Ye'kuana prototypes in 1964, i.e. the PY, YD and MP styles. The class of guapawork referred to up until this point as the "traditional Panare type" includes only one style - the TP style.

The first Panare artisans to master the techniques of the Ye'kuana type of guapawork were those living in the Colorado valley. Portachuelo, the other Panare community where the YD and MP styles are produced, consists of a number of families that have broken off from those in Colorado in the interim since the Ye'kuana type was first introduced. The Ye'kuana type of guapawork has also spread to several of the neighbouring groups of Panare who are in regular social contact with Colorado and/or Portachuelo. But in the neighbouring communities, the artisans have not been so successful in reproducing the Ye'kuana techniques and their guapawork still manifests features characteristic of the traditional Panare type of guapawork. That is to say, in terms of the stylistic classification defined above, the guapawork of the artisans living in the communities that maintain regular social relations with Colorado and/or Portachuelo belongs for the most part to the PY style.

Most Panare who do not know how to weave guapas of the Ye'kuana type say that they would like to be able to do so. This is in part due to the fact that Ye'kuana type guapas command a higher market price than the traditional Panare type guapas. But it is also due to the fact that most Panare regard the guapas of the Ye'kuana type to be in some sense aesthetically superior to the guapas of the traditional Panare type. However, to make the change from weaving guapas of the traditional Panare type to weaving guapas of the Ye'kuana type requires a good deal of time and experimentation and apparently it is not all Panare who are prepared to do this. East of the Chaviripa where the

basket trade is not the only means of exchange with the criollos and where certain criollo cultural norms have been adopted, most artisans continue to weave guapas of the traditional Panare type. West of the same river, the Panare are more innovative and almost all the guapas they produce are of Ye'kuana type. Although there are one or two notable exceptions, it is nevertheless generally true to say that it is the relatively traditional communities that weave in the most innovative manner. This apparent paradox is simply explained: it is only in the communities where the Panare still show interest in basketry skills, i.e. in the relatively traditional communities, that the artisans are prepared to spend the necessary time to learn and develop the techniques of the Ye'kuana type of guapawork.

Neither the PY style nor the MP style conforms entirely to the technical conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition that are fundamental to the Ye'kuana type of guapawork. In the case of the PY style, the failure to conform to technical conventions can be attributed to the way the Panare go about learning. The circumstances under which the Colorado Panare first learnt the Ye'kuana type of guapawork were somewhat unusual since they did so under the stimulus of the Evangelical missionary in Caicara. Under normal circumstances, the Panare never systematically copy the work of another<sup>30</sup>. During the period that the authors spent in Colorado, a period of eight months over the course of a year, Panare from neighbouring communities often examined the guapawork of their hosts when they came on a visit, but they never took a sample home to learn from. In attempting to reproduce the YD style from memory, they appear to have allowed certain features of the traditional Panare type of guapawork to creep into their work.

The MP style, like the YD style, is confined to Colorado and Portachuelo. Historically, the MP style developed out of the YD style but can be distinguished from the latter by the disregard shown for the conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition. In contrast to the PY style, in which technical conventions are broken as it were by default, in the MP style technical conventions are deliberately disregarded in order to achieve certain graphic effects. Nevertheless, on account of their mutual non-conventionality, there is a certain overall similarity between PY style and MP style guapas. At their best PY style guapas can be mistaken for MP style guapas. Indeed, rather than

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30. This disinterest in copying has often been noted in studies of so-called "primitive" art (cf. Boas 1955: 156 and more recently, Wilbert 1975: 82).



consider the best PY guapas as failed YD guapas, it may be more correct to consider them to be examples of genuinely innovative guapawork. This is particularly true of the best guapawork produced in the Panare communities located south of the Suapure river (cf. Map N° 2).

A rough temporal framework for the diversification of Panare guapa styles is provided by the collection of Panare basketry made by R. Lizarralde in 1969<sup>31</sup>. In this collection, made five years after the introduction of the Ye'kuana type of guapawork, there are 22 guapas in all. Of these, 18 were woven in communities east of the Chaviripa, and 4 were woven in Colorado. Of the 18 woven east of the Chaviripa, three or possibly four could be classified within the PY style. The remainder are all TP style. Two of the four Colorado guapas display the diagnostic features of the YD style. The other two show a mixture of the features of the YD and the TP styles, leading one to classify them in the PY style. This style never occurs in Colorado today. The presence of these guapas in Lizarralde's collection suggests that the YD style was not adopted simultaneously by all the Panare of Colorado which is what one would have anticipated.

Museum collections can only verify the presence of certain styles; they cannot verify their absence. One cannot be certain how representative Lizarralde's collection is of the complete range of Panare guapas being woven in 1969. But on the basis of his collection, combined with information collected from both Panare and criollo informants in the field, one can propose that the PY style emerged soon after the introduction of the Ye'kuana prototypes as the Panare attempted to reproduce them with varying degrees of success and that the MP style has developed only in the last five years (cf. Table N° 4).

### III.4 *The Diagnostic Features of Panare Guapa Styles*

The diagnostic features of Panare guapawork styles are summarized in Table N° 5. The following description of these features is an essential preliminary to the following discussion of the interrelation between the technical and graphic features of guapawork. Reference

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31. In the ethnographic collection of the Sociedad de Ciencias Naturales La Salle, there are two small samples of Panare guapawork. The first of these has already been mentioned and is that collected by Crucent in 1948. The other collection was made by Wilbert in 1957. Unfortunately, because of lack of funds, the ethnographic collection of the Sociedad is stored in lamentable conditions and it was not possible to locate all the items collected by Crucent nor any of the items collected by Wilbert. Although the catalogue of the collection gives a precise description of the Wilbert collection, this can only be considered a very poor alternative to looking at the items themselves.

TABLE N° 5  
*The Diagnostic Features of Panare Guapa Styles*

		Traditional Panare	Pseudo Ye'kuanoid	Ye'kuanoid	Modern Panare
TECHNICAL FEATURES	Width of Elements Edging Weaving Technique	3.5-5mm. crude 1/4/4	3.5-5mm. crude 1/3/3 or 1/4/4	2-3mm. fine 1/3/3	2-3mm. fine 1/3/3
	Chromatic Sequence	discontinuous; one or both axes	continuous; one axis only	continuous; one axis only	continuous; one axis only
	Coloured Elements (*)	black-red on concave surface	black/red on concave surface	black on both surfaces	black on both surfaces
	Weave Pattern	simple	simple	complex	complex
GRAPHIC FEATURES	Variation in Composition	limited	(limited) (**)	limited	
	Representational Mode	particularistic	holistic	holistic	holistic

(\*) These features are not exclusive: it is possible to find TP guapas with black on both surfaces and YD guapas with black on the concave surface only, but they are exceptions.

(\*\*) The parenthesis means that the limitation is minor.

should be made to Appendix III for definitions of the terms employed.

i) *The edging and the width of the elements*: when the Colorado Panare judge the quality of a guapa, it is to these two features that they give immediate attention. The diagnostic feature that is termed "edging" refers to the circular rim of the guapa. This rim consists of a strap that is woven independently and then bound around the circumference of the main body of the guapa with a hoop on either side to provide strength (cf. Roth 1924: 321; cf. Plate 4a).

TP and PY guapas can be distinguished from YD and MP guapas on the basis of the width of the elements alone. Whereas the majority of the elements used in the latter two styles are between two and

PLATE No. 4



a. binding the hoops



b. and c. binding the edging  
on the main body

three mms. wide, the elements used in the former two styles are rarely less than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  mms. wide and sometimes as great as 5 mms. wide. The quality of the edging depends on the width of the elements. The TP and PY edgings are usually therefore much cruder than those of the YD and MP. The YD and MP artisans take more care in binding the edging to the main body and have introduced other refinements such as weaving a graphic pattern into the edging and painting the hoops that bind it to the body, either black with *mabto* (cf. p. 49 above) or red with urucu (L: *Bixa orellana* L.: S: *onoto*; P: *wate*).

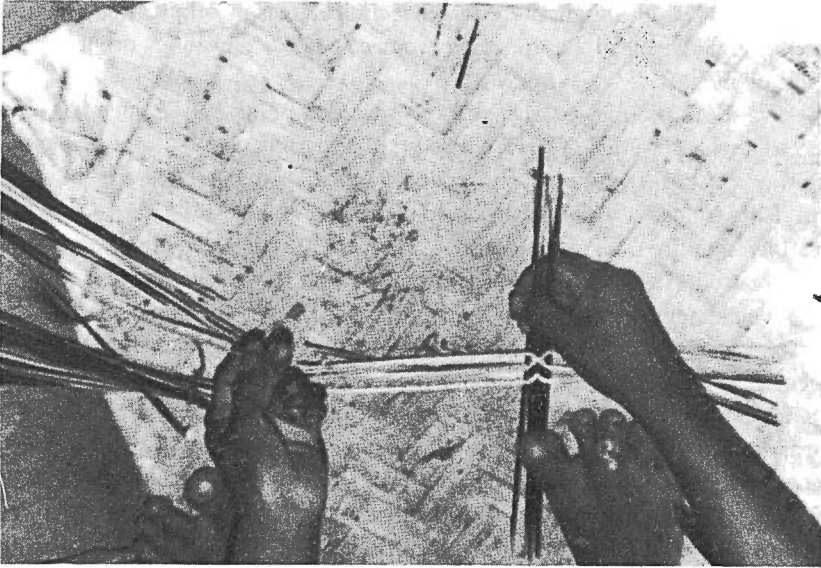
Although the narrowness of the elements employed allows one to distinguish between styles, there is no necessary relation between this feature and any of the other diagnostic features. That is to say, there is no technical reason why a guapa in the TP or PY style could not be woven with narrower elements. As an experiment, one of the authors asked a competent Colorado artisan to weave a guapa in the TP style. He did so employing elements 2 mms. wide. Furthermore, the comparison of modern TP guapas with the guapas in the collection of Panare artefacts made by Cruxent in 1948 suggests that the TP artisans now make guapas with narrower elements than they used to.

Nor is there any absolute technical reason why a guapa in the YD and MP styles should not be woven with elements wider than 3 mms. The use of wider elements would however reduce the number of graphic motifs possible within a given area since a motif woven with elements 4 mms. wide would obviously require twice the area of the same motif woven with elements 2 mms. wide. Thus the complexity and intricacy of the overall graphic composition of a guapa are to a certain extent dependent on the width of the elements employed.

ii) *The weaving technique* (cf. Appendix III.7): in the TP style the basic weaving technique is 1/4/4, whilst in the YD and MP styles it is predominantly 1/3/3. In the PY style, the weave is usually 1/3/3 but occasionally the debt that the PY owes to the traditional Panare type of guapawork is revealed in the use of a 1/4/4 weaving technique in part or even all of a PY guapa.

iii) *Chromatic sequence* (cf. Appendix III.10): in the TP style and more often than not in the PY style, coloured elements are inserted discontinuously into either or both axes. In the YD and MP styles, coloured elements are inserted continuously into one axis only. In the TP and PY styles, both black and red elements are frequently used in the same guapa. Bands in which black and red elements are mixed can be alternated with bands of uncoloured elements. Alter-

PLATE No. 5



a. beginning a wapa



b. weaving the strap of the rim

natively, bands of black and bands of red elements can be alternated with each other and with bands of uncoloured elements. In the YD and MP styles, although there is no technical reason why other colours should not be used, one rarely comes across anything other than black elements.

iv) *The graphic pattern and the weave pattern* (cf. Appendix III. 6, 9): in the TP and PY styles, the graphic pattern generally occurs only on the concave surface of the guapa whilst in the guapas of the YD and MP styles, it occurs on both surfaces. This difference is due to the fact that in the YD and the MP styles, all the elements employed are coloured. In the concave surface of a guapa woven in these styles, all the elements of one axis are coloured and all the elements of the transverse axis are uncoloured. But in fact, the elements in the uncoloured axis of the concave surface are nothing more than coloured elements with their uncoloured surfaces turned uppermost. If one turns a YD or MP guapa around and looks at the convex surface, it becomes evident that the axis that was coloured in the concave surface has become uncoloured and the axis that was uncoloured has become coloured. Nevertheless the graphic pattern is exactly the same on both surfaces of YD and MP guapas.

One can make use of Fig. 4c to illustrate this point. Let us assume that Fig. 4c represents the concave surface of a hypothetical YD guapa. One should note that in Fig. 4c the coloured elements are in the horizontal axis and the uncoloured elements in the vertical axis of the weave. If one turned this section of tessellate work around and looked at what would be the convex surface of the guapa, one would observe that although the graphic design of the convex surface was identical to that of the concave surface, the uncoloured elements would be in the horizontal axis and the coloured elements would be in the vertical axis of the weave.

Although the graphic pattern is the most instantly appreciable visual property of a guapa, it is not an autonomous feature of the guapa but rather a product of the interaction between the chromatic sequence and the weave pattern. To vary the graphic pattern of a guapa, it is necessary to manipulate one or other or both of these latter two features.

In the TP style, variation in the graphic pattern is achieved by manipulating the chromatic sequence whilst the weave pattern is held relatively constant (cf. Fig. 3). Since the chromatic sequence is discontinuous and coloured elements occur in both axes, the chromatic sequence generally masks the weave pattern. In some TP guapas, the

weave pattern and the graphic pattern have different visual centres which compete for the attention of the viewer's eye, thus giving rise to a slight kinetic effect (cf. Plate No. 7a, b, c, d).

In contrast, in the YD and MP styles, the graphic pattern is varied by manipulating the weave pattern whilst the chromatic sequence is held constant. Since the graphic pattern and the weave pattern covary in the YD and MP styles, they are in effect identical in these styles. Fig. 3a represents the end result of combining the invariable chromatic sequence of the YD and MP styles (one axis coloured, the other uncoloured) with the weave pattern illustrated in Fig. 2b. The two patterns are evidently identical.

In most PY guapas, the graphic pattern is varied by means of manipulating the weave pattern as in the YD and MP styles. But the chromatic sequence is more variable in the PY style than it is in the YD and MP. For example, one might encounter a PY guapa that has a sophisticated weave pattern after the fashion of a YD or MP guapa but which has coloured elements discontinuously distributed in both axes as one would encounter in a TP guapa.

v) *Composition* (Appendix III.12): in all four styles of Panare guapawork, composition is normally symmetrical about the central point of the surface of a guapa. Nevertheless, the variation in the types of composition that is characteristic of each style is an important stylistic boundary marker, particularly between the YD and MP styles which in other respects are very similar.

The YD style is readily identified by its highly characteristic composition. This consists of four or more complex motifs arranged symmetrically about the central point of the surface of a guapa and enclosed within a square or rectangular "box" construction from the sides of which "herring bone" constructions radiate to the perimeter of the guapa (cf. Appendix III.11; Plates No. 10, 11). The Panare inherited this composition from the Ye'kuana. Hames and Hames regard this composition as the "template" for "virtually all" Ye'kuana guapas and as "the design characteristic that distinguishes Ye'kuana flat basketry from all others in the Guianas" (Hames and Hames 1976: 17).

The characteristic YD composition is sometimes encountered in guapas of the PY style. In many PY guapas however, the composition consists of simple motifs distributed symmetrically over the whole surface of the guapa (cf. Plates No. 8, 9).

In the MP style, there is greater variety of composition than in the YD style. One might say that the centripetal composition cha-

racteristic of the YD style has been replaced in the MP style by centrifugal composition. The central square or rectangular "box" construction typical of the YD style can be opened out and the motifs normally confined within it allowed to spread over the surface of the guapa. The central "box" construction can be opened sideways for example and the figures allowed to reach the perimeter of the guapa (cf. Plate No. 12). Alternatively, the central "box" construction can be opened both vertically and horizontally so that the figures are disposed in a cross (cf. Plate No. 12d). In some MP guapas, the "herring bone" constructions which are such a prominent feature of YD composition disappear entirely and the surface of the guapa is filled with figures enclosed within their own "box" constructions in series of parallel lines (cf. Plates No. 12, 13). The MP composition in which figures are enclosed within individual "box" constructions (Plate No. 12) bears a certain resemblance to the PY composition of the type illustrated in Plates No. 8, 9. The two can usually be distinguished, however, by the greater complexity of the motifs of the MP guapa.

vi) *Mode of representation* (cf. Appendix III.13): most graphic forms of Panare guapawork have no representational meaning. In other words, they are motifs but not figures (cf. Appendix III.11). However, taking into consideration only those graphic motifs that do have meaning, the TP style can be distinguished from the styles of the Ye'kuana type on the basis of the particularistic mode of representation encountered in the former style. In the other three styles, representation is mostly holistic.

This diagnostic feature is dependent on the way in which the chromatic sequences and weave patterns of the various styles interact to create the graphic pattern. Holistic representation is more easily achieved when the weave pattern and the graphic pattern are identical as in the YD and MP styles and frequently in the PY style. In the TP style, the interplay of chromatic sequence and weave pattern leads to a break up of the graphic forms and thus makes it difficult to represent anything more than the most elementary profile. This is usually not sufficient to make a holistic representation of the referent. Thus in the TP style, the association between the graphic forms and their referents is usually made on the basis of the visual similarity between the graphic pattern and the body markings of the referents.



### III.5 *Innovation and the Merging of Styles*

It is not only in the derivative PY and MP styles that innovations have occurred in Panare guapawork. It has also been possible to innovate within the limits of the features that have been used to define the original styles, the TP and the YD (cf. Table N° 4).

In some communities in which TP style is woven, the Panare have begun to colour guapa elements with commercial paint. The result is garish compared to the subtle hues of the natural dyes. In addition to the traditional red and black colours, the Panare are beginning to use blue and green. Sometimes guapas are woven with red, black and green elements, a truly startling combination. Innovations have also taken place in the form of *Ti'* guapas. Traditionally, Panare guapas were probably the shape and size of the Panare manioc sieve, i.e. circular with a diameter of approximately 50 cms. Now however, circular guapas as large as 1.20 m. in diameter and as small as 10 cms. in diameter are produced. In certain communities, TP guapas of an ovaloid form are produced, presumably to conform to the criollo's idea of what a tray should look like. Nevertheless, all these innovative specimens can still be classified within the TP style since they all feature the interplay of weave pattern and chromatic sequence that is the most important defining characteristic of the style.

Within the YD style, it is possible to weave a wide range of motifs without breaking technical conventions. At this stage in time it is difficult to know exactly which figures the Panare merely copied from the Ye'kuana. It would seem that only the Monkey, the Frog, the Snake and possibly the Man figures (Plates No. 10, 11) were directly copied<sup>32</sup>. The other figures in the catalogue in Appendix I are all Panare innovations. In the YD style, innovations in the shape and size of the guapas have not been as varied as in the TP style. The shape of YD guapas is invariably round. Size varies but not as much as in the TP style: YD guapas are rarely greater than 65 cms. in diameter or less than 15 cms.

Although it has been possible to innovate within the limits of the original styles of Panare guapawork, the rapid rate of innovation will probably soon make the stylistic boundaries that have been defined in this essay obsolete. Even now, as pointed above, these stylistic boundaries are somewhat artificial. There are many Panare guapas that defy incontrovertible classification within the present scheme. The finest guapa from a technical point of view that the authors encountered was

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32. Personal communication from P. René Bros who has lived for many years amongst the Ye'kuana of the mission at Sta. María de Erebató, on an affluent of the Caura river.

woven by an artisan of the community of El Rincón (cf. Map N° 2). The elements of the guapa in question were little more than 1 mm. wide. The figure was the artisan's own invention and did not conform to the technical conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition. These two features would lead one to classify the guapa as an example of the MP style. But the composition of the guapa was the characteristic YD composition. Finally, the guapa was woven by a member of a community where guapas of the PY style are the most common. Even more unusual was the fact that the guapa in question had been woven by an adolescent and not by an artisan of many years experience as one might have expected given its technical refinement.

The most critical stylistic boundary marker in Panare guapawork is the manner in which the weave pattern and the chromatic sequence are manipulated in order to produce the graphic pattern. On the basis of this feature, the TP style can be readily distinguished from the other three styles. In order to make the transition from the TP style to one of the other three styles, an artisan has to change the relationship between the technical and graphic features of his work radically. It is not all Panare who are prepared to go through the lengthy period of experimentation involved in making this transition. For this reason, the stylistic boundary between the TP and the other three styles is likely to endure whilst the other boundaries become even more blurred than they are at present. Then the range of Panare guapas will be reducible to two basic styles: the Traditional Panare style and the Modern Panare style, the latter owing its genesis to the copying of the Ye'kuana type of guapawork but now sufficiently distinctive to be regarded as an autochthonous Panare style.

#### IV. THE GUAPA AS A MEANS OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

##### IV.1 *The Representational Meaning of Guapa Motifs*

The form of most of the graphic motifs of Panare guapawork is rarely the consequence of any intention on the part of the artisan to represent a specific phenomenon. In practice, the technical factors described in the previous section play a large part in generating the form of the motifs. In the majority of cases, the meanings attached to the motifs of Panare guapawork are nothing more than *post hoc* rationalizations. Nevertheless, when a motif is said to have meaning, regardless of whether or not this meaning was in the artisan's mind

before he produced the guapa in which it occurs, it will be termed the "representational meaning" of the motif.

The ethnographers who have described Guianese indigenous arts and crafts have tended to assume that the motifs of tessellate basketry have consistent and widely accepted meanings. Roth illustrates over fifty tessellate basketry motifs taken from the work of various indigenous groups of "Arawak, Warrau and Carib sticks" (Roth 1924: 356-367). Only for one or two of these motifs does he give more than one meaning, leaving the reader to assume that the remainder of the motifs have a uniform meaning throughout Guiana. It seems unlikely that the motifs illustrated by Roth would have the same meaning even across the range of culturally distinct groups that he mentions. They do not have uniform meanings throughout Guiana. Blixen (1965: 11-12) assumes that the motif identified by Roth as representation of the nutmeg tree (Roth 1924: 356, Fig. 168) has the same meaning amongst the Ye'kuana. In actual fact, it does not appear to have any specific meaning for the Ye'kuana (cf. Hames and Hames 1976: 20, Fig. 4e, f).

Amongst the Panare there is very little uniformity in the interpretations given to guapa motifs. There are certain complex figures that have universally accepted meanings. But a meaning is only universal when there is a very obvious visual clue in the figure such as the apparently "curly" tail of the Monkey figure (cf. Plate No. 11c). When there is no obvious clue, the meaning attributed to complex figures is highly variable. Most of the tesserae in the body of the Dog figure illustrated in Fig. 5 make 9 spans. A figure that features tesserae of more than 9 spans in the body but which is otherwise identical to the Dog figure is also frequently woven. This latter figure is said by some informants to be the representation of a goat. But other informants will continue to identify this figure as the representation of a dog. Conversely, the figure most commonly said to represent a dog (i.e. the figure with only 9 span tesserae in its body) is said by some informants to be the representation of a goat. In short, whether these figures represent dogs or goats depends very much on who is doing the identification. Furthermore, in the interview situation itself, the Panare make it quite clear that it is not very important to them which animal of the two the figures represent.

The meanings that the Panare attribute to the less complex and secondary figures of their guapawork are even less systematic. Most simple motifs have no meaning whatsoever. The only simple figure that

has a universally recognized meaning is the Tortoise figure (cf. Plate No. 10a). But this figure is something of an exceptional case since it is based on the "tortoise shell" construction which is one of the fundamental technical features of tessellate basketwork (cf. Appendix III.11).

The fact that the meanings attributed to motifs are mostly *post hoc* rationalizations explains the inconsistency of the interpretations the Panare give. The Panare say that the "eye" constructions in the body of the Tiger figure represent the spots of the tiger's coat (cf. Plate No. 16d). However, the "eye" constructions in the body of the Monkey figure mean nothing except when contrasted with the Monkey figure with no "eye" constructions in the body (cf. Plate No. 11c). In this case, some informants say, the all-black Monkey figure represents the howler monkey which has a very dark brown coat or the monkey that the Panare call *amsiri* (capuchin monkey?) which has a black coat, whilst the Monkey figure with the "eye" constructions in the body represents the species with lighter coloured coats. In other words, the "eye" constructions in one case (the tiger's spots) are thought to represent spots of darkness whilst in the other (the light coloured coats of some species of monkey) they are thought to represent lightness of colour. In fact, in both cases, the "eye" constructions have the technical function of avoiding over-long tesserae in the bodies of the figures. *Post hoc* they have been given representational meanings. Only in the case of the Howler Monkey figure, where the absence of "eye" constructions results in tesserae that are longer than the conventional maximum, is one possibly dealing with a case of the intentional manipulation of technical features in order to express a specific meaning in graphic form.

As the examples just examined show, the interpretations that the Panare put on guapa motifs are often highly apposite. It is for this reason that one is initially tempted to detect a code in the graphic motifs of Panare guapawork. Yet the ingenuity that informants show can vary greatly with the interview situation. The most ingenious explanations the authors recorded were those of the Panare living close to the Guaniamo diamond mines who do not weave guapas themselves and were at first incredulous that the guapas represented in the photographs that the authors carried were woven by fellow Panare. The mood of the informant also affects the interpretations that he gives. One of the most imaginative set of interpretations that the authors recorded was given by an informant whilst travelling in the authors'

vehicle accompanied only by two of his friends. His words brought the guapas alive: here a monkey was off to search for food, there a caiman wallowed in a pond, certain thick lines were trees, other thinner lines were rivers etc. But the same informant, several months later, in his own settlement, surrounded by a crowd of onlookers, did not want to offer a single interpretation of the same motifs. His reticence before other Panare was due to the fact that most Panare regard the insistence that the motifs should have meanings as at best amusing and at worst tiresome. Consequently, even at the best of times their interpretations are only half serious. When not in the mood for humouring the authors, the Panare would claim that they didn't know what the motifs meant or would say whatever came into their heads. The attitude of the Panare leads one to think Roth may have been taken in over the meaning of the motifs that he considers to be a series of variations on a theme of canine genitalia (Roth 1924: 364-367). Probably the only thing that these motifs represent is some long-dead artisan's sense of humour<sup>33</sup>.

#### IV.2 *Guapa Representation in the General Context of Panare Art*

Before the introduction of guapawork of the Ye'kuana type in 1964, there was no genuine tradition of representational art amongst the Panare. Although the figures of the TP style of guapawork may to a limited extent be the consequence of a prior intention on the part of the artisan to represent specific phenomena and not merely *post hoc* rationalizations, the representational potential of TP guapawork is highly circumscribed by the fact that only angular and linear graphic forms are possible due to the technical limitations of the style. These forms rarely permit holistic representation (cf. Appendix III.13). When meanings are attached to TP figures, the referents are frequently reptiles or fish, not because these classes of animal have any special significance for the Panare but rather because their body markings or

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33. In this connection, it is advisable to recall Schomburgk's warning against taking indigenous interpretations of representational figures at their face value. Reporting that the Makusi used the term "spiny sting ray" to describe the frying pan (obviously an item intrusive to Makusi society for which a new word had to be found) on account of a certain visual similarity between the two, Schomburgk suggests that it was the same logic that led his informants to discern petroglyphs in the irregular grooves brought about by water action on the surface of certain boulders (cf. Sujo Volsky 1975: [29] 733). The Panare show a similar analogical ingenuity in the words that they invent for intrusive technological items and a parallel equivalent to that suggested by Schomburgk can be drawn between the Panare's linguistic inventiveness and the imaginative interpretations that they give of the motifs of guapawork (cf. Muller 1974: 8).

body surface textures lend themselves to representation by means of angular and linear graphic forms.

Outside the sphere of basketry, representational art was almost unknown amongst the Panare. Panare pottery where it is still made, is a very crude, black ware that comes in a standard bowl form of various sizes. The Panare do not elaborate other items of everyday use such as benches or cooking spatulas into representational forms. The only genuine form of representation that the Panare appear to have practised is the pair of Lizard figures painted on the beer canoe during male initiation ceremonies. Apart from this isolated example, the nearest that the Panare came to representational art before the introduction of guapawork of the Ye'kuana type was the designs that they paint on their bodies and on the ritual belts used in the dances connected with male initiation. These designs are painted free hand, or in the case of body painting, with the aid of wooden stamps. As in TP guapawork, these designs are mostly linear and angular. The Panare rarely impute any representational meaning to these designs but when they do, the meanings, even more than in basketry, are merely vague *post hoc* rationalizations. As in TP guapawork, and for the same reasons, the referents that the Panare cite for these designs are usually reptiles and fish.

The similarity in the form of the designs employed in body painting and on ritual belts on the one hand and the motifs of TP guapawork on the other is sufficiently great to suggest that the various media may have influenced one another. But, given that the linear and angular forms of TP guapa motifs are determined by the technical features of the style, they cannot merely be copies of the designs of other artistic media. On the other hand, there is no way of showing, and indeed it seems unlikely, that body painting and ritual belt decoration did not occur prior to the development of guapawork. However there could well have been some cross referencing with regard to the mean-unknown to the Panare. The YD style opened up a whole new range of

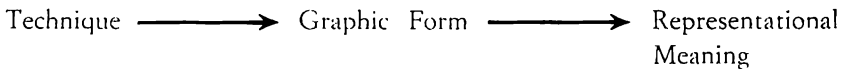
The YD style allows a degree of holistic representation that, with the exception of the Lizard figure mentioned above, was previously unknown to the Panare. The YD style opened up a whole new range of potential referents for Panare guapawork figures. Representation was no longer confined to those referents that have distinctive body markings or body surface textures. Nevertheless, the technical conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition that operate in the YD style impose a limit on the range of phenomena that can be represented. The Mon-

key and the Frog (Plate No. 11a, c) figures are the holistic representations most frequently found in guapas of the YD style. Yet their frequency should not be attributed to their cultural importance for the Panare but rather to the fact that the distinctive physical features of these referents can be represented within the limits of technical conventions whilst those of other creatures cannot.

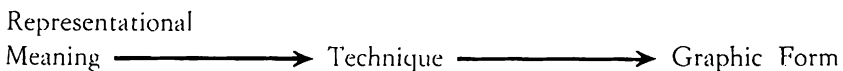
In sum, the range of phenomena that can be represented in TP and YD guapawork is strictly limited by technical considerations. The same can be said for the PY style, since it is essentially a mixture of the two original styles. If the figures of PY guapawork are sometimes non-conventional, this is usually the result of inexperience rather than some graphic intention on the part of the artisan.

In the MP style however, the intention of the artisan plays a much greater part in determining the graphic form of the figures than in the other styles. If a MP artisan wishes to weave the representation of a phenomenon that would not be possible within the limits of technical conventions, the conventions are simply put aside. The relationship between the factors involved in representation in the various styles of Panare guapawork can be diagrammed in the following form:

i) *TP, YD, PY styles*



ii) *MP style*



In the TP, PY and YD styles, technical considerations determine the form of the graphic features and in the majority of cases, meaning is attached to the graphic form subsequent to its completion. In the MP style, the artisan's intention to represent a given phenomenon leads him to adapt the technical features of the medium in order to produce the appropriate graphic form. This summary of the differences between the MP and the other three styles involves a certain degree of oversimplification: in the MP style, some respect for technical conventions is necessary or the guapas would simply fall apart whilst in the other three styles, the artisan's intention can influence the form that the

graphic pattern takes to some extent. Nevertheless, the diagrams serve to highlight the difference in the relationship between the artisan and his work in the various styles of Panare guapawork.

Disregard for technical conventions makes guapawork a more time-consuming process since in order to produce a guapa that is both technically and graphically successful, the artisan needs to spend a good deal of time in experimentation. For example, the artisan that disregards TC 1 loses the help that the convention gives him in anticipating the graphic development of a motif. Consequently he is in danger of leaving out an essential part of the graphic pattern and of having to retrace his steps by taking out several elements and weaving them again. But although rupture with technical conventions may cost the MP artisan a good deal of extra trouble, it enlarges the representational potential of the medium enormously<sup>34</sup>.

Panare artisans have used freedom from technical conventions not so much to change the kind of phenomena they represent in guapa work as to change the graphic treatment of those phenomena. As in the other three styles, a considerable number of the motifs of MP guapawork are merely geometrical forms to which no meaning or only *post hoc* meanings are attached. And, as in the other styles, the great majority of motifs are said to represent animals. There are a few notable exceptions to this generalization such as the Jeep and Truck figures (cf. Plate No. 13a, b).

But the MP style can be clearly distinguished from the other styles on the bases of the naturalism of the figures of MP guapas. The

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34. During the course of fieldwork, one of the authors learnt how to weave guapas. Having mastered the basic techniques, he too began to break with the technical conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition in order to produce more interesting graphic forms. In doing so, he discovered just how difficult guapawork becomes when technical conventions are disregarded. The only way he could produce successful non-conventional graphic figures was by working them out beforehand on graph paper! The Panare cannot "cheat" in this way and are obliged to spend a good deal of time in rule-of-thumb experimentation. Even in the communities where the MP style of guapawork is produced, it is not all Panare who have the skill or the patience to develop new, non-conventional figures. Many Panare in Colorado where the author was based considered the non-conventional figures in his guapawork to be an indication of his inexperience and were constantly advising him on how to alter them so as to make them conform to technical conventions. On one occasion, the author left a half-finished guapa featuring various non-conventional figures stored away in the roof of his house whilst he spent the day elsewhere. In the evening, when he returned, he discovered that some well-meaning individual had taken down his guapa and had re-woven it so that the graphic figures conformed to technical conventions. The author dismantled the guapa and returned the figures to their non-conventional form only for the same thing to happen again two or three days later. Only when the author re-wove the figures for the second time, did his anonymous benefactor appear to accept that the non-conventionality of the figures of the guapa were the product of the author's intention and not merely the consequence of his inexperience.



heads of MP figures are no longer based on simple "tortoise shell" constructions as they are in the YD style. Ears, mouth, a pair of eyes can all be represented. The bodies of the figures more closely represent the profile of the referents. Body markings can be inserted where they are appropriate and omitted where they are not. Nor are the figures limited to flat profiles. The ears of the Cat figure in Plate No. 16c and the facial features and paws of the other Cat figure in Plate No. 16d, all based on non-conventional constructions, make it clear that one is looking at a three quarter profile.

The greater naturalism of MP figures involves closer attention to detail and thus allows a more precise differentiation of the referents. The rump and snout of the figure illustrated in Plate No. 16a, b which would be impossible to weave in this form if technical conventions were respected, allow the figure to be readily identified as a tapir. This figure is easily distinguished from the Acure figure (Plate No. 14b). If both of these figures were woven with respect for the technical conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition, they would both have "tortoise shell" constructions for heads, square rumps and "eye" constructions in the body and hence would be virtually indistinguishable.

Holistic representation first introduced to the Panare with the Ye'kuana type of guapawork and made more naturalistic in the MP style, has now begun to overflow into other Panare artistic media. The characteristic figures of the YD and MP styles now crop up in slightly more curvilinear forms in free-hand body painting. Holistic representation has even been adopted in the carving of body stamps. One of these is worthy of special mention since it involves a figure of an anthropomorphic kind. Many Panare are extremely cautious about figures of this type<sup>35</sup>. Carved by an adolescent, the stamp repre-

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35. Within the Guianese Tesselate Tradition, anthropomorphic figures are rare. Roth reports that he never encountered any in the southern part of Guyana. The anthropomorphic figure that he reproduces in his book comes from Surinam (Roth 1924: 361, 364, 368). Anthropomorphic figures occur in Ye'kuana guapawork but they are a recent innovation. Amongst the Panare, even though the Man figure is quite clearly anthropomorphic, the interpretations that informants gave were highly ambiguous. Some Panare were content to distinguish between two classes of Man figure one representing the criollo, the other representing a Panare. The criollo figure is distinguished by its feet which are thought to represent the shoes of the criollo (cf. Plate No. 14h). The Panare who normally never wear shoes are represented by the figure without feet (cf. Plate No. 14g). But other Panare were unwilling to identify any anthropomorphic figure as the representation of a Panare, always insisting that they were representations of criollos. The reticence that such informants showed contrasted sharply with the generally casual attitude that the Panare have about the interpretations of guapa figures. It was particularly marked if the informant had woven the figure himself. This reticence is probably related to the Panare's belief that any detachable physical

sents a saint and is an imitation of one of the cheap religious prints often encountered in the houses of local criollos. The boy carved this stamp just for fun and it is indicative of an interest in holistic representation only and in no way indicative of any religious interest<sup>36</sup>.

In short, the holistic, naturalistic representational mode of the MP style of guapawork is completely new to the Panare artistic tradition. The MP style allows a more sophisticated and varied form of artistic expression than is possible in the other guapawork styles in which the artisan is encumbered by technical conventions. Although the technical limitations on the development of graphic forms are not as great in the other Panare artistic media as they are in guapawork, the representation achieved by the Panare in the MP style is the most sophisticated of all Panare artistic media. The MP style of guapawork therefore constitutes a definite enrichment of Panare art.

The MP style represents a new departure not only within the context of Panare guapawork but also within the Guianese Tesselate Tradition as a whole. In all the published sources that the authors have consulted (cf. Bibliography) and in the collections, both private and public, that they have examined, they have never come across the systematic disregard for technical conventions that one encounters in the MP style of guapawork. In the tesselate basketry illustrated in the published sources, if technical conventions are broken at all, it is only in ancillary motifs such as the "hour glass" construction (cf. Roth 1924: 347-348) and the zigzag motif known to the Ye'kuana as *ashicha* (cf. Hames and Hames 1976: 20, Fig. 4g, h). The conventions are very rarely broken in the weaving of figures. The systematic disregard for technical conventions that is encountered in the MP style of guapawork thus makes this form of Panare tesselate basketry unique within the Guianese Tesselate Tradition.

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manifestation of a person can be used by malignant supernatural entities to harm him or her. In Panare society, this belief is encountered in several different guises. For example, the inedible remains of food are never left in places where they might be found by malignant supernatural entities. In a modern context, this belief manifests itself in an unwillingness to be photographed or tape recorded. Apparently the Panare also believe guapa representations to be potentially dangerous. One should not overgeneralize this point: some Panare were quite happy to interpret anthropomorphic figures as representations of Panare. Some informants even went so far as to identify Panare in the figures that were most frequently interpreted as representations of frogs or lizards (cf. Plate No. 11b).

36. For another case of the transfer of tesselate motifs to another medium, cf. Ahlbrinck 1931: 276-277. In this case the transfer was from basketry to pottery.

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In 1964, guapawork of the Ye'kuana type was introduced to some Panare of the community of Colorado who, although they had their own tradition of guapawork, abandoned this tradition in favour of the Ye'kuana type of guapawork on account of the greater commercial potential of the latter. From a technical point of view, the Ye'kuana type of guapawork is a more sophisticated form of tessellate basketry than the traditional Panare type and involves a form of artistic representation previously unknown in Panare artistic media. Having spent six or seven years mastering the basic techniques of the Ye'kuana type, the artisans of the Panare communities located in the Colorado river valley and at Portachuelo began to break with the technical conventions that underlie the Ye'kuana type of guapawork. The purpose of this rupture was to achieve more varied and more naturalistic graphic forms. The frequent disregard shown for technical conventions in this form of Panare guapawork, termed the "Modern Panare" style in this essay, marks it out as unique within the Guianese Tessellate Tradition as a whole. In the concluding section of this essay, the relationship between the commercialization of Panare basketry and the emergence of the Modern Panare style of guapawork will be examined.

There is no doubt that if it had not been for the basket trade, the Modern Panare style of guapawork would never have evolved. The Ye'kuana type, of which the Modern Panare style is a derivation, was first adopted by the Panare on account of the fact that it commanded a higher market price than the traditional Panare type. Furthermore, the commercialization of guapawork has contributed directly to the rupture with technical conventions that is the defining characteristic of the Modern Panare style. It has done so in two principal ways. Firstly, a Modern Panare guapa requires more skill to weave than a conventional guapa. The basket trade has contributed to the development of the necessary skills amongst the Panare simply by virtue of having stimulated them to spend a great deal of time engaged in guapawork over the course of the last decade. Secondly, demand has also encouraged rupture with technical conventions. The immediate outlet for a large part of the volume of guapawork produced by the Panare are the criollo dealers based in Caicara. These dealers frequently urge the Panare to make the graphic figures of their guapawork as naturalistic and anecdotal as possible and to include as many animal figures as they can. In order to comply with this request the Panare are obliged to circumvent technical conventions.

But although the commercialization of guapawork is indubitably a necessary part of the explanation for the emergence of the Modern Panare style of guapawork, by itself, it does not provide sufficient explanation of the phenomenon. As far as the limited information on this subject allows one to judge, the commercialization of the tessellate basketry of other Guianese groups has not been accompanied by the same degree of innovation as has taken place in Panare guapawork. Amongst the Ye'kuana whose craftwork has been commercialized for longer and in a more systematic way than the basketry of the Panare, innovation has taken place in the form of women's carrying baskets, shamanic stools and in pegalls rather than in guapas<sup>37</sup>. A sufficient explanation for the uniquely innovative character of the Modern Panare style requires further reference to the place of guapawork in Panare society.

It should be borne in mind that the Ye'kuana type of guapawork from which the Modern Panare style evolved is intrusive to Panare society. The techniques of the Ye'kuana type have not been handed down from father to son since time immemorial in Panare society. The most competent weavers of the Ye'kuana type are currently between 25 and 40 years of age. In short, the Ye'kuana type of guapawork is in no way legitimated by Panare tradition. It is possibly for this reason that the Panare have been more willing to introduce innovations than the Ye'kuana themselves. Moreover, the purpose of guapawork amongst the Panare is exclusively commercial. The Ye'kuana on the other hand, in common with other Guianese indigenous groups to whom this type of guapawork is autochthonous, sometimes use the guapawork that they produce for functional domestic purposes (cf. Roth 1924: 321). Given that the purpose of the technical conventions of the Guianese Tessellate Tradition is to ensure that baskets are sturdy enough to withstand use, it is understandable that the Panare, who never use the guapas they produce, should be less careful about observing these conventions than those indigenous groups that do.

Another circumstance that might explain why the Panare are disposed to break with technical conventions is their almost continuous contact with the criollo world. In this connection, it is interesting to note that the few non-conventional examples of tessellate basketry that Roth

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37. P. René Bros, personal communication. The authors' own impression, based mainly on the inspection of the exhibition put on by the *Unión Makiritare del Alto Ventuari* in Caracas in April 1976 and on the collection of Ye'kuana tessellate basketry of Dr. W. Coppens, is that although innovation in modern Ye'kuana tessellate basketry involves a certain degree of disregard for the technical conventions of the Guianese Tessellate Tradition, this is not nearly so marked as in the Modern Panare style of guapawork.

encountered were manufactured by artisans who had had unusual exposure to the non-indigenous world:

“Occasionally, however, some sophisticated Indian will spontaneously produce a freak, which, getting into circulation, may give the ethnologist a good deal of trouble. Other Indians will speak of it as ‘fancy’ work, and admit that they could easily make one like the pattern under consideration but have never done so, because it was not the ‘proper kind’. Of the two specimens that have passed through my hands, both were manufactured by old Arawak, one of them long in contact with Europeans and a reputed miser, the other a visitor to the Chicago’s World’s Exposition” (Roth 1924: 369-370).

The communities which produce guapas of the Modern Panare style have not adopted many criollo cultural norms and remain both socially and economically highly independent of the local criollos. Nevertheless they have left the mountains and have settled on the plains in order to be closer to the criollos’ settlements. This change in settlement pattern is symptomatic of a certain discontent with their traditional way of life in the mountains and reveals an interest in participating, to a limited extent and on their own terms, in the criollo world. The highly innovative character of the Modern Panare style could perhaps therefore be interpreted as an artistic expression of the interest the Panare appear to have in broadening their areas of experience. No longer content to be constrained by technical conventions, under the stimulus of the basket trade, the artisans of Colorado and Portachuelo have developed a form of guapawork that acts as a more versatile medium of plastic expression than any they previously possessed.

But all the conditions mentioned as factors possibly contributing to the evolution of a highly innovative form of guapawork hold for all the Panare communities involved in the basket trade, many of which continue to produce very conventional basketry. In order to identify the specific conditions that might favour innovation in some communities but not in others, it is necessary to take a closer look at the various communities involved in the trade.

In order to break with technical conventions and yet still produce good guapawork, the artisan needs to have both skill and sufficient interest in guapawork to experiment with new techniques. The Panare of the communities east of the Chaviripa river are those that have gone furthest in adopting criollo cultural norms, and do not appear to have sufficient interest in guapawork to dedicate themselves to the experimentation necessary to master the Ye’kuana type of guapawork. Conse-

quently, it is the traditional Panare type of guapawork that is most common in these communities. In the more traditional communities west of the Chaviripa, the artisans have been more ready to adopt the intrusive type of guapawork. But it is only in the communities of Colorado and Portachuelo that the artisans have sufficient skill to produce guapawork in which the technical conventions of the Guianese Tesselate Tradition are intentionally broken in the interest of producing new and more varied graphic forms. It is this conjunction of circumstances that explains a phenomenon that at first sight might appear to be paradoxical: namely, that it is in the communities of Colorado and Portachuelo, that number amongst the most traditional of Panare communities, that the most innovative form of present day Panare guapawork is produced.

Contrary to popular assumption, the example of the Panare basket trade indicates that the commercialization of indigenous craftwork does not necessarily result in the bastardization of traditional skills. In the case of Panare guapawork, commercialization has contributed to the development of both its technical and graphic features. Furthermore, far from being divorced from present day Panare life, the commercialized Panare guapas act as a more direct and varied means of artistic expression than any of the more traditional Panare artistic media.

## APPENDIX I

### *A Catalogue of Panare Guapa Motifs*

Only the most common and the most interesting motifs and figures of Panare guapawork are illustrated in this catalogue. Each motif illustrated is an ideal type and small variations on the motif are possible. Where these variations give rise to different interpretations of the meaning of the motif, these are explained in the notes to each figure. Each figure is accompanied by one or two ancillary motifs that have the technical function of avoiding the need for long tesserae (cf. Appendix III. 1). These motifs can also vary. For example, the line motif between the legs of the Acure figure (Plate No. 14b) could easily be substituted for by a series of independent "eye" constructions (cf. Fig. 1c). For reasons discussed at length in Section IV.1, this catalogue should not be regarded as a key to a graphic code. Nor should it be regarded as a complete or definitive list of Panare guapa motifs. Even in the years since the authors left the field, the Panare have no doubt invented many new motifs and figures.

PLATE No. 6. TRADITIONAL PANARE STYLE (TP)

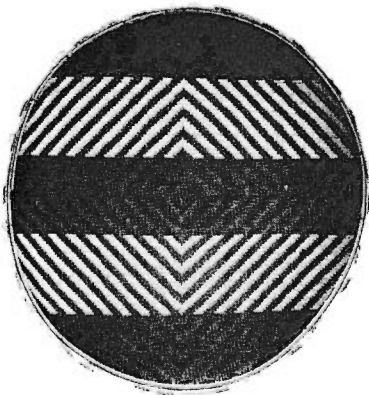
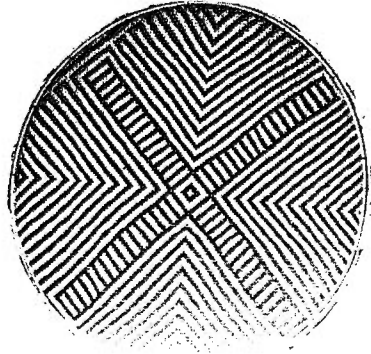
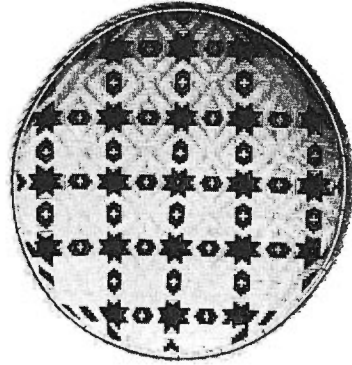
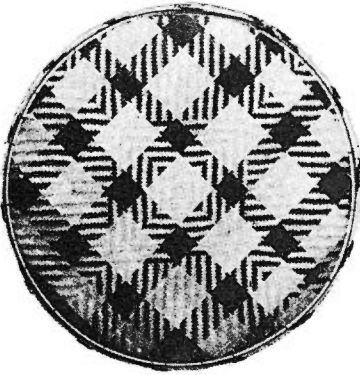


PLATE No. 7. TRADITIONAL PANARE STYLE (TP)

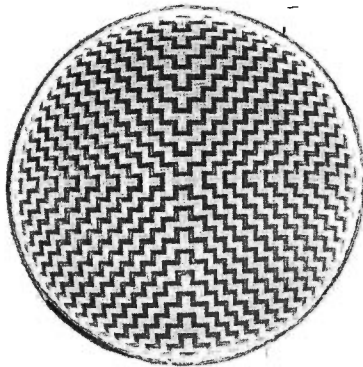
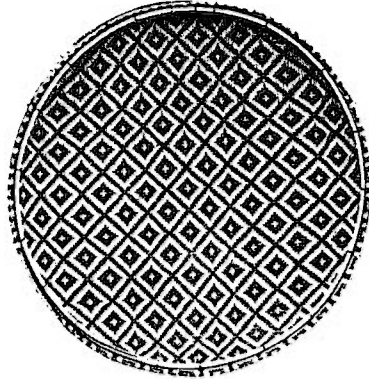
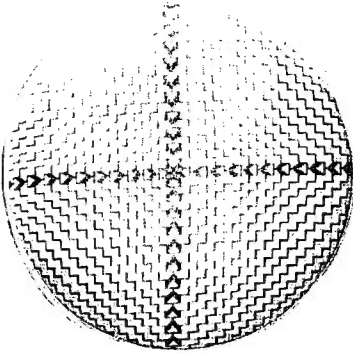
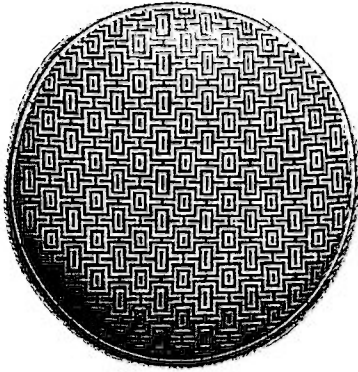




PLATE No. 8. PSEUDO YE'KUANOID STYLE (PY)

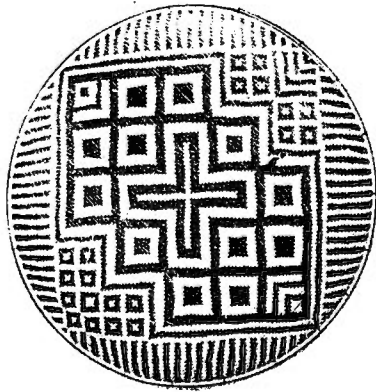


PLATE No. 9. PSEUDO YE'KUANOID STYLE (PY)

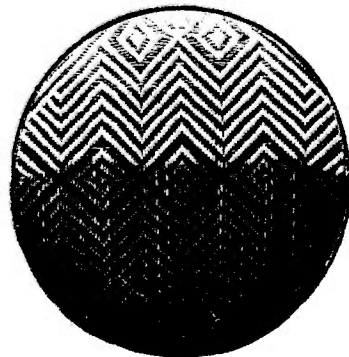
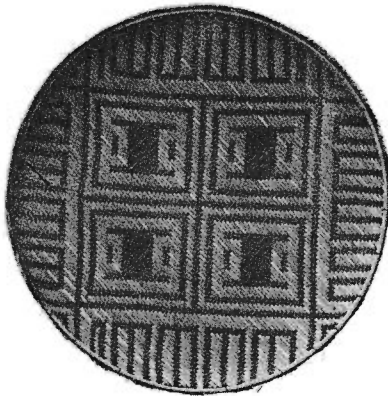
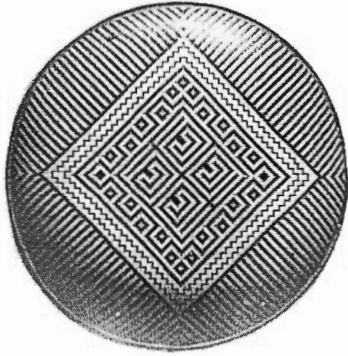
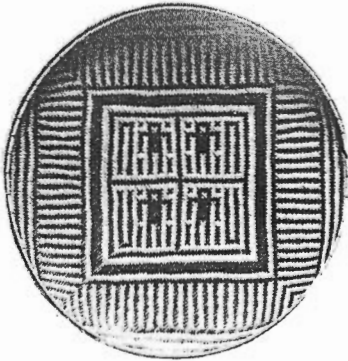
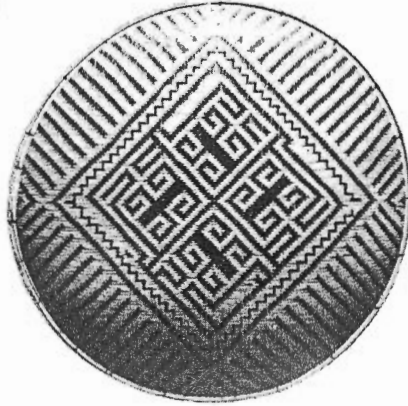


PLATE No. 10. YE'KUANOID STYLE (YD)



a. geometrical motifs

b. leaping frog (?)

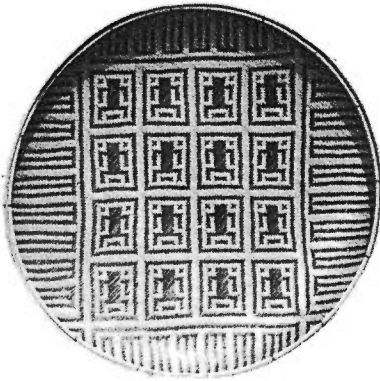


c. man

d. tortoise shell

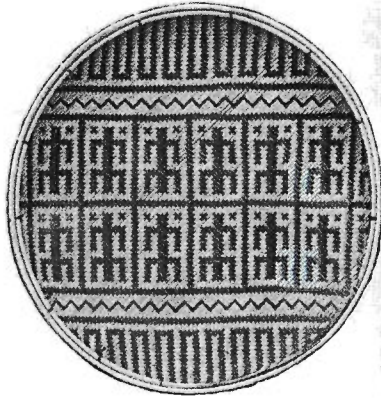


PLATE No. 11. YE'KUANOID STYLE (YD)



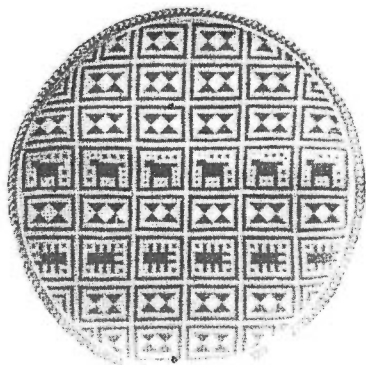
a. frog (sleeping?)

b. lizard



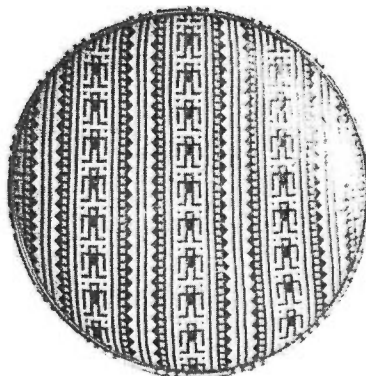
c. monkey

PLATE No. 12. MODERN PANARE STYLE (MP)



a. dog and centipede

b. man



c. dog, frog and acure



d. cat

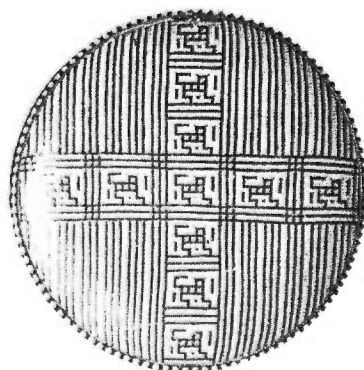
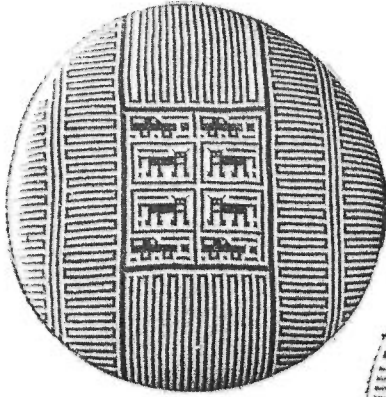
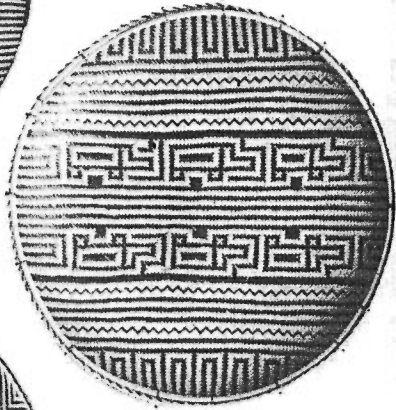


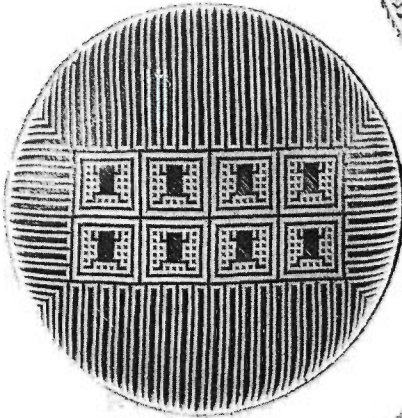
PLATE No. 13. MODERN PANARE STYLE (MP)



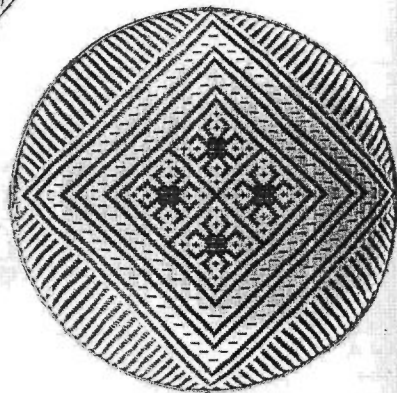
a. jeep and cat; jaguar



b. truck



c. frog



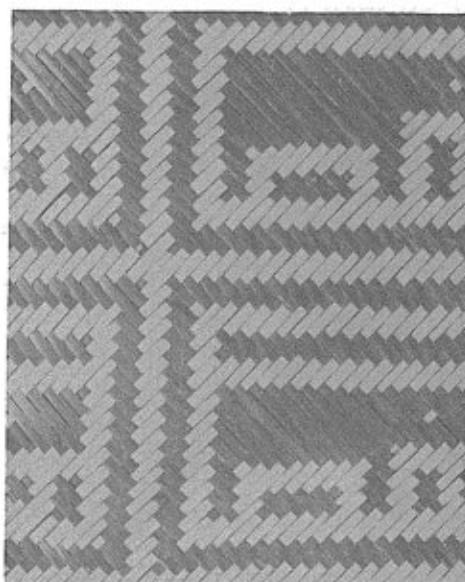
d. spider

PLATE No. 14. FIGURES OF PANARE BASKETRY

a. bird



b. acure



d. bird (?)

c. truck

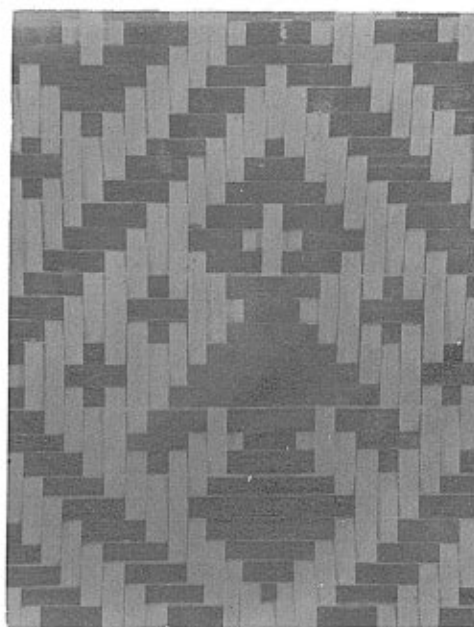
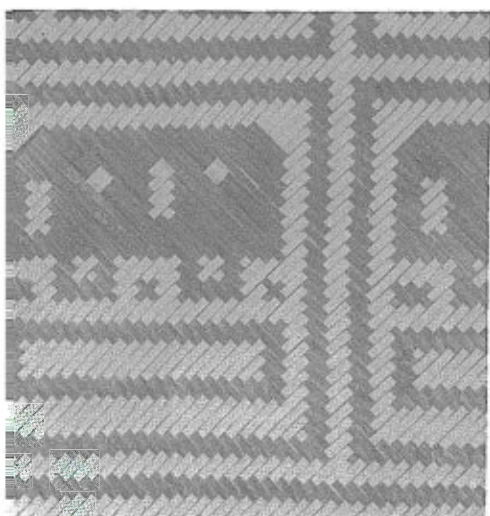
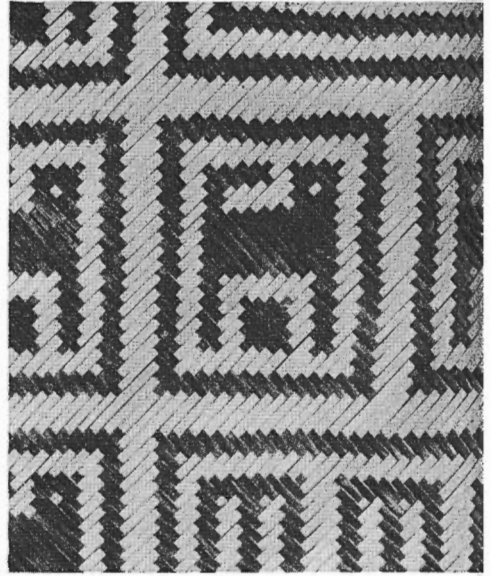


PLATE No. 14 (Cont.)

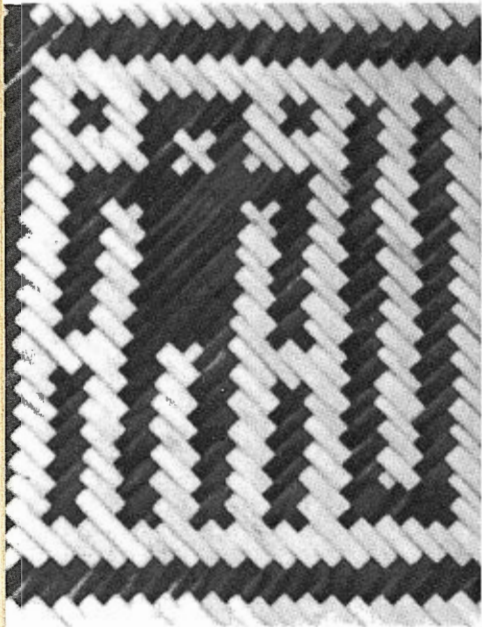
e. deer and monkey



f. cat



g. man (Panare?)



h. man (criollo?)

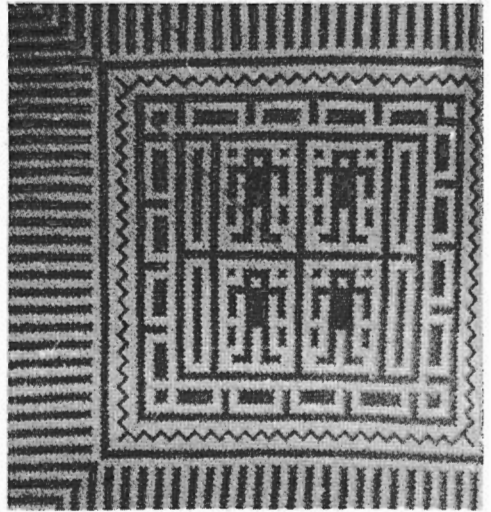




PLATE No. 15. VARIATIONS ON CAT-JAGUAR FIGURE

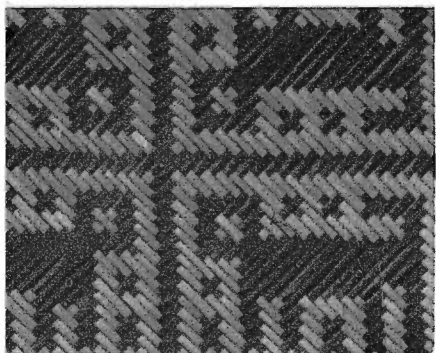
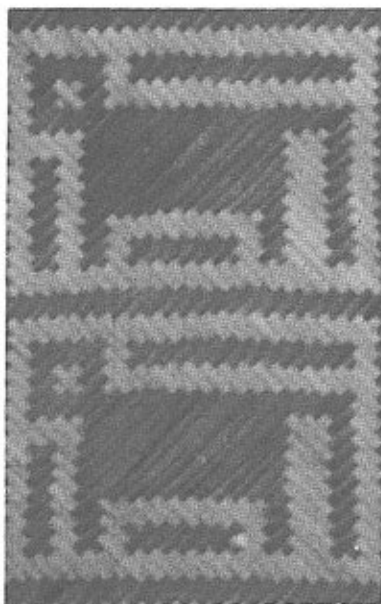
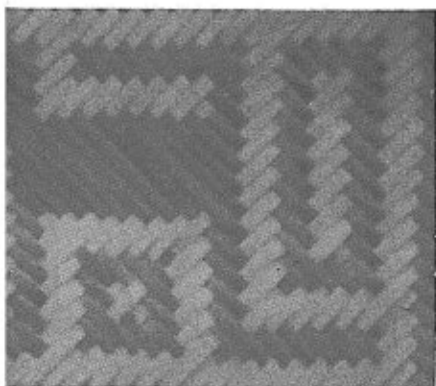
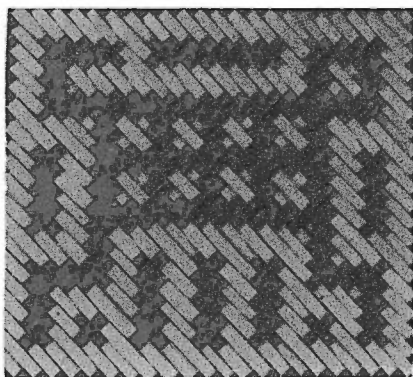


PLATE No. 15 (Cont.)

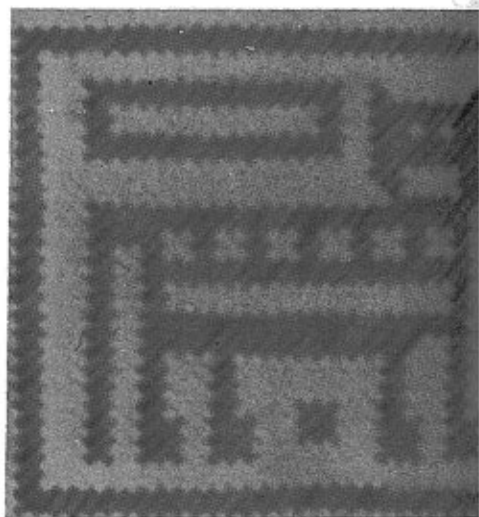
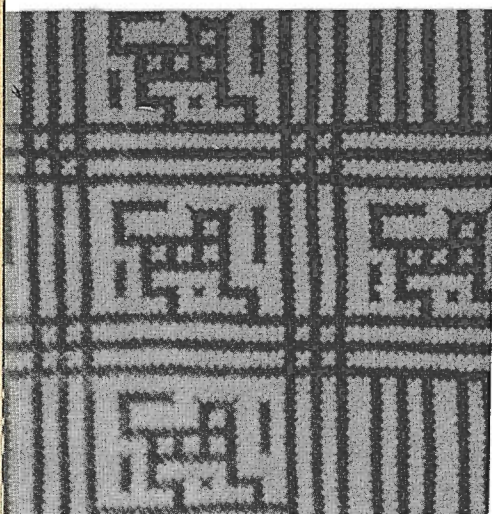
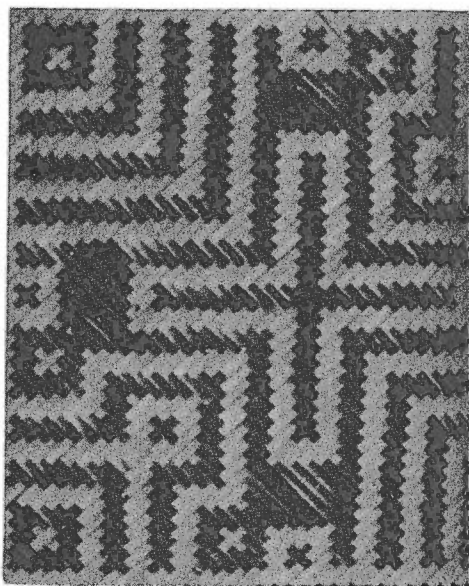
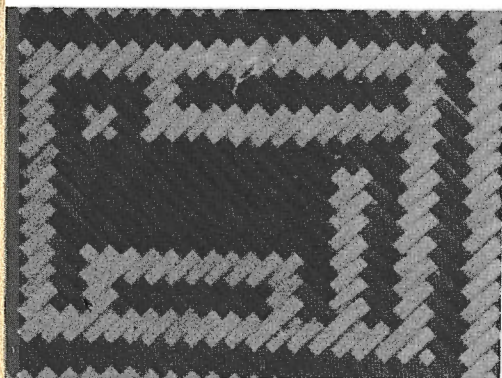
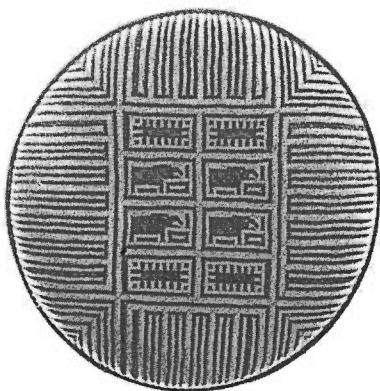
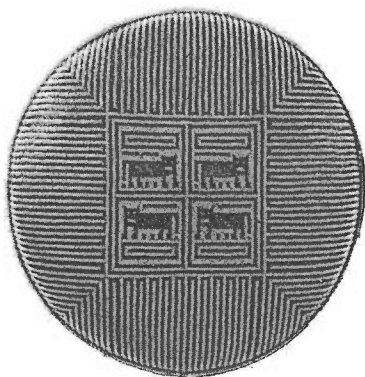
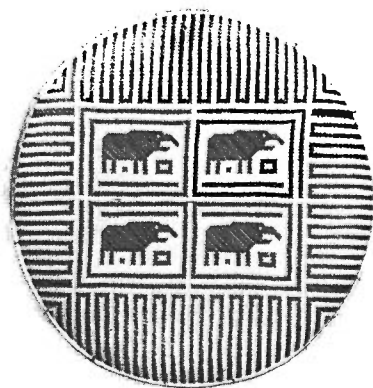


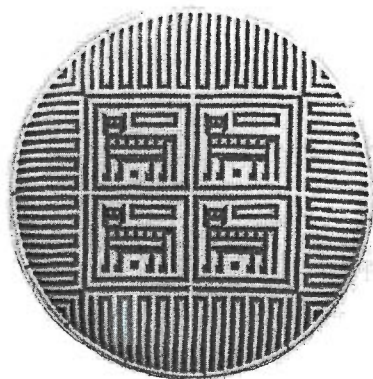
PLATE No. 16. NEW FIGURES IN MODERN PANARE STYLE



a. b. tapir and centipede



c. d. cat-jaguar



## APPENDIX II

### *A Catalogue of Panare Basket Types*

Table N° 2 provides a classification of Panare basket types according to the kind of weave employed. This system of classification follows very closely the system devised by Simpson on the basis of his study of Kamarakoto (Pemon) basketry (cf. Simpson 1940: 468-481). The following catalogue gives brief details of the names given to Panare baskets, their general shape and form, the materials from which they are woven and the uses to which they are put. Definitions of the technical terms employed in this catalogue are to be found in Appendix III.

#### 1. *Tessellate Basketry*

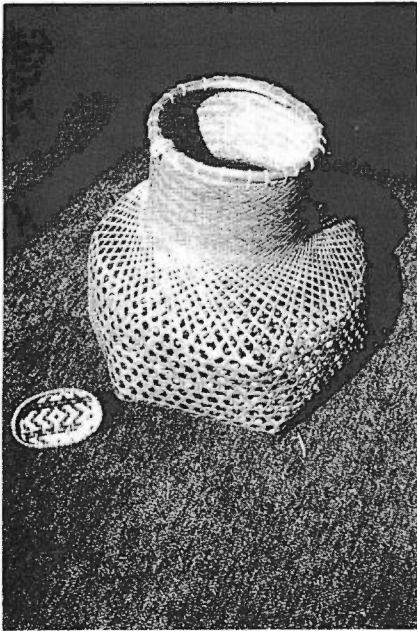
All Panare tessellate baskets are woven from elements of itiriti (L: *Ischnosiphon obliquiformis* Loes.\*; S: *tiriti*; P: *mananke*) and are woven almost exclusively for sale to the criollos.

a) *Guapas* (S: *guapa*; P: *wapa*). Roth termed baskets of this type "circular trays" (Roth 1924: 320-321). The Panare *guapa* is flat but slightly concave. Most Panare *guapas* are circular, although sometimes they can be ovaloid. The smallest Panare *guapas* are rarely less than 15 cms. in diameter and the largest are rarely greater than 1.20 m. Baskets of this kind are woven by several Guianese indigenous groups including the Ye'kuana who call them *waba tomennato* (cf. Hames and Hames 1976: 11-12) and the Pemon who call them *o:apa*. The Panare *guapa* should not be identified with the basket that Pemon call *wapa* which is a small tessellate storage basket (cf. Simpson 1940: 494).

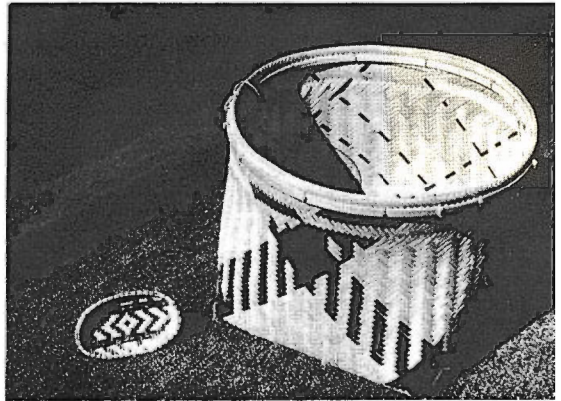
b) *Pegalls* (S: *petaca*; P: *tupupukumën*). The *pegall* consists of two rectangular box-shaped baskets, one box being slightly larger than the other, so that they can be fitted into one another. The English term "pegall", sometimes written "pack-all", is a corruption of the word *pagara* or *pagala*, which are the names given to this type of basket in certain Carib languages of Guyana (Roth 1924: 345). The volume of Panare *pegalls* does not vary greatly. An average Panare *pegall* would be about 20 by 25 cms. on the base and about 15 cms. high. Very few Panare are competent weavers of *pegalls*. Frequently the graphic patterns on the walls of Panare *pegalls* are broken up by swathes of undif-

PLATE No. 17. OTHER TYPES OF BASKETS

a. latticework basket



b. pegall



c. manioc-sieve



d. satchel



ferentiated colour or by swathes of no colour. Swathes of this kind can be avoided if an "hour glass" motif is employed on the top surface of the pegall and if certain elements are only coloured over half of their length (cf. Roth 1924: 346-349). This technique is complex and is apparently unknown to the Panare. Some Guianese groups give one or both of the boxes of which the pegall consists two walls, leaves being inserted between the walls to render the pegalls waterproof (cf. Simpson 1940: 495). This technique is also apparently unknown to the Panare.

c) *Storage baskets* (S: *canasta*; P: *tawahëmën*). The Panare storage basket has a square base and a circular mouth. When measured diagonally from corner to corner, the base of the storage basket is longer than the walls of the basket are high by a ratio of 5:4 or thereabouts. The walls of the smallest examples are about 15 cms. high and those of the largest about 40 cms. Although most of the storage baskets that the Panare weave are made of itiriti, they are occasionally woven from the leaves of the ite palm (L: *Mauritia* sp.; S: *moriche*; P: *ankayano'*).

d) *Varia*. The Panare sometimes mount the mouths of their blow-pipe dart quivers with pieces of conically shaped basketwork (P: *paranantan*). The Panare of the community of El Pajal manufacture various types of basketwork that are rarely encountered elsewhere, including satchels (P: *kamawa'*), model communal houses that are used by the criollos as lampshades (P: *perekankin*) and plaques that resemble table mats.

## 2. *Non-chromatic Basketry*

The following baskets do not usually involve the use of coloured elements. They have therefore been grouped together as "non-chromatic" basketry in contradistinction to tessellate basketry. Unless otherwise stated, these basket types are also woven with elements of itiriti.

a) *Latticework baskets* (S: *cesta jaula*; P: *ëwe'*). Panare latticework is of the simplest kind. It involves three series of elements set in different directions. Each element is separated from that parallel to it by a short gap. The result is a hexagonal lattice (cf. Fig. 6). No supplementary wefts are introduced in Panare latticework. The base of a Panare latticework basket is flat and hexagonal. The mouth is circular. The simplest variety of Panare latticework basket is essentially cylindrical in form. The Panare use this type of basket themselves for storing cotton. The latticework baskets sold to the criollos are usually "bot-

tle shaped" (cf. Plate No. 17a). The most sophisticated Panare latticework baskets have one or more "bellies". Recently some Panare artisans have begun to paint the elements used in latticework. Even so, these baskets cannot properly be considered examples of tessellate basketry since no graphic effect is achieved by this means.

b) *Cheese moulds* (S: *cincho*; P: *tintu*). The Panare cheese mould is essentially a mat of a rectangular shape varying between 2 and 2.50 metres in length and between 50 and 70 cms. in width. In order to be used as a mould, the mat is rolled up and secured with a cord so as to form a cylinder, open at both ends. This basket is made exclusively for sale to the criollos. The Panare use it neither as a mat nor as a cheese mould.

c) *Manioc sieves* (S: *manare*; P: *u'pa*). The general form of the Panare manioc sieve is very similar to that of the guapa. It is flat but slightly concave. It is invariably circular, measuring approximately 50 cms. in diameter. The weave is open but the degree of aperture varies according to the purpose to which the sieve will be put. Although these baskets are mostly used for processing manioc, they can also be used for straining the sediment from the sugar cane beer that the Panare consume at dances. If a sieve is made for the latter purpose, the weave is less open than normal. Manioc sieves are occasionally sold to the criollos but are made principally for domestic use.

d) *Manioc presses* (S: *sebucán*; P: *sinki'*). The Panare manioc press is cylindrical in shape and when not in use is about 2 metres long and about 10 cms. in diameter. The Panare manioc press has a strap at the mouth and a ring at the base. In general shape and form, the Panare manioc press therefore conforms to the type found all over Guiana. However the Panare manioc press is simpler than those of many Guianese groups and does not feature "hip" or "shoulder girdles" (cf. Roth 1924: 281-286). When the press is to be put to use, it is filled with manioc pulp and suspended from a house beam by means of the strap at the mouth. A lever is inserted through the ring at the base and downward pressure is exerted. As the pressure on the lever elongates the press, the manioc pulp is compacted and the juice contained within it runs out of the press and into a bowl placed below. As in the case of the manioc sieve, although the press is made principally for domestic use, it is also sometimes sold to the criollos.

e) *Carrying baskets* (S: *mapire*; P: *tawa'*). The Panare carrying basket is woven from the leaves of the kokorito palm (L: *Maximiliana regia* Mart.; S: *cucurito*; P: *wë'sae*). The carrying basket is essentially cylindrical in general form. The base of the basket is convex. The mouth is circular. The volume of the Panare carrying baskets varies considerably. The smallest examples, often made as playthings for little girls, have mouths of 15 cms. in diameter and are about 20-25 cms. deep. The largest baskets of this type, used for storing rather than carrying, are about 50 cms. across the diameter of the mouth and about the same deep. It is this type of basket that is most frequently woven by the Panare. Only occasionally are they sold to the criollos. Every Panare woman has at least two or three and uses them for a wide variety of transportational purposes.

f) *Mats* (S: *estera*; P: *sunwa*) and *Firefans* (S: *abanico*; P: *pape'*) are also woven from the leaves of the kokorito palm. Sometimes firefans are woven from the leaves of the palm the Panare call *kabše* (L: *Jesenia bataua* Mart.; S: *scje*). Both are made in various sizes for domestic use and are of very simple manufacture.

### APPENDIX III

#### *A Glossary of Technical Terms*

1. *Tessera, tesserae, tessellate*: the patterns in the surface of twilled woven plaiting in which coloured elements have been used consist of small rectangular sections of approximately the same width but of varying lengths. For this reason, the graphic patterns of this type of basketry are reminiscent of the patterns of stone mosaics. The constituent rectangular sections of the graphic patterns of twilled woven plaiting are therefore termed "tesserae", the name given to the small pieces of stone, glass, ceramic or other hard material that make up the most common form of mosaic. The singular form of this term is "tessera" and the adjectival form is "tessellate". The adjectival form is used to describe all examples of twilled woven plaiting in which coloured elements have been inserted into the weave for graphic effect (cf. Hames and Hames 1976: 17).

2. *Technical features and graphic features*: throughout this essay, an important distinction is made between the graphic and the technical features of tessellate basketry. A tessellate basket is first and foremost a



basket and only secondarily a medium of graphic expression. All the features of a tessellate basket to do with its construction will be termed "technical features", whilst those features to do with the graphic effects achieved on the surface of the basket will be termed "graphic features". As is shown in detail in the text, the graphic features of tessellate basketry are highly constrained by the technical characteristics of the medium.

3. *Elements*: the strands of raw material from which a basket is woven. In the study of basketry, a conventional distinction is made between the relatively inflexible and passive elements of a basket and the relatively flexible, active elements that bind the former together. Elements of the first kind are said to form the "warp" of the basket and elements of the latter kind are said to form the "weft". But in twilled woven plaiting, this conventional distinction is not properly applicable since all elements in this type of basketry are equally flexible and are found in both active and passive roles.

4. *Closed and open weaves*: a closed weave is one in which all the elements in a parallel series are contiguous. In an open weave, the elements are separated from one another by a short gap.

5. *Weave axes*: in twilled woven plaiting, there are two sets of parallel elements oriented at an angle of 90 degrees to one another. These two sets of elements form the weave axes.

6. *Weave pattern*: the pattern created by the weave itself *without* reference to the visual effect that results from the use of coloured elements in one or other or both of the axes of the weave.

7. *Weaving technique*: the manner in which the elements of one of the weave axes pass over and under the elements of the transverse axis. For example, each element of each axis could be passed over one element of the transverse axis, under the following element of the transverse axis, over the third element, under the fourth element and so on. This would be a case of a one-over-and-under-one weaving technique. As a shorthand, this could be written: 1/1/1. Alternatively, each element of each axis of the weave could be passed over the first two elements of the transverse axis, then under the next two elements, over the following two elements and so on. This would be a case of one-over-and-under-two weaving technique. In shorthand, this would be written:

1/2/2. If each of the elements of each axis passes over and under three elements of the transverse axis this would be a case of a 1/3/3 technique. Similarly, if each element passes over and under four elements of the transverse axis, this would be a case of a 1/4/4 technique. The greater the number of elements of the transverse axis that an element passes over, the looser the weave. The tightest possible weave would therefore be 1/1/1. But this weaving technique is very rarely encountered in Guianese basketry, presumably because the raw material used to make the elements would not withstand the strain (cf. Simpson 1940: 479). The 1/2/2 technique is used in manioc sieves. Tesselate work usually features a predominantly 1/3/3 or 1/4/4 technique.

8. *Tesserae spans*: when a 1/3/3 technique is predominant in a given form of tesselate basketry, most tesserae extend over three elements in the transverse axis. In a form of tesselate basketry in which the predominant technique is 1/4/4, most tesserae extend over four elements in the transverse axis. When a tessera extends over 3 elements in the transverse axis, it will be termed a tessera of three "spans". When a tessera extends over four elements, it will be termed a tessera of four "spans" or a "four span tessera". Likewise, a tessera that extends over one element in the transverse axis will be termed a "single span tessera". In Fig. 1a, the tessera marked (A) is an example of a single span tessera. The tessera marked (B) is an example of a three span tessera. The tessera marked (C) is an example of a five span tessera. The tesserae marked (D) and (E) are in the transverse axis to the tesserae marked (A) — (C). Tessera (D) is a three span tessera and tessera (E) is a single span tessera.

9. *Graphic patterns and graphic axes*: the graphic pattern is the effect produced by the use of coloured elements in the weave of twilled woven plaiting. The vertical and horizontal dimensions of this pattern form the graphic axes of the pattern. The graphic axes of tesselate basketry run obliquely to the weave axes at an angle of 45 degrees.

10. *Chromatic sequence*: the order in which coloured elements are inserted into the weave. Coloured elements can be inserted discontinuously into either or both sets of elements or continuously into one set of elements only. Coloured elements are never inserted continuously into both sets of elements since this would result in the whole surface of the basket being one undifferentiated colour.

11. *Constructions, motifs and figures*: the weave pattern and the graphic pattern are made up of tesserae. When these tesserae combine together to produce recurrent forms in the weave pattern, they are termed "constructions". It is useful to distinguish between "constructions" and recurrent forms in the graphic patterns, which will be termed "motifs". In the tessellate work of the Guianese Tessellate Tradition, the weave patterns and the graphic patterns are identical. Hence, all the constructions of this type of tessellate work are also motifs. In the traditional Panare type of tessellate guapawork however, the weave pattern and the graphic pattern are quite distinct and in this form of basketry, most constructions are not motifs. Some, but by no means all, graphic motifs are considered to be a representation of some being or thing of the real world. Motifs that are given representational meanings of this kind are termed "figures".

There are a number of constructions that are so frequent in tessellate basketry, that it is worth giving a name to them:

a) the "eye" construction. The smallest recurrent form in the weave pattern of tessellate work is a simple cross-shaped form, consisting of a single tessera of three spans flanked by two single span tesserae. The Panare call this construction, *tyon*, which when translated into English means "eye". This construction is sometimes considered to be a figure, and one of the things that it is said to represent is an eye. But the term *tyon* is also used in a simple analogical sense to describe a construction that has a technical function but no necessary representational meaning. In this essay, the term "eye" construction is used in the same analogical sense as it is used by the Panare but will be enclosed in inverted commas to indicate that reference is being made to a construction and not to a figure that represents an eye (cf. Fig. 1c).

b) the "tortoise shell" construction. This consists of a square form with an "eye" construction in the centre (cf. Fig. 1a, b). These constructions, considered as figures, are sometimes thought to represent the plaques of a tortoise's shell. But when the term is enclosed in inverted commas this indicates that reference is being made to a construction and not to a figure that represents a tortoise.

c) the "herring bone" construction. This consists of a parallel series of stepped tesserae that form a herring bone pattern (cf. Fig. 1d). The Ye'kuana call this construction *konojo*, literally "rain", but the Panare only occasionally make this association. Normally, the Panare will simply refer to this form as *tēsēmēn*, literally "the straight one(s)". In view of the lack of specificity of the Panare term, the term "herring bone", used by Roth, has been preferred.

d) the "box" construction. This consists of a rectangular or square form often encountered in concentric series, enclosing a central "tor-toise shell" construction as in Fig. 2b.

12. *Composition*: the distribution of graphic forms over the whole of one surface of a guapa.

13. *Representational mode*: the term "representation" is used in this essay in the sense defined by Munn (1973 : 216, note 1):

"... a communication with referential meaning in which the sign vehicle is a 'structural equivalent' for its referent. Put in another way: there is an element of likeness between the form of the vehicle and its referent..."

In addition, the present authors distinguish between two "modes" of representation:

- i) particularistic: representation of a part of some being or thing.
- ii) holistic: a representation in which an attempt has been made to reproduce the whole of the referent. In theory, it would be impossible to make a completely holistic representation without reproducing the referent entirely. The difference between the particularistic and holistic modes of representation is thus a difference of degree rather than a difference of kind.

In the study of Panare guapawork, this distinction is useful for differentiating between the representation of the profile or silhouette of a referent which is here considered to be a form of "holistic" representation and the representation of the body markings of certain referents which is considered to be a form of "particularistic" representation.

## ABSTRACT

*For the last decade certain Panare communities have been actively involved in the production of decorative baskets for sale to indigenous craftwork dealers and tourists. In the first section, this article describes the development of this trade and traces its effect on the economic organization of the communities involved in it. It then proceeds to examine the effect of commercialization on the artistic quality of the baskets produced and on the relationship between Panare artisans and their work. The article attempts to show that the trade has had an overall beneficial effect for the Panare since it has provided them with a means of acquiring the industrial goods they need in a way that does not disrupt traditional subsistence activities whilst at the same time encouraging them to develop innovative weaving techniques which have greatly increased the potential of their basketry as a medium of artistic expression.*

## RESUMEN

*Durante la última década, algunas comunidades Panare han sido activamente involucradas en la producción de cestas decorativas destinadas a la venta. En la primera sección, este artículo describe el desarrollo de este comercio y presenta sus efectos sobre la organización económica de las comunidades. Se analizan después las relaciones entre comercialización y valor artístico de las cestas así como las relaciones entre los artesanos Panare y sus obras. Este trabajo intenta mostrar que este comercio ha tenido efectos positivos para los Panare en la medida en que les permitió adquirir productos industriales sin perturbar fundamentalmente sus actividades tradicionales de subsistencia; además, estimuló nuevas técnicas de tejido que han aumentado considerablemente la potencialidad creadora de su cestería como medio de expresión artística.*

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