



The early colonization of the Lower Orinoco and its impact on present day indigenous peoples

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Introduction

Nineteenth century explorers such as the brothers Richard and Robert Schomburgk, im Thurn as well as twentieth century investigators like Roth (M.R. Schomburgk 1922-1923; im Thurn 1967 [1883]; Roth 1970 [1924]) provided a good general impression of the Guiana Indian situation at the time, but they did not achieve a detailed knowledge of the different ethnic groups in the area.

Over the past fifty years, considerable research has been carried out among the various indigenous groups of the Guayanas (reviewed in Jackson 1975 and Rivière 1984; see also vols. 2 and 3 of *Los Aborígenes de Venezuela* [Coppens 1983, 1988]). However, the current distribution of the Indian population has changed considerably since the early colonial times. Today, indigenous territories are largely confined to those areas along international borders and others of little coveted and largely inaccessible regions such as the desert of the Guajira peninsula and the swamps of the Orinoco Delta.

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With the exception of multi-ethnic configurations found on the Upper Río Negro and symbiotic relationships such as those of the Ye'kwana with the Yanomami/Sanema, most Indian groups are separated from one another by Criollo-occupied territories¹.

The Kari'ña, located within the Federal States of Monagas and Anzoátegui² as well as the Pemón of the Gran Sabana in the State of Bolívar³ occupy areas clearly separated from neighboring indigenous groups. There remain only a few zones, like those along the lower Paragua River, where groups such as the Pemón and the Ye'kwana live together⁴, or cases like San Martín de Turumbán where refugees from the Essequibo Territory form multi-ethnic settlements (Mansutti 1981; Butt Colson personal communication 1995).

This is also the case for the Lower Orinoco and the Orinoco Delta in particular where today, the Warao are the sole indigenous inhabitants. The only exception is along the Amacuro River, situated on the Venezuelan/Guyana border, where Warao still live together with Arawak (Lokono).

Until recently, little of the available information alluded to a "complex" of foraging and fishing societies exchanging foodstuffs and a wide range of other goods with horticultural societies. Light was shed on such a complex by the ethnohistorical studies of Biord Castillo (1985) and Whitehead (1988). Their work demonstrated that the Europeans of the Contact Era encountered populations of distinct language groups and cultures living in intense symbiosis and/or marked conflict (M. Richard Schomburgk 1922-1923; Robert H. Schomburgk 1848:49 footnote; Boomert 1984; Whitehead 1992; see also Kirchhoff 1931:143-147).

This paper surveys the historical documents of early explorers and chroniclers that describe the Lower Orinoco and goes on to compare the data to the present-day situation in the same region. The references depict the existence of a far-flung trade network in the Guayana area at the turn of the 16th century⁵ (Keymis 1968[1596]; Humboldt 1970 (II):441 ff.; Jiménez de la Espada 1966 [1877]; see also Lathrap 1973). In addition they report that settlements of several thousand inhabitants were a common phenomenon along the Lower Orinoco (Raleigh 1848 [1596], 1986 [1596]; Keymis 1968[1596]; see also Whitehead 1988).

¹ Criollo- originally a Spaniard born in the New World; today the term is used to identify a member of the general national population.

² 1982: 6.849; 1992: 10.490 (Venezuela, 1992).

³ 1982: 11.464; 1992: 20.607 (Venezuela, 1992).

⁴ The Ye'kwana fabricate dugouts there and exchange them for a number of articles, especially shotguns imported by the Pemón from Brazil.

⁵ "Guayana" as it is used here, includes that area between the Amazon and the Orinoco called the "Island of Guayana" in colonial times. In contrast, Guyana refers to the former British-Guiana. However, in aboriginal times as today, headwater regions have quite different characteristics in social organization and economic systems than coastal areas.

Ethnic identity, tribal names, and auto-denominations

In order to decipher the bewildering number of tribal names appearing in historical documents and on maps of the Guayanas, it is imperative to identify and separate the "derogatory" names given to ethnic groups by their neighbors, from genuine auto-denominations and generic classes such as "highlander" or "backwoodsman". One should also discard "arbitrary" names generated by Europeans who unwittingly lumped together regional Indian groups under names such as Patagones, Orejones, Motilones and Taparitas. Doing so considerably reduces the list. Audrey J. Colson, in her interesting work (Butt Colson 1983-84), has shown this to be true for the Roraima Massif, and the procedure seems to be applicable for the Orinoco Delta and eastern Venezuela⁶.

For example, the Yanomami of the Upper Orinoco in Venezuela have long been referred to as the *Waika*. *Waikya*, however, is actually a derogatory term meaning "cruel" and is used by the Sanema, a neighboring group of the same language family, to identify the former. Likewise, the term *Shiriana* (*shirish'na*) is Ye'kwanan meaning "monkeys" (see also Heinen 1991:63).

The Warao of the Orinoco Delta use similar terms for their Carib neighbors. For example, they call the Kari'ña *musimotuma*, "red faces" because of the red dye produced from onoto (*Bixa orellana*) that the latter used as body paint. They also use the expression *nahoromo*, "cannibals," for a number of groups, especially the Kari'ña and the historical Siawani (Ciawani, Chaguanes, Isawana)⁷.

Just as some Caribs were identified with the "tiger-cult," some Warao, especially those from the Osibu Kahunoko area, identify with "*waharomu*"; a migratory sandpiper (*Tringa flavipes*) called "Tigüi-tigüe" in Eastern Venezuela. The latter still perform the ritual dance of the *waharomu* (Lavandero & Heinen 1986). The historical Otomac Indians of the Middle Orinoco feared the tigüi-tigüe as a theurgic animal (Acosta Saignes 1961:106). Therefore, the historical Tivitive are not only the inhabitants of the coast and the moriche palm swamps, but

⁶I do not find it convenient to follow Jackson (1991:131) in narrowing down the concept of "ethnic group" to mean a subculture in a national society. This might lead to a confusion with "ethnic minority," as Urban and Sherzer themselves point out (1991:4) and which indeed already occurs when Venezuelan Indians refer to themselves as "minorías étnicas" (Bonfil Batalla 1981:347). Furthermore, the work of Fredrik Barth (1969:10), generally invoked in this context, was developed in quite a different context and the latter's drawing on the article of Raoul Narroll (1964) and his concept of "cult unit" shows the weakness of this chain of reasoning. For a different solution to the problem see Butt Colson 1983-84: 73.

⁷The Siawani are called Isawana in the Mariusa area (Briggs 1992:183, and personal communication). They were probably Waraoan speakers (see below).

also the people that identify with the sandpiper *tigüi-tigüe*. When asked about their fear of Caribs transformed into man-eating "tigers" (*namoni*), Warao shamans, replied "we just fly away;" (Wilbert pers. com. 1978) therewith confirming their identification with *waharomu*.

Auto-denominations among ethnic groups of the Guayanas generally translate to "we, the people" implying that the "others" are less human⁸. While groups with a "foraging" tradition such as the Warao and the Yanomami only distinguish between themselves and "all others" or "all strangers," horticulturists like the Pemon and the Ye'kwana have individual names for their neighbors as well as important human groups further afield.

For example, the Ye'kwana refer to themselves as *soto*, "people," but go beyond a simple dichotomy between themselves and all others such as *hotarao* (Warao) or *napë*. (Yanomami). Instead they use distinct names: *Öti* (Pemon and Makushi), *Eyei* (E'ñapa [Panare]), *Matiuhana* (Kari'ña), *Shirish'na* (Sanema and Yanomami), *Oyë* (Wötühö [Piaroa]), and *Waruwaru* for the (Hodi)⁹. Further afield, they call the Spaniards "Fañudu", the Venezuelan Criollos "Yadanawi", the Brazilians "Karaiva"¹⁰, and the Dutch and Northern Europeans "Hudunku"¹¹.

While "Warao" is a well known auto-denomination in the Orinoco Delta, we shall show that terms such as "Tivi-tive" may have broader- or more specific meanings. Today, or until very recently, the Warao thought of themselves in very broad terms as "lowland people" belonging to a subgroup (subtribe) living along the banks of a particular river. They do not, however, recognize the tribal concept of "the Warao". In fact, until very recently, the Warao of other subtribes (*Warao daisa*) were considered strangers and often more threatening to ones particular subtribe (because of possible sorcery) than the non-Warao.

Based on the above examples one will recognize that tribal identities are not rigid. Rather, they are fluid and shifting depending on the distance of one's perspective. Normally, as one moves closer one begins to distinguish subdivisions. The author proposes therefore, that many of the distinctions commonly made between the concepts of intra- and extra tribal should be abandoned. This is especially so with respect to conflicts because it seems that the concept of "ethnicity" has been distorted by, and made subservient to, recent quests for a national identity.

⁸ Misunderstandings and faulty translations often arise because Westerners do not always keep in mind that the tribal name also, and specifically, means "Indian" or "human being".

⁹ The author thanks Nalúa Silva Monterrey for a revision of the Ye'kwana terms.

¹⁰ One may note that the Tupi derived *caraiva*, "a crafty person," and the Taino term *caraiba* are cognates with the same meaning.

¹¹ For the respective terms used for their neighbors by the Pemon, see Thomas (1982:18).

The Orinoco Delta today

According to the Venezuelan census of 1992 (Censo Indígena), the Orinoco Delta¹² is inhabited by 21,256 Warao and a handful of Arawak (Lokono) Indians (Venezuela 1994:24-25). There are total of 29,000 Warao of which 24,555 are registered in Venezuela¹³. This makes them the second largest indigenous group in the country following the Guajiro (Wayúu). In the state of Delta Amacuro the Warao represent 20% of the total population of 106,686.

During the indigenous census of 1992, very few individuals officially identified themselves as "Arawacos;" members of the Lokono tribal group (Brett 1868:97). The total "Arawacos" figure was 101, while the Caribs (Kari'ña) in the area retreated to the headwaters of the Amacuro River and the Sierra de Imataca.

The figure for the Arawacos is misleading since, among the Delta Criollo population, there are numerous families of Arawak origin that did not identify themselves as such because they no longer speak their original language. Instead, they communicate in Spanish and Warao respectively.

Contrary to the national constitution and the Agrarian Reform Law of 1960, critics of Venezuelan Indian policies insist that the Indian population should not be considered as peasant "campesino." However, it is a fact that the culture of many Venezuelan campesinos is Indian. This is the case for the Arawak population of the Orinoco Delta. Many of these families hail from the Amacuro River area adjacent to what is now the Cooperative Republic of Guyana. Many of them live as Criollos in isolated homesteads and some have even married into Warao villages. Although this phenomenon may be interpreted as a sign of acculturation and tribal disintegration, the Arawak are known to easily integrate with other ethnic groups and appear not to give major weight to the maintenance of ethnic differentiation or "esprit de corps."

Until fairly recently, the only other Criollo element in the Orinoco Delta was comprised of fishermen originally from the island of Margarita. They have been heavily influenced by the Spanish culture, but one can easily detect their native Guayqueri heritage which Raleigh and others identified as "Wikiri". During the Colonial Era they were also reported as living on the floodplains situated in eastern Monagas state.¹⁴

¹² Politically, the Orinoco Delta is part of Estado Delta Amacuro, recently reclassified from a "territory" to a state. It represents 23,700 km² of the state's total 40,200 km² (Vila, 1964:12).

¹³ In spite of newly introduced diseases and an increasing emigration from the Delta into adjacent cities such as San Félix (Ciudad Guayana), the Warao population has increased over the past 10 years. In addition, there are probably a number of unregistered families which would increase the total count to approximately 29,000 individuals.

¹⁴ Dudley (Warner 1967, map) has them living in the western Orinoco Delta as Yguiri. Lavandero (1994:27), while agreeing that the Guayqueries originally spoke probably a Waraoan language, contends that the Wikiri and the Guayqueries are not the same.

There are also isolated groups of Guyanese peoples of African and East Indian origin who reside in the Delta. However, their migration into the area largely stems from difficult economic conditions and a recent increased mobility which prompted an almost simultaneous influx into the mentioned area as well as into the newly industrialized regions around Ciudad Guayana in the state of Bolívar.

The greater Orinoco Delta during the 16th century

The Spanish and English explorations of the 16th and early 17th centuries reported several Arawak- and Carib-speaking groups living along the margins of the Orinoco Delta.¹⁵ The chronicles also make many references to trade languages and polyglot individuals. Therefore, in the process of unraveling their ethnic identities, great care must be taken not to arrive at premature conclusions because all of these Indians were probably highly acculturated and multilingual as a consequence of long-standing trade relationships.

For example, according to the descriptions of Raleigh and Oviedo, Huyapari¹⁶ (also known as Aruacay) was a village situated near the apex of the Delta, a short distance from the northern (left) banks of the Orinoco River (east of the present day Barrancas).¹⁷ As previously hypothesized by Lovén (1968 [1928]:714), its inhabitants were probably multi-ethnic.

According to Raleigh (1973:593) the inhabitants of Huyapari were Nepoyo, believed by Vázquez de Espinosa (1948 [1620]:34-5) to have spoken a Carib language. However, around 1627, Major John Scott (Harlow 1967:121) associated them with the Sepoyes (Shebaio) who supposedly spoke Maipuran Arawak and Naipaul (see below) refers to a 1760 document where the "Nepoios" are classified as an "Arawak tribe" (Naipaul 1969:121). Although the Nepoyo are not a subgroup of the Lokono, Loukotka classified them as Arawak speakers (Loukotka 1968:125; see also the detailed discussion of the Nepoyo in Boomert 1986:12 and note 13). The solution to this puzzle is probably in the documents of the Catalan Capuchin missionaries who used the Nepoyo language extensively during their missionizing efforts on the island of Trinidad. While the name "Aruacay" certainly appears to be of Arawak origin meaning "Jaguar-Island" (Boomert 1984:134) the alternative designation of "Huyapari" suggests a Carib affiliation.

¹⁵ Especially the voyages of Sir Walter Raleigh, Robert Dudley and some English captains such as Keymis, Whiddon etc. as well as Spanish explorers summed up by Vázquez de Espinosa in 1620.

¹⁶ In Warao, Uriabari.

¹⁷ The mouth of the channel mentioned by Raleigh is located at the present village of Apostaderos.

The Nepoyo also occupied a territory on the southern shores of the Orinoco River near the present-day village of Piacoa under leadership of their chief, Carapana; a name that may have originally referred to the physical location because the Arawak-ending *-bana* or *-pana* indicates a place name. However, the neighboring Guayano Indians, situated a little further up the Orinoco to the west, definitively spoke a Carib language because the Capuchin missionaries associated the language with Paria(goto) which was spoken on the mainland west of Trinidad.

The Guayana Indians of French Guyana speak a Carib language even today. According to Boomert however, the latter originated from the Brazilian Amapá region (personal communication 1994). Raleigh (1986:123) mentioned an additional group inhabiting the eastern Llanos. They were the Zaimas, Saimi or Chaima; a population known to have spoken a Carib language. A few of their descendants are still found in the present federal state of Sucre, but they no longer speak their native language.

Near the town of Uracoa, situated by the Manamo (Amana) River (the westernmost tributary of the Orinoco Delta), there was a group of Arawak (Lokono) visited by Raleigh on his way to Guayana (1973:599). Their chief, Aramiari (Arromaiarie), had defeated the Tuitiuas (Siawani) of the Amana (Manamo) River and, according to Keymis (1596:8), had opened a trade route from Huyapari to the Gulf of Paria. The "true Arawak" (Lokono) occupied the coast from the mouth of the Río Grande del Orinoco to the southeast. Since the report of Rodrigo de Navarrete (1964 [1570-75]) this region was recognized as "La provincia de los Aruacas."

The Kari'ña, or "true Caribs" as they were called by early ethnographers towards the end of the 19th century, occupied the plains of the eastern Llanos and the mouths of the rivers Guanipa and Guarapiche (today San Juan). The map of 1595, attributed to Raleigh reads "canibales" at the mouth of the Guanipa. The Kari'ña still inhabit the states of Anzoátegui, Monagas and Bolívar in Venezuela, but their strongholds on the mouths of the rivers Guanipa and San Juan (Guarapiche)¹⁸ previously mentioned by 16th and 17th century explorers and missionaries, e.g. Raleigh, Pelleprat etc. no longer exist (Fig. 1).

Groups of Warao, or Waraoan speaking peoples, also inhabited the western shores of the Gulf of Paria. There were the Verotiani (Veriotaus) mentioned by Dudley in 1595 (Warner 1967:74). He reported them as living next to the Tuitiuas (Warao) and implies that

¹⁸ Guarapiche is possibly an Arawak derived toponym with the suffix *-bisi*, river.

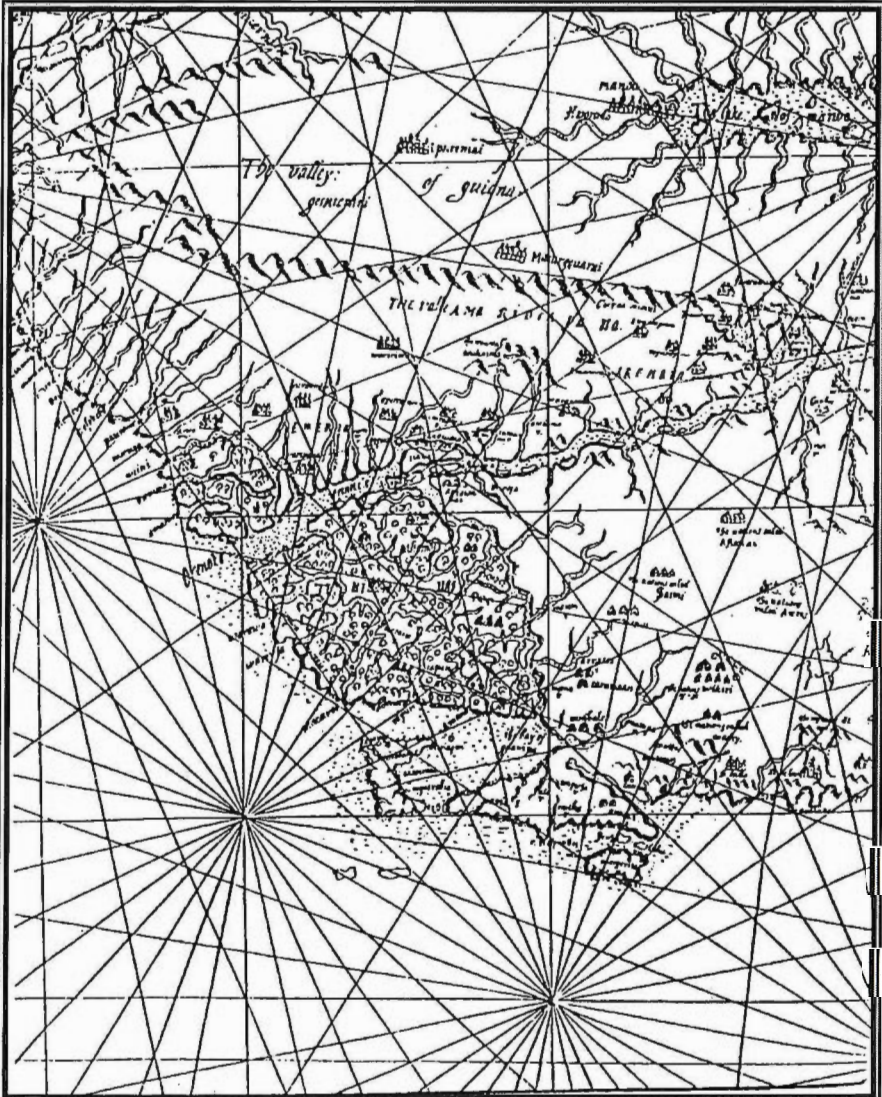


FIGURE 1

MAP OF THE ORINOCO DELTA
ATTRIBUTED TO
SIR WALTER RALEIGH
1595

the two groups were different peoples. This deduction was a mistake since the description of these people appearing in "Kingdome of Tiuitiuas" clearly refers to Arawak speakers.

The Verotiani are identical to the Tiuitiuas. They appear in later reports by Spanish missionaries as Farautes and are without doubt, very similar, if not identical to the Warao. In about 1678 the famous linguist, Father Francisco de Tauste, pointed out that the Farautes lived from fishing and the exploitation of the moriche palm (*Maurita flexuosa*) but that they did not practice agriculture¹⁹.

In comparison, the identity of the Arotos is uncertain. In Warao their name could be construed as meaning "inhabitant, people", but what we know about them does not match what we know of the latter.

The people identified by Raleigh as Wikiri were probably the modern day Guayqueri; last identified as the inhabitants of Margarita Island. Although they are believed to have spoken a Carib language (Vázquez de Espinosa 1948[1620]:35), members of this ethnic group were reported to have conversed in an Arawak language (Acosta Saignes 1961). Furthermore, Humboldt (1970 [1814-1825]) reported that Guayquerí informants near Cumaná informed him that their ancestors once spoke a language similar to that of the Warao. The latter is likely to be true. The Carib language they spoke was probably adopted while they lived together with the Carib speaking Chaima (Raleigh 1973:621, 630).

Aboriginal Trinidad

In the early 17th century, Major John Scott reported that the "Island of [Trinidad] is in figure something Triangular & Devided into three parts, by 3 distinct nacions of Indians, Vizt The Carrebees, The Sapoyes, and Arowagoes" (Harlow 1967:120). Although this was a vast improvement over the Spanish policy that, for obvious reasons, was not clear on whether the inhabitants of the island were "guatiaos" friendly (Arawak) or enslavable "cannibals" hostile (Caribs), the real situation was far more complex.

The Yao Indians of the southwestern tip of Trinidad were believed to be Carib speakers. This is also almost certain for the Karinepagoto. Karine can be interpreted as Karina or Kariña. In Carib languages *pa* means place, as in *upata*, "our place" or the Ye'kwana *fata*, and *goto* or *koto* which implies "people" (pl. *komo*). One can assume therefore that the Carib speakers were mainly located on the western side of Trinidad.

¹⁹ "Los farautes viven en tierras muy pantanosas y sus casas las tienen fundadas sobre el agua; no hacen éstos labranza alguna: con pescado y cacería se sustentan; en lugar de pan tienen el corazón de un árbol llamado ataguaí, que es como palma, y de esta misma hacen redes o hamacas para dormir..."(Carrocera 1964:199).

The Arawak, who may have been Lokono or perhaps Iëri-speakers, are associated with the Carao area of south-central Trinidad²⁰ (see also Dudley in Warner 1967:71 n.2), and the Nepoyo with the southeast. Scott relates the latter to the Sepoyes (Harlow 1967:121), which is conceivable if we take into account indigenous sound patterns²¹.

While the Sepoyo (Shebayo) are thought to have been Arawak speakers, Vázquez de Espinosa (early 17th century) grouped the Nepoyo with such Carib speakers as the Guayano, the Guayquerí, and the Cumanagoto (1948:34-5). Given that the Nepoyo lived together with the Lokono in the trade center of Aruacay, they may have been habitually bilingual. As will be explained shortly, the Nepoyo of Trinidad were connected by a permanent trade route with their territory in Carapana which lies east of present day town of Piacoa located on the Lower Orinoco.

The oral tradition of the present-day Warao (Orinoco Delta) links them with the island of Trinidad. Waraoan speakers delimit their habitat by the northern point of Naparima on Trinidad and the southern point of Wakarima in the Sierra de Imataca (see below). Besides the place-name "Naparima", there are a few additional traces on Trinidad thought to be of the Siawani (Chaguanes); a group related to the Warao.

Trinidadian tradition mentions that the southern Caroni Swamps and the Chaguanas River were inhabited by an Indian tribe called Chaguanes (see also Naipaul 1969:14). In fact, except for the absence of moriche groves, the Caroni swamps have a conspicuous similarity with the mangrove environments of the Lower Orinoco Delta.

The association of the Naparima Indians with the Nepoyo remains to be resolved (Benjamin 1991:12, 15). But there are distinct places where the Nepoyo have been associated with the Warao or, at least, Waraoan speakers. As we shall see below, in the time of Raleigh, the Siawani relocated at the mouth of the Arawao distributary, which was a thoroughfare used by the Nepoyo and Arawak-speaking people.

It is appropriate to point out here that apparently, the Siawani were also situated in individual habitation sites along the Guayana coast. For what Dudley's memory was worth after 43 years, he identified a "kingdom of Seawano" just east of the Essequibo near the hypothetical gold-mine of Wakeren and an additional Seawano territory east of the Corentyne (Warner 1967:72, 93, 95; see map).

²⁰ One of the few technical mistakes that can be found in Ojer (1966), who was misled by Dudley's map of 1637, more than 42 years after his voyage, into thinking of Carao as located in the western part of the island.

²¹ The reader may think of the pair Sanema-Ninam/Ñanam.

The early sources

Since the quest for El Dorado into the depths of Guayana was not successful, there was no "Bernal Díaz del Castillo" to describe the journey of Diego de Ordás up the Orinoco (1531) nor the several attempts of "Antonio de Berrío" to find the entrance to the riches of El Dorado via the Meta and down the Orinoco that ended with his death on the islands of the Orinoco Delta in 1597 (Arellano Moreno 1964:248 n.). However, we do know that Columbus reached the Orinoco Delta on his third voyage in August of 1498 making him the first European to set foot on the South American continent.²²

For many years Raleigh's "Discoverie" (1848 [1596]) was the main source of information for the Lower Orinoco during the late 16th century (however short his trip might have been, and however much of his information might have come from the Spaniards, especially Antonio de Berrío). Additional data of value was provided in the chapters on Venezuela in Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo (1986 [chapter 24, first published between 1535 and 1557]) and in the writings of later chroniclers like Fray Pedro Simón (1987 [1627]) and Caulín (1987 [1778]). There was also the manuscript of Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa's "Compendio y descripción de las Indias Occidentales" written in the 1620s which was "thought lost" but later transcribed by Charles Upson Clark (1948) under the aegis of the Smithsonian Institution. But the many reports and "*relaciones*" of the Spanish colonial administration remained buried in the archives at Simancas, Spain.

This situation changed when the boundary dispute between the United States of Venezuela and Her Britannic Majesty, culminating in the arbitration of 1898, produced a 12 volume compilation of colonial documents that were presented in an appendix to the case on behalf of the British Government. A special emphasis was given to eastern Venezuela and the Essequibo Territory (B.G.B. 1898). The appendix contained all of the available documents from the English, Spanish and Dutch archives.

This particular event prompted a number of individuals to publish related documents. On Trinidad, the Spanish colonial documents pertaining to the area were translated into English, and in Venezuela, a La Salle Brother, Hermano Nectario María, made a long and arduous effort in the archives in Seville to collect and transcribe important documents now held at the La Salle Foundation Library in Caracas.

In England, the Hakluyt Society published a number of works on the Voyages of the English to the West Indies and Guiana. Among them were those of Robert Dudley (1594-95 in Warner 1967) and Robert

²²It is important to point out that there are many inferior editions of the so-called "Board diaries". So far, the most carefully researched is the one by Consuelo Varela (1992).

Harcourt in (1613 in Harris 1967), as well as the reports of Major John Scott (Harlow 1967). The report of Captain Keymis, Raleigh's companion on his voyage of 1595 (who committed suicide after the unfortunate assault on Santo Tomé de Guayana in 1618), is now available in facsimile (Keymis 1968 [1596]). Also attracting the attention of the Hakluyt Society were the documents from the Dutch West Indies Company.

Scrutinizing the archives for data on the various Indian groups of the area is an arduous and little productive task because the main preoccupation of the Spanish was gold and souls while the ledgers of the Dutch West India Company mainly deal with trade and the Dutch plantations. The subject of the Indians was treated as a background for a vast canvass of early European efforts at occupation, attempts to relieve the Indians of their gold and pearls, and using their labor for the production of agricultural products.

A very important source of information are the early maps, especially an anonymous Spanish one, dated tentatively at 1556, and titled "Mapa de los ríos Amazonas, Esequivo o Dulce y Orinoco y de las comarcas adyacentes." It was first published by Marcos Jiménez de la Espada in 1877. This map locates the "Tibetibes" at the mouth of the Orinoco and the "Caribes" on the Llanos north of the middle Orinoco. It also mentions the voyage of Ordás up the Orinoco (dating it wrongly 1536 instead of 1531) and describes the passage up the Essequibo via several portages into the Amazon basin. This fluvial corridor represented a major trade route of the Arawak Indians. It was also used from the 18th century on by the Carib-speaking Ye'kwana Indians to access metal products at the Dutch trading post of Amenadiña²³. Pablo Ojer (1966) would later call this map "El mapa de los Aruacas" (Lokono) because it neatly defines their territory.

Of equal importance is the map attributed to Raleigh, which the latter completed with the data obtained from Antonio de Berrío while held prisoner by Raleigh on Trinidad in 1595. It shows the Warao territory as stretching from Anaparima (*anabarima* "guardian of the waves") in northern Trinidad to Wakarima (*wahakarima* "guardian of tierra firme") in the Guayana highlands to the south. Dudley's map of 1637 suffers from a time lag of 42 years, but the map elaborated by Robert H. Schomburgk to accompany his edition of Sir Walter Raleigh's "Discoverie" (1848) collects the former's experience as an explorer of the region in his own right.

²³ In historical times the Ye'kwana used to travel from the Upper Orinoco and the Ventuari (Antawadi) via the Caura (Merewari), Paragua and Caroní rivers through the Mazaruni-Essequibo, and from the Branco through the Rupununi-Essequibo over a number of portages (field notes Heinen 1982, Humboldt 1970 [2]:471-2).

Some modern surveys

The Rupununi uprising that began on January 1, 1969 and the simultaneous flare-up of the Essequibo boundary dispute between Venezuela and the newly independent Cooperative Republic of Guyana, blew new life into the efforts of historians to come to grips with the first two centuries of European presence in the area. Fueled by lucrative petroleum-generated funds, a team of Jesuit researchers and their associates delved into the various European archives. Although partisan, the work by Pablo Ojer (1966) is a nearly flawless study on "The formation of Eastern Venezuela"²⁴. Equally impeccable is the account by the Trinidadian writer of East-Indian extraction V.S. Naipaul called "The loss of El Dorado" (Naipaul 1969). He was a contemporary of Ojer, but worked in the British Museum Library. Naipaul deciphered most of the intricate story of the early voyages in the Orinoco including the complex history of the Berrío family and their various deputies; a history that subsequent anthropological efforts would end up confusing (see below).

In Venezuela the early and mid-sixties saw the publication of colonial documents under the name of "Relaciones Geográficas de Venezuela". It contained important writings by Martín López (1550), Rodrigo de Navarrete and Antonio Barbudo (between 1570 and 1575)(Arellano Moreno 1964) including those of Domingo Ibarguen y Vera and Antonio de Berrío (between 1594 and 1597) (Arellano Moreno 1964; see also Ramos 1988).

In Trinidad a number of Venezuelan historical documents were translated into English and published in the Trinidad Historical Society Publications. Among them was a report from 1520 by the Justicia Mayor, Licenciado Rodrigo de Figueroa to the King of Spain. It addressed the classification of the Indians of Tierra Firme into Caribs and "indios de paz".

Recent efforts to transcend the narrow national quadrants into which the region had been divided by the Spanish, English, French, Dutch and Portuguese language areas and envision the whole of what, in colonial times, was called the "Island of Guayana" was accomplished by Dutch and English anthropologists/archaeologists (Boomert 1984; Whitehead 1988). They replaced the cumbersome expressions of "true Caribs" and "true Arawaks" with the ethnonyms *Kari'ña* and *Lokono* respectively.

²⁴ A certain bias on the part of Ojer could be expected since he was working on the papers of the British Guiana Boundary dispute on behalf of Venezuelan interests. The decisive legal question always was, "how far did Spanish or Dutch settlers reach". But the Essequibo Territory is frankly Indian country and this should be taken into account by both Guyana and Venezuela

Both studies emphasize the shifting alliances between the various Indian tribes on the one hand, and those of the European nations on the other during the early 16th century. They qualify the stereotype of the "peaceful" Arawaks as "friends of the Spaniards" and the "hostile" Caribs as "collaborators of the Dutch." This is not to say, however, that the Arawaks, because of the geographical position and the ecological niche that they occupied, would not have been predisposed to supply the Spanish of Cubagua and Margarita with foodstuffs, and for the Caribs to sell Indian slaves to the early Dutch plantations in the Essequibo.

It is also a merit of Boomert's paper to have defined the different ecological niches alluded to above, with the Arawaks occupying the lower sections of the western Guayana coast, the Caribs the higher reaches of the respective rivers and the Warao, the interfluvial swamps near the coast (Boomert 1984:128-9). Of course there were exceptions. Some rivers and Orinoco distributaries were completely in the hands of the Arawaks and their allies. This was the case with the Aruabisi/Arawao whose routes traversed the Sacupana to the then Carapana region (see below). Also there may have been trade and other agreements with the Upriver Caribs that allowed the Arawak "cacique" Jaime to undertake a trading expedition (1553) with four piraguas up the Essequibo and over a number of portages into the Amazon (Jiménez de la Espada 1877, map). But on the whole, Boomert's classification is solid.

Both authors used the detailed study of Ojer, *Formación del Oriente Venezolano* (1966). Although Whitehead's great merit was to have broken new ground with his perspective on chiefdom-like formations in the Lower and Middle Orinoco, he did not quite succeed in presenting a clear summary of the work of professional historians in the area. He confused a number of points which Naipaul (1969) was able to clarify.²⁵

Origin of the names Warao and Tiuitiuas

During the last decade or so there were a number of interpretations made of the ethnonym Warao. The widespread opinion that the etymology of the name should be traced to "navigators," "boat people" (Roth 1970[1924]:744, Barral 1979:460), is a recent interpretation; at least

²⁵ For a detailed review of Whitehead's "Lords of the Tiger Spirit: A history of the Caribs in Colonial Venezuela and Guyana, 1498-1820", see Heinen & Caballero Arias 1994. Besides some ethnographic misapprehensions Whitehead seems to consider the Venezuelan Yanomami as Carib speakers (Whitehead 1988:208 note 34).

with regard to the "real" Warao (*Waraowitu*)²⁶. A more plausible interpretation would be that Warao is a derivation of *waha* (beach, sand bank), and *arao* (inhabitant, people). This alternative was brought to the attention of the author in 1969 by the late Toni Gómez, headman of the Arawao River village of Hubasuhuru and was later confirmed by Antonio Lorenzano of Winikina (Heinen, fieldnotes 1988). In addition, Cesáreo Soto, a bilingual Warao from Osibu Kahunoko, used to frequently point out that "we Warao do not live in canoes," because *arao* means "people" in the broadest sense of the word, and implies residence as well as ownership. This corresponds to the classification by the Warao which contrasts "all strangers" as *hotarao*, "highland people," with all Warao as "lowland people" or "people of the marshlands, sand banks" (see also Lavandero Pérez 1994:18-19).

One of the first reports we have on the Warao is that of the Spanish Captain, Phelippe de Santiago who, on the 2nd of November 1595, writes to the authorities of Cumaná that the Chaguanes and Tivetives (of the Delta) "both live in swamplands"²⁷ (B.G.B. 1898. British Guiana Boundary I:9 [Archivo de Simancas]). This information is completed by the description of Sir Walter Raleigh during his voyage of 1595 (1848:48).

After much speculation it is clear that the name "Tiuitiua" (Tibitibi, Tivitive) refers to the sandpiper, *Tringa flavipes* which the Warao call *waharomu*²⁸. Whitehead (1988:201) supports the widespread, but misleading opinion, that the archaic name for the Warao "Tivitives" is derived from the Lokono word tibetebe (cockle or mollusk). However, this only proves the existence of primary and secondary meanings, and one need not deny the latter and in order to reject its application to the ethnonym of the Warao.

Another example of primary and secondary meanings is found in the term "Amana"; a tributary of the Guanipa River. In Warao it means bifurcation, or branch, but Marc de Civrieux, in his 1970 study on Los últimos Coaca, associates this name with a Carib term meaning "water spirit" (Civrieux 1970). This does not imply Civrieux is wrong, it only proves the existence of terms that have primary and secondary meanings.

²⁶ It is possible that the interpretation "Canoe People" originated with the descendants of the famed makers of dugout canoes who, according to Raleigh (1968:43), lived in the Upper Delta and probably were of the Siawani branch of the Tiuitiuas. This whole complex needs further research.

²⁷ "Chaguanes y Tivetives quienes los unos y los otros avitan en anegadizos". Phelippe de Santiago was the erstwhile companion of Antonio de Berrío. The name Tibetibes was already on a map from the mid 16th century and published by Jiménez de la Espada in 1877 (reproduced in Ojer 1966).

²⁸ Recent questioning of native informants indicate that the song of the *waharomu* best corresponds to the *Tringa flavipes*.

In a similar case the Capuchin Father, Félix María de Vegamián, categorically asserts that the name of the Nepoyo village Aruacay comes from the Warao term *aru-a-ka-i*, "tip of a manioc tuber" (Vegamián 1945:41). Boomert, however, interprets Aruacay as a Lokono term; *aru* "jaguar" and *kai* (*cairi*, *cayo*, *keys*) "island" (1984:134). The latter seems a more reasonable interpretation. It is a bold hypothesis to derive the ethnonym Aruaca from the town of Aruacay, but one is not forced to follow Boomert in details since the toponym is common in the Guayanas (see also Caulin 1987 [1778]:111-12²⁹), whilst the ethnonym Aruak or Arawak might just as well derive from *haruka*, "yuca" or manioc tuber, or from *aruakana*, "clan of the jaguar" (Taylor 1958:157), both of which would account for the "k" pace (Boomert 1984:134)³⁰.

Both the Warao and the Arawak (Lokono) exploit the sago of the moriche palm (*M. flexuosa*). The Arawak call it "*haru*" (Rev. J. Williams 1924:356; Brinton 1871; Schulz 1803; Adam 1882); the term that also means "*mañoco*" (cassava flour). In the Warao language *aru* today means bread. In Warao, the sago of the moriche palm is *ohidu aru*, "moriche bread" while cassava is *hota aru*, "highland bread" or *aru witu*, "true bread". The fact is that Warao mythology and tradition use many Arawak terms, e.g. the name of the Warao culture hero Haburi (Wilbert, pers. com.; see also Roth 1929).³¹

Large areas of the South-Central Delta, from the Aruabisi via the Arawao to the Sakobana, including the Winikina rivers, seem to have been under the influence of Arawak speakers. Aruabisi, the pronunciation used by older Warao for the Araguabisi, means "Jaguar River" or, as put forward by im Thurn (1967:164) in reference to its namesake in the Essequibo estuary, "home of the jaguar". Later we will return to this point.

Much confusion was caused by those who claimed that the Warao "lived on trees" Girolamo Benzoni (1565-1572); Humboldt (1985[4] 500-1)³². Raleigh, however, clarified the misinterpretation when he reported for the Upper Delta:

²⁹ On the one hand there were Arawacays in the Moitaco area of today's Bolívar state; on the other, "Isla Tigre" exists on the lower Manamo River near the mouth of Caño Buja. There are several toponyms with the Warao term for jaguar "tobe" in them such as Tobehuba, Tobeina (near the mouth of the Sakobana) etc.

³⁰ There are still other ways to account for the K, namely by deriving Arauca from *arukana*, "clan of the jaguar" (Taylor 1958: 157).

³¹ The absence of horticulture observed among the Warao is only partially due to soil conditions. Creole peasants from the Amacuro River, who are descendants of Lokono groups, grow tubers, bananas, and chillies (ajies) in the Central Delta with the help of a cultivation technique called "en trinchas", which is also used in the western Essequibo territory.

³² "Le navigateur, en traversant de nuit les canaux du delta de l'Orénoque, voit avec surprise de grands feux Éclairer la cime des palmier. Ce sont les habitations des Guaraons (Tivitvas et Ouarauetis de Raleigh), suspendues aux troncs des arbres" (Humboldt 1970 II:653).

"In the summer [dry season, January to April] they haue houses on the ground as in other places: In the winter they dwell vpon the trees, where they build very artificiall townes and villages...: for betweene May and September the riuer of Orenoke riseth thirtie foote vpright" (Raleigh 1968:42).

In the Lower Delta the problem of the annual inundation is replaced by the diurnal flooding which the Warao overcome with pile dwellings. This difference will allow us to geographically locate certain episodes from Sir Walter Raleigh's report.

Waraoan- and non-Waraoan speakers in the early Colonial Delta

Other ethnic groups such as the Arawak- (Lokono) and Carib-speakers (Kari'ña) appear on a number of old maps of the Orinoco Delta drawn by de Bry (1599)(Fig. 2)³³ and the admittedly unreliable map of Robert Dudley of 1637 (Fig. 3).

It is amazing that it took so long for the complex ethnic configuration of the Lower Orinoco to be understood by the anthropological community in spite of routine mentioning of groups which have nowadays disappeared or are vastly reduced in numbers. Somehow it was tacitly assumed that the present configuration was by and large the result of the appearance of horticulture and their bearers in the area after 4000 B.P.

Wilbert (1964:15, 1972:66, 1976:303) has long contemplated the antiquity of the Warao and Waraoan speakers in the area. In fact, an extensive vocabulary common to Warao and Maipuran Arawak languages such as *duhu*, *nawa*, *hanoko*, *maka* and *(ha)maka* etc. (see also Loukotka 1968:126) has long drawn the attention of scholars. Warao mythology narrates of a time when Trinidad was still connected to the mainland (Wilbert 1975:190, see also W. Wilbert 1995), but physical proof had been largely missing so far. However, in a recent publication, Williams refers to the prehistoric and protohistoric situation in the western Guyanas and the Orinoco Delta and cites evidence for an "Early Man occupation of the Lowlands of... 11,000 years ago" (Williams 1993:6).

It now seems possible that considerable variation among Warao groups in terms of subsistence systems, language, and material culture existed early in the 16th century and has persisted until recently in western Guyana. Far from being the result of prehistoric population movements, it now turns out that the present isolated tribal situation is

³³ The illustrations by de Bry depicting Warao dwellings on the coast built in trees when they are actually constructed on pilings demonstrates the misconceptions created by Raleigh's descriptions and those of other Europeans in general. Tree dwellings, on the other hand, could probably be found in the upper Delta in the area occupied by the Siawanl.

FIGURE 2

THE TREE-DWELLINGS
OF THE WARAO BY THE
ARTIST THEODORE DE
BRY, 1612

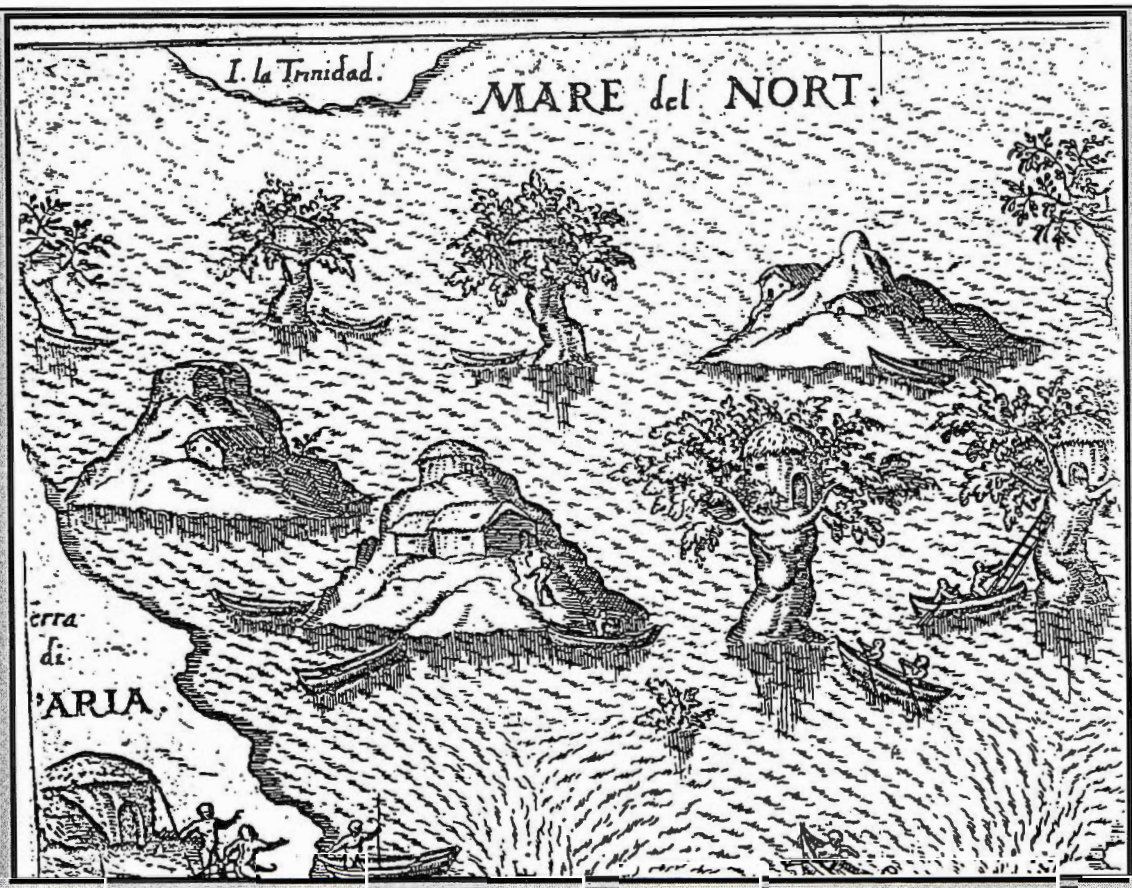




FIGURE 3

MAP OF ROBERT DUDLEY
1637

largely the consequence of early colonial times and the intrusion of European explorers, settlers and, later, missionaries.

There are certain clues as to the location of Arawak and Carib speakers in the Delta. The lower Arawao (Araguao) and Sakobana distributaries show evidence of Arawak occupation. (We will come back in detail to the area and to the Warao-Arawak interaction later.) Specifically, the *-bana* (*-pana*) and *-coa* (as in Uracoa, Piacoa etc.) point to Arawak place names. The northern shore of the Lower Orinoco around the present town of Curiapo suggests a Carib stronghold; *-apo* indicating a Carib place name. The Warao were very afraid of the slaving activities of the Caribs, but in most cases the Carib incursions were probably dedicated to the harvesting of fruits like pineapple, (*anana*) and "piñuela" (*korobisoro*).

In reference to other groups living in the Delta, Sir Walter Raleigh (1848:48) wrote:

"Those people which dwell in these broken Islands and drowned lands are generally called Tuitiuas. There are of them two sorts, the one called Ciawani, and the other Waraweete".

Besides the "true Warao" Waraweete (*warawete*, *waraowitu*), there were the Siawani (Ciawani, Isawana) or Chaguanes, as the Spanish called them³⁴. Towards the end of his report, Raleigh repeats that,

"...there are but one sort of people called Tuitiuas, but of two castes as they tearme them, the one called Ciawary, the other Waraweeti, and those warre one with the other" (Raleigh 1968:90-91).

Warao mythology confirms the existence of strife between them and the Siawani. On the one hand, it depicts the Siawani as cannibals (*nahoromo*), but on the other they describe them as the bringers of technical knowledge such as sago processing (Wilbert 1964: 141-143). It is not clear if Raleigh's use of the term "castes" is meant to convey a difference in physical appearance as it did in Spanish colonial times and as the term "varna" (color) still does in the East Indian area. The Siawani might have been more riparian-oriented than the Warao since Vázquez de Espinosa points out that "the Chaguanes lived close to the Tibitibes [but] on the *shores of the Orinoco and other [rivers]*" (1948:62, italics added). They also lived mostly in the Upper Delta towards its apex, while the Waraowitu were largely confined to the coastal areas.

³⁴ The English /s/ is equivalent to the Spanish /ch/. This explains spelling variations as seen in Saima and Chaima.

Raleigh visited the Siawani on his way to El Dorado, somewhere on the Amana (today the so-called Mánamo³⁵) (Raleigh 1969:41). According to his descriptions of the house-types and the strong difference in water levels between the dry and flood season, especially at the end of the rainy season (Raleigh 1968:42) this encounter probably took place in the Upper Delta³⁶ rather than the Lower Delta where houses are built on piles and the flooding is less dramatic. Lavandero (1994:23-23) even goes so far as to suggest that Raleigh never met any Waraowitu (Waraweete) but only Siawani (Ciawani, Chaguanes, Isawana).

Raleigh mentions that these Tivitives were of the sort called Siawani and that they were excellent boat builders, especially of the type with "houses" on them, which they traded for gold in Guayana and for tobacco in Trinidad³⁷. In reference to this he mentions the Macareo (Makiri) and Capure rivers and concludes his chapter by saying that "we departed from the port of these Ciawani..."(1968:43). From this description it can be assumed that the place belonged to a complex close to the present town of Tucupita where the Capure and Tucupita river flow into the Manamo and the Macareo comes very close in a large bend. The Siawani probably had a port on the Amana blocking the trade route to Huyapari, but their real territory was a short distance away. It was here that during the second half of the 18th century Fray Iñigo de Abbad found some 3.000 Indians living in an area which he cited as Cutupite (Tucupita river) (Abbad 1974; see also the map by Surville of 1778³⁸).

This would explain the presence of the Chaguanes on the shores of the Río Grande del Orinoco and its southern banks, since the Macareo in the rainy season directly connects with the Caño Baldomero and what is today called the Araguaíto River. Furthermore, the location of Dudley's "kingdom of Seawano" east of the Essequibo (close to a hypothetical gold mine called Wakeren) is possibly a confusion and could easily be placed into the Carao area of the Sierra de Imataca

³⁵ Neither Manamo nor Amana refers to the entire river. Manamo has the basic meaning of "two" and is used to refer to a stretch down-river, where the river bifurcates into what is now called Mánamo and Manamito. Amana, meaning "bifurcation", "horqueta," and "branch," probably was the name of the river from San Rafael on where the Cocuina joins the Manamo. The term seems to have been spread by Raleigh. The Spanish of Raleigh's time also knew the term Manamo since Captain Phelippe de Santiago reported that, "Ay otra boca del Delta llamada Manavo, por la cual se sabe que entró el Inglés, nombrado Guat-erral..."(B.G.B. I:9). Incidentally, there is a place close by still today called "La Horqueta". The river along the present town of Tucupita is actually called Mawanaba by the Warao.

³⁶ The story of the two Arawak brothers *running* away from the Siawani indicates the presence of at least semi-firm ground which is difficult to find in the Lower Delta.

³⁷ This seems to be exactly the trade route which according to Keymis the Arawak chief Aramiari had taken away from the Tuitiuas (see above).

³⁸ Clusters of villages like those in today's Uracoa-Simara-Tabasca area or around La Horqueta-Cocuina near Tucupita may prove to be a pre-Columbian pattern.

(Dudley 1967:72, 93, 95). It could possibly be located near the so-called "Christall Mountain" that Raleigh saw in the Wakarima area of the Imataca.

Today there is a place by the name of Siawani in the Orinoco Delta. It is located in an estuary of the Arawao on the southern banks of the river. Its inhabitants are not native to the area. They came from the moriche swamps north of the Arawao called Dirida. The people traditionally belonging to the Siawani area are found in the vicinity of such nonWarao places as Kanaima (an evil being of the Guayana highlands), Barakataina ("armadillo-cluster" in Arawak: see also im Thurn 1967:18, Roth 1970:674)³⁹, and along a channel connecting with the Aruabisi River. Their women wear the typical Caribbean island dresses called *nawa*⁴⁰, adjust easily to virilocal residences, and are not very strict in observing the son-in-law avoidance taboo. They also produce a drink of fermented beverages called *kasiri*.

Captain Keymis' report explains how the Siawani arrived there from their original place of residence on the Macareo (Keymis 1596:24-25⁴¹). He reports on how the Spanish had burned their houses because they had refused to trade the gold they had obtained from Guayana for their canoes. Sir Walter Raleigh, on his way back to Trinidad, probably visited them again on the Macareo River which would explain the quality of his description.

Because the present-day Siawani are located on a site that looks suspiciously like an Arawak-derived enclave, I might be forgiven for having originally postulated the Siawani as Arawak-speakers (Heinen 1984). Data obtained from Vázquez de Espinosa (1948:35, 62), a detailed study of Warao myths regarding the Siawani⁴², and the arguments of Aard Boomert (pers. com. 1988) have prompted me to change my position to consider them as speaking a Warao-related language. Furthermore, in many other places the Siawani are associated, not with the Lokono, but the Nepoyos who supposedly spoke a Carib language. I will now turn to the Arawao-Sakobana thoroughfare and the related archaeological finds.

³⁹ The place name may actually be a reference to the Arawak "Barakata" clan (see Roth 1970:674).

⁴⁰ Fernández de Enciso reports in his work of 1519 (reproduced in Seville in 1530), that the first Europeans observed among the inhabitants of Hispaniola Island that "las mujeres [usaban] unas áque llaman naguas" (quoted in Friederici 1960:443; compare also Las Casas 1951[2]:412)

⁴¹ The facsimile has no page numbers. Pages 24-25 starting with "The second Voyage to Guiana" are marked D-E.

⁴² It is interesting to note that the mythology states "that [the Siawani] are true Indians, (true people)" *nome Warao*, but does not say that they are *waraowitu*, "proper Warao" (Waraweete) (for a rendering of the Siawani myth see Wilbert 1964:29, 141).

Archaeological sites

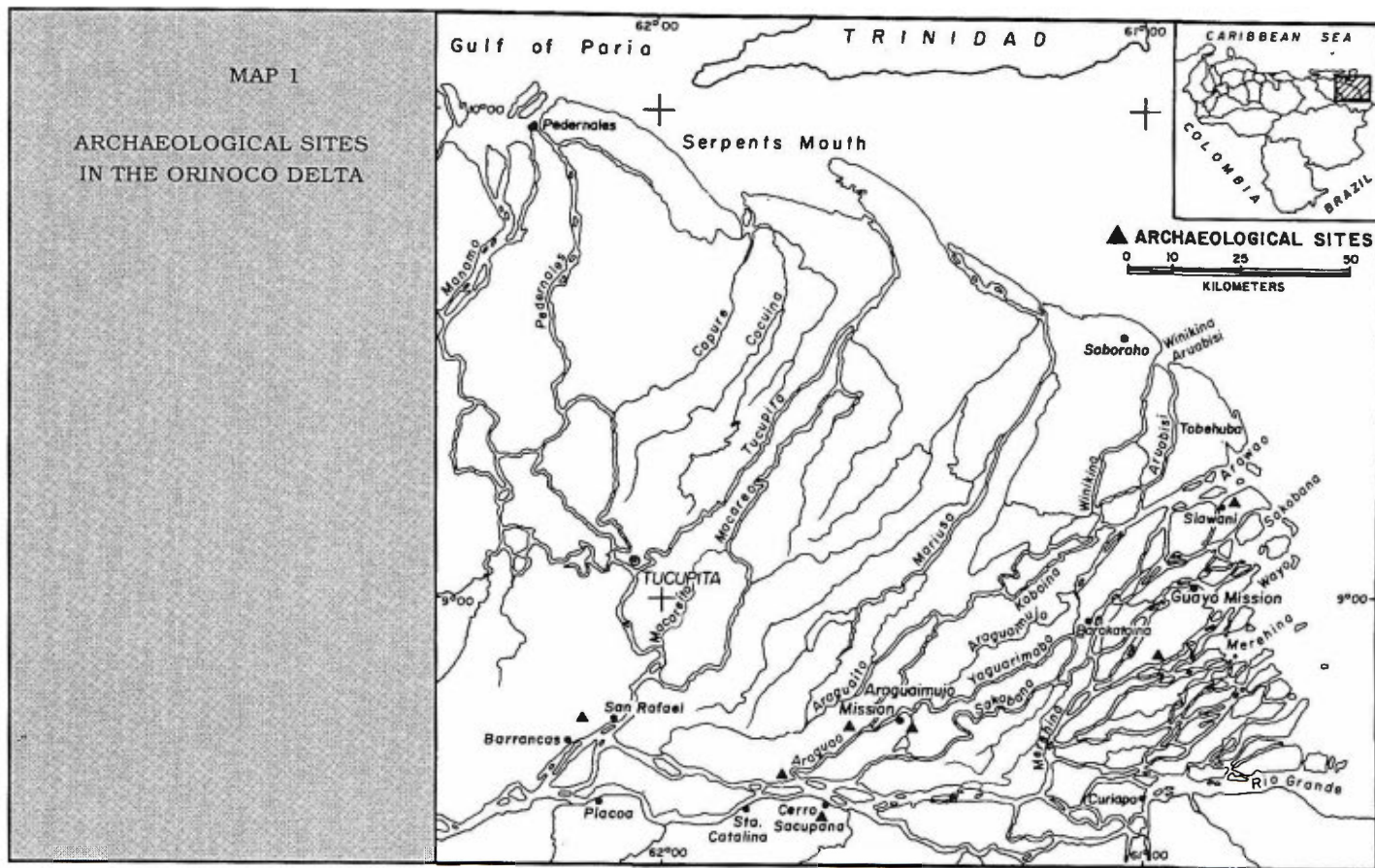
Place- and river names are reputed to be nearly impervious to change. While the major rivers in the Orinoco Delta carry names of Aráwak and sometimes of Carib origin, the smaller caños and creeks in the deltaic interior have Warao names (Heinen 1980; 1988:595, 597).

In some cases the Warao have taken a loan word and given it a Warao suffix such as *-ina*, meaning ensemble "cluster", "bunch." Such might be the case of the river Winikina, which on old maps often appears as Winikeberi or Winikebery (see also Vegamián 1945:27). The place- and river names of Arawak origin are especially impressive along a fluvial stretch which begins at the mouth of the Arawao River, runs past the present Mission of Araguaimujo (Arawaimuhu), and ends at the village of Cerro de Sacupana on the southern shore of the Río Grande del Orinoco (Map 1).

This pattern indicates the existence of an impressive commercial highway leading from perhaps as far north as Trinidad and extending via the southeastern Delta across the Sierra de Imataca and to the Guayana highlands. The Boca de Navios is formed by the Río Grande del Orinoco. Although it is the largest estuary of the Orinoco, it is not easily navigated because of the many shifting sand banks and shoals. In addition, due to its relative distance from Trinidad, it would not have been a logical point of entry. The closest inlet with a direct connection to the Orinoco is the Aruabisi River which joins the Winikina River to form the Boca de Winikina. In early colonial times, this area was under the domination of the Arawak and Nepoyo Indians. The Mariusa and Winikina rivers themselves were not suitable as trade routes. As endoreic (nonfunctional) distributaries they have no direct connection to the main channel of the Orinoco.

This particular belt from Trinidad via the Aruabisi/Arawao to Sucupana has a number of interesting archaeological sites. Some of these sites are considerably larger than present day Warao settlements. They are inundated during the annual floods of the Orinoco, but quite accessible during the dry season (January through April and early May). What we know of Warao pottery is that there are only a few coarse pots originating from the Moruka area of Guyana. An analysis of some of these Orinoco Delta sites should prove interesting (see also Williams 1993).

A large assembly of potsherds was found near the previously mentioned village site of Siawani on the Island of Kanaima and the river channel of the same name. "Kanaima" is not a Warao toponym, but even if Lavandero (pers. com.) is right in pointing out that the real name might be the Warao term of *kanaina*, its meaning of "potsherds," "earthenware" is still intriguing.



Not far away is a fluvial connection with the estuary common to the Winikina and Aruabisi rivers, said by many Warao to be overrun by jaguars. It carries the Arawak toponym of "jaguar river" (see above). The people of the Sakobana River practiced horticulture of "mapuey" (*himakona*), sweet potatoes, "batata" (*orere*), and bitter manioc (*hota aru*) on the islands off the coast of the Central Delta like Burohoida and Iduburoho. In the early 1920s they introduced the "ocumo chino" tuber, *ure* (*Colocasia antiquorum*) from the Amacuro region of the Guayanas to the Delta (Lario 1973a, 1973b).

From the Sakobana river the reconstructed commercial route ran via the island of Barakataina and the present Arawaimuhu (Araguaimujo) River to the Río Grande. Here, around 1859, existed a large Warao village by the name of Sacupana led by a Creole chief (Appun 1961:384). *Barakataina*, meaning "cluster of armadillos," itself is an Arawak loan word (see Taylor 1958:157) with a Warao suffix. In Warao the word for armadillo is *oka*, and "cachicamo" is the Venezuelan Criollo term of Carib origin.

There are several archaeological sites near the mission of Araguaimujo o (Arawaimuhu). One is south of the mission, and the other on the left bank of the Arawao. A third is on the left bank of the Río Grande shortly before the entrance to the Arawao (see map 1). Numerous sites have been found in the vicinity of the Criollo hamlet of Cerro de Sacupana.

There are additional archaeological sites outside of the mentioned belt, viz. on the Korokoina Anaburu river, located diagonally across from the Warao village called Dauda Hana or Mora (Voorhies, Wagner & Arvelo 1981:31-50). The inhabitants of Mora report of an oral tradition according to which the settlement on the other side of the river belonged to Indians from Trinidad. They had animals that were "similar to pigs that were not real pigs", and others that were "similar to chickens that were not real chickens." This tradition confirms the Delta-Trinidad connection.

An additional archaeological site is located near Lake Coporito, not far from the confluence of the Macareito (a branch of the Macareo River) with the Manamo/Amana River. This fluvial branch was misnamed "Macairita" by Richard Schomburgk on the map of Raleigh's trip and might be the place where the latter met the Siawani.

Conclusion

The immediate consequence of the European intrusion into the Orinoco Delta was the realignment of indigenous alliances and the reorientation of their trade routes and even production mixes. But there is no reason to conclude that warfare among them was any more

intense than it had been in pre-Columbian times. Even the much touted alignment of the "Aruacos" with the Spaniards and the Caribs with the Dutch had to be qualified by detailed research.

After an initial confusion "peaceful" Indians were called "guatiaos" and believed to be Arawak. The "hostile" Indians were called "cannibals" and believed to be Caribs. With time the initial orientation actually developed into a trade relationship between the Spanish and the Lokono whereby the latter supplied the Spanish pearl fishing stations at Cubagua and later Margarita Island with foodstuffs, especially manioc, in exchange for metal tools and trinkets.

The Caribs, on the other hand, turned to the Dutch to furnish their plantations with Indian slaves and act as their allies in general. Here metal tools were also the main exchange item. This stereotype has been much modified by detailed research⁴³, which, among other things, showed that the Arawak also had extensive dealings with the Dutch, especially in the fisheries and as go-betweens in the trade of Warao dugouts and fishing products⁴⁴. Nevertheless, the general alignments basically held through much of the 16th and 17th centuries.

As observed by Vázquez de Espinosa around 1620 (1948), the Warao, who were traditionally the producers of dugouts and providers of fish for their neighbors, remained rather isolated and preferred to negotiate with the Arawak (Lokono).⁴⁵ Their relations with the Caribs were often strained. As Raleigh observed the Warao "...were wont to make warre vpon all nations, and especiallie on the Canibals..." (1848:52). Even today the theme of fearing the "cannibalistic Caribs" echoes throughout Warao mythology.

The real transformation of the Guayana area was effected in the 17th century by the introduction of cattle raising begun by Fernando de Berrio, son of Don Antonio de Berrio, and implemented from the late 17th and through the 18th century by the economic organizations of the mission orders. The landscape was completely changed when the Catalan Capuchins established their large-scale cattle ranches in

⁴³ Another strong reservation regarding the Arawak/Carib dichotomy has surfaced in research on the Island Caribs (Boomert 1986) who turned out to be basically Maipuran Arawak speakers with a Carib ethnic identity.

⁴⁴ A letter by the commander of the Essequibo to the Dutch West Indies Company of June 1, 1768: "Dandere Visscherije is in de twee drooge Saisoenen aen de zeekant...buyten dat kost deeze vissertje oneijndig meer als dandere Daruwakken die deeze doen wel vier maer zoo veel betaling willende hebben..." (B.G.B. III:175-176).

⁴⁵ "The Arawwaks live frequently intermixed with the Waraus..." (Schomburgk 1848:52 n.; see also Lovén 1929). It is possible that all these references to a Warao-Arawak relationship and Warao-Carib antagonism refers mainly to the Siawani. One important reason for the often mentioned Warao-Lokono symbiotic relationship is the porous tribal boundary of most Arawak-speaking groups that leads to a more open social organization than that of the Caribs (see Heinen 1983-4:272, 276 regarding the absorption of the Arawak-speaking Guinaú [Tomomüyömö] by the Ye'kwana).

Guayana. The indigenous populations surrounding the Delta were largely absorbed into the general Criollo population and only the fairly isolated Warao of the moriche swamps, called in the Delta *hobahi arao* and in Guyana *inarao*, remained as a well defined ethnic group. They probably mixed with the Siawani and perhaps with remnants of other groups⁴⁶.

The social and physical transformation of Guayana through the introduction of large amounts of exotic animals is at the root of the "mestizaje," which is so much talked about by Latin American intellectuals. But the concept ignores two facts: (1) that it was always European men who took Indian women and (2) the resulting hidden traumas on the popular psyche. This is a myth in the making that envisions the figure of the Venezuelan cowboy, the "Llanero," as a glorified prototype and the very expression of national identity.

I do not believe that the Warao were "retreating into the Delta before the advance of horticulturists, presumably of Arawak or Carib linguistic affiliation." As Wilbert has repeatedly pointed out "[the Warao] have lived in [the Orinoco Delta] since prehistoric times" (1969:18, 1972:66, 1976:303). We know of at least two, and possibly more Waraoan speaking groups living in and around the Orinoco Delta in protohistoric and early colonial times. Rather, I believe that it was the pressures of early European explorers and colonists that reduced the aboriginal indigenous population to its present isolated state.

Finally, the nature of the association between the Arawak (Lokono), Nepoyo and the Siawani still remains a problem to be solved.

Resumen

En su tercer viaje al "Nuevo Mundo" en Agosto de 1498, Cristóbal Colón desembarcó en la isla de la Trinidad y tocó tierra firme contactando a indígenas de habla Caribe y, casi seguramente, Warao. Vivían con Aruacos/Arawak (Lokono) y otros grupos étnicos en un sistema regional que conectaba complejas formaciones tribales en una red interdependiente de actividades comerciales y de subsistencia especializada.

Hoy en día, las etnias indígenas están aisladas y separadas entre sí por conglomerados de poblaciones criollas. Están caracterizadas por sistemas de subsistencia auto-suficientes y difieren mucho de los primeros tiempos coloniales.

El presente trabajo proporciona algunas evidencias que sugieren que durante las primeras etapas de la colonia, la población indígena del Bajo Orinoco era multi-étnica. Se investiga el impacto de los primeros exploradores, colonos y misioneros sobre la población indígena del Bajo Orinoco.

⁴⁶ A catchment basin for such remnants seems to have existed in the 18th century in the Cutupite area in the western Delta (Lavandero 1994:34 and personal communication 1993).

Abstract

On his third voyage to the "New World" in August 1498, Columbus touched on Trinidad and the Venezuelan mainland, where he encountered Carib speakers and, most certainly, Warao Indians. They lived, together with Arawak/Aruacos (Lokono) and a number of other ethnic groups in a regional system of interdependent tribal formations connected by intense commercial activity and subsistence specialization.

The present-day situation of indigenous "islands", characterized by auto-sufficient subsistence systems and isolated by surrounding Criollo populations, is markedly different from that of early colonial times.

This paper outlines the situation as encountered by the first European arrivals and traces the impact of early explorers, missionaries and colonists on the indigenous populations of the Lower Orinoco.

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