

Chapter 4

Spanish Colonial Appropriation Practices in *Terra Firme* and Trinidad (1503–1591)

In analogy to the analysed Spanish colonial legal provisions, this chapter examines the Spanish practices of colonial appropriation in Trinidad, Paria, and the Orinoco during the yet inconclusive period 1503–1591. Starting with an investigation of Spanish enslavement practices in the “Indies” since 1503, which presented the first encounter between Spaniards and Indigenous Peoples after Columbus, this chapter continues with an examination of the first Spanish colonial settlement attempts in Trinidad by Antonio Sedeño (1530–1534) and Juan Ponce de León (1569–1579), before the first royally sanctioned appropriation expeditions on the coastal mainland are traced between 1530 and 1591 to determine whether Spain’s practices qualified for the acquisition of a valid legal title.

Enslavement in the “Indies” between War and Labour (1503–1537)

Predated by the practices of famous Spanish explorers, such as Columbus (1492–1498), Cristóbal Guerra (1499–1502),¹ and Rodrigo de Bastidas (1504), who sailed from Santo Domingo to *Tierra Firme* to forcefully capture “six hundred natives from the mainland to sell them as slaves in Espanola [Hispaniola],”² Queen Isabella I in 1503 permitted the enslavement of “canibales” as war captives,³ while King Ferdinand II in 1508 – most notably without any legal basis – acceded

1 Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 29 (emphasis added). This Spanish explorer had declared the mainland coast “infested with caribes” in 1499, shortly before the royal order of Queen Isabella, and therefore, “ravaged” the northern “shores of *Terra Firma*” between 1500 and 1502 (ibid.).

2 C. Anderson, *Old Panama and Castilla del Oro. A Narrative History of the Discovery, Conquest, and Settlement by the Spaniards of Panama, Darien, Veragua, Santo Domingo, Santa Marta, Cartagena, Nicaragua, and Peru*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1911, p. 122.

3 Whitehead, “Carib Cannibalism”, p. 70; Seed, *American Pentimento*, p. 104; Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 70. In this context, Peter Hulme assumes that the decree was “probably swayed by lurid tales of anthropophagous savage actively propagated by slave traders [. . .] as the demand for slaves grew acute” (Hulme, *Colonial Encounters*, p. 70). In addition, Neil Whitehead reasons that “from the trade in *caribes* there were more general economic considerations involved in this issue, principally the supply of a labour force” (Whitehead, “Carib Cannibalism”, p. 70; see also Id., *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 173), whereas Patricia Seed suggests that the link between “native cannibalism to military resistance allowed Iberian leaders to believe that they

slave raids by the Spaniards in Hispaniola on neighbouring islands for economical purposes, as for example licensed to Diego de Nicuesa and Alonso de Hojeda in June 1508 “to take up to 400 Indians from islands neighbouring Hispaniola in their expedition to *Tierra Firme* and Veragua” (emphasis added) and granted for “Lucayan Indians resisting their relocation” in 1509. The permission was extended to the Spaniards of Puerto Rico in April and June 1510, assertively resulting in the depopulation of the Bahamas by 1510 and depletion of its “human cargo” by 1518,⁴ whereupon the slave raiders turned further South, after the pearl oyster beds of Cubagua and Margarita were discovered during the period 1509–1512,⁵ which had prompted the settlement of Margarita in the period 1525–1527 by Marcello de Villalobos.⁶

Hence, the major turning point was prompted by the “massive” rebellion of the Indigenous Peoples in Puerto Rico in 1510/1511, which had killed the Spanish Lieutenant Cristobal de Sotomayor, his nephew and “many other Christians” and left two Spanish villages burnt and several Christians taken prisoner. The “rebellion” was assertively incited by “a great number of [. . .] Cariba”, who “came to the aforesaid Island of Sant Xoan” and would have caused “all the other Indians in the aforesaid Island in Sant Xoan rebelled.”⁷ In response, King Ferdinand II ordered the “rebellious Indians” to be transferred from San Juan to Hispaniola in June and November 1511,⁸ before the Spanish monarchs issued a royal order on 23 December 1511, which permitted Spaniards to carry out “punishing expeditions” against *caribas* in Trinidad, Dominica, Varis, Martinique (Mantenino), St. Lucia (Sancta Lucia), St. Vincent (Sant Vicente), Barbados (Barbudos), Tobago (Cabaço) and Grenada (Concepcion; Mayo)⁹ and to “may make prisoners

did in fact represent a new moral order” to “satisfy the ruler’s consciences that they were justified in ordering slavery” (Seed, *American Pentimento*, pp. 103–104).

⁴ Anderson-Córdova, *Surviving Spanish Conquest*, pp. 131–133.

⁵ Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 85; Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 74; 11; Id., “Carib Cannibalism”, p. 70.

⁶ Ibid., p. 75.

⁷ King Ferdinand II, “Royal Cedula (23 December 1511)”, p. 27.

⁸ Anderson-Córdova, *Surviving Spanish Conquest*, pp. 131–132. In this context, Arie Boomert asserts that the rebellion would have resulted in the “exodus” of the “Taino”, who had occupied the area “from there to the smaller islands, indeed as far south as Trinidad” (Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, pp. 85–86), whereas Francisco Morales Padrón designates those peoples as “Igneri”, that is “Arawak people of [the] southern Greater Antilles”, and likewise indicates that the “Caribs” of the mainland (Kalina) were at that time present in the “northeastern zone” of Trinidad (Morales Padrón, *Spanish Trinidad*, p. 6).

⁹ While Concepcion is the Spanish name of Grenada, Mayo presents the Italian version of the same.

of them, and taken them to the places and islands they so desire, and sell them [. . .] not [. . .] outside the aforesaid Indies”. The order was justified with self-defence, cannibalism claims, and the refusal of Christianity,¹⁰ whereas the latter presented an “unjust” cause of waging war in the colonial law of Francisco de Vitoria of 1532.

In practice, Spanish enslavement in Trinidad took increasingly place between 1510 and 1520 (Figueroa report), after the royal permission of both punishment expeditions in 1511 (in breach with the legal provisions of the Catholic church), and slave expeditions for economical purposes in 1508 (without any legal foundation). Most notably, in 1510, the slave trader Juan Bono de Quejo in company of “fifty or sixty other robber-companions”¹¹ had unlawfully [sic!] carried of 185 Indigenous Peoples by force to sell them “in Puerto Rico and Hispaniola” and burnt another “one or two hundred [. . .] alive”.¹² In addition, Bono’s precise description reveals that “[t]he Indians received them as they would their own people”, after Bono had declared to “come in peace and to live among them” and, therefore, had “invited” more than 100 Indigenous Peoples in the dwelling [house] built by them on his request.¹³ Similarly, the Spaniards had also in the “final months” of 1516 switched to attacking and forcefully enslaving all Indigenous Peoples of those in the “large, bell-shaped dwelling” by using “their swords”.¹⁴ Those enslavement strategies continued in 1517, when slave raiders repeated Bono’s “mean trick” in Trinidad and “lured with promises of gifts”, before “suddenly drew their weapons and captured a large number of Amerindians, who were carried away as slaves and sold in Hispaniola”.¹⁵ In addition, Michael Perri reports for Cubagua that since the year 1518 “coercion” was applied “to acquire slaves” and enslavement was covered “[u]nder the guise of [a licence of] barter (*rescate*)”,¹⁶ whereas the term “rescate” is, same as “armada”, indicating a term of war.¹⁷

¹⁰ King Ferdinand II, “Royal Cedula (23 December 1511)”, p. 29.

¹¹ NATT, J. Bono, “Account on Enslavement in Trinidad”, 1510, publication No. 556. This account also mentions a Cacique called “Alfonsus” (*ibid.*).

¹² Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 86. By contrast, Francisco Morales Padrón narrates the same event as followed: “While on land, another one hundred refugees suffered abuse in the large house that they refused to abandon” (Morales Padrón, *Spanish Trinidad*, p. 17).

¹³ NATT, Bono, “Account on Enslavement in Trinidad”, 1510.

¹⁴ Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 86.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87; Morales Padrón, *Spanish Trinidad*, p. 17.

¹⁶ Perri, “Ruined and Lost”, pp. 139–140. In addition, the Spaniards applied the term “rescate” to determine Spanish slave raids in Cubagua (Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 85; Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 74).

¹⁷ Anderson-Córdova, *Surviving Spanish Conquest*, pp. 131–133.

Eventually, Spanish slave raids on coastal mainland Paria took increasingly place in 1519, after the Spanish Crown in June (1519) “gave license to Miguel de Psamonte, Royal Treasurer of Hispaniola, to acquire Carib Indians from the coast of Paria for his use”,¹⁸ while another Spanish slaver in the same year captured and enslaved between 70 or 80 Indigenous Peoples in the Gulf of Paria, based on the claim that they “were war captives of Amerindians, which were considered to be *guatiaos*”, wherefore “their indigenous enemies could be seen as caribes”,¹⁹ which lacked any foundation in the papal legal provisions (see chapter 3). Paria declared as “cariba” by the Figueroa report of 1520, the Indigenous Peoples of the mainland conducted a joined attack upon the Spaniards, whereupon a “punitive expedition” was sent out from Hispaniola to Comaná (Cumaná) in 1520, which under the lead of Gonzalo de Ocampo had killed “the Indians who opposed them” and captured “more than 600 Indians”, which in result would have “decimated native populations near Cumaná and Santa Fé, especially the sedentary Tagar”.²⁰ At the same time, a “first [indigenous] rebellion” took place in Cubagua in 1519,²¹ which was joined by the Arawak of Trinidad in 1520 to resist “the execution of a local Amerindian chief called Melchor”.²²

At the same time, enslavement continued in Trinidad, despite the designation of the island as “*non-caribes*” by Figueroa in 1520 and the general legal papal prohibition of enslavement based on cannibalism claims, as the term *caribas* was “interpreted freely” and “although Trinidad was inhabited by *guatiaos*, malicious persons did not hesitate to call them *caribes*”.²³ Furthermore, “the coastal mainland of the Gulf of Cariaco” was “largely decimated” by 1527,²⁴ after enslavement expeditions had “continued throughout the 1520s” in both *Tierra Firme* and the Lesser Antilles.²⁵ In result, about “40,000” Indigenous Peoples had been violently removed, enslaved, and forced to labour in pearl fisheries,

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 132.

¹⁹ Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, pp. 85–86.

²⁰ Perri, “Ruined and Lost”, p. 135. At that time, the Tagare were believed to occupy the area “west of Cumaná”, while the Cumanagoto lived “west of Tagare”, bordered by “a lost of politically distinct peoples”, but “linguistically related to the Cumanagoto”, while there were further inland “from east to west” the Indigenous Peoples of the “Warao, Chaima, Coaca, Core and Kari’ña” (ibid., p. 153, footnote 14).

²¹ Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 75.

²² Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, pp. 87–88.

²³ Ibid., pp. 85–86.

²⁴ Thus, Michael Perri indicates that “[t]housands of slaves were registered at Cubagua and sent to the Greater Antilles” and, after the “discovery” of Peru in 1531, “hundreds more were exported to Panama, where they worked as porters” (Perri, “Ruined and Lost”, p. 142).

²⁵ Anderson-Córdova, *Surviving Spanish Conquest*, p. 133.

plantations, and mines between 1505 and 1527²⁶ and “more than 1,000” Indigenous Peoples died due to “ill-treatment” in Trinidad alone.²⁷ Afterwards, the Spanish slavers proceeded towards Paria (since 1520 declared as *cariba*)²⁸ and turned the area into a “depopulated backwater of the Spanish Empire”.²⁹ While the papal bull *Intra Arcana* of 5 May 1529 permitted the use of arms for the spread of Christianity without any spatial limitation, and both Charles V in 1530 and *Sublimis Deus* of 1537 in general prohibited enslavement, the royal practices of the Spaniards somewhere between 20 May 1530 (*capitulación* of Diego de Ordás for the Orinoco) and 12 July 1530 (*capitulación* of Antonio Sedeño for Trinidad) switched from “discovery, conquest and population” to “population and pacification”. The approach was legally supported by Francisco de Vitoria in 1532 and became the general Spanish practice in 1573.

Spanish Short-Term Settlements in Trinidad (1530–1579)

Notably, the peak of enslavement in Trinidad and coastal mainland Paria emerged at the moment of the royal abolition of enslavement, as the royal order of Charles V had reached the “Indies” in August 1530,³⁰ when the first Spanish settlement attempt was carried out in Trinidad by Antonio Sedeño. The undertaking was based on the royal *capitulación* for the “pacification and population of the island” (“*pacificación y población de la isla de Trinidad*”) of 12 July 1530,³¹ whereas an earlier *capitulación* of 1520 to Rodrigo de Bastidas for the “population” (“*poblaría*”) of Trinidad³² had remained unimplemented³³ and the Spanish monarch in January 1530 had rejected the request of Sedeño to insert the royal permission

²⁶ Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, pp. 27–29.

²⁷ Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 106.

²⁸ Perri, “‘Ruined and Lost’”, p. 141; NATT, Figueroa, “Report upon the Peoples of the Islands Tierra Firme”, 1520, pp. 1–2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

³⁰ Perri, “‘Ruined and Lost’”, p. 130.

³¹ AGI, Charles V, “Capitulación Antonio Sedeño”, 12 July 1530, ES.41091.AGI/29.3.7.1// PATRONATO, 18, N.9, R.1, Seville.

³² D. R. Pérez, *Genocidio y Conquista: Viejos Mitos Que Siguen En Pie*, Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1998, p. 113, footnote 68.

³³ Anderson, *Old Panama and Castilla del Oro*, p. 122. Accordingly, Rodrigo de Bastidas received another corder in 1521, after Columbus’ son Diego voiced his opposition, which instructed him “to settle and exploit a tract of land extending from Cabo de la Vela westward to the Rio Grande de la Magdalena”, although his expedition had not left Santo Domingo before 1524/1525 (*ibid.*).

to make “prisoners of war when rejecting evangelisation”.³⁴ While the rejection of the Holy faith by Indigenous Peoples was legally refused by Vitoria as “just” cause of waging war in 1532, Charles V already in July 1531, based on his general enslavement abolition of 1530, reminded the Spanish explorer Sedeño that enslavement is strictly prohibited and ordered him to treat the Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad “lovingly and with friendship”.³⁵ Hence, the Spanish king again rejected the sword approach of *Intra Arcana* of 1529.

Despite, Antonio Sedeño, in the same month of July 1531, brought enslaved “Indians from Trinidad” to San Juan,³⁶ where his “warfare and slave-raids” were described as being “even bloodier than those of [. . .] Ortal”,³⁷ who had “attacked the settlement of Orocopón at the Unare River” in union with the Cacique Guaramental around the same time, wherein Cacique Orocopón was killed and all those captured enslaved.³⁸ Again, after landing “his forces in Paria”, the Spaniard Ortal had carried out a massive slave raid and, thus, “depopulated the Province of Paria”, although the Indigenous Peoples were described as “friendly Indians, [who] guarded these frontiers against Caribs”³⁹ and the royal order had prohibited enslavement. Thereupon, another enslavement expedition took place in October 1535, when “Indians [were] taken from Venezuela and sold in Hispaniola”, after in July 1535 the “residents of San Juan even went so far as to request the Crown’s permission to bring Indians from Brazil without paying taxes”.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Antonio Sedeño, upon his arrival in Trinidad in November 1530,⁴¹ had attempted to fulfil his additional order to populate the island at the frontier to the Dragon’s mouth⁴² and, thus, approached the Arawak Caciques Maluana (Maruana) of southern Trinidad and mainland Cacique Turipari from the Orinoco confluence Manamó⁴³ with “numerous gifts such as polished ornaments, textiles, Castilian wine, and iron implements” in exchange for “an indigenous

³⁴ Ibid. The validity of the enslavement prohibition of 1530 is also confirmed for Margarita (Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, pp. 76–77) and Cubagua (Perri, “Ruined and Lost”, p. 140).

³⁵ AGI, King of Spain “Information about the treatment of Indians upon request of Antonio Sedeño”, 24 July 1531.

³⁶ Anderson-Córdova, *Surviving Spanish Conquest*, p. 133.

³⁷ Perri, “Ruined and Lost”, p. 146.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 144.

³⁹ Treasurer of Cubagua, “Report”, July 1535, in: Perri, “Ruined and Lost”, p. 143.

⁴⁰ Anderson-Córdova, *Surviving Spanish Conquest*, p. 135.

⁴¹ Boomert, Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago, p. 89.

⁴² AGI, Charles V, “Capitulación Antonio Sedeño”, 12 July 1530, ES.41091.AGI/29.3.7.1// PA-TRONATO,18, N.9, R.1, Seville.

⁴³ Alternative spellings are Turpiari, Tiopiari, and Turuquiare.

war captive”. Initially aiming to establish a footing at the coast of the Gulf of Paria in the Carinepagoto area, Sedeño, however, had to face Cacique Bacunar of Cumucurapo on the opposite site of Trinidad and, therefore, just established “a modest mud-walled fortress close to the village of Turipari”, before leaving for Puerto Rico “to enlist new men and collect supplies”. Established on the coastal mainland, the “fortress” was immediately afterwards destroyed by Diego de Ordás, who departed for the Orinoco sometime between October 1531⁴⁴ and June 1532.⁴⁵ In contrast, attempts by Sedeño to fulfil the order of “pacification” are neither record nor hinted in any of the historical sources.

After Sedeño’s return from Puerto Rico at the end of 1532, the situation in Trinidad had, instead, significantly worsened, since Bacunar, arguably in response to Sedeño’s previous slave raids, had killed 24 of Spaniards earlier sent by Sedeño from Puerto Rico and forced the remaining Spaniards to leave for Cubagua, whereupon Sedeño attacked Bacunar’s village Cumucurapo. The village burnt, “several Spaniards” killed by poisoned arrows and numerous Carinepagotos murdered, only “a few” had “survived the massacre”. Afterwards, Sedeño “took possession of the village”, which, however, was in breach with the royal orders. Moreover, Bacunar returned for a counter-attack in June 1533, which had killed two and wounded 25 Spaniards, before the Cacique of the Carinepagotos undertook another attack in September 1533 with reinforcements of the Caciques Guyma (Guaimá), Pamacoa, Diamaná (Diamainmá), Amanatey, Paraguani, and the “gigantic Utuyaney” from Paria and Trinidad. The exact result is not transmitted, but it is known that the indigenous force withdrew into the hills and Sedeño abandoned Trinidad in August 1534. Thus, the Spaniard left his royal order to populate and pacify Trinidad unfulfilled, mainly due to opposition of Indigenous Peoples “unified under chief Baucunar, a Carinepagoto ‘great man’ living at Cumucurapo”,⁴⁶ which was followed 35 years later by another (failed) Spanish settlement attempt.

Meanwhile, Spanish enslavement expeditions continued based on numerous grounds, despite Vitoria’s legal limitation of the enslavement of war captives. Accordingly, the Spaniards of the island of Cubagua were once again licensed to capture and enslave “rebellious Indians” in 1532,⁴⁷ which was in particular undertaken by Andrés de Villacorta during the 1530s, who had prompted

44 Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 89.

45 R. Schuller, *Ordáz and Dortal Expeditions in Search of Eldorado, as Described on Sixteenth Century Maps (with two maps)*, Washington: Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections 66.4, 1916, p. 3.

46 Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 89.

47 Perri, “‘Ruined and Lost’” p. 140; Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, pp. 75–77.

a “bloody Amerindian uprising”; subsequently, the Spanish Crown limited the permission of enslavement to “specifically licensed” Spaniards.⁴⁸ Similar, the Spaniards in Hispaniola were again permitted to enslave Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 1533, although “the enslavement of women and of children below the age of 14” remained prohibited, same as “the transfer of Indians outside of their province of origin”, before a royal order of 11 December 1534 had in general prohibited the Spaniards from Hispaniola “from unilaterally permitting raids to Venezuela”, which was reaffirmed on 19 March 1540, in line with the Vitorian legal provisions of 1532. Nevertheless, Indigenous Peoples were still removed from “their places of origin during the 1540s”, as confirmed by the letter of Bartholomé de las Casas to the Council of the Indies on 15 September 1544,⁴⁹ while the enslavement of women and children also continued in 1558, as illustrated in the case of the slave raid of Father Francisco de Ayala from Margarita and attempted capture of an indigenous girl in the Orinoco, whereupon the relations between the Arawak and Spaniards of Margarita was cut off until 1562.⁵⁰

Thereafter, the “Caribs” continued their responding resistance against Spanish enslavement and encroachment by conducting attacks upon the Spaniards. Thus, in February 1562, the “Caribs of Guayana” were reported to have murdered “a priest and 14 Spaniards”, while the “Caribs” of Grenada were holding “more than 30 Spaniards as captives in [their] power”.⁵¹ In the following year of 1563, the “Caribs of Dominica”, determined as “the most difficult to subdue”,⁵² along with the “Caribs of Trinidad” attacked the pearl fisheries of Margarita,⁵³ and those of Dominica had again “destroyed two sugar works” in Puerto Rico in August 1574 and attacked a Spanish fleet during its watering stop, where they captured “30 Spaniards and 40 Negroes from Porto Rico, including the son of Juan Ponce León”, who was sent out to seek provisions for Trinidad, “where he was established to conquer the island”.⁵⁴

48 Ibid.

49 Anderson-Córdova, *Surviving Spanish Conquest*, pp. 133–135.

50 Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 93.

51 NATT, Fray F. de Montesinos “Account”, 13 February 1562, publication No. 558.

52 NATT, Missionary account, “The Nation of the Indians called Caribs”, no date, publication No. 800. For a more differentiated account on “cannibalism”, see Whitehead, “Carib Cannibalism”, pp. 69–87.

53 NATT, Montesinos, “Account on the Caribs of Dominica”, 11 May 1562, publication No. 558; Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 93.

54 NATT, Bishop of San Juan, “Account on the Caribs of Dominica”, 1574, publication No. 802. Furthermore, this Bishop described the “Caribs” of Dominica as “bellicose Indians”, who would live in “8 pueblos, each with about 50 straw houses”, and would “eat human flesh but

Thirty-five years after Sedeño, Juan Ponce de León was the second Spaniard, who attempted to establish a Spanish settlement on Trinidad. Based on his formal announcement of taking possession on 22 December 1569,⁵⁵ Ponce de León had, thus, carried out some symbolic acts, such as making “a Cross in the sand” and “a large Cross on a tree” in order to take “possession of the Island for Your Majesty with all the necessary official acts and due solemnities, swearing to maintain and defend it in Your Royal Name”.⁵⁶ Hence, a fort and houses were established until 15 January 1570, situated “just north of the Caroni River”,⁵⁷ while the Indigenous Peoples had assertively “agreed that we should settle and we trade and exchange goods as friends” and the short-term governor had “ordered that no person whatever shall ill-treat or deal harshly, neither by act nor word, with any Indian under severe penalties”.

Moreover, Ponce de León had bartered with Indigenous Peoples on the Gulf of Paria coast of Trinidad upon arrival, where the Spaniard had exchanged “gifts” from Castile with “many Indians in two large pirogues, who were returning from fighting with the Caribs”, and likewise with “15 or 20 Indians” of the pirogue of Cacique Mayroa, who brought “articles of food for bartering”⁵⁸ and were treated by Ponce de León “with much consideration and civility”.⁵⁹ Finally, Ponce de León had in “well-populated” Trinidad⁶⁰ also traded with “the Arawak of south Trinidad” for provisions.⁶¹ However, the precise faith of Ponce de León’s settlement attempt is not exactly known, but its abandonment happened most likely in 1579, after he reported, for the last time, from the place of Trinidad that “the galleys of *Terra Firme* have taken two ships of French corsairs”,⁶² before the Spaniard

not that of the Christians whom they take to enslave” and would “go to the Island of Trinidad and other parts nearby to capture Indians to eat” (ibid.).

55 At the same time, three unsuccessful attempts to implement royal *capitulaciones* took place on the mainland.

56 NATT, Fray Miguel Diosdado, “The Conquest and Settlement [of Trinidad]”, 15 January 1570, publication No. 600. This place was named “the Farellons of St. Stephen” (ibid.).

57 Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 94.

58 NATT, Diosdado, “The Conquest and Settlement [of Trinidad]”, 15 January 1570, publication No. 600. A settlement of a very similar name was mentioned in the Sketch map of Johann Theodor De Bry of 1599 (J. T. De Bry, “Sketch map of Guiana”, 1599, No. 23, in: BC, vol. 4, p. 59).

59 NATT, Fray Miguel Diosdado, “The Conquest and Settlement [of Trinidad]”, 15 January 1570, publication No. 600. This “people” is, furthermore, described as having a “good disposition, who go naked as they are born, both men and women; they are of noble appearance”, and would number “more than one hundred thousand” (ibid.).

60 Ibid.

61 Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 94.

62 AGI, Juan Ponce de León, “Captura de Navíos Franceses: Tierra Firme”, 1579 (emphasis added).

became acting governor of Puerto Rico in the same year,⁶³ while his son remained in captivity of the Caribs of Dominica (Dominico), after having been taken on his way from Trinidad to Puerto Rico in August 1574.⁶⁴ In October 1591, Antonio de Berrio had at the end of his third expedition “overrun all the island”,⁶⁵ when no trace of the Ponce de León’s settlement was found.

Failed *Capitulaciones* and the Discovery Myth of El Dorado (1530–1591)

Paralleled by the first Spanish settlement attempt in Trinidad, the King of Spain in 1530 had pressed for the appropriation of the neighbouring coastal mainland and until 1569, therefore, issued a series of *capitulaciones* to Spanish explorers, which all remained unsuccessful, but do reflect the changing legal means of appropriation, applied by the Spanish Crown until King Philipp’s II famous royal order of 1573. The first in line was the *capitulación* of Diego de Ordás, granted on 20 May 1530 for the “discovery, conquest and population” of “200 leagues”, extending “from the limits of the Cabo de la Vela and the Golf of Venezuela [north of Maracaibo] until the Marañón [Amazon]”.⁶⁶ Hence, Ordás fitted out his expedition in June 1531,⁶⁷ before reaching Paria from Tenerife after a detour towards the Amazon about October 1531,⁶⁸ where the Spanish expedition encountered a “friendly” Cacique “about six leagues” distant from the Sedeño outpost, which Ordás destroyed before the Spaniard departed for the Orinoco about June 1532.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, the expedition failed soon after sailing up the Orinoco (Huyapari⁷⁰) at the confluence with the mouth of the Meta (Metacuyu),

⁶³ D. McNally, “Casa Blanca reveals centuries of San Juan history”, web.archive.org/web/20090614091530/http://com.miami.edu/parks/sjcasablanca.htm (accessed 20 September 2018).

⁶⁴ NATT, Bishop, “Account on the Caribs of Dominica”, 1574, publication No. 802. León’s son was “ten years later” still prisoner of the Caribs of Dominica (Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 94).

⁶⁵ NATT, Antonio de Berrio, “Letter to King”, Margarita, 26 October 1591, publication No. 265.

⁶⁶ AGI, Charles V, “Capitulación to Diego de Ordás”, 20 May 1530, ES-AGI-41091-UD-244728.

⁶⁷ D. L. Level, *Historia Militar Y Civil De Venezuela*, Madrid: Sociedad Espanola De Libreria, 1917, p. 51.

⁶⁸ Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 77.

⁶⁹ Schuller, *Ordáz and Dortal Expeditions*, p. 3. The departure date is indicated as 23 June 1532 (ibid.).

⁷⁰ According to the Oviedo sketch map, Huyapari presents the contemporary name of a part of the Orinoco (Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, “Huyapari Sketch map”, assumed 1533, in: R. Schuller, *Ordáz and Dortal Expeditions*, p. 2), while Alexander von Humboldt indicates that

since Ordás dismissed “the recommendation of the [captured] Aruacan guides” and continued to navigated the Orinoco further southwards,⁷¹ where the boats, according to the rediscovered map of eyewitness Oviedo, were then stopped at a “chain of mountains” and “returned down the same river to the sea”⁷² without having established any Spanish settlement.⁷³ Instead, Diego de Ordás had encountered at least two indigenous settlements in Upper Orinoco: one indicated as “grande pueblo”,⁷⁴ situated “two leagues inland from the Orinoco River”, where Ordás arrived “[w]ith 280 men, 18 horses, and one mule” and left his “large canoe” behind.⁷⁵ Named Aruacay, this settlement is indicated as a “large Arawak village” with “some 200 houses under nine chiefs and led by a ‘chief-priest’”.⁷⁶ The other settlement was indicated as Cabruta,⁷⁷ situated “seven leagues” below the Casanare junction”.⁷⁸ Cabruta arguably equates with the settlement of Chief Baratubaro, which the Spaniards had attacked after having been welcomed “with arrows” and thus killed “many Warao and distribut[ed] their women as slaves among the Amerindians of Aruacay”,⁷⁹ while an anonymous map of 1560 also reads that the “village of the Indian chief Baratubaro” was “burned [by orders of] Ordáz” and “over 120 of the defenceless Indians perished in the flames”.⁸⁰

“[t]he river, from its mouth as far as the confluence of the Meta, is called Uriaparia, but that above this confluence it bears the name of Orinucu”, which was derived from the language of the Tamanac, who “dwell south-east of Encaramada” (A. von Humboldt, *Personal Narrative of a Journey to the Equinoctial Regions of the New Continent during the Years 1799–1804*, London: Longman, 1814, p. 41, Annotations).

71 Ibid., p. 40.

72 Fernández de Oviedo, “Huyapari Sketch map”, p. 2.

73 Matineza, “Letter to King”, in Level, *Historia Militar y Civil de Venezuela*, p. 53.

74 Fernández de Oviedo, “Huyapari Sketch map”, p. 2. In this map, the ‘large village of Huyapari’ is indicated as being “situated two leagues inland from the Orinoco River” (ibid.).

75 Schuller, *Ordáz and Dortal Expeditions*, pp. 12–13.

76 Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, pp. 12–13.

77 Alternative spellings are Cabuta, Cabritu, Cabrutu. According to Neil Whitehead the settlement is determined as a “Carib” settlement in the province of Meta (Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 59; 13).

78 Fernández de Oviedo, “Huyapari Sketch map”, p. 2. The Spanish original reads “a Cazzanara ay siete leguas”. This partly unreadable map legend also indicates the name “Carranaca”, which might present another indigenous settlement (ibid.).

79 Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, pp. 12, 78.

80 Schuller, *Ordáz and Dortal Expeditions*, p. 12. This information is derived from an anonymous map of c. 1560, which erroneously indicates the year of this event with “1536” (Anonymous, “Sketch map Orinoco” c. 1570, in: Schuller, *Ordáz and Dortal Expeditions*, p. 11), as Ordás had died three years earlier during his voyage to Spain (Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 78).

Finally, Neil Whitehead states that Ordás has “found human trophies” in “a village near Cabruta” in the Upper Orinoco,⁸¹ which might equate with “Carra-naca”, mentioned in the partly unreadable map legend of the rediscovered Oviedo map (see Figure 2).⁸² Next in line, daring “to pursue the discovery of the Orinoco”, were Alonso Herrera in 1533 and Geronimo Ortal,⁸³ the former was killed in the Meta swamps by an Arawak chief with “2.000 Guayanos”,⁸⁴ after Alonso Herrera⁸⁵ had “found the settlement of Aruacay deserted”,⁸⁶ and then attacked a Carib camp, where “all the Caribs” were “put to sword, except two”,⁸⁷ but was afterwards forced to return due to mutiny.⁸⁸

Two decades elapsed, before the Spanish King on 11 August 1552 undertook a subsequent attempt to lawfully appropriate the coastal mainland of northeastern South America, which was predated by a report of the Bishop of Cartagena, Fray Gregorio de Beteta before the Council in Madrid in 1540 to “bring peace and the knowledge of Our Lord and obedience to Your Majesty, to the Aruac Indians of the Island of Trinidad and of Guayana and to the other neighbouring nations” and, thus, likewise to ensure that “Indians who are not Caribs, can come in security to bring supplies”.⁸⁹ With conquest and discovery vanishing from the letter patents, the next *capitulación* was, therefore, granted to Geronimo de Aguayo at the Castle of Monzón in August 1552 for the “population of the provinces of the Aruacas and

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 59.

⁸² Fernández de Oviedo, “Huyapari Sketch map”, p. 2.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 6. This follow-up expedition claims to have passed the place where Herrera was killed and to have “found true marks of the death”, along with “a little bell and a tin-cup” (Fernández de Oviedo, “Huyapari Sketch Map Legend”, p. 7).

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 2; J. Williams, “The Name of Guiana”, *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 14–15 (1922), pp. 19–34, at 25. Furthermore, James Williams indicates that the Guayanos are the “Indians of the Province of Guayana” (ibid.), which was for the first time mentioned in an official royal order on 29 July 1549 (AGI, Diego de Serpa, “Application to the Audiencia of Santo Domingo for the position of Governor of Guayana”, 29 July 1549). By contrast, Michael Perri identifies those people as “Achagua Indians”, since the expedition was attacked “with poison arrows” (Perri, “Ruined and Lost”, p. 143).

⁸⁵ Williams, “The Name of Guiana”, pp. 25–26; Schuller, *Ordás and Dortal Expeditions*, p. 6.

⁸⁶ Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 79. None of the indigenous settlements re-emerged in the subsequent Sketch map of Johann Theodor De Bry in 1599. Although De Bry mentions a settlement named “Arowacai”, this settlement, in contrast to Ordás’ Aruacay, is situated in the vicinity of the Caroni (De Bry, “Sketch map of Guiana”, 1599, No. 23, in: BC, p. 59).

⁸⁷ Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 79.

⁸⁸ Fernández de Oviedo, “Huyapari Sketch Map Legend”, p. 7.

⁸⁹ NATT, Bishop of Cartagena Fray Gregorio de Beteta, “Report to King”, Madrid, 1540, publication No. 185, pp. 1–2.

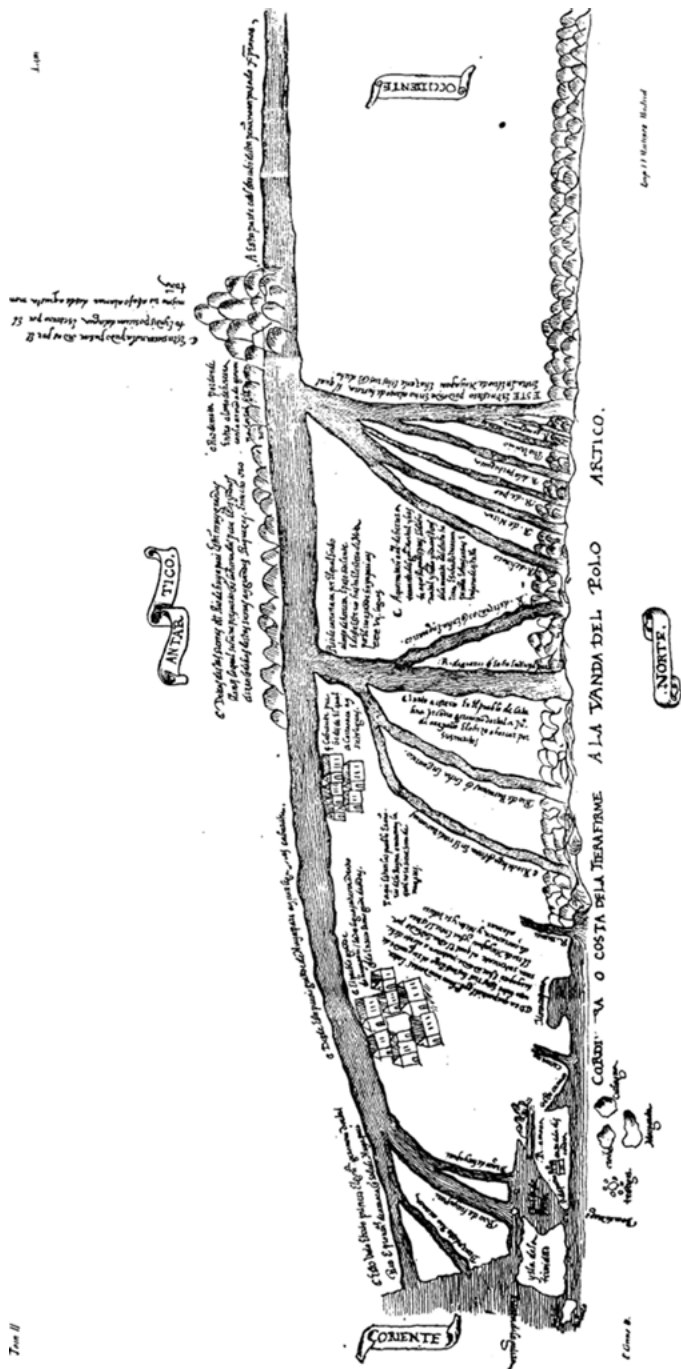


Figure 2: Rediscovered Oviedo Map of the Ordás and Herrera Expeditions (c. 1733).

Amazonas”, situated “between the river Orellana or Amazon and the Orinoco”,⁹⁰ but declared null and void in the following year (1553) for unknown reasons.⁹¹ Also not implemented was the subsequent royal order of May 1562 to Fray Francisco de Montesinos for “converting and pacifying the provinces of the Aruacas”,⁹² which was mentioned for the first time in the report of Rodrigo de Figueroa of 1520, in this context declared as *guatiao*s (“friends of the Christians who are well treated there”),⁹³ and spatially defined by the Santo Domingo notary Rodrigo Navarrete about 1547 as being bounded by the Corentyn.⁹⁴ Fray Montesinos, who resided in Margarita in 1540 and Maracapana in 1561, had formed a short-lived “mission among the Arawak in Trinidad” in 1557 and established a monastery in Santo Domingo in 1562 and had indeed embarked to the “province of Aruacs” via Porto Rico and Margarita in the same year of 1562.⁹⁵ In case that Montesinos ever arrived in the “province of Aruacas”, his stay in the province was, however, very brief, as the Fray had already in 1571 undertaken another unsuccessful missionary attempt in Trinidad,⁹⁶ before he returned to Maracapana in November 1573.⁹⁷ In addition, the potential settlement attempt of Fray Montesinos in the “province of Aruacas” was also predated by the above mentioned slave raid of Father Francisco de Ayala of Margarita in 1558, who attempted to capture an indigenous girl in the Orinoco

⁹⁰ AGI, King Charles V. “Capitulación to Jerónimo de Aguayo”, Castle of Monzón, 11 August 1552, ES.41091.AGI/29.3.11.2//PATRONATO, 29, R.7; British Library, London (hereafter BL), King Charles V, “Royal Capitulación Geronimo de Aguayo for the settlement of the Provinces of the Aruacas (or Arawaks) and the Amazons, from the mouth of the river of Orellana, al. the Amazonas, along the sea coast as far as the river Aoyapara”, Castle of Monzón, 11 August 1552, BL: Add MS 36314, f. 90.

⁹¹ AGI, Don Manso Luis Lugo, “Report of Adelantado of the Canary Island and Governor of the New Kingdom of Granada”, 1553, ES.41091.AGI/24.20.14//JUSTICIA, 1102.

⁹² NATT, Montesinos, “Account on the Caribs of Dominica”, 11 May 1562; BL, Audiencia of Santo Domingo, “Decree by the Audiencia of Santo Domingo of Española, in furtherance of the King’s Instructions to Fray. F. Montesinos”, Espanola, 21 May 1562, BM: 18. f. 105. See also NATT, Audiencia of Santo Domingo, “Decree”, 21 May 1562, publication No. 559.

⁹³ NATT, Figueroa, “Report upon the Peoples of the Islands Tierra Firme”, 1520, pp. 1–2.

⁹⁴ NATT, Rodrigo de Nabarete, “Report to King”, Espanola, assumed 1547, publication No. 186. Instead, Jonathan Hill indicates the date as 1570s (J. D. Hill [ed.], *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492–1992*, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1996, p. 24).

⁹⁵ NATT, Bishop Beteta, “Report to King”, Madrid, 1540, publication No. 185, pp. 1–2; Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 93; NATT, Friar Montesinos, “Account on the Caribs of Dominica”, 11 May 1562, publication No. 558.

⁹⁶ Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 93.

⁹⁷ NATT, Audiencia Santo Domingo, “Letter to the King of Spain”, 14 November 1573, publication No. 801. Maracapana was then described as “without a church” and a “very poor place” containing only a few “huts made from straw” (*ibid.*).

Valley, *nota bene* in breach with the papal bull *Sublimis Deus*, and was subsequently killed.⁹⁸ Despite, some Arawak had hosted the Spaniard Juan Martin de Albújar, who had fled to the province of Aruacas from “Carib” captivity, before proceeding to Margarita in 1576, where the lone survivor of the Pedro de Silva expedition disaster of 1574 had significantly contributed in nurturing the myth about “the gold-land El Dorado”.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, the Spanish King had undertaken other reinforced attempts to lawfully acquire the coastal mainland by a series of letter patents granted to Spanish explorers in 1568/69. Hence, Philipp II issued a *capitulación* to Pedro Maraver de Silva on 15 May 1568 in Aranjuez for the “discovery and population of the provinces of the Omaguas, Omegua [sic!] and the Quinaco”, named Nueva Extremadura,¹⁰⁰ and on the same day also granted the letter patent to Diego de Serpa for the “government and population of the provinces of Guayana and Caura and other provinces [. . .] entitled to be named Nueva Andalucía”,¹⁰¹ spatially extending “from the Island of Margarita until the Marañon [Amazon]”, including “the Omaguas and Omegas with the provinces of El Dorado”,¹⁰² after

98 Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 93.

99 Ibid., p. 97. Since Albújar’s stories indicated El Dorado as “to be found near a lake in the mountainous hinterland in Guiana”, the story prompted “increased voyaging by Spanish traders and adventurers from Margarita into the Orinoco Valley” (ibid.), which is confirmed by the precise indications of the Sketch map of Johann Theodor De Bry of 1599, which reads at the river Essequibo: “Di Volcker So an dem Flus ESSEKEBE wohnen konen in 20 dagen von eingang dises Fluses biss auff einen tagreiss nahe beij den grossen See PARIME schiffen von wanen si alss dan zum ersten ihre Porsiant und dar nach ihre Canoas uber landt bis in obgemelten See dragen ihre hanterung asso zu dreiben” (“The peoples living at the river Essekebe can travel in 20 days from the entrance of the river until a one-day travel distance of the great Lake Parime from where they carry first their provisions and then their canoes over land until the lake drawn [in the map] in order to trade [there]”). Furthermore, the map reads at a river Macawini, situated between Orinoco and Essequibo that “in diesem Fluss Macawini findet man fill goldt im Sandt” (“there is a lot of gold to be found in the sand”) (ibid.), while Johann De Bry repeats the general Spanish claim for the area between Essequibo and Orinoco, namely that the “Arwackas” would be “der Hispanier freundt” (“the friends of the Spaniards”) (De Bry, “Sketch map of Guiana”, 1599, in: BC, No. 23, p. 59).

100 AGI, King Philipp II, “Capitulación of Pedro de Silva, 15 May 1568”, Aranjuez, ES.41091. AGI/23.15.410//INDIFERENTE, 416, L.4, F.1R-6V.

101 AGI, King Philipp II, “Capitulación to Diego Fernández de Serpa”, 15 May 1568, Aranjuez, ES.41091.AGI/29.3.12.1//PATRONATO, 26, R.2.

102 Level, *Historia Militar y Civil de Venezuela*, p. 62. Accordingly, Fernando de Velasco had also petitioned for a *capitulación* for Nueva Andalucía, but de Serpa was the successful petitioner (ibid.), whereas Nueva Andalucía, according to Michael Perri, represented the “new” name for the Pearl Coast and was inhabited by “hundreds of thousands” Indigenous Peoples (Perri, “Ruined and Lost”, pp. 147–150).

the order of May 1567 to the Gobernadora of Margarita Aldonca Manrrique to “settle” the province of Guayana remained unfulfilled.¹⁰³

However, both expeditions of Pedro de Silva and Diego de Serpa failed likewise, since de Serpa, after having departed from Spain in August 1569 with 300 soldiers, was confronted with the Cumanagotos and Chacopatas at the Comorucauo in 1570, who attacked him “from all sides” and killed Diego de Serpa along with his Sergeant Major and 160 Spanish soldiers. As a result, the previously founded settlement Santiago de los Caballeros, situated “between the Neverí and Unare rivers”, was abandoned,¹⁰⁴ while Pedro de Silva was stopped on his arrival in Margarita in April 1569 by a force of about 300 Commanagotos¹⁰⁵ and his subsequent attempt of 1574 “perished” between the Marañon and Orinoco “at the hands of Carib Indians”, whose sole survivor de Albújar reached Margarita via the “province of Aruacas” in 1576.¹⁰⁶

Paralleled by the second Spanish settlement attempt of Juan Ponce León in Trinidad, the Royal Audiencia of Santa Fé de Bogotá on 28 July 1569 had also approved a third letter patent, granted to the conquistador of Bogotá Gonzalo Ximenez de Quesada of 1568¹⁰⁷ for “discovering and populating” the “plains, which are at the exit and after our kingdom [of New Granada]”. Spatially determined to comprising “400 leagues between the Pauto and Papamene river”¹⁰⁸ and explicitly excluding the areas granted to de Serpa and de Silva for colonial appropriation, including Guayana,¹⁰⁹ the Quesada *capitulación* is to date treated

103 NATT, Audiencia of Santo Domingo, “Order to Dona Aldonca Manrrique of Margarita”, 14 May 1567, publication No. 806. The order was issued to the Margarita governor, since the island had presented “the nearest permanent Spanish settlement to the River Orinoco”, wherefore she was recommended by “[t]he Audiencia to instruct the most [. . .] suitable and appropriate person to undertake the opening and settlement of the Province of Guayana” (ibid.).

104 Perri, “‘Ruined and Lost’”, p. 149. The procedure is also confirmed for the Spanish in Mexico by Matthew Restall and determined as a *chain of conquest*, since “[m]ost conquests and newly founded colonies served as stepping stones to other conquest enterprises” (M. Restall, *Seven Myths about the Spanish Conquest*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 123).

105 Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 80.

106 Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 97.

107 AGI, Audiencia de Santa Fé, “Nomination of Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada for the ‘Discovery and Conquest’ of the New Kingdom of Granada”, Santa Fé, 21 May 1547, ES.41091.AGI/10.46.6.1//CONTRATACION, 5787, N.1, L.2, F.139V; Audiencia of Santa Fé de Bogotá, “Report”, 28 July 1569, in: Molina, “Historical Bulletin”, p. 430; King Philipp II. “Capitulacion Ximenez Quesada (1568)”, in: J. Buchholz, “De Entre Rios a un Reino Desmesurado: La capitulacion Genesica de la Provincia de Guayana”, *Tiempo y Espacio* 21 (June 2011) 55, pp. 1–7, at 4.

108 M. A. Donis Ríos, *Guayana: Historia De Su Territorialidad*, Caracas: Instituto de Investigaciones Historicas, Universidad Católica Andrés Bello: Ferrominera del Orinoco, 1997, p. 19.

109 Buchholz, “Entre Rios”, p. 4.

as the foundational grant for Spanish colonial appropriation of Guayana,¹¹⁰ although Quesada's expedition, which left Bogotá in December 1569, had completely failed in establishing any Spanish settlement and, instead returned to Bogotá after "tragic marches" through the plains of the Llanos with 25 of 300 armed soldiers in 1571. In addition, his successor Antonio de Berrio had significantly overstepped the limits of the *capitulación*, which was granted to him under the same conditions, after the aged Quesada had hastened to modify the terms of his succession, since although the *capitulación* included an inheritance "for two lives", Quesada lacked a male successor and, thus, concluded an additional agreement with the Spanish King on 19 February 1571, which extended the concept of "legitimate heirs" by permitting Quesada "to name his successor".¹¹¹ Just before the husband of his niece, Antonio de Berrio, took over, the Spanish King Philipp II in 1573 issued his famous royal order, which replaced conquest with pacification and at the same time emphasized that "he would not approve any new discovery expeditions until after the lands already discovered shall be settled", since "population" was inserted in all royal *capitulaciones* granted by the Spanish monarch to Spanish explorers for Trinidad and the coastal mainland between 1530 and 1569 (while conquest had ceased since 1552), but was not implemented until then.

Thereupon, Antonio de Berrio, husband of Maria de Oruña, succeeded Quesada in 1579, departed from Spain to the New Kingdom in 1580, where he became infected with the El Dorado fever,¹¹² and in October 1582 claimed his inheritance "of the Adelantado Gonzalo Ximinez de Quesada" at the Audiencia of New Granada, whom de Berrio requested for the "same agreement as was arranged with Quesada". Nevertheless, in the course of the negotiations Antonio de Berrio attempted to modify the initial grant by attempting to extend the inheritance to "three lives, beginning with Antonio himself", and also to change the permitted means of legal appropriation from "discovering and populating" the area between the Pauto and Papameme to a spatially unlimited *capitulación* for "conquer[ing] and settl[ing] the Province of El Dorado". However, this was rejected by the Audiencia, but Antonio de Berrio recognized as legal successor of the Adelantado Quesada¹¹³ and awarded with "two lives" of the original grant. Instead, the

110 Donis Ríos, Guayana, p. 19; M. A. Perera, *Provincia Fantasma: Guayana Siglo XVII, Ecología cultural y Antropología Histórica de una Rapina, 1598–1704*, Caracas: Universidad Central de Venezuela, 2003, p. 96.

111 NATT, N.N. "Report about the Agreement between King Philip II and Ximinez Quesada of 19 February 1571", 25 February 1586, publication No. 262.

112 NATT, Antonio de Berrio, "Report about Claims in the New Kingdom of Granada", publication No. 261.

113 J. Buchholz, "Entre Ríos," p. 4.

Audiencia followed the royal order of Philipp II of 1573 by sticking to the means of appropriation inserted in the original grant, namely to “discover and populate”. Moreover, the “province of El Dorado” was placed within the initially granted area of [sic!] the province between the Pauto and Papamene.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, during his three expeditions between 1583 and 1591, Antonio de Berrio had not managed to fulfil his order to discover and populate the area between the Pauto and Papamene, as his first expedition in 1583–1585¹¹⁵ was unable to cross the Cordilleras in the vicinity of the Orinoco and Meta junction, where the Achagua attacked the Spaniards twice, as de Berrio had “killed several” and taken others “prisoners” during the first attack, whereupon the Achagua returned “in much greater force” and “with more than 4,000 Indians coming from all directions”, whom the remaining 100 Spanish soldiers “could not repel”.¹¹⁶ Previously, the Spanish explorer had in February 1584 exchanged “shells and beds, salt and dogs, in tool and gowns [. . .] in return for Indian women and child slaves” of other “peaceful Indians” at an Achagua settlement,¹¹⁷ situated “16 leagues away from the cordillera”,¹¹⁸ where de Berrio also received the information “that there was a very large lake in the cordillera on the shores of which there were many towns and numerous people with great riches of gold and jewels” and also “that in the cordillera there were many places in each one of which were much more people than in all the plains”.¹¹⁹

Back in Bogotá, this had not stopped Antonio de Berrio from upgrading his discovery claim for the “cordilleras on the other side of the plains” to the unsubstantial claim to have “discovered” the myth-encroached province of El Dorado, whose “true name [. . .] is Guayana”, which de Berrio presented to the Spanish King until May 1585, although in fact just based on the information of the Acha-

114 NATT, Audiencia of New Granada, “Decree to confirm Agreement between the King of Spain and Antonio de Berrio of 11 October 1582”, Santa Fé, 11 October 1592, publication No. 808.

115 Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, pp. 13; 81 This expedition had left Bogotá in 1583 and reached the Meta Orinoco junction in February 1584, before it returned to Bogotá by the end of 1585 (ibid.).

116 NATT, De Berrio, “Report about Claims related to the New Kingdom of Granada”, publication No. 261.

117 Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 81.

118 According to John Hemming, the Achagua had villages on the Meta, “whose large thatch huts were tightly closed against the myriad mosquitos” (Hemming, *The Search for El Dorado*, p. 151).

119 NATT, De Berrio, “Report about Claims related to the New Kingdom of Granada”, publication No. 261.

gua.¹²⁰ Subsequently, the Spanish explorer repeated his asserted discovery claim of El Dorado on several occasions, such as in a letter of Doctor Francisco Guillen Chapano on 21 May 1585, who announced that “Captain Antonio de Berrio declares that he has discovered Guayana which is called El Dorado”,¹²¹ but also in a letter to the Spanish King, written during his third expedition at the Cassanare in 1590, which had departed from Bogotá in March 1598, after his second expedition had failed after 28 months, and finally made it¹²² in crossing the *cordilleras* by water.¹²³

In fact, the Spanish explorer during his third expedition from March 1589 until January 1591 had, however, not managed to fulfil his order to acquire the area between Pauto and Papamene by the legal means inserted in his letter patent, namely discovery and occupation. Instead, de Berrio was significantly overstepping the spatial limits of his grant by descending the Orinoco for “200 leagues” before reaching “a province of Caribs, the villages of which continued for more than 120 leagues as far as the sea”, from where the Spaniards with some “Caribs of Barima” had travelled “for more than 350 leagues [. . .] down the Orinoco” until reaching “the dwellings of the Caroni”,¹²⁴ who would have also promised to lead the Spaniard “to Guayana, the borders of which by the

120 Ibid. At the same time, Antonio de Berrio asserted before the King that he had “seen there [at the very large lake in the cordillera] more than 20,000 [people] and there may be another 20,000 or 120,000” (ibid.).

121 NATT, Antonio de Berrio, “Report on the ‘Discovery’ of El Dorado”, 1585, publication No. 560.

122 NATT, Antonio de Berrio, “Letter to King”, Margarita, 26 October 1591, publication No. 265. According to Neil Whitehead, he also encountered Amaigotos at the Lower Cuchivero (Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 15).

123 BRC, De Berrio, “Letter”, Margarita, 1 January 1593, serial No. 1, pp. 1–7, at 4–7. This was undertaken in self-made pirogues (rafts), since “all the Indians assured me that in descending the Orinoco, I should find great settlements of Caribs, and lower still I should find a great river which is called Caroni, which descends from Guayana, and, on account of a great waterfall cannot be navigated; but that there, and a little above, where there is a Chief called Morguita [un prensipal que se llama Morguita], the cordilleras end and the provinces of Guayana begin, and then come successively those of Manoa and El Dorado and many other provinces” (ibid.). According to John Hemming, “Manoa” is the Araucan word of the Achagua for “lake” (Hemming, “How Brazil acquired Roraima”, p. 297).

124 BRC, De Berrio, “Letter”, Margarita, 1 January 1593, serial No. 1, pp. 1–7. Furthermore, de Berrio indicated that those Caribs of Barima had also revealed “great secrets of the country (secretos de la tierra)” and the purpose of their travel: “I asked these Caribs why they took such a long journey with so much labour, when they were so numerous and courageous, and had Guayana so near. They replied that the Guayanese were numerous, and were very near, and can make war upon them by land, and for this reason, they wish to be friendly with them” (ibid.).

great River Caroni were more than 100 leagues from the beginning of these villages".¹²⁵

Hence, the Spaniard continued for four leagues until reaching "a province called Morequito", situated "on the borders of Guayana",¹²⁶ whose settlement "Chucopare"¹²⁷ was assumed of being 4,000 people strong in 1583,¹²⁸ where de Berrio remained for two months, received information about the location of "the great cities and the richest countries", before being expelled, as Morequito's people "rose against us and carried off all our provisions", to which the Spaniards was not able to respond with the remaining 15 healthy soldiers. Thereupon, de Berrio was forced "to travel down the river for another 20 leagues" before having reached the provinces of Barguicana (account of October 1591)¹²⁹ and Carapana (account of December 1594),¹³⁰ where the Spaniard again remained for two months in order to wait for the help of the governor of Margarita. While asserting that Barguicana would be "willingly submitted to Your [Spanish] Majesty and gave us food", de Berrio also reported that the Chief had at the same time attacked the Spaniards, since de Berrio admitted that he "had not ten men able to fight", and was, thus, again compelled to proceed further, this time "to the sea and from there to Trinidad which is only a day's journey". Without having established any settlement, de Berrio finally reached Margarita in October 1591, after a fleeting visit in Trinidad.¹³¹

On the whole, this chapter concludes that no legal title was acquired by Spain in the period between 1503 and 1591, since the Spanish settlement attempts

125 NATT, De Berrio, "Letter to King", Margarita, 26 October 1591, publication No. 265. At the same time, the Spaniard assumed the "Guayanos" to be "very near" (*ibid.*).

126 *Ibid.*

127 Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, p. 13.

128 *Ibid.*, p. 33. This account also refers to the Cacique Mori, whose people would have had comprised about "1000" people and each indigenous Orinoco settlements in general between "500 and 1,000" people (*ibid.*), who would be all "at war with the Caribs of the Orinoco, who raided them every year, sending flotillas of over forty pirogues". In addition, there would have been "various villages" along the Orinoco, such as Paraguaqui with a village of 500, Yniquar with a village on the Caroni and Muchapan, whose "leader of a village" would have been situated "some two leagues further along the same river [Caroni]" (*ibid.*, p. 13).

129 NATT, De Berrio, "Letter to King", Margarita, 26 October 1591, publication No. 265.

130 BRC, Antonio de Berrio, "Report to Spanish King", 2 December 1594, serial No. 3, pp. 8–9. Both are not mentioned in his expedition report of January 1593 (BRC, Antonio de Berrio, "Letter to King of Spain", Margarita, 1 January 1593, serial No. 1, pp. 1–7, at 2–3). Carapana was a Nepoio Chief (Boomert, *Indigenous Peoples of Trinidad and Tobago*, p. 100) and both Carapana and Morequito already in 1583 visited by Spaniard Jorge Grigo from Margarita (Whitehead, *Lords of the Tiger Spirit*, pp. 80–81; 13), who were, at that time, "at war with the Caribs of the Orinoco" (*ibid.*, p. 13), wherefore Morequito, most likely, was also not a Carib Cacique.

131 NATT, Antonio de Berrio, "Letter to King", Margarita, 26 October 1591, publication No. 265.

in Paria, the Lower Orinoco, and Trinidad were limited to two short-term attempts in Trinidad (1530–1534; 1569–1579) and no successful conquest, which was replaced in the Spanish royal practice by pacification in 1530 (Trinidad) and 1562 (Province of Aruacas), was recorded for either the Lower Orinoco, Paria, or Trinidad, whereas several enslavement practices had been ordered and carried out in violation of both the valid papal bulls and the Spanish colonial law of Francisco de Vitoria. Hence, the following chapter investigates the lawfulness Spanish colonial practices in Trinidad from the establishment of San Joseph in 1592 until the conclusion of the Treaty of Amiens in 1802.