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Article

Indians to be Transformed to Whites. Circa 1797?

AUDREY BUTT COLSON

Abstract

Utilising ethno-historical research recently published by a number of distinguished scholars, it is now possible to better understand the socio-political situation of Amerindians in Dutch-English, Portuguese and Spanish Guiana from early colonial settlement to the 19th century. This information enables us to make a detailed assessment of the report "Indians to be Transformed to Whites", published by James Rodway in 1917, to assign an exact date to it and to place it in the context of a number of changes leading up to and unfolding in the three colonial societies of the time. Essentially, a role reversal movement, it is also of interest as being one of a number of enthusiastic movements characterizing Amerindian responses to the region's national administrations' policies in 18th and 19th century Guiana in the Three Colonies (Guyana), in the Rio Branco and Roraima area (Brazil) and in La Guayana (Venezuela).

KEYWORDS: Transformation, the Three Colonies, Akawaio, Caribs, Portuguese, Spanish Guayana, trade, slavery, mission villages, Postholder, Protector, militia, present-giving, demography, Bovianders, God, cattle, role-reversal.

James Rodway, a prominent naturalist and historian of late 19th century and early 20th century British Guiana,¹ also took an active interest in its indigenous peoples. In 1917 he published a text in *Timehri*,² that has aroused a lasting interest and curiosity. Entitled: 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites', it is reproduced here in its entirety. (Plate 1) It describes a transformative movement anticipating a number of role reversals, but has additional interest in its being one in a history of indigenous enthusiastic movements in the Guiana region of South America, spanning a period from the middle of the 18th century to the present day. Moreover, the same ethnic groups have been involved down the centuries: namely communities of the Kapon and Pemon peoples, known in the literature as 'Akawaio' and 'Arekuna'. I have already published a previous enthusiastic movement involving them, as

described in two 1756 reports, and have related these to the religious and geo-political context of the period.³The 1756 movement is the first that I have discovered in the historical literature of Western Guiana. The Rodway account, that he dates to 'about 1797', is the second. Like the first, the significance of this latter movement resides in the particular historical context in which it occurred and was embedded. Of necessity therefore, we need to investigate the political and social circumstances in the region towards the end of the 18th century and in the first decade of the 19th century in order to understand the Amerindian condition at that period and to discover how it gave rise to the anticipated transformations. We also have to look at this extended period of time because Rodway's date is not a firm one for the events described and he does not state how he arrived at 'about 1797'.

Indians to be Transformed to Whites.—Appun gives an account of the curious notion that Indians would be changed to whites and become masters (see *Timehri*, 1893, p. 344); here we have an early report which goes to prove that the idea was not quite new. This was reported in about 1797 to one of the Protectors of Indians and refers to the neighbourhood of the then Post, now Penal Settlement.

“I certify that going up the River [Essequibo] to look for my people who had run away, and, after passing three deserted Buck villages, I met an Akkawaai Captain, named Arransarve, coming out of Pollara Creek, who told me, that he was collecting the Indians since three days, to join them to another Nation named Woujejannen, but would, or could not say for what reason, adding that, the Indians of Essequibo, Demerary, Maceroeny and Coejoeny, would join them likewise. That in company with this Captain, and another Buck, I went in search of my run-away people. That during three days we remained in the Bush. That we passed ten abandoned Indian villages, of which the Inhabitants were gone to join the other Indians. That the Indian Captain wanted to persuade the other Indian I had with me, and who is a slave to Mrs. Tomé, to join them, saying, that they had hid God in the Sea, and that the Indians would be changed to whites, and the Whites to Indians. That an Indian girl, named Annetta, a slave of Mrs. Tomé, was told by the aforesaid Indian Captain's wife, in order to persuade her likewise to join the assembly, that the world was going to be changed, that the Indians were already transformed into white blood, and that the Whites would soon appear in their skins. That they had erected a house for the presents they destined to the Whites; as being their subjects, that the Mulattoes would be their slaves. That they had nominated two Bucks, named Maypoerie-poerie and Caycoeco, to be their chiefs. That two cows had made their appearance in the village of Indian Caycoeco, as a sign of their future transformation. That the Spanish and Portuguese Indians had joined the Assembly, and that the moment the transformation would be completed, they would conquer the colony.”—J.R.

Plate 1: Timehri, Journal of The Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana 1919, Vol. IV (3rd Series): 296-7.

Of those named in the Report, the Akawaio figure as the central, activating group. The information given derived from an 'Akkawaai' Captain named Arransarve who had been busy recruiting local Indians over a period of three days, and also from his wife. The only other

indigenous 'Nation' named in the Report is the Woujejannen, or Wauwejans, denoting the mixed 'Arawak-Akawaios' of the lower Demerara River. Other references are general ones. Employing the word 'Buck' the writer of the Report was using a term to denote indigenous peoples in the Three Colonies (Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara) deriving from the Dutch word Bok (pl. Bokken), referring to 'people of the woods'.⁴ Other participants were 'the Indians of Essequibo, Demerary, Maceroeny [Mazaruni] and Coejoeny [Cuyuni]', who were to join the Woujejannen. Finally, there was the assertion that '...the Spanish and Portuguese Indians had joined the Assembly, and that the moment the transformation would be completed, they would conquer the colony.' The Report therefore refers to a widespread Movement involving Arawak and Akawaio of major river valleys in the Dutch colonies, whose ethnic sub-groups also extended into neighbouring river areas, into the Orinoco basin in Spanish Guayana in the west and into the Portuguese Rio Branco in the south, where their descendants still live, in present-day Venezuela and Brazil.⁵ An analysis of the Transformative Movement needs to take account of this extended Amerindian experience across vast tracts of land and frontiers still unknown to Old World colonists in the early 19th century, but which represented a continuum for its indigenous inhabitants whose perceived political structures and spaces differed from those of the incomers. As both the early literature and the oral tradition of the peoples themselves describe, there were trading routes that were paths via which news and knowledge were also conveyed and exchanged over long distances.⁶ The statement that 'they had hid God in the Sea' and the assertion that 'two cows had made their appearance in the village of Indian Caycoeco as a sign of their future transformation', have also to be considered in this wider context of colonial relationships.

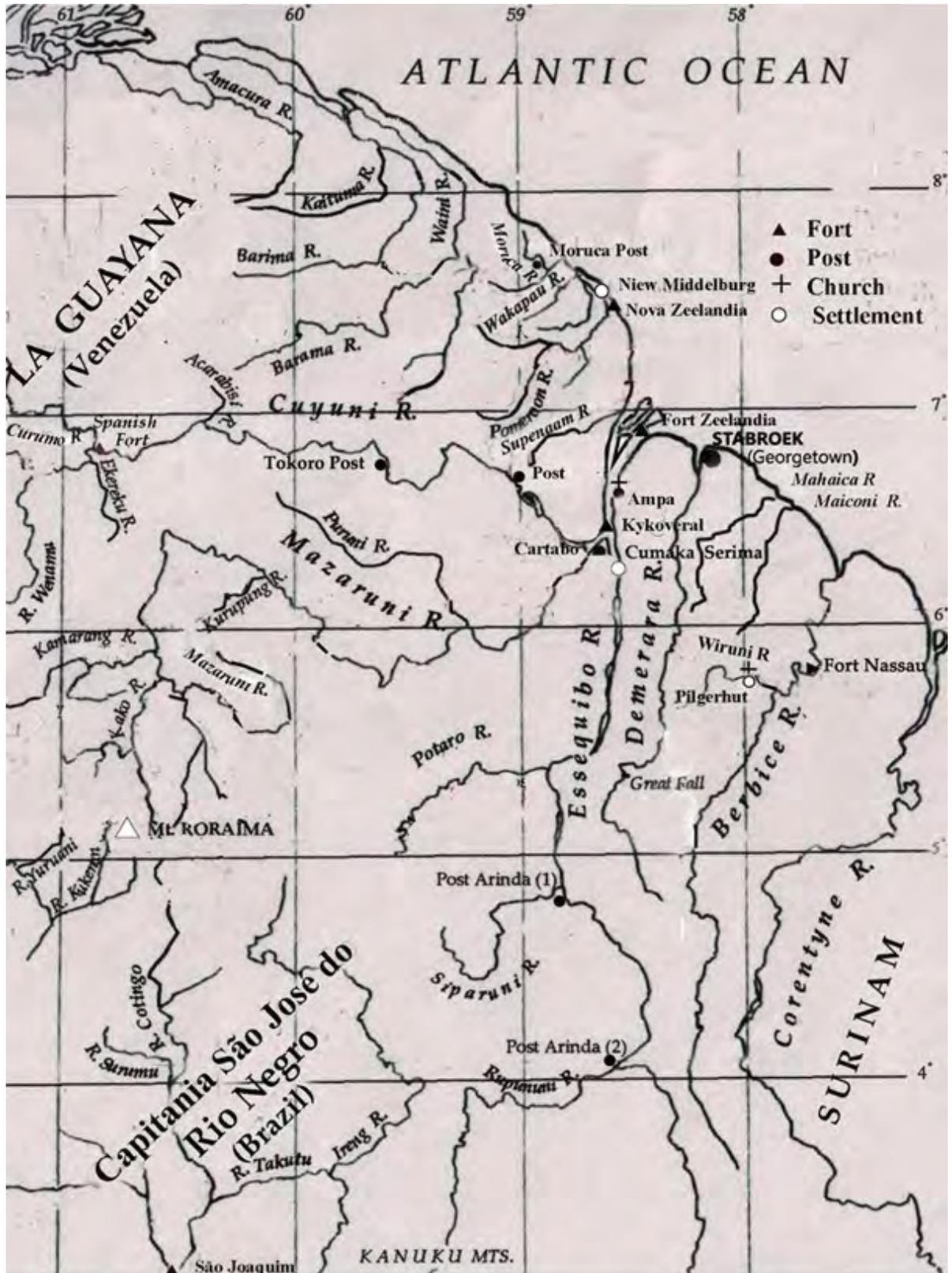
The Dutch and the 'Three Colonies': Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara⁷

The Dutch maintained an unbroken,⁸ if sometimes precarious, possession of the three South American colonies of Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara up to 1781. Then, early that year, during the war between England and her North American colonies with their French, Dutch and Spanish allies, the Three Colonies capitulated to the English Caribbean fleet under Sir George Rodney. This marked the beginning of a series of rapid changes of sovereignty, achieved peacefully. In January 1782 the Colonies surrendered to a French squadron. In March 1784, following the Treaty of Paris (September 1783), the French restored them to the Dutch. In 1791 the Dutch West India Company's Charter expired and the States-General assumed direct administration. A Colonial Council was formed but the French Revolution and consequent events in Europe dominated colonial affairs. In April 1796, the year previous to Rodway's attributed date to the Movement 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites', the British fleet arrived again and the Three Colonies again surrendered. In December 1802 they were given to the Batavian Republic.⁹ However, in September 1803 they became British for the third time. This proved to be the final transference of sovereignty, although British possession was not finally confirmed until the Treaty of London, 13th August 1814 and the general peace established by the Treaty of Vienna. The Three Colonies were amalgamated to become British Guiana in 1831. Present-day Guyana achieved Independence in 1966.

The historical data indicate clearly that the period in which the Movement 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' took place was, at the international level, an exceptionally turbulent one. The question arises as whether, and to what degree, the Amerindian peoples were affected in the internal, domestic context of the Three Colonies and what their concerns were. To discover this, we have to examine the Amerindian policy established by the Dutch and continued by their British successors over a long period of colonisation and administration.

Dutch Settlement

Dutch settlement along the South American Atlantic coast during the 17th century, from the Corentyne in the east to the Essequibo in the west, arose out of trading ventures. Ships arrived with manufactured articles for the Amerindians who accumulated and prepared local products in exchange. Depots were made in order to save long waiting periods for a cargo to be assembled and organizing agents were left on major rivers. Settlements began during the second decade of the 17th century. They were exposed to attacks by European rivals allied to local Amerindian groups.¹⁰ As a consequence, the first, permanent settlement began up the main rivers, at some 20 - 60 miles distance from the sea. In c.1616 the Dutch established a fortified trading station on a small island overlooking the confluence of the Mazaruni and Cuyuni rivers with the Essequibo. It became known as Kijkoveral, because it 'looked over all' the area of the three river mouths.



Map 1. The Dutch Three Colonies: forts, posts and settlements in the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth centuries.

The Dutch West India Company was formed under a government charter in 1621 and a colony began under the Zeeland Chamber. The colony of Essequibo was founded in 1624 and the first Commanders, permanent officials, were appointed to administer it.¹¹ In 1644 the Company acquired the monopoly of trade in Essequibo, but the area was opened to private colonisation in 1656 and in 1657 a group of twelve arrived. The Company had its own plantations of tobacco and cotton and others began to extend along the banks of the three rivers, below the first falls. It continued to hold a monopoly of trade in Essequibo until its final dissolution in 1791.¹²

The Dutch colony of Berbice was founded by the van Pere family of merchants from Vlissingen in 1627. A fortified trading centre, Fort Nassau, was established some 12 miles up the Berbice River and plantations started nearby, spreading along this river and the Canje. A jointstock company was formed and the Berbice Association was founded which directed the colony. In 1831, it was incorporated with Essequibo and Demerara as one of the three provinces comprising British Guiana.

The colony of Demerara began later, when the river was opened to settlement in 1745 and the first plantations began the following year. Many British West Indian planters settled there, attracted by free land and a 10 year period of tax exemption. From 1753 Demerara had its own Commandeur residing on the island of Borselen, some 20 miles up-river, but it was administered as part of Essequibo until, in 1773, it achieved an independent Commandeur and Court of Policy and Justice.¹³ However, under a re-organization in 1789 the combined Colony of Demerara and Essequibo came into existence and was placed under one Governor and one general Court of Policy and Criminal Justice. During this period a capital developed.¹⁴ The French, having ousted the British in 1782, laid out a town at the mouth of the Demerara River which, after re-possessing the Colonies in 1783, the Dutch named as Stabroek. This changed to Georgetown after the British took permanent possession.

Both Essequibo and Berbice remained precarious until the middle of the 18th century, being at the mercy of events in Europe. For example, Kijkoveral was occupied by English forces for a short time during the war between the Netherlands and England, 1665-7. The wars between the Dutch and French (1689-97 and 1702-13) were equally disastrous, as when Berbice was held to ransom and privateers preyed on shipping.¹⁵ Attempts to found a colony in the Pomeroon during 1658-1665 and again in 1686-9 failed due to destruction by the English in the first instance and by the French and Caribs in the second.¹⁶

The two colonies of Essequibo and Berbice were, at this early period, little more than trading stations with a few soldiers for defence of their respective forts, Kijkoveral and Nassau, and a small number of plantations in the vicinity with their handful of settlers, Black plantation slaves and a few Amerindian household servants. However, the period from 1713 until 1781 when the British took the colonies for the first time, was one of a steady expansion overall.

Trade in Essequibo, Berbice and Demerara in the 17th and 18th centuries¹⁷

Trade, the primary aim of most European visitors to the Wild Coast¹⁸ in the early days of contact, continued after settlement began and plantations were established. The major commercial products sought included the beautifully grained 'letterwood' of the tree *Piratinera guianensis*; oils and resins, especially balsam copaiba (*Copaifera* spp.) used medicinally and for soap, and *urucu* (also known as *orlane* or *anatto*) an orange-red dye made from the pigment surrounding the seeds of the *Bixa Orealla* tree fruits, notably used in the red

rind of Dutch Edam cheese. Tobacco and cotton were highly valued, becoming plantation crops. Hammocks and other items of Amerindian craftsmanship were sought, notably corials made by the Warao. Locally produced food supplies, especially the staple cassava bread, dried fish and bush meat were vital for early settlement subsistence.

The scale of trade in certain items, notably *urucu*, was very considerable indeed. Adriaan van Berkel¹⁹ recorded that during his time (1670-89) there were 15 to 16 men on the Demerara River trading with the Indians for *urucu*. At one time there was a *urucu* store on the lower Mazaruni, where it was collected and prepared for shipping to Europe. At the end of the 17th century 150 barrels of this dye were exported annually. About 1710 two vessels were sent to collect produce from Essequibo which included 160 hogshead of plantation sugar, 50 barrels of *urucu* and over 800 flasks of balsam copaiba. In 1720-22, at Moruka Post alone, 10,341 lbs of *urucu* were exchanged for trade goods.²⁰ Cotton, tobacco and garden foods were cultivated by Amerindians and later by the settlers, but other products were acquired through hunting and gathering that only the indigenous inhabitants could obtain through their intimate knowledge of the forest and its resources. In return for their produce the Indians received metal goods of all kinds. Axes, knives and fishhooks, replacing stone and bone implements, rapidly became indispensable. Beads, ornaments, pottery, glass, cloth, musical instruments and other manufactures were eagerly sought. All of them, especially metal tools, entered the indigenous long distance trading network already in being and extending into the Amazon and Orinoco basins. Pemon on the Gran Sabana in neighbouring Venezuela, still today recall a place down the rivers to their east to which their forefathers journeyed to obtain trade goods. They refer to it as *i-keng*, 'its mouth' and they describe it as 'the place where the rivers meet', suggesting the confluences of the Mazaruni and Cuyuni, where these flow into the Essequibo.²¹ This was for many years, the site of the Essequibo Post where the Indians of the three rivers, (mostly Akawaio and Caribs, some from as far away as Barima) congregated at regular intervals with their families to trade and to receive their presents.²²

The Dutch established a trading system designed to tap into Amerindian goods over vast areas²³ Initially, they employed agents called an outrunner (*uitlooper*) who traversed the country by canoe and on foot, visiting the indigenous settlements. They carried Dutch merchandise to encourage exchanges or visits to the fort for barter. After the first period of contact, these outrunners tended to be half breeds or elderly Blacks familiar with an Indian language. They were succeeded by the outlier (*uitlegger*), who was a European with one or two assistants, (a *bijlegger* or bylier who was often an old soldier). They manned trading posts on the main rivers and there was one in Essequibo in 1626. In 1683-4 a temporary one was established at the mouth of the Barima River where quantities of *urucu* and letterwood were obtained.²⁴ By 1703 there were four posts, for the Pomeroon, Demerara, Mahaicony and Cuyuni districts. In 1734, after exploratory parties had been sent up the Essequibo in 1714, 1725 and 1731, a trading post was established, first near the Potaro confluence and then near Siparuni mouth.²⁵ This post, Arinda, was later moved up-river near to the confluence of the Rupununi River with the Essequibo and, after some delays, was operative there from 1769. It was still in existence in 1791 but abandoned during the course of the final change in sovereignty at the turn of the century.²⁶ In Berbice a similar, but smaller-scale system was adopted, with posts on the Canje, the Berbice and the Wiruni.

By 1700 the *uitlegger*, (outlier) at the posts was becoming known as the *posthouder* (Postholder) and the *bylier* as Under-Postholder, assisting in the management of the posts. Apart from this official organization, of posts, Postholders and their Assistants, trade with the indigenous communities was also carried on by private colonists. They were Europeans of varying nationalities, referred to as *swervers* (rovers or itinerant traders). They engaged in trade and smuggling, often in defiance of the West India Company's declared monopoly.

Occasional adventurous ones made east - west journeys from Surinam to the Orinoco and north - south from the coastlands to the vicinity of Portuguese settlements of the Rio Negro. Their activities often caused problems for the West India Company officials in that their sometimes ruthless negotiations and intrigues led to retaliation and violence by the aggrieved Indians, requiring the Administration's intervention. Their activities also had economic consequences for the West India Company, as in 1687 when Abraham Beekman, the Commandeur in Essequibo, complained that:

Since this river begins to be filled with many inhabitants, some of them rove continually among the Caribs, buy up everything, and glut them with wares.
(Burr, U.S. Commission on Boundary Between Venezuela and British Guiana I: 209.)

In Fort Kijkoveral was the West India Company's shop, called by the colonists "The Worshipful Co's Shop", stocked with goods for the Indian trade.²⁷ Letters of the Commandeur in the 1680s show how closely trading activities were monitored. They refer to inter-tribal wars, such as those between the Akawaio and Caribs on the lower reaches of the Cuyuni, Mazaruni and Essequibo, that spoilt trade and prevented hunting for meat supplies for the colonists.²⁸ They express grave concern when the French cornered the Barima Carib trade, having attacked Indians of the upper Cuyuni savannas and spoilt the copaiba trade which the Company's Black outrunner was seeking there in 1684-5.²⁹ The trading posts consisted of a collection of thatched dwellings with provision grounds around, situated strategically at points at which traders passing through the districts had to register themselves.³⁰ A post channelled the Indian trade of its river area by using the stocks of merchandise kept there by the outlier/Postholder and because various other attractions, such as free rum, enticed them to visit, or to settle in the vicinity. Some of the posts were orientated to distant trade connections with neighbouring European colonies, to the Portuguese in the south via Arinda and to the Spanish in the west via Moruka, Pomeroun and the Cuyuni. A trading post at Wakapao was a prime recipient of a Capuchin Mission clandestine trade with the Dutch in horses and mules which were needed to operate the sugar presses.³¹ There was also a flourishing trade in tobacco.³² The posts were important because trade was the major occasion for Dutch contact with the Amerindian communities in the early stage of colonization. Up to the middle of the 18th century, relationships of both individuals and the colonial administration with the indigenous peoples were mostly trading relationships with a mutual interdependency based on these. On the coast, the traders were mainly in contact with Arawaks (Lokono) and Caribs (Kari'na), but when the colonists moved up the rivers to avoid attacks by privateers and European competitors, they encountered Akawaio (Kapon) communities that extended inland above the first falls of the major rivers, from the Berbice in the east and westwards to the Cuyuni and Mazaruni valleys and beyond.³³

The Postholders also came to have considerable political significance. They kept up communications with the Indian communities and reported any warlike movements and any grievances due to extortion and interference by the colonists, notably by the private traders. They kept a watch out for river travellers, especially foreigners. They were, later in the 18th century, vital in summoning Indian volunteers against runaway slaves and revolts and they distributed the gifts and rewards for these services. From 1802-3 they were placed under a District Protector to whom they reported - as Rodway's Report on 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' demonstrates. The Postholder system was retained by the British until 1857. Security was an issue from the beginning of settlement. The two colonies of Essequibo and Berbice were at first isolated, separated from each other by vast tracts of forest. Communications were by river and sea, or occasional overland travel by Indian trails passing through the Demerara valley which began to be colonised later, from 1745. The

incomers were heavily outnumbered by the Amerindians, as may be gauged by the telling statistic³⁴ that Abraham van Pere founded Berbice colony in 1627 with 60 - 80 White colonists and 6 African slaves in an area well populated by Arawaks.³ Benjamin considers that the early settlers depended on the indigenous inhabitants for much of their food supply:

Judging by the fate of aborted colonies in other parts of the Guianas, it may very well be that the Amerindians saved the early Berbice and Essequibo colonists from starvation - or at least provided essential supplements to their diet over an extended period of time. (Benjamin 1992-3: 2)

The Red Slave Trade in the Three Colonies

The Dutch valued indigenous 'Red slaves' as domestic servants. The majority of Amerindian slaves on the plantations were women who did the domestic work, especially cassava bread-making. Amerindian men hunted and fished, cleared the forest for cultivation, acted as droghers and paddlers and obtained raw materials from the forest for house building etc. Labour for the plantations was also required but it was dangerous to recruit slave labour from the local indigenous population. Indians would not freely undertake continuous heavy work and cultivation was women's work in a gendered division of labour, the customary male contribution to swidden cultivation being the initial clearing of the forest. Attempts at enslavement caused conflict that endangered the lives of the colonists as the free relatives sought revenge and enslaved Amerindians could escape back to their communities, being familiar with the forested countryside.

In this situation, the Dutch pursued a pragmatic policy of friendship and alliance with the local peoples with whom they traded. Regarded as 'free nations', there were four of them: the Caribs, Arawaks, Warao and Akawaio. Throughout the Dutch period there were proclamations and injunctions issued against the acquisition of them as slaves. Any complaint by these 'free' indigenous peoples concerning attempts at enslavement were taken very seriously by the Dutch Administration and later by the British. Probably the first regulation on this matter, much quoted, was made by Commandeur Beekman in Essequibo in 1686: *A white man and a negro had been killed by Indians through the enslaving of one of the natives, and it was therefore ordered that no one should buy these people in future without the transaction being witnessed by the Commandeur (Rodway 1896 X, Part I: 15).*

Throughout Dutch rule the periodic attempts to enforce this policy indicate that it was not always successful. However, it was permissible to buy Indian slaves from Indians who had obtained them from other, distant indigenous communities. This procedure was to some extent regulated when in 1717 a special tax was laid upon 'Red slaves' and the number owned by each inhabitant was limited to six. They were to be obtained from the Orinoco area by purchase or exchange.³⁶ This injunction, ensuring friendly relationships with local Indians thus freed of enslavement of themselves, was re-issued in 1752. Then in 1793 the States General passed a resolution which '...prohibited from purchasing or holding as slaves any Indians or the offspring of Indian women of any Tribe whatsoever under the severest Penalties.'³⁷

The enslaving of distant Amerindians for purchase by the Dutch was carried out by the Amerindians themselves throughout the 18th century, notably by the Caribs and with Arawaks and Akawaio involved to a lesser degree. Groups of Caribs positioned themselves as to have an unrivalled range of access across the whole of the Guiana region and even

beyond.³⁸ Their trade was associated with very destructive raiding in which men were killed and the women and children taken into captivity. Via private traders and the Dutch posts, these were sold to the West India Company and private estate owners. The Catalanian Capuchins of the Caroní (Guayana) Mission established in Spanish Guayana from 1724 to 1817, complained bitterly of the decimation of Amerindian communities by Carib slave raiding in Spanish-claimed territory, endangering their Mission and enriching the Dutch usurpers to their east. In 1758 they estimated that the Caribs sold over 300 children yearly and murdered more than 400 adults.³⁹ In the mid 18th century, new mission villages in the Yuruari (upper Cuyuni) savannas were deliberately sited to cut off Carib incursion routes. These were not entirely successful and the mission villagers were sometimes discovered to be engaged in the slave trade with relatives and trading partners still 'living in the wild'. Moreover, as soon as one route was blocked the Caribs opened another. A prime example was the blocking of the Cuyuni route by the Spanish making a series of raids down that river, beginning in 1758 when they destroyed the incipient Dutch post there, capturing the Postholder and his Carib helpers, together with documents itemizing 25 slaves and 13 hammocks. Their recipients were to have been the 'governor of Essequibo' and his son.⁴⁰ In 1769 the Cuyuni post, re-established, was destroyed by another Spanish incursion. Seeing that the entire river valley was becoming unsafe, some Caribs re-located to the neighbourhood of Post Arinda, which had just been moved up the Essequibo from Siparuni mouth to the area of the Rupununi confluence. There they made common cause with their Corentyne River relatives who had ready access to the Surinam slave market. These Caribs travelled by a westward trail across the heads of the Berbice and Demerara rivers to Primoss Inlet, on the Essequibo a few miles above Rupununi mouth. Together they raided inhabitants of the Rupununi and Rio Branco savannas and beyond, along the watershed of the Orinoco and Amazon basins. It was at this time that references to Makushi and Wapishana slaves and attendant hostilities appeared in official communications, now recalled in oral tradition.⁴¹ By the middle of the 18th century trade between the West India Company and the four protected 'nations' had undergone a profound change. Certain traded items retained great importance, such as large quantities of salted fish, vital in the food supply for the plantation African slaves, and corials (dugout canoes). Both were provided by the Warao and traded via Moruka Post. However, the trade in the red dye (*urucu* or *annatto*) became greatly reduced. The post at Wakapao - Moruka had been the most important trading place for the West Indian Company supply of dye but van 's Gravesande noted in 1764 that: *The trade of that Post formerly consisted mostly in boats and annatto dye, of which last it used to yield a very large quantity, though now it sends none at all.* (Harris & de Villiers II: 469.)

The Capuchin missionaries in the Guayana Mission remarked that the Caribs depended entirely on slave trading for their economy and Anna Benjamin has concluded that '... by the middle of the eighteenth century the Amerindian slave trade eclipsed all else' and that it was under the control of private traders in alliance with the Caribs, the West India Company not being able to enforce its monopoly in this respect.⁴²

At the time of the Movement 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' the various administrations in the Three Colonies were making strong attempts to abolish Amerindian slavery. In 1793 the Netherlands' States General had prohibited the enslavement of Amerindians in Essequibo and Demerara. In 1796, when the British took the colonies for the second time, total abolition of Amerindian slavery was promulgated, including Berbice. This ruling was not observed and in 1802 the Batavian Republic of the Netherlands also proclaimed total abolition. In 1808 another British Proclamation stated that no Indian of any nation could be held in slavery. The early 19th century authorities complained that these rulings were not being observed⁴³ but their repercussions were being experienced amongst the upper Essequibo slave raiding Caribs by 1810, as the Mahanarwa (Manariwa) incident

shows (see below). However, another set of circumstances had been developing, notably from the middle of the 18th century, which had become central to relationships between the European colonists and the indigenous peoples in the Three Colonies, the impact of which is very clearly marked in the transformative movement that Rodway records. It involved a diminution in trade with the indigenous peoples and the development of a plantation-based economy that was necessarily labour intensive.

The Dutch Plantation System

By settlement in up-river, inland sites, the Dutch had achieved safety from privateers and, for the most part, attack in times of war that stemmed from events in Europe. The coast was partly under water at flood tide, was insect-ridden and inhospitable. Considerable knowledge, cooperation and a large labour force were needed to establish flood control and bring the land under cultivation. Nevertheless, a move to the coast began in the middle of the 18th century when the danger of piracy and sudden raids had disappeared and the type of crop changed from cotton (local) and coffee (introduced), to sugar (introduced). The sandy soils on which the early plantations were sited were exhausted whereas the alluvial coastal soils were more productive and suited to sugar cultivation. It was not worth cutting down more of the forest and combatting the up-river falls and rapids when superior soils were available through drainage techniques, in which the Dutch excelled.

Kijkoveral island was abandoned in 1718 as being too small and the Commandeur and his officers transferred to Kartabo (Cartabo), a peninsular opposite formed by the confluence of the Cuyuni with the Mazaruni. At that time, the Company and private plantations extended along the banks of the three rivers, the Company's Poelwijk estate being at the first island of the lowest falls of the Mazaruni River.

Then, in 1739-40 the centre of government moved to Flag Island (later called Fort Island) in the Essequibo estuary. The Company's plantations were transferred to the islands and the seaboard at Essequibo mouth and the private planters followed. By 1777 cultivation up-river from Flag Island was abandoned, except for a plantation at the Cuyuni - Mazaruni confluence.⁴⁴ In Berbice Fort Nassau was replaced by the capital New Amsterdam, founded in 1796 on the coast, and the plantations moved down the river. Similarly the administration in Demerara on Borselen Island, some 20 miles up-river, transferred to the incipient township at the mouth of the Demerara which, founded in 1782, became Georgetown in May 1812.

Thus, plantation development in the second part of the 18th century led to a concentration of the colonial population on the seaboard and colonial administration became increasingly concerned with its own expanding population and settlements there. When the British took the Three Colonies from the Dutch, briefly in 1781-2 and 1796-1802 and with effective possession from 1803, they knew only the coastal fringe. Routes into the hinterland which had been traversed by Dutch traders from the earliest times, had to be re-traced by explorers and scientists in the 19th century. Boundaries between the Three Colonies and their neighbours, the Spanish and Portuguese, had yet to be discovered and agreed. Nevertheless, the British inherited a knowledge of the indigenous people from the Dutch and also the system of posts and Postholders. They also inherited a dependency on the indigenous that remained vital until 1838. This dependency had nothing to do with trade, either in goods or in Red slaves acquired mostly in Carib raids in neighbouring Spanish and Portuguese territories. Trade in goods had become slight and trade in Red slaves was legally abolished as from 1793. The dependency arose out of the nature of the plantation system itself.

Under the able administration of Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande, as Secretary (1738-43), Commandeur (1743-50) and Director-General (1750-72), Essequibo developed from a mere trading station into an organized colony.⁴⁵ He was the founder of Demerara Colony, which rapidly began to flourish. The extent of the development that took place can be gauged by a comparison of the number of plantations and of the Black slaves employed in the them. The latter are summarized in the Appendix. They clearly demonstrate that from the mid 8th century a dramatic expansion occurred in both plantation numbers and of slaves who cultivated them. There were only a few hundred Europeans in the Three Colonies and these were greatly outnumbered by thousands of Black African slaves. Unable to use any significant number of local Amerindians, the labour needs of the Colonies had been solved by the importation of slaves from West Africa, a practice begun by the West India Company in Essequibo almost immediately after its incorporation in 1621. As the plantations increased in numbers and size so did the imported Black slave population, which was discontented with its lot.

Guardians of the Plantations: Amerindian Policing, Slave Hunting and Militia

As the African slave population on the plantations dramatically increased from the 1730s onwards, the estate owners had to confront the loss of runaways. This loss was disastrous on several counts. It exacerbated the continual shortfall in slave labour. There was the risk that camps and permanent settlements of runaways would form in the forests behind the plantations and develop into a dangerously hostile Maroon population (as occurred in Surinam under similar circumstances). These "Bush Negroes" could raid the estates and, retaining contact with relatives and friends there, could incite further revolt and desertion. Another dimension was the threat posed by runaways taking refuge with the Spanish in Orinoco.⁴⁶ When, in the 1750 Treaty of Madrid, a Royal Boundary Commission was created to agree a boundary line with the Portuguese in Brazil along the Amazon-Orinoco watershed, Spain was also contemplating the use of the discontented and escaping Black slaves of the Three Colonies for territorial and political ends. The Church urged that, on taking sanctuary in Spanish Guayana, the runaways should be freed and incorporated into the Roman Catholic religion and local labour force. The plot was based on the assumption that these and the discontented slaves remaining on the Dutch plantations could be persuaded to rise and be organized as a significant force for the expulsion of the Dutch from the continent. There was a secret agreement with the Portuguese that their joint forces were to construct strongholds to ring the Dutch, starting in the interior and advancing towards the coastal plantations.⁴⁷ The dangers in allowing the runaway slaves to flee westwards towards Spanish territory or southwards towards the Portuguese, were perceived to be very grave ones. It was out of this situation and its associated fears, arose a mutually convenient collaboration between the free Amerindian peoples and the Dutch West India Company and colonists.

In the 17th century, Benjamin points out,⁴⁸ the records seem to indicate that Amerindians had little or no policing role. The few runaways were chased down by their White owners or a trusted Black servant. In the 1740s however, the beginning of a great increase in the Black slave population highlighted the dangers of rebel camps and it was at this time that the Caribs in Essequibo took on the role of hunters of Black slaves. In 1744 a Maroon camp in the Barima River area was destroyed by Caribs.⁴⁹ The Demerara River Akawaio slave-hunted in 1752 and in Berbice the local Arawaks performed a similar role. The Berbice Slave Revolt of 1762-3 was the occasion that triggered a great expansion of Amerindian policing and slave hunting with the establishment of Amerindian militia to put down slave revolts and to eradicate the camps

of runaways. Interestingly, Benjamin notes ⁵⁰ that the Berbice uprising was 'partly made possible by the fact that large numbers of Amerindians [Arawak] had moved out of the colony to escape an epidemic'. At that time (1762) there were 346 Whites, 244 Indian slaves and 3,833 Black slaves in Berbice Colony. (See Appendix.) The Berbice rising was on such a large-scale and so successful that the Dutch there very narrowly escaped total evacuation of the colony and the Essequibo and Demerara planters also feared for their own survival. The Director-General, Storm van 's Gravesande, called on the Caribs for assistance, issuing them with firearms. The Demerara Akawaio volunteered to go to Berbice and also some Arawaks. Their joint efforts were crucial in containing the uprising until the arrival of help from overseas.⁵¹

The slaves killed in the Berbice Revolt were replaced by more imports from Africa and overall numbers still increased. In 1762 Demerara had 1,648 slaves; in 1769 there were 5,967 and in 1782 there were 12,559. (Appendix.) Concomitantly, runaway numbers also increased steadily and uprisings continued. In 1767 a hundred Berbice Black slaves fled to the Demerara but their settlements were destroyed by Caribs from the Mazaruni and Essequibo. The posts played an important role in the counter-measures taken as it was through them that contact with Amerindians was maintained and arrangements made for obtaining their aid. In 1770, for example, the Postholder of Arinda, by then established up the Essequibo near Rupununi mouth, was told to request the Carib leaders in that area to send down 50 men to guard the sugar estates.⁵² Risings on two Essequibo estates were put down by Caribs from Arinda and in 1772 over 200 Caribs put down a revolt on the Demerara plantation of P.C. Hoofd.⁵³ In 1794-5, 800 Carib fighters put down an insurrection in West Coast Demerara and Akawaio also offered aid. Caribs and other Amerindians were organized to block the paths that runaways used to get to Spanish territory and they monitored both sea and river routes to the Orinoco. In 1784, after some runaways had escaped into Spanish territory, the post at Moruka was renewed and it was arranged with the Arawaks that 40 - 50 Indians should man it.⁵⁴

Whereas at the beginning of Dutch settlement in the early 17th century, the colonists had depended on the local Amerindian communities for food for survival and for goods to trade, by the 1790s the colonists depended on the Amerindians for the security and maintenance of the plantations on which the colonial economy had become based. As Benjamin aptly remarked⁵⁵ the Amerindian as an independent trader had converted to the role of colonial policeman.

Protection and Present-Giving⁵⁶

The utilization of Amerindians as a militia on occasions of slave uprisings and as policemen hunting down runaway slaves in the forest, was due to their unrivalled knowledge of the country, tremendous skills in bushcraft and appropriate techniques in warfare. But these services had to be paid for. The anxiety of the Dutch Administration and the colonists with regard to their plantation slaves was such as to impel them to cultivate the friendship of the Amerindians assiduously. Payments were made for each occasion when help was required and received. Rodway asserts ⁵⁷ that the hunting of runaway slaves by Indians began with the offering of rewards for their recovery, either dead or alive, and that the first record of such a transaction was in 1743, when three barbecued right hands were brought, for each of which the Commandeur paid ten axes. Later, the reciprocal relationship created was confirmed by the giving of presents, the increase of which came to be in direct ratio to the preoccupation with slave revolts and the need for Amerindian aid. Initially therefore, the giving was casual,

used as an aid in maintaining good relationships and boosting the more substantial payments and rewards for particular instances of assistance. Then the Government began to spend certain sums each year on the purchase of special articles and a ceremonial distribution of these took place at regular intervals. The first such distribution occurred on the 6th March 1778. It was held on Fort Island, the Essequibo Administration's headquarters. The Amerindians invited were presented to the Court of Policy. Others were put forward on the 10th March. The Indian leaders were

...Presented with sticks with large silver knobs, bearing the impression of the seal of the company, hats with large silver pointed plumes, blue drill coloured cloths, axes, ribbons, looking glasses, and other articles, and asked to visit the Fort from time to time. The visitors were thereafter entertained in high revels, with "kiltum" (cheap rum), bread and provisions. The Indians on their part promised to be faithful, and to render assistance whenever called upon. These revels and prestations were maintained from year to year; but discontinued when the menace of revolting Negro slaves no longer existed. (Webber 92-3)

Also in 1778, 176 gallons of kiltum were supplied, by order of the Director-General, to the Moruka Post and to Arinda Post up the Essequibo for Amerindian revels.

The importance of this 1778 event was that it marked a departure from ad hoc arrangements for Amerindian aid whenever the occasion arose. Instead, the Administration began to formalize its relationships with the indigenous peoples, to subsidize them and to specify what it wanted from them. It worked through the appropriate Amerindian leaders, recognizing them officially as "Captains", giving them written Commissions and various insignia of office, such as staffs, silver badges, suits of clothes and lace-trimmed hats. It asked that assistance be given whenever it might be required and, sometimes, that the communities in question should not change their strategic place of abode. By 1795 the amounts had been stepped up. After the West Coast insurrection of that year when 800 Caribs had been mobilised and duly paid for their services, over £2,000 was given in the following year to Indians in goods alone and about £700 in cash.⁵⁸ A regular distribution of presents through the agency of the Postholders was adopted.

On annexation of the Three Colonies in 1803 the Articles of Capitulation guaranteed the continuance of all existing institutions under the previous Dutch Government.⁵⁹ Thus the British inherited from the Dutch the same problems inherent in the plantation economy and necessarily had to adopt the same measures.⁶⁰ Despite the insecurity due to the struggle for sovereignty in the period 1796-1803, the Black slave population had doubled from 30,000 to 65,000.⁶¹ In her Section II, entitled 'Policy of Presents to the Amerindians'⁶² Menezes quotes the Estimates of the Colonies, listing the amount of money voted for the annual and triennial presents and rations for the Indians during the first three decades of the 19th century. In 1802 'presents for bucks' amounted to 9,000 guilders. In 1804 £110 was spent on silver medals and chains for Indians at Moruka Post. In 1805 'gratuities or occasional presents to Indians' amounted to 2,500 guilders and, in 1809-10, 'presents to Indians' amounted to £6,000. In 1811, £6,904 was expended and in 1812 the sum of £5,112.⁶³ The Acting Governor maintained that the Colonies were tributaries to the Indians and that the whole Indian system required reconsideration. However, by 1811 the total population of Essequibo and Demerara was calculated as being 77,031, of which 71,180 were slaves.⁶⁴

Whilst slavery lasted the colonists could not alter the system they had created, with its inherent dangers. This system continued under British rule and ended only with the Emancipation of Slaves in 1838, which provoked an entirely new phase in relationships with

the indigenous peoples. At the period of the Movement of the 'Transformation of Indians into Whites' therefore, the existence of thousands of discontented African slaves on the sugar plantations and only a few hundred European owners and staff was a fact of life. So also was the dependency of the colonists on Amerindian help to put down slave uprisings and track down runaways. This relationship between the colonists and the indigenous peoples was mediated and cemented by payments and a system of present-giving. The prestations rapidly created needs and expectations in the participant indigenous communities and in turn bound them into a dependency on the colonial politico-economic system, notably via a structure of government-recognized leaders, or 'Captains', whose own prestige increased when they collected and re-distributed the presents awarded for the services of their people.

The Coloured Population

In the system of inter-dependencies of the colonial settlements and adjacent indigenous communities another, third, element was developing at the end of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th. This involved a new, increasing sector in the population of the Three Colonies, which needs to be fully considered because it is directly implicated in the Movement of "Indians to be Transformed into Whites".

In the transmutations envisaged was the anticipation 'that the Mulattoes would be their [the Indians'] slaves'. This new population had settlements along the river banks, between the coastal plantations and the first rapids of the principal rivers and they were referred to as Bovianders, a term incorporating "above" and indicating 'yonder'. They were people of mixed race, the term Mulatto referring to offspring of White Europeans and Black Africans, but the miscegenation went further. Thomas Staunton St. Clair, a young Army Lieutenant stationed in the Three Colonies between 1806-08, on seeing the free coloured people up the Essequibo in 1807, described them as

...a mixture between the Mulattoes and native Indians, and thus having three kinds of blood in their veins, the White's, the Black's and the Indian's, and possessing the worst qualities of each. Their method of living resembles that of the Indians, a number of whom were residing with them. (St. Clair II: 49-50)

Rodway noted that:

The free coloured people generally sympathised with the runaways and on pretence of going up the creeks to fish, carried supplies and traded for such things as they raised in their provision grounds or collected from the bush. (Rodway 1890: 16)

This mixed sector of the population engaged in trading and inter-breeding with the Amerindian population nearest them, which was primarily Arawak on the lower rivers and Akawaio living above the first falls. Every so often quarrels and disputes arose between them which aroused anxiety in a colonial administration wishing to prevent active conflict near the estates and which relied on the indigenous population for policing and military support in controlling the Black slave population. A prime example of the dangers threatened by disputes between the indigenous and coloured population occurred shortly after the British took control of the Three Colonies in 1803. The event, a disagreement between the Essequibo Indians and the Bovianders, is recorded by Rodway, who related that Postholder Linau was, in 1805, sent up the Essequibo to reconcile the parties in a dispute:

He met with an Arawak who had abandoned his home because the mulattoes had frightened him with a report that the Acawois and Macousis were coming down to murder them all. He found the bovianders from Essequibo, Massaruni and Cuyuni congregated on a small island, as they said, for defence against the Indians. Being confronted with some of the Arawaks, they affirmed that the report of the expected raid came from the Indians, which the latter denied. Finally the postholder forbade the bovianders to interfere with the Indians, at the same time saying they must pay the Arawaks properly and live in peace with them. The offenders were however very impertinent, refusing to obey these orders and saying that if the whites did not give them satisfaction they would attack the Indians. They were, they said, not only free people, but Burghers, and in every respect as good as the whites; if the Fiscal tried to seize their arms he might depend upon it that not a single gun would be given up. On further investigation Mr. LINAU also found that the Indians charged the mulattoes with stealing their children to sell as slaves. The Court [of Policy] decided to send two persons who understood the Indian languages to assure them that they would be protected, and to renew the prohibition of 1793, against their being purchased as slaves. (Rodway 1896 X Part I: 24)

Rodway dated a Linau investigative visit to the Essequibo Bovianders as taking place in 1805, but Menezes's, quotation of the Minutes of the Court of Policy for 1807-8 (Guyanese National Archives) indicates that this date, as also his suggested 1797 date for the Report of 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites', is too early.

Quoting Minutes of the Court of Policy, Monday 26 Oct. 1807 Menezes notes: in 1807 when the Protector of Indians heard that disturbances between the Indians of Essequibo and the free coloured people had broken out, postholder Linau was immediately dispatched to collect information about the matter and to assure the Indians of the friendliness of the Colony towards them.

In a footnote, still quoting from the Minutes of the Court of Policy (M.C.P.) she records: *The report of Linau's describing the hostility between the free coloured people was carefully checked. The Court of Policy sent two competent persons familiar with the Indian dialect on another expedition back to the villages with Linau 'to ascertain the truth of the said Postholder's statements and to assure the Indians of the determination of the Government to afford them every protection'. M.C.P., Monday 25 Jan. 1808. The free coloured people were stirring up trouble among the Indians and in April 1808 Postholder Wahl in the River Essequibo was appointed Adjutant to Burgher Militia with rank of Captain. (Menezes 1977: 83-4 & Footnote 1 on page 84.)*

The Minutes of the Court of Policy for 26 Oct. 1807 witness that the Protector of Indians for Essequibo, Councillor Knollman, was praised by the Court ... *for swift and judicious decisions in an emergency... when he dispatched his postholder to investigate the disturbances between the Indians and the free coloured people on the Essequibo river. (Menezes 1977: 96. See footnote 4.)*

Thus, both Rodway and Menezes refer to the investigative journey by Postholder Linau and his report, which was followed by a second confirmatory journey. Rodway states a date of 1805 whereas the Minutes of the Court of Policy, quoted by Menezes, indicate that these events took place in 1807. There is a possibility that the friction between the Bovianders was on-going between these two dates, reaching a crescendo in the latter year for which we have another relevant source of information. In 1807 a high profile expedition also visited the scene of the dispute. It consisted of the Acting Governor of the Three Colonies Lieutenant Colonel Robert Nicholson, a variety of officials and some military personnel. An account of this expedition is recorded in detail by the young Army Lieutenant Staunton St. Clair, stationed in the Colonies in 1806-8 and a participant in the expedition. He wrote:

In November, 1807, strong suspicions of a revolt among the Indians of the interior against the Whites, or Europeans, were entertained. Great bodies of these wild people had been observed crossing different rivers towards the Essequibo; and it was supposed that some tribes from Columbia, [Venezuela] or , as they are called, Spanish Indians, had joined them, and were urging the quiet Arrawakas to commit depredations on us for the sake of plunder. It was likewise reported to Colonel Nicholson by the post-holder up the Demerara, whose duty I have already stated it to be to watch the movements of the savages, that they had all of them deserted their wig-wams, or huts, on the banks of this river, and had proceeded in great numbers, with all their families, towards the Essequibo. (St. Clair II: 5-6.)

These movements gave rise to great alarm among the planters and there were daily reports from the Commandeur in Essequibo, with information that the Essequibo Postholder had been attacked and also one or two settlements and people had been killed. There was fear of an attack on Fort Island, the centre of administration in Essequibo Colony, and a military detachment was sent from Demerara to defend it. St. Clair went on to state: *Though the number of these wild people was daily increasing, and their horrid blasts of war re-echoed through the woods, it was impossible to divine the cause of the discontent which had been excited among them - more particularly as they had hitherto constantly conducted themselves towards the Whites as the most harmless and friendly race of beings ever met with. (St. Clair II: 6-7)*

After nearly a fortnight's suspense, it was learnt that the Indians had retired into the interior of the country. It was discovered, from some complaints made, that their anger and discontent had been caused by the free coloured people residing on the banks of the Essequibo, who had defrauded them and also detained their young children as slaves.

The Acting Governor, Lieutenant Colonel Nicholson, decided to journey to the Essequibo trouble-spot himself. St. Clair recorded that they left Stabroek on 22nd November 1807 and returned on the 6th of December. On their way up the Essequibo they landed at Groot Creek, west bank of the Essequibo, where some Indians came to barter baskets. They were probably Arawaks. Alarmed by 'other tribes collecting in great numbers higher up the river', they had fled to thick forest for security. On reaching Agitos, the first settlement of the free coloured people up-river, the expedition saw that, fearing an attack from the Indians, the inhabitants had erected a large block-house as a place of security. The expedition began to suspect the involvement of the Akawaio (referred to as 'Aguaya') in the disturbances. Their tracks were discovered in the forest nearby and suggested the presence of a great number of them. *It was this tribe they so much dreaded, being considered a very warlike and determined people, who, as we supposed, had been incensed by the habitual outrages of these mongrels, and likewise*

those of the pusillanimous Arrawakas, in stealing their children, and making prisoners of their young men and women, whom they barter away for rum and other commodities to the white inhabitants lower down the river - a cheap labourer being always sought after by the planters in preference to the Negroes ...but they never bestowed a thought on the consequences that must ensue from the hate and detestation of these much-wronged natives, whose conduct towards the settlers had hitherto been most harmless and inoffensive. They reported the numbers of the Aguayas to be great; and these free coloured people well knew that if they fell into their power they had nothing but death to expect. (St. Clair II: 51-2)

It was learnt that the Akawaio detected near Agitos had proceeded up-river and the expedition decided to follow them. On the way they arrived at Billstains, where a Dutchman was living with an 'Arrawaka' wife and family, who said that the Indians were all collected above the falls

...that they were an innocent and harmless people; and that he was sure their provocations for committing violence must be great. (St. Clair II: 62)

The last settlement of the free coloured people on the Essequibo was Kumaka Serima (Kumaka Point), situated just below the first rapids. This was the settlement that had been attacked, three men having been killed and four badly wounded, after which the avenging party had retreated and, it was reported, were collected above the falls. Whilst in Kumaka Serima the expedition was

...informed by the post-holder, who was a native of this settlement, that the Macoushi Indians, a race dwelling inland, on the confines of the Portuguese territories, on the great river of Amazons, had lately joined the tribes resident in our territories; and that many others from the interior of the Spanish main had come up to their assistance. (St. Clair II: 64)

However, on the expedition ascending the rapids, they found only deserted houses, the owners having decamped a few days previously and, it would seem, '... most probably, from the tracks we observed, in different directions'.⁶⁵ Deprived of an opportunity to question the Indians as to whether the free coloured people had enslaved any of their children and to confront the two parties to the dispute, Colonel Nicholson decided to return to Demerara. However, he first summoned the chiefs of the two settlements of free coloured people and demanded that they should cease the illegal practice of enslaving their Indian neighbours, on pain of exile.⁶⁶

There are striking resemblances between the Report of 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' (c.1797) and St. Clair's account of the 1807 dispute between the free coloured people below the first falls of the Essequibo and the Akawaio Indians assembled above. Both texts are augmented by the Minutes of the Court of Policy for that period, as quoted by Menezes. Both St. Clair and the Transformation Report refer to a considerable movement of Indians to the Essequibo River from its two major tributaries, the Mazaruni and Cuyuni, and from the Demerara River. The Demerara Postholder reported that the Indians there had all deserted their homes and had gone in great numbers towards the Essequibo, where they were to be joined by Spanish and Portuguese Indians. The journey from the Demerara to the Essequibo was not arduous as there were several paths between the two rivers. The beginning of one was pointed out to St. Clair as being a seven hour walk only.⁶⁷ Both accounts refer to the involvement of Spanish and Portuguese Indians. St. Clair observes that the old Postholder, (whom he later named as 'Sami', a native of Koumaka Serima the uppermost village of the free coloured people) specifically referred to the 'Macoushi' Indians from Portuguese territory as having '...lately joined the tribes resident in our territories'.⁶⁸ (See the full quotation above.)

St. Clair's account does not mention a Protector of Indians for Essequibo colony. However, the Minutes of the Court of Policy for 27 October 1807 indicate that it was Mr Knollman, a Councillor, referred to as 'Protector of Indians in Essequibo' and as having discharged Postholder William Anthon and the Assistant Postholder B. Pieterse, the former for quitting his post without leave and the latter because he had 'rendered himself obnoxious to the Indians'.⁶⁹ These discharges may explain the use of H. Linau (Postholder in the Pomeroron and Moruka area of Essequibo Colony) to investigate the causes of the dispute between the free coloured people and the Indians up the Essequibo, reported in the Minutes of the Court of Policy, 26 Oct. 1807.⁷⁰ However, these Minutes indicate that another Postholder, H.C. Wahl in Essequibo, may have been involved, for on 1st Sept 1807 he had received a very meritorious report and an increase in salary on the request of his Protector.⁷¹

It is noteworthy that by the time that the British had taken the Three Colonies in September 1803, a new office, 'Protector of Indians', had been created which was linked to that of Postholder. On 14th May 1803, still under the Batavian Republic, the Court of Policy had issued 18 Articles of 'Instructions to the Postholders', then numbering six and stationed at posts on the Demerara, Essequibo, Pomeroron, Mahaica, Mahaicony and Boeraserie rivers. Each Postholder was to keep an accurate journal of his proceedings and of all the occurrences at his post and he was to transmit quarterly a copy of this to the Protector of his district. In the case of any extraordinary occurrence, at or near the post, 'he shall immediately acquaint therewith the Protector'. (Articles 1-3)⁷² The document detailing the Movement 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' is a product of these first three Instructions, notably falling under the third Article as being 'an extraordinary occurrence'. The Essequibo Post at that time was situated at the Cuyuni - Essequibo confluence (later to become the Penal Settlement site).⁷³ It would most likely to have been from there that the reporting Postholder went out to search for his people 'who had run away'.

Protectors, like Mr Knollman, were '...chosen from the most respectable gentlemen in the districts close to their respective Indian residences'.⁷⁴ The office was an unpaid, honorary one, with the duty of protecting the Indian population of their particular district. Specifically, they were to supervise the Postholders there, to report on their behaviour and to act as intermediaries between them and the colonial administration. They could engage and dismiss Postholders and their Assistants but needed the ratification of the Court of Policy for this. Notably, they were involved in present-giving. They submitted lists of articles required for the Court of Policy to authorise the purchases and they supervised the distributions at the various posts.

I have not been able to discover any mention of the exact date of the creation of the office of Protector, which might assist in the dating of Rodway's document. There is the possibility that it had its roots in 1781, when the Three Colonies capitulated to the English fleet in the Caribbean. Appointments following included a 'Surveyor of the Woods of Essequibo for the Preservation of the Timber' and a 'Deputy Surveyor of the Woods of Demerara'. There was subsequent correspondence⁷⁵ concerning a prospective appointment of a 'Mr Michael Henry Leste[r]n' and of his suitability. In it there is reference to the Postholders having always been employed in keeping up an interest with the Indians '...of whom there are so many Nations bordering close upon these colonies', so that 'by putting the Postholders in the hands of Mr Lesten, he may manage the Indians as he pleases, and the Colony is in a great degree at his Mercy'. In the Instructions given (by Edward Thompson, Commander of H.M. Ship *Hyaena*), is a statement that unites concern with the forest and relationships with its Indian inhabitants: *The Deputy Surveyor shall have the appointment of proper postholders to protect the Woods and encourage the Indians.* (C.O. III, 1: 102, 102A)

There is frequent mention of Protectors and of their mode of integration with the long

established postholder system in the 'Postholders Instructions' issued by the Batavian Republic in May 1803, thereby suggesting a recent creation. The c.1797 date for the Transformative Movement, as proposed by Rodway is seemingly too early for a report to have been made to 'one of the Protectors of Indians'.

Given the information on the dispute between the free coloured people and their Akawaio neighbours, affirmed by the Minutes of the Court of Policy to have erupted in 1807, the question arises as to whether the reported Movement 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' was a precursor and separate event or an integral part of the 1807 occurrences as described by St. Clair. Rodway assigned a tentative date of 'about 1797' for the Movement without giving a reason for this. In judging whether we are considering two successive events and not just the one of 1807, it is perhaps useful to recall St. Clair's remark that it was impossible to divine the cause of the Indians' discontent particularly because '...they had hitherto constantly conducted themselves towards the Whites as the most harmless and friendly race of beings ever met with' (full quotation above). It might be argued that had there been a similar, previous dispute within the periods of English possession of the Three Colonies (1781-2, 1796-1802, 1803-) St. Clair would have heard of it. That the two sets of references relate to just one Movement, that operative in 1807, may also be inferred because, as noted, they had a number of factual statements in common. The reaction of the Administration, in sending a second investigative visit to the villages to check on Postholder Linau's initial one, is noteworthy in that it is quoted by the Court of Policy, in the Minutes of 26th October 1807 and later by Rodway, who gives the date of 1805 for the first visit by Postholder Linau but does not date the second visit. But whether the reported Movement refers to one or two separate events, or perhaps to simmering hostilities during several successive years, it powerfully reflects the nature of the social and political context in which Amerindian communities were involved in the colonial system of the beginning of the nineteenth century and the initiation of British rule. The data demonstrate that from the 1790s onwards, there was the potential for increasing conflict between those Amerindians living near the colonial establishments (the Coastal Arawak and the Akawaio nearest the first falls) and the growing communities of free coloured people, the Bovianders.

Our sources, notably the dates recorded in the Minutes of the Court of Policy, indicate that the Movement 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' came to a head in the year 1807 and most likely around the middle of that year when there was a call to the Akawaio of the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers to join an assembly up the Essequibo, together with related communities coming from the west and south. It was to trigger the subjection of the free coloured people and Whites by a switch in roles that would reverse a dominance perceived to stem from a spiritual power named 'God'.

Missionary Work in the Three Colonies

Before and throughout the 18th century religious instruction and ceremonial were minimal, even for the colonists themselves. In Essequibo, a church and minister were attached to the Administration and moved with it, eventually being located at Ampa on the right bank of the River Essequibo, near the Estuary. Berbice had one Dutch Reformed Church and a Lutheran Church and Minister. In 1735 the first Preacher arrived at the church which had been built at Fort Nassau in 1724.⁷⁶ Demerara had no church and no regular clergyman. Georgetown's first church was opened in 1810, subsequently becoming the Anglican Cathedral. The Dutch official religion in the Three Colonies was the Dutch Reformed Church, but Lutheranism and

other forms of Protestantism were tolerated. Roman Catholics were not - largely through fear of Spanish connections. Robert Schomburgk noted that in 1796 and in 1803 when British troops were in occupation, the only church in Essequibo was on Fort Island with just the Chaplain of the British forces and the Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church. Children were left unbaptized for want of a pastor.⁷⁷

In the Dutch period there had been considerable difficulty in obtaining suitable Ministers and there were long vacancies. Services were mostly conducted at the Essequibo and Berbice Forts.⁷⁸ Up to 1824 there were no more than three clergymen in the Three Colonies. Unless they happened to be associated with the household of an unusually pious owner, or were witnesses to church services at the headquarters of the colonial administrations, Black and Amerindian slaves and servants would not have encountered any specific Christian teaching or ritual. It was, moreover, deliberate Dutch policy to keep both the Black slaves and the indigenous peoples in ignorance of the Christian faith, fearing that such teaching would foster a sense of oppression and promote rebellions in the case of the former and would upset the friendly relationships created with the latter. A lack of dedicated evangelization continued under the British up to 1831, when an Anglican Mission for the indigenous peoples began at Bartica, at the Mazaruni confluence with the Essequibo.⁷⁹

Although the Dutch period is notable for the absence of Christian missionary endeavour involving the indigenous population, there was one exception. This was the work of the Moravian Brethren in the colonies of Surinam and Berbice. Arriving in Surinam in 1735, most of the Brethren's work was with the Black slaves, but by 1742 they had substantial contacts with the Caribs. In 1756 they established the Carib mission of Saron on the Saramacca River (Surinam) with Arawaks added later. It lasted until 1779. Moravian activity in Berbice began in 1738 when a Dutch planter requested the conversion of his slaves to Christianity. In November 1740 the missionaries founded Pilgerhut on the Wiruni River, a tributary of the Berbice. From 1748 Pilgerhut was an important centre of Moravian work amongst the Arawak, until its destruction through epidemics followed by the Berbice Slave Revolt in 1762-3 when the remnant population fled. During its existence the missionaries there worked on the Arawak language and apart from compiling a German-Arawak dictionary and grammar, they translated into Arawak parts of the Bible, the story of the birth of Christ, the Revelation, Passion and Resurrection, the first sermons of the Apostles and numerous hymns.⁸⁰

By 1757 there were 300 Indians living in or around Pilgerhut. After its destruction the Moravians opened a mission station called Hoop (Hope) on the Surinam bank of the Corentyne River. Between 1789 until 1798 it was manned by Johann Fischer, who began to learn Arawak and who opened a school for children. The mission, assailed by hunger and disease, was destroyed by fire in 1806 and was closed in 1808. In all, 855 Indians had been baptized from the Berbice and Corentyne Rivers.⁸¹ Although the missionaries concentrated on the Coast Arawaks (Lokono) of Berbice, they also had contacts with Akawaio communities. They recorded that there were 'Aquais' living in the upper zone of the Berbice, Demerary and Isequeb. They also recorded that they visited the 'Acquaien' several times in 1748 and 1749. The Pilgerhut diary refers to a visit by Brother Gra benstein in October-November 1748, who had encountered *...ten camps in a row, each one hour away from the other. The people there are looking forward to meeting us and they listened to him.* (Staehelin 1913-1919, II: i, 66-67.)

⁸²

Among the 195 Amerindians baptized at Pilgerhut in 1751 was an unspecified number of Akawaio. The Mission also had an Akawaio evangelist, called Ruchama, working amongst his (or her) own people. Additionally, the diary records a journey that was made in January 1753 that suggests contact with Akawaio living westwards, in the Demerara and perhaps the Essequibo valleys:

Brother Cornelius returned home from one of his six weekly journeys to the West, in order to buy some hunting gear from the Acquaïen. He has been at a distance of 9 travel days and went here and there to tell them about the Holy One. (Staehelin 1913-1919, II: ii, 106)

The Moravians visited Indians scattered through the forests of 'Surinaam, Berbice, Courantine, Demerara, Essequibo, and Venezuela to a distance of not less than 300 miles along the coast'.⁸³ Of prime importance was their knowledge of the Arawak language and their translation of the life of Christ, which they read to the Indians and discussed during their visits. *They thus gained the esteem and affection of the people, and a desire, to become better acquainted with the Christian religion, manifested itself through the whole Arawaak nation. Some of the converts having visited their friends on the Orinoko river, the extreme western boundary of Guiana, communicated the truths which they had learned to the Spanish Indians in that quarter, which led to a deputation from them to Pilgerhut, to hear the truths of the gospel from the missionaries themselves. A visit to the Courantine, eastward, was followed by a similar result. These reports gradually spread wider and wider for several years, and visits were made to the station from distant regions, so that the leading truths of Christianity were more or less known to all the tribes between the Orinoko and the Amazon, the boundaries of Guiana, but especially to the Arawaaks who live on the coast, and have more intercourse with the Europeans than any of the other Indian nations. (Duff 7)*

In 1848 the Superintendent of the upper Corentyne River reported that, at the time of his arrival, there were still Arawaks who could read the Bible in their own language, sing their hymns and give a correct account of the principal parts of the Christian religion. He attributed this to a Moravian missionary settlement up the Corentyne in Dutch times.⁸⁴

In the opinion of some 19th century missionaries of British Guiana, the teaching of the Moravians had been all but forgotten, but they nevertheless considered that it had prepared the ground for their own evangelical work.⁸⁵ However, in their writings these later Protestant missionaries did not acknowledge or take into account the more extensive and sustained missionary endeavour that had been carried out amongst the same ethnic groups in their western regional extension, by the Capuchinos Catalanes, the Capuchins of Catalonia, in their Guayana Mission. Nor did they consider the effects of Portuguese incursions and Carmelite missionary work in the valleys of the Rio Negro and Rio Branco to the south, during the course of the 18th century.

The Portuguese in the Rio Negro and Rio Branco

The Report of the Transformative Movement states: 'That the Spanish and Portuguese Indians had joined the Assembly, and that the moment the transformation would be completed, they would conquer the colony.' In the Three Colonies the designation 'Portuguese Indians' referred to indigenous peoples living in the far south, at the headwaters of the Essequibo, in an unexplored and undetermined frontier with the Portuguese in the Amazon basin. Names of the Indian peoples that are today associated with the Rupununi Savannas and southernmost forests, Makushi, Wapishana, Atorai and Taruma, figure sporadically in Dutch records of the second half of the 18th century, noticeably from 1764, the year in which Storm van 's Gravesande ordered the removal of the Essequibo post of Arinda from its site at the Siparuni confluence to that of the Rupununi. This was accompanied by an order to its

Postholder to visit 'the numerous and powerful tribe called Tarouma, and, if possible, to discover the source of the Essequibo.'⁸⁶ His stated reason for removal up the river was not the Carib trade in Red slaves or in 'Acuway' (Akawaio) and 'Ataray' (Atorai) dyes but for 'keeping up the communication and friendship with the inland tribes, by means of which great discoveries might be made'.⁸⁷ The discoveries referred to were valuable natural resources, such as cocoa, cinnamon and precious minerals, especially the latter.⁸⁸ In a 'Brief Treatise' of 1764 van 's Gravesande asserted that: *The Essequibo itself, through remaining equally wide and large, is unknown a few days above the Post [at Siparuni], ...no-one having gone in this direction.* (Harris & de Villiers II: 463)

He blamed the itinerant traders as being superstitious and cowardly and Postholders who quickly become like Indians. He also referred bitterly to the abortive expedition of Nicolas Horstman, a Surgeon in the pay of the West Indian Company, who had been sent up the Essequibo in 1739 to find the route to the Amazon, its mineral resources and trading possibilities, but who had defected to the Portuguese on reaching the Rio Negro Carmelite village of Aracarí. It is clear from Horstman's Journal that he had followed an established Amerindian trading route. From the Rupununi River the expedition had dragged their canoes across the swampy lake Amucu into the Pirara River, thus crossing the Essequibo - Amazon watershed and from thence into the Mao (Maho/Ireng), down the Tacutu and Rio Branco into the Negro.⁸⁹ Arinda, on its new site, was not established until 1769. In that year Postholder Gerrit Jansse proceeded up the Rupununi River, made contact with the 'Macoussis' and through them with the 'Wapissannes' living on both sides of the Maho (Ireng) River.⁹⁰ The reluctance to ascend the Essequibo, to explore and make direct contact with Amerindians to the south and west is explicable if we look at events that had been unfolding in neighbouring Brazil during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Pedro de Teixeira, accompanied by two Jesuits, arrived at the Rio Negro confluence in 1639 during his Amazon journey. He took possession of the river in the name of the King of Spain.⁹¹ On Portugal becoming independent from Spain in 1641 the Amazon territory was thereby politically separated from that of the Spanish in the Orinoco to the north and the Andes to the west. In 1755 the Province of *São José do Rio Negro* was created and a capital established at Barcellos. The Jesuits were working at Rio Negro mouth by 1660 and Portuguese claims were confirmed by the establishment of a fort, the *Fortaleza da Barra do Rio Negro*, situated just above the Negro's junction with the Amazon, the site of today's city of Manaus.⁹² Although Dutch attempts to colonize the Amazon to the south had failed, (they were expelled in 1654) their influence in the north remained. It took the form of trading relations carried out via an indigenous network using paths such as that described by Horstman in his Journal. There were reports of Dutch goods, notably metal tools and guns acquired in exchange for slaves, which were discovered in the hands of the indigenous peoples of the Rio Negro and its tributaries, including the Branco, causing the Portuguese to fear that it was the preliminary to a Dutch acquisition of this region. The need to ensure sovereignty and the policy of enslavement and forced labour of their indigenous population at large, were the basis of events in northern Brazil until the middle of the 19th century, Brazil having become independent from Portugal in 1822. The boundary with British Guiana was finally settled by Arbitration in 1905.

The Portuguese Policy of Enslavement

As in the case of the Three Colonies, the existence of a plantation economy in Amazonia depended on slave labour. African slaves were preferable but Indian slaves were cheaper and wealth lay in the control of this source of manpower. However, it was a fluctuating source owing to its constant depletion through disease and high rates of mortality due to recurrent epidemics, notably of smallpox and measles spreading from Para and Maranhão. The recruitment of replacement labour had therefore to be carried out in increasingly remote areas of Amazonia. Since the Indians would not voluntarily work for the colonists a system of forced labour was established. This was based on purchase and kidnapping by specific expeditions into the distant hinterlands, so that escape back to home territories from the colonial centres and their plantations was inhibited.

As Sweet describes, there were several kinds of slaving expeditions.⁹³ There was the *tropa de resgate* that he defines as an official government expedition sent to barter goods for slaves with compliant Indian chiefs and which normally also raided villages to capture people. The term *resgate*, literally 'rescue', embodied the legal fiction that it was a process for purchasing, and thereby saving by ransom, Indians already enslaved and were captives of war in danger of being killed and, it was asserted, eaten. There was the *tropa de guerra*, an official government expedition sent to punish Indian tribes that had attacked Europeans and to capture and enslave as many of the offenders as possible. Finally, there was the *descimento* defined as a non-violent and, theoretically, voluntary removal of Indian communities in a 'descent' from the forest to villages (*aldeias*) set up under missionary or military administration. In these *aldeias* the Indians were to become Christians, adopt a Portuguese way of life and a cultivation economy and they were organized to give their labour for specific ends. The able-bodied members were divided into rotating sections to perform particular tasks during the year, such as 3-4 months serving the colonists, giving service to the State, working for their resident missionary and maintaining their village. They spent long periods collecting forest products and often acted as crewmen to carry out further slave raids and *descimentos*.⁹⁴ Apart from State sponsored slaving expeditions, private slaving also flourished, being a feature of the regional economy from the very beginning of the colony in the 17th century.⁹⁵

With slaving expeditions having exhausted the manpower in the areas nearest the colonial settlements, attention turned to the remoter regions of the Amazon valley, in the north to the Solimões and Rio Negro. The low reaches of the Negro experienced its first *tropa de resgate* in 1657, accompanied by two Jesuits, Francisco Vellozo and Manoel Pires who established contact with the Taruma there.⁹⁶ Responsible for all missionary work in the colony, Jesuits explored and sporadically worked in the lower Rio Negro to found mission villages until 1693-4, when they were replaced by the Carmelites.⁹⁷ One mission, Aracari (or Aracary), was established opposite the Rio Branco confluence, but the middle and upper reaches of the Negro were blocked by a confederation of the Arawak-speaking Manao peoples under their famous leader, Ajuricaba. The Portuguese regarded them as being allies of the Dutch, engaging in extensive trade in slaves in exchange for exotic goods of Dutch origin, so when they attacked an official expedition led by Manoel de Braga, camped in Manao territory near Aracari, a *tropa de guerra* was sent to subdue them and take as many captives as possible. The war of 1723-30 which followed, coincided with a smallpox epidemic in 1724-5 in Para and Maranhão that killed great numbers of Indians and even some Black slaves, in towns and on plantations, causing a great shortage of slave labour.⁹⁸ With Manao power destroyed, Portuguese slavers gained access to the middle and upper Negro at this crucial time of labour

shortage and the valley became rapidly depopulated, its inhabitants carried off as slaves or settled in Carmelite mission villages. Its tributaries, including the Rio Branco valley, were now accessible.

According to Freitas⁹⁹ in 1706 an official *Tropa de resgate* under Cristo va o Aires Botelho had entered the lower Rio Branco. Around then, during the first decade of the 18th century, Francisco Ferreira, a Paraense, began exploring the river and remained active there for over 50 years. Sweet refers to him as known for being the 'pioneer explorer of the Rio Branco basin'

...Who is credited with having "discovered" the lush plains of the Uraricoera and Takutú valleys...and who came to be the man with the greatest knowledge of the entire Branco valley. (Sweet 658-9; see also 667-8 & 765 No. 55.)

In 1710 Ferreira accompanied Lourenço Belfort, a Maranhão planter, and his troop a short distance up the Rio Branco¹⁰⁰ Settled at the mission of Santo Alberto do Aracari during the 1720s, Ferreira made annual expeditions up the Rio Branco to collect forest produce and acquire slaves. From Aracari he worked with the Carmelite missionary Fr Jero nimo Coelho. In 1736 Lourenço Belfort, financing his own *tropa*, carried out an expedition led by Jose Miguel Ayres to explore the Uraricoera. In 1740 a party of Belfort's troop under Francisco Xavier de Andrade, camped on the lower reaches of the Uraricoera and, accompanied by Francisco Ferreira, explored far up the river into the forest, seeking Wapixana, Macuxis and Sapara . It was followed by another, official, incursion at the end of the 1740s, sent by Jose Miguel Ayres and which joined a group commanded by Sebastiao Valente who was carrying out private *resgates*. Sweet reckons that this combined expedition may have extracted as many as 1,000 slaves from the Branco valley in a single year.¹⁰¹ The Ayres incursion also brought in an epidemic of measles that was spreading throughout the colony, destroying villages and causing the flight of their inhabitants.

From 1739 until 1750 'the exploration and systematic depopulation of the Rio Branco and upper Rio Negro ... proceeded without interruption.'¹⁰² Farage notes¹⁰³ that although the military leaders (*cabos*) were ordered to leave their command within a year, in practice they rotated in a system of substitution allowing for a return. In this way, in the Rio Branco the *resgates* under the command of Belfort, initiated in the 1730s, began to be drawn out from 1740 to 1749. Farage also describes the tactics of the *cabos*, which was to make a base camp and to divide their troops into escorts (*escoltas*) acting simultaneously in various areas. Thus, in 1740, a part of the Belfort troop formed an escort commanded by Francisco Xavier de Andrade, who set up an encampment above the first rapids of the Uraricoera River and then divided into two, taking different directions along the two banks of the river, the one commanded by Francisco Ferreira, entering the western area of Roraima, seeking Wapixana and Macuxi.

As a result of these slaving expeditions, the indigenous peoples along the main rivers of the Rio Negro and Rio Branco who had not been killed or captured, fragmented and fled to remoter areas. Some took refuge within the Dutch sphere and the 'first coming of "Maganouts" ' [Manao] into Essequibo around 1722 and their 'second advent in 1723', referred to in Dutch records, might have been a result of Portuguese initial activities in the Rio Negro.¹⁰⁴ Some Paraviana (or Paravilhanos), Carib-speaking people of the lower Rio Branco, may also have made their way to the Essequibo, for Horstman in December 1739 recorded that he spent weeks in a 'village of the Parahans' on the Essequibo, situated a short distance above the Siparuni confluence.¹⁰⁵ The Makushi were being raided for slaves by 1740¹⁰⁶ and it might have been around this time that, according to their oral tradition, some

westernmost Wapishana crossed the Takutu River into the Rupununi and entered Atorai country to escape the Portuguese. Both belong to the same Arawak-speaking ethnic group of Pityan but conflict ensued with their Carib-speaking Makushi (Pemon) neighbours. In 1746 a Dutch mining expedition to the Calikko or Crystal Mountain¹⁰⁷ that had 'examined the heaven-high mountains up in Essequibo' reported

...that the Indian tribes living in that district had not permitted them to approach it [the Crystal mountain] without a deal of difficulty, terrified by the ill-treatment they had suffered at the hands of the neighbouring Portuguese: ...and that the Indian tribes were all at war with each other, and were nearly all at war, too, with the Portuguese, who were continually making raids upon them and carrying them off, and that this was a source of great danger to any Christians who came there. (Harris & de Villiers I: 226-7, Despatch of Van's Gravesande to the West India Company, Dec.1746.)

In 1749-50 in Paraviana country - the lower Rio Branco, there was a direct confrontation between Dutch and Portuguese. A Portuguese slaving expedition under Sebastião dos Santos Valente clashed with and was beaten back by a party of Dutch slavers. With an additional contestant, the Spanish of Guayana (see below), there were by 1775 three powers competing for control of the Rio Branco valley.

In 1764 there is a first Dutch reference to the Tarumas, who had fled from their Carmelite mission village in the lower Rio Negro to take refuge in the forest south of the Rupununi Savannas.¹⁰⁸ In 1765 the Macoussis and Wapissanes were again reported to be at war.¹⁰⁹ The repercussions of Carib raiding and slaving in the Rupununi and Rio Branco regions added to the turmoil that the Portuguese advance northwards created. Two groups of Caribs can be identified as active in the Rupununi District. One group derived from the Cuyuni River valley in Essequibo, which was abandoned by them when Spanish raids from 1758 onwards destroyed an incipient Dutch post there and the river became unsafe. Taking advantage of the relocation of Post Arinda to the vicinity of the Rupununi River confluence they became the dominant indigenous group there, fighting and displacing the Akawaio who had supported Arinda when it was located downriver at the Siparuni confluence. The second group of Caribs had fled to the Rio Branco area from islands in the Caroní River, below the Paragua confluence, having previously escaped from the Franciscans to the north of the Orinoco. These were very likely the Spanish-speaking Caribs whom the Portuguese identified (see below). Both groups worked together with Caribs based in Surinam, which was the major market for selling Amerindian slaves.¹¹⁰

The consequences of radical displacement of Amerindian peoples of the Negro and Branco valleys have yet to be fully assessed, combining a study of English, Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish sources with indigenous oral traditions.¹¹¹ However, the literature already shows that Portuguese slaving activities caused groups of survivors to flee towards and into areas of Dutch influence in the upper Essequibo valley, notably into the Rupununi. Hence the reference to the anticipated participation of the 'Portuguese Indians' in the Movement 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' and an explicit mention of 'Macoussis coming down to murder them all'[the Mulattoes], quoted by Rodway.¹¹²

The 'Directorate' and the Policy of Indigenous Settlement in Villages

In 1750 the ascension to power in Portugal of the Marquis of Pombal as Chief Minister

resulted in dramatic changes of official Indian policy. He was aided by his brother Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado who became Governor of the State of Maranhão and Pará. Early in 1757 Mendonça Furtado decreed that Indian villages should be free of missionary control. A subsequent 1757 decree negated an intention to give Indians freedom and the same rights as the Portuguese colonists, on grounds of unsuitability.¹¹³ Instead of missionaries, Indian villages (*aldeias*) were to be in charge of White 'Directors'. This new system of governance became known as the *Diretório* and it was to dominate the second half of the 18th century Portuguese treatment of Amerindians.¹¹⁴

In 1754 there were twenty-five Carmelite villages on the Rio Negro and five on the Rio Branco.¹¹⁵ A fear of Dutch expansion from the Essequibo in the north led to a consolidation of Portuguese power through the creation of the *Capitania de São José do Rio Negro* in 1755. A fort on the Rio Branco was proposed but not built until 1775-6. Situated at the confluence of the Tacutu with the Uraricoera, forming the Rio Branco, its construction was the response to a surprise invasion by Spanish military expeditions from the Orinoco.¹¹⁶ Beginning in 1773, these travelled up the Paragua River, crossed the Southern Pakaraima Mountains into the Amazon basin and began to create fortified villages on tributaries of the Uraricoera. On becoming aware of the Spanish presence the Portuguese sent a military force which duly captured a Spanish detachment and expelled the invaders.¹¹⁷ There was now a pressing need for an effective occupation to maintain title against the Spanish, Dutch and French to the north, to a frontier in dispute. The response was to build Fort São Joaquim, with a permanent military detachment and a policy of settling the indigenous peoples in villages governed by the *Diretório* system. This system was to dominate relationships between the Portuguese and the indigenous peoples of the Rio Branco until a decree in 1798 abolished all of Pombal's legislation. By 1777 Fort São Joaquim and 5 - 6 villages (*aldeias*) had been established.¹¹⁸ The villages were:

N.S. da Conceição, on the Uraricoera; inhabited by Wapixana, Parauana, Atoraiu, Sapara.

São Felipe, on the Rio Tacutu; Paraviana.

N.S. do Carmo, on the lower Rio Branco; Wapixana, Paraviana, Sapara, Erimissana.

Santa Bárbara, on the Rio Branco; Paraviana.

Santa Isabel, on the Rio Branco; Tapicari, Sapara, Wayumara.

Santo Antonio e Almas, on the Rio Uraricoera; ?.

In 1780-1, with the exception of Carmo further down the Branco, the settled Indians revolted and fled their villages. With the aid of a Royal Pardon a second attempt at settlement was made in 1784 and four new villages were organized. They were:

N.S. da Conceição (240 Paraviana).

São Felipe (212 Wapixana).

Santa Maria (133 Wapixana).

São Martinho (45 Wapixana).

Additionally, 23 Macuxi settled by the Fort.

Of a total of 1,051 settled in the 1784-9 period, 389-390 were Wapixana.¹¹⁹ The villages were strategically located along the Rio Branco from the Fort down the river towards the Portuguese settlements of the Rio Negro. The process of re-settlement was slow and a second revolt occurred at the beginning of 1790. It started with the Macuxi, whose leader killed a soldier of the Fort and the military Director of his village. The villagers killed two more soldiers and then fled. The revolt of the Wapixana in São Martinho followed. A Portuguese punitive force was sent into the mountains to track down the culprits, taking Macuxi prisoners and killing three who, armed with muskets, had resisted, amongst them Parauijamari their leader. Fearing an attack on the Fort and a general flight, a policy of dispersal of the village Indians to other, distant regions of Brazil was adopted. Sixteen leaders were sent to Barcellos on the Rio Negro, for better control. Indians from the Rio Negro were

brought in to serve the Fort and to re-populate the area. By 1798 only a few Indians were encountered in the villages of Carmo, Santa Maria and Sa o Felipe, the other two villages had vanished.¹²⁰ In this year there was a third rebellion against the Portuguese:



Map 2. Approximate locations of Indigenous villages under the Directorate in the Rio Branco 1777-90. With acknowledgements to Farage (1991, 58) and Hemming (1990, 296).

Carib-speaking Paravilhana and Aruak Wapixana combined in an attempt to end colonial rule: they killed their director, a squadron of soldiers, and some settlers. The official reaction was very violent. A punitive expedition was sent from Belém do Pará under Lieutenant Leonardo José Ferreira. The Indians tied to organize a resistance, but were slaughtered on the west bank of the Rio Branco above Lake Arauari, at a place that became known as Praia do Sangue (Beach of Blood, now called Praia da Desgrace, or Beach of Tragedy). Seventy Indians fled from the massacre, but were captured and deported ... Depopulation of the Rio Branco was now extreme. (Hemming 1990: 321-2 and 1990a:3)

The process of settlement (*aldeamento*) of the Rio Branco Indians had failed in its intention to transform them into sedentary, civilized people modelled on a Portuguese way of life. The causes of the three revolts against village life indicate the situation of the indigenous 'Portuguese Indians' of the Rio Branco at the turn of the 18th century.¹²¹ Each village was under the administration of a *Diretor* who was usually a soldier subordinate to the Comandante of Fort Sa o Joaquim. His first obligation was to keep up the population by carrying out 'descents' (*descimentos*), the process of forcibly persuading Indians to live in villages in a system of controlled and intensive labour. Although enslavement of Indians had been legally prohibited in 1755 and the *tropas de resgate* had ceased, under the *Diretório* system they were still subject to forced labour, for State purposes such as keeping up the Fort and providing food for the military, for the *Diretor* himself and for village subsistence. Certain aspects of indigenous society and culture were suppressed, such as polygamy, the use of *urucu* body paint, the building of houses without separate rooms. Abuses, restrictions, an excessive exploitation of labour, including lengthy expeditions to collect forest products, led to the 1780-1 revolt.¹²² Farage argues that the villages were never self-sufficient and suffered severe food shortages and famine. In 1787 disease was an added factor to extreme oppression, hunger and misery. Finally, following the 1790 revolt, there was the exile of the villagers and their leaders to areas far from their home territories. The culmination of these indigenous - Portuguese relations was a military confrontation, when Caribspeaking Paraviana and Arawak-speaking Wapixana combined to assert their freedom by killing their colonial oppressors but were themselves massacred and the survivors exiled.

In 1798, the *diretório* system was abolished. The legislation replacing it recognised Indians as legal minors, but as in previous decrees it was basically concerned with the supply of labour.

Any Indian who did not have a house and a 'fixed occupation' could be compelled to work for the state or for private colonists. Any outsider was free to exploit natural resources on Indian land. (Hemming 1987: 60)

Descimentos continued into the nineteenth century and Robert Schomburgk was witness to one of them in 1838 when exploring in the vicinity of Fort Sa o Joaquim. The victims were Wapishiana and Atorai from the right, Rupununi bank of the Takutu, their village having been raided in the middle of the night, set on fire and the inhabitants marched away with their hands tied behind their backs.¹²³ Fort Sa o Joaquim and its small garrison continued to maintain the Portuguese presence in the Rio Branco. However, a major change, the introduction of cattle herding, was taking place on the Uraricoera grasslands at the end of the

18th century and was beginning to affect the entire region by the time of the 1807 Movement. (See below.)

The Carmelites¹²⁴

The northern region of Amazonia, after preliminary work by the Jesuits, was assigned to the Carmelites by the Crown in 1693 and by the first quarter of the 18th century they had mission villages on the lower Rio Negro and at Aracarí at the mouth of the Rio Branco. Sweet stresses that the most striking feature of the early Carmelite missions on the Negro and Solimões was their business enterprises. Particularly notable was Fr Jerônimo Coelho, in the village of Tarumã on the lower Rio Negro in the 1720's who, as well as organizing lucrative collections of forest products, was reputed to be engaged in trade for Dutch goods up the Rio Branco and Tacutu and also involved in slaving expeditions up the Rio Branco from Aracarí, conducted by Francisco Ferreira (referred to above).

Although any process of enslavement was forbidden by missionary regulations, the Carmelite villages were nevertheless centres for this activity, maintaining the numbers of their servile village population by *descimentos* and collaborating with passing slaving expeditions. At the same time, the process of settlement in villages had the objective of conversion of 'wild' Indians into imitation Portuguese citizens, which entailed a process of acculturation that required conversion to Christianity. Both Sweet and Farage stress the secular nature of the settlements established by the *diretório pombalino*, operative from 1751 - 1798. In the Rio Branco in the late 1770's, the settlements were, through this policy, under the administration of soldiers detached from the military garrison of Fort São Joaquim. Whilst it is very likely that reports on Christian teaching and ritual carried out by Carmelites in their Rio Negro villages had been transmitted through the indigenous trading network that extended northwards,¹²⁵ there was no mission presence established in the Rio Branco valley until Fort Joaquim was founded (1775-6) and a Carmelite Chaplain and resident Franciscan were attached. Using a portable altar, they occasionally travelled, celebrating Mass and baptizing. By 1780 seven hundred were reported baptized, mostly children¹²⁶ Those who had, for short periods during the 1780s been settled in the villages, would have seen and participated in Christian ritual, receiving some teaching. However, the conversion of adults seems to have been difficult to achieve. In 1790, after the second revolt and the abandonment of the villages established by the *Diretório*, missionary work among the Rio Branco Indians ceased. Until 1839 no attempts were made by the Portuguese to evangelize the Rupununi peoples and their fellow tribesmen to the west. There is a possibility that the Caribs might have transmitted information on Christian primary beliefs. No Caribs in the region appear to have been settled by the Portuguese, but from the middle of the 18th century and in the early 19th century they were reported to be raiding and trading slaves in the Rio Branco valley and in the Rupununi, frequently using the Dutch Post of Arinda as a base. Some of them had fled the Spanish Capuchin Guayana mission village of Murucuri on the Caroní River in the early 1750's and were reported to be Spanish speakers.¹²⁷ Others from the Dutch sphere of the Cuyuni had moved to the vicinity of Arinda, when it had been re-positioned to near the Rupununi confluence in the 1760's. There, both groups joined Surinam Caribs in obtaining and marketing Red slaves. (See above.)

We cannot discount a probability that knowledge of Christian teaching and rituals were infiltrating the remote survivors of Portuguese colonial endeavours, including the Makushi, Atorai and Wapishana groups within or in the neighbourhood of the grasslands of the

Essequibo - Amazon divide. By 1807 there had been a movement of 'Portuguese Indians' eastwards over the Takutu River, taking refuge in the Dutch sphere of influence. It would seem that these Indians were being recruited as allies in the prospective role reversals envisaged. However, there had as yet been no prolonged and systematic teaching widespread in this region, comparable to that which was occurring among the 'Spanish Indians' in the Guayana Mission in the Orinoco basin.

Spanish Guayana

Guayana, the easternmost province of Venezuela, was created in 1593 and, together with Trinidad, was under the jurisdiction of the Real Audiencia de Santa Fe until 1731 when it was incorporated in the Province of Nueva Andalucía and jurisdiction passed to the Governor of Cumana. In 1777 it was united to the *Capitanía General de Venezuela*, having been ruled since 1762 by a succession of officials with the title *Comandante General de Guayana*. In ecclesiastical affairs Guayana was part of the Diocese of the Bishopric of Puerto Rico until, in 1790, the new Diocese of Guayana was created. Its territory extended south of the Orinoco River, eastwards to an undetermined border with the Dutch colony of Essequibo and southwards to an unknown frontier with the Portuguese in Brazil. There was one central colonial settlement, that of Santo Tome de Guayana, founded in 1595 near the Caroní River confluence.¹²⁸ It made several changes of site and suffered attacks from Dutch, English and French and their Amerindian allies, eventually becoming closely associated with two military forts, one constructed between 1642-75 and the second at its side in 1749-50, at the site today known as Los Castillos. In 1764 the Guayana Administration was, for reasons of security, moved up-river to Angostura, today's Ciudad Bolívar. The first popular uprising in Venezuela against colonial rule occurred in February 1797 and Independence from Spain was unilaterally declared by the National Congress on 5th July 1811.

In 1652 King Philip II ordered by Royal Decree the suspension of military operations against Indians and entrusted the task of civilizing them to missionaries. In 1646 Jesuits had arrived in Santo Tome and between 1653 and 1681 there were short-lived, sporadic missionary efforts along the lower Orinoco involving the 'Aruacos' (Lokono) and Pariagotos.¹²⁹ Two mission villages were founded, Belén de las Totumas and Mariguaca. In 1681 the Jesuits abandoned their Guayana Mission and concentrated on the upper Orinoco. A very brief visit by two Capuchins occurred in 1682. The 'Capuchin Mission of Trinidad and Guayana' was created by Royal Decrees in February 1686 and April 1687 and the Catalan Capuchins again arrived in Guayana, taking over the two villages and founding two more, in 1687 and 1692. However, sickness and death of mission personnel led to their abandonment by 1700.¹³⁰



Map 3. Anonymous. Mission Villages of the Capuchins of Catalonia in La Guayana, c.1789. From the Archives of the Catalonian Capuchin Order in Rome. (U.S. Commission on the Boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana. Report & Accompanying Papers. Vol. 4, Atlas. Maps of the Orinoco-Essequibo Region of S. America 1897: p. 75.)

A further, brief, attempt at evangelization in 1718 likewise failed. It was not until 1724, with the arrival of six Capuchin missionaries, that the 18th century Guayana Mission began to be successfully established. This is said to have been due to the temporary absence of Caribs who in 1720-3 lost many of their warriors in a war up the Orinoco.¹³¹ Although suffering epidemics, uprisings, desertions and subsequent attacks by Caribs, the Capuchins succeeded in founding some 52 Amerindian villages between 1724 and 1817. Of these, 28 survived.¹³² The Mission lasted until May 1817 when Republican forces invaded during the Venezuelan Civil War, destroying both the Mission endeavour and the Capuchins themselves.¹³³

During its 93 years of existence the Guayana Mission came to control over 2,000 sq. miles (5,178 km²). It encompassed the lower Orinoco flood plain between the Caroní River and the Delta, the forested Imataca Mountains extending parallel to the river, before turning southeastwards into the Essequibo basin and, importantly, it occupied the Yuruari grasslands of the upper Cuyuni basin. (Map 3) The Mission aimed to gather the indigenous population into nucleated villages, (*reducciones*), to teach the Spanish way of life, language and culture. It created a highly organized system. Each mission village was presided over by a *Padre Presidente*, supported by a couple or so of soldiers as an escort. The rest were Indians, who filled a variety of official positions in the village administration. The Mission headquarters was at first situated in the village of La Purísima Concepción de Suay, near Santo Tome, then, when Santo Tome was moved to Angostura in 1764, it was transferred to San Antonio on the lower Caroní, which became La Purísima Concepción del Caroní. The Mission administration was headed by a *Prefecto* and there was a common fund with a *Procurador* who had charge of the overall economy of the mission villages, marketing their surplus produce and purchasing

and distributing village necessities with the proceeds.¹³⁴ In September 1802, the total Capuchin Mission population in Guayana in permanent, nucleated settlements numbered 16,267 residing in 27 villages. This population number excluded the two townships (*villas*) of Upata founded in 1762 and Barceloneta, (today La Paragua) founded in 1770, both having a predominantly Spanish and mixed population).¹³⁵ By 1816, the year before the destruction of the Mission, the total population had risen to 21,246, including a Spanish component of 2,092 in the two *villas*. Thus the total Mission Indian population was 19,154 at that date.¹³⁶ By the time of the 1807 Movement therefore, the Mission was still increasing in numbers, despite epidemics and desertions, and was a very considerable political and economic power.

The Capuchin village economy was based on both cultivation and pastoralism. Each village that had available pasture had its herd of cattle as well as its communal plantations and each family had its own cultivations and domestic animals. The Indians worked on the communal lands for three days per week and the remaining days on their own plots. Surplus produce went to the upkeep of the garrison at Los Castillos, to Angostura, the two townships of Upata and Barceloneta and with the proceeds the *Procuradoría* purchased tools and other items on behalf of the Mission.¹³⁷ There was a clandestine trade with the Dutch in Essequibo, notably in horses and mules for the Dutch sugar mills and in tobacco. The missionaries periodically sent out from Spain were skilled craftsmen as well as priests.¹³⁸ They were stone masons, smiths, carpenters, tanners, cobblers, weavers, brick and tile-makers. Certain villages specialized in particular crafts, such as metal-working or the cultivation, spinning and weaving of cotton cloth. Cheese, sugar, soap and wax were produced and a leather industry developed from the pastoral economy. The Mission also provided materials, such as bricks and tiles, and labour for the capital and two townships. For example, in 1765, 1,084 *peones* (workmen) were sent to Angostura for 2 - 3 months exclusive of travel time, and also supplies of cassava, maize, rice, salt meat and oxen.¹³⁹

The Guayana Mission pursued a policy comparable in its objectives to that of the *Diretório* of the Portuguese but carried out under a segregated, religious domination and not a predominantly secular, military one like that in Brazil. The need for food and labour for State and private enterprises was common to both colonial administrations and the colonists in both countries regarded the indigenous inhabitants as a source of cheap labour necessarily acquired though enforced settlement in the first instance. However, the Guayana Capuchins were fiercely protective and resisted government proposals to transfer any village to a secular administration, or to allow in Spanish settlers.¹⁴⁰ Both the Spanish and Portuguese policies were directly the opposite to that of the Dutch, who deliberately opposed the teaching of Christianity and of especially created villages, in case these should upset the friendly trading and policing activities that the colonists pursued with their indigenous neighbours and which enabled the Indians to continue their traditional way of life, mostly unhindered.

The Capuchin Mission Reports give the ethnic identity of the Amerindians in each village and its date of foundation. Apart from Guayanos, and Pariagotos,¹⁴¹ the Mission population consisted of ethnic groups whose lands and communities extended eastwards from La Guayana into and across the Three Colonies of the Dutch. These were the Caribs (Caribes), Warao (Guarau nos), Arawaks (Aruacas), Guaicas and (B)Arinagotos. Guaica or Waika¹⁴² is a term that has the general connotation of warlike, fierce, savage. At base, it was a reference to forest-dwelling, wild, Indians, some only recently settled in a mission village. In the Guayana Mission it was applied to the Akawaio (Kapon) but sometimes also to the (B)Arinagoto (Pemon) who then, as now, were occasionally referred to as Camaracotos (Kamarakoto), those Pemon living in the Paragua River valley and around the Paragua-Caroní confluence. In the later Mission Reports, like those of 1797 and 1816, the designation '(b)arinagotos' was

increasingly displaced by that of 'guaicas' in a number of mission villages.¹⁴³ Occasionally both appear as joint inhabitants as, for example, in Avechica in the 1816 Report which states 'Guaicas y arinagotos'. The great similarity in language, society and culture between the two peoples, Kapon and Pemon by autodenomination, appears to have allowed a peaceful cohabitation which did not normally occur between two self-distinguishing ethnic unities (*naciones*). However, the use of the term 'Guaicas' might also have referred to Indians recently acquired by *entradas* and still regarded as savages.

The Capuchin evangelization of the (B)Arinagotos and Guaicas began in the 1740s when the Mission crossed the mountains separating the lower Orinoco flood plain from the Yuruari grasslands in the upper Cuyuni basin and encountered the (B)Arinagoto and Guaica nations there.¹⁴⁴ At first, the Guayana Mission consolidated its position by using peaceful methods, of mutual visiting, gift-giving and persuasion and founding mission villages within the territory of the local population. Only after c. 1770 was the forcible *entrada* (an ingression in search of Indians, captured and forced to settle) used by the Capuchins. This was when their early mission villages were mature, economically stable and had incorporated most of their surrounding population but had suffered great losses through epidemics. They then began to penetrate the Essequibo forest via the Cuyuni and middle Mazaruni Rivers, and to participate in military expeditions along the Essequibo coast as far as Moruka. They also travelled southwards up the Paragua and Caroní valleys. In 1797 the *Consejo de Indias* ruled that *entradas* could continue, but without using violence or force of arms.¹⁴⁵ A great exponent of the long-distance, forcible *entrada* was Padre Mariano de Cervera¹⁴⁶ who was the missionary in Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de Piedra, founded in 1769 with a mixed population of Guarau nos (Warao), Chima (Chayma) and Guaicas (Akawaio). He travelled down the Cuyuni River in 1787 and took 81 Guaicas (Akawaio). In 1788 and 1789 he led expeditions up the Caroní taking Kamarakoto (Pemon). In 1792-3 he led an incursion down the middle Mazaruni to a short distance above the Puruni confluence and seized 150 Guaicas (Akawaio), some of whom came from the Kurupung - Kumarow area, at the foot of the Pakaraima escarpment.

The Capuchin Guayana Mission records give abundant evidence of Christian (Roman Catholic) teaching given to Amerindians whose ethnic territories lay between the Orinoco and Surinam (Suriname). Incorporated in the mission villages were those from the adjacent Essequibo forest lowlands. In his 1792-3 *entrada* Mariano de Cervera was accompanied by 40 or so Guaicas who were settled in the mission village of Santa Rosa de Lima de Cura, founded in 1782 in the Yuruari grasslands near the edge of the forest that extends into Essequibo. It is noteworthy that the Guaica population numbers in Cura jumped from 743 Guaicas recorded in the Mission Report of 1797, to a peak of 995 recorded in the July 1799 Report.¹⁴⁷ Also included in Capuchin teaching were Coastal Arawaks, Caribs of Barima and Barama and Warao of the Delta.

Independent, long-distant visits between members of regional groups of the same ethnicity were noted by the Moravians when Arawaks from Berbice visited Arawaks in Spanish territory and the latter in turn came to visit the Berbice Mission (see above). The Arinda Assistant Postholder reported in 1769 that a group of Seregong (upper Mazaruni Akawaio) from Orinoco had arrived, asserted by the Caribs to be staying with and molesting the local Akawaio there.¹⁴⁸ In the literature generally, the Akawaio are depicted as a much travelled, trading people. They were the news carriers

...the pedlars of the whole eastern coast, in a constant state of locomotion, carrying cargoes of European goods to the Spanish and Portuguese frontier for barter there. (Harris & de Villiers I: 177, quoting Hilhouse, 1832 JRGS II: 233)

The routes along which the indigenous traders travelled were also routes of news and knowledge transmitted over extensive areas, being passed from community to community as is well illustrated by the spread of knowledge of the Alleluia religion during the 19th century to the present day.¹⁴⁹ Linguistic adoptions from the Spanish bear witness to this process. Akawaio words for introduced domestic animals are of Spanish origin, as cow (*paka*, Sp. *vaca*): horse (*kawale*, Sp. *caballo*): dog (*pero*, Sp. *perro*): work (*trawaso*, Sp. *trabajo*). Significantly there is *santo* which is Spanish for 'saint' but Akawaio today use to denote a doll. A cross is *kurusuk*, the Spanish being *cruz*. Books and printed paper are *kareta*, from the Spanish *carta*, meaning letter. Dutch derived words appear to be fewer. There is notably *puruku* from *broek* for trousers and *sundaga* from *zondag* meaning Sunday.

How much Christian teaching had been absorbed in the Guayana Mission villages is difficult to assess. Storm van 's Gravesande was sceptical, writing in 1766:

All the world knows how far the faith of Indians and negroes converted by their missionaries extends. I have spoken to some of those Indians who were scarcely aware that there was a Supreme Being and knew absolutely nothing of religion beyond the "Ava Maria" and the "Pater Noster", whilst a few could say the Creed in Latin and make the sign of the Cross. Fine Christians indeed! (Harris & de Villiers II: 512)

Even more vehemently, referring to the harbouring of runaway slaves by the Spanish in Orinoco, he accused neighbouring and allied nations of seeking to ruin the Three Colonies

...Upon the frivolous and really ridiculous pretext of brining the slaves into the Christian religion -- a whited sepulchre filled with nothing but rotting bones - - because all of their Indian and black (so-called) Christians I have not seen a single one who knows anything more of religion than that there is a God and perhaps not so much as that, or with entirely erroneous ideas concerning the Supreme Being. (Harris & de Villiers II: 521-2. Underlining by Butt Colson)

Taking place in Demerara in the late eighteenth century, presumably addressed to Akawaio and Arawaks there, was an independent effort at evangelization by a Scotsman, James Glenn, who had been a founding member of the Theosophical Society in London in 1784. He lived alone in the forest as a John the Baptist style of missionary but was unsuccessful in converting the neighbouring Indians, subsequently claiming that, although interested in tobacco, rum and the material things of life, Indians and Blacks showed no desire to learn anything in the way of spiritual knowledge. In his opinion

...it would be as easy to turn a young dog into a young sheep, or a lime into a mango tree, as to make them real internal Christians. (Rodway 1891-4 II: 109-110)

Despite the skepticism of Protestants in the Three Colonies concerning the absorption of the Christian faith of the indigenous communities of Guiana, the literature shows that by the beginning of the nineteenth century a very substantial number had been in contact with an assortment of missionaries, Jesuits, Carmelites, Capuchins and Moravians. The contacts had

been directly through living in mission villages for varied periods of time, from visits and reports circulating about them. In particular, the Capuchin Guayana Mission records give abundant evidence of Christian (Roman Catholic) teaching given to Amerindians whose ethnic territories lay between the Orinoco and Corentyne. Incorporated in their later mission villages were Guaica (Akawaio) from the adjacent Essequibo forests. At the time of the 1807 Movement the Guayana Mission was powerful and extensive. The Movement itself witnesses that some at least had understood that the core of missionary teaching related to God, who was thus perceived to be the source of White people's power, giving sovereign status and its associated endowments, notably white skins, slave ownership, present-giving and cattle possession.

Cattle as a Sign of Transformation

According to the wife of the Akawaio Captain summoning the Essequibo Indians to an 'assembly', two cows had made their appearance in the village of Indian Caycoeco, one of the two nominated leaders of the Movement, 'as a sign of their future transformation'. This leads us to a consideration of the role of cattle, their management and value in relation to Amerindian economy and society in the Guiana region at the beginning of the 19th century.

At first sight, cattle may appear to be an unlikely symbol for denoting a physical and cultural transformation of Indians to Europeans, but the history of Guianese cattle herding suggests that in many respects it was an appropriate one. The domestication of food animals did not occur in traditional, lowland Amerindian life and economy. The Old World domesticated animals, cattle, sheep, goats, horses, mules, did not exist on the American continent. The many wild animals and birds obtained, tamed and often traded, fell into the category of 'pets' and, as today, were probably not eaten, although those in the wild were hunted and consumed. As shown above, among the Akawaio and Pemon names for the introduced food animals are Amerindianized versions of their Spanish or Portuguese denotations. Dr George Pinckard, visiting Physician to the British Forces, who travelled in Demerara and Berbice in 1796-7, described the economy of the Indians at that date as:

Like all other tribes, who are ignorant of the comforts and conveniences of civilization, the Indians of Guiana procure their food from the rivers, the sea, and the forests. They have no animals domesticated, nor any grain or roots, except the cassava [cassava: manioc] brought into cultivation; and hence they depend very much upon the fortune of the chase for subsistence. (Pinkard 1942 edition: 128)

In general, the production of beef in the Three Colonies was limited. St Clair noted that beef for the British garrison was imported from North America and was almost inedible, the soldiers frequently refusing to eat it. He contrasted it with the fat and tender 'creole beef' from animals born and bred in the country, but this was in very short supply, a few plantation owners breeding cattle for their own table only.¹⁵⁰ These included plantations of the West India Company, for in 1755 van 's Gravesande had complained to the Directors that he was short of food, unlike his predecessor who had received all the bread he had required and at every Court [of Policy] meeting an ox and several head of small cattle. He noted that 'I have even had fourteen or fifteen of my own oxen killed'.¹⁵¹ Henry Bolingbroke, in the Colonies between 1799 and 1805, visited Reynesin sugar estate, fifteen miles up from Demerara

mouth. There he noted 20-30 cows which provided the owning family, and periodically the estate workers, with milk, butter and meat. Special grass pastures were grown for fodder and 'in some savannahs, the bull and the cow are found in the same wild state'.¹⁵² We know from Pinkard that some Berbice Indians had already learnt to manage cattle. Travelling up the Berbice River in 1796, he visited Savonette, an estate belonging to Mr Heynemann, where he noted there were cattle and that the forest had been cleared for them. A former Dutch soldier acted as a kind of manager and Deputy Postholder, but the estate was cultivated principally by Indians.¹⁵³ Interestingly, Mrs Tome, widow of the former Essequibo Postholder referred to in the Transformative Movement report, owned cattle. In a petition of 1811 she complained that she had been obliged to kill cattle when the great Carib leader Mahanarwa (Manariwa) came down the Essequibo in 1810 and, with his entourage, lodged with her.¹⁵⁴ Apart from seeing cattle at some posts, Postholders often espoused or co-habited with Amerindian women and had affines participating in the care of their animals.

We can conclude therefore, that within the Three Colonies cattle rearing was not unknown to some Amerindians at least. However, for the majority of those living in the dense tropical forest of the hinterland and pursuing their traditional subsistence economy, pastoralism was not an attractive proposition. Except for the Berbice savannas and extensive grasslands of the distant Rupununi it was necessary to fell large areas of forest and sow them with special grasses, to erect fences, to keep out jaguars and deal with insect pests. So why would Amerindian communities go to all this trouble and curtail their traditional freedom of movement when they could obtain supplies of meat by hunting? On the other hand, cattle were acquiring a special significance as a sign of White power and prosperity through their predominance in an economy that supported military and politico-religious institutions in neighbouring Portuguese and Spanish grasslands to the south and west.

In the Uraricoera (upper Rio Branco) cattle were introduced by Colonel Manoel da Gama Lobo d'Almada, Governor of the *Capitania São José do Rio Negro*. This was most probably in 1787, for when the Macuxi settlement at Fort Sa o Joaquim rebelled in January 1790 Lobo d'Almada ordered that the troops sent to defend the Fort should also protect the small herd he had introduced and was trying to multiply, the Indians that had fled having already killed two horses. He also mentioned the 'depraved designs they had on the herd' - probably indicating that the animals were in danger of being killed and eaten.¹⁵⁵ The herd flourished and three National Fazendas, founded by the Fort at the confluence of the Takutu with the Uraricoera, held some 900 head by 1798. At first administered from Fort Sa o Joaquim, they were designated for local consumption, including the provision of meat and leather to the *Capitania*. They gradually spread over the extensive grasslands of the region and at the turn of the century therefore, the indigenous inhabitants of the upper Rio Branco basin were aware of an increasing presence of cattle and were perhaps already beginning to learn of their significance, economically and culturally, maybe first of all as a new game animal to be hunted and then as an animal to be herded by themselves after learning to be vaqueiros in the service of settlers.

In the Movement 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' the reference to two cows having made their appearance in the village of Indian chief Caycoeco 'as a sign of their future transformation' can best be construed as being a significant pointer to Capuchin Mission influence. The prosperity, even the very existence of the Guayana Mission, was founded on cattle ranching. It was a major reason, together with fear of Carib attacks, why the Mission never established villages in the forest to the east of the Yuruari grasslands and why the Mission often attracted Indian families choosing to settle in order to take advantage of the regular meat supply and associated products. The hunger which prevailed in the Carmelite

villages under the *Diretório* system in the Rio Branco, indicates the difference between an economy with cattle and one without.

The foundation of the Capuchin herds dates from the establishment of the Guayana Mission in 1724 when, shortly afterwards, a number of animals was acquired from the Franciscans north of the Orinoco. The organization and care of the main herd became centralised in the Mission ranch La Divina Pastora, founded in 1737 on the Yuruari River in the midst of excellent pastures. Referred to as *El Hato* (the Cattle Ranch) it was manned by Guayanos, brought in from the Capuchin mission villages along the Orinoco, who came to be expert cattle herders. In addition, each mission village with pasture had its own small herd to support its population.¹⁵⁶ As soon as a new village was projected not only were cultivations made to provide garden products but a new herd was started and the Amerindians settling were taught herding techniques. The Transformation Movement account does not specify the ethnic identity of the leader Caycoeco, in whose village two cows had appeared, ushering in the anticipated role reversals. Nevertheless, this event was related by an Akawaio and would have been widely known since this ethnic unity extended into the upper Cuyuni forest on the edge of the Capuchin Mission and its cattle raising industry. There were Akawaio (Guaicas) inhabiting several mission villages each with their own cattle herd attached. For example, there was Angel Custodio de Aycaua, *El Hato Nuevo* (the New Cattle Ranch) founded with an accompanying village in 1785 with cattle from La Divina Pastora, whose pastures were becoming exhausted. Mission Reports ¹⁵⁷ state that the initial inhabitants were Guayanos (1788) imported from La Divina Pastora, Alta Gracia and Cupapuy, to manage the herd. Then the village inhabitants were denoted Caribes (1791) and as Guaicas in 1797 and 1799, at the time when *entradas* were being made down the Cuyuni and Mazaruni to obtain Guaicas (see above). Finally, in 1802, Angel Custodio was reported to be abandoned through the flight of its Guaica inhabitants and had not yet been re-established. It was never re-established.

We cannot say whether or not the Indian Caycoeco referred to in the Transformative Movement was an Akawaio personally involved in a Capuchin mission village in the upper Cuyuni and had either been given two cows by the Capuchins as a welcomed settler, or had made off with two cows from the communal herd and was planning his people's transformation independently in his own settlement. Cattle rustling was reported to be a real problem for the Mission, especially as depredations by jaguars could be blamed by the Amerindian herdsman involved. By 1800 cattle were grazing throughout the Yuruari grasslands. By 1803 the total Mission herds numbered just under 50,000 head.¹⁵⁸ To the indigenous peoples, traditionally hunters, fishermen and cultivators, the appearance of cattle in one of their villages and the potential for a pastoral economy was the first substantial sign of a fundamental change in their lives and the beginning of an unfolding transformation.

Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish Indigenous Policies Compared

Comparing the status of the indigenous peoples in the Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish colonies during the eighteenth century with that at the beginning of the nineteenth, we see that significant changes had taken place, caused by policies adopted by the State administrations involved. At base, these policies were connected to theological - juridical thought in the respective Mother countries, but also to on-the-ground realities. In the Three Colonies a gradual process occurred whereby, from being independent traders a considerable number of the indigenous communities became dependant recipients of exotic goods, deriving from payments and handouts in return for their services as policemen and militia. As soon as the colonists started to grow commercial crops they were faced with a labour problem, which the West India Company solved almost immediately after its incorporation in

the 17th century by the importation of Black slaves from Africa. By the time of the Movement of Transformation into Whites, which we can now date as having taken place in 1807, both the colonists and the Amerindians had been locked into the increasingly dominant plantation economy, with its ever-increasing number of discontented Black slave labourers. This system ended only when Emancipation finally occurred in 1838 British Guiana and a policy of imported indentured labour, primarily from India, was developed, rendering Amerindian policing and military action obsolete. Compared to the fate of neighbouring communities during the eighteenth century, the four favoured nations in the Three Colonies (the Arawaks, Caribs, Warao and Akawaio) lived under a policy of peaceful co-existence. They remained independent and mobile in accordance with their traditional cultures. Their grievances, mostly generated through contacts with private traders, were attended to and their material welfare was augmented through profitable trading, payments and presents and work as a migratory workforce providing for colonial household needs. Notably, as a matter of policy, there was no official missionary pressure or Christian teaching provided. Amerindians were regarded as pagans and lacking a belief in God or knowledge of the Bible so that their evidence in Court was invalid when the defendant was white.

In contrast, Portuguese policies were directed towards the forceful commandeering of indigenous labour. Both State and private expeditions set out to capture in war, or at best to trade, to obtain plantation slaves. As the Portuguese advanced northwards after the defeat of the Manao in the Rio Negro, the indigenous peoples of the Rio Branco became engulfed in successive slave raids, notably from the 1730s until the 1750s. These depopulated the borders of the river and its major tributaries, reaching the Takutu and the western edges of the Rupununi Savannas and northwards into the Uraricoera grasslands and the mountainous headwaters of the AmazonOrinoco divide. Wapishana, Makushi, Sapara and Paraviana, amongst others, were sought as slaves to be sent to the colonial centres in the far south. The end result was a fragmentation of ethnic groups as those who were not killed whilst resisting, or captured, enslaved and exiled, abandoned their settlements and fled into more remote areas. Some joined regional groups of the same ethnicity, as in the case of some Wapishana (Pityan) who entered Atorai (Pityan) territory in the Dutch sphere of influence in Essequibo, but who were subsequently reported as engaged in long-term fighting the Makushi (Pemon) neighbours. Apart from a few survivors, the Paraviana of the lower Rio Branco were eventually eliminated as an ethnic unity, as also were the Sapara.

The second half of the eighteenth century saw the, technically free, Indians forced into villages often ruled by ex-military Directors who ruthlessly exploited their labour. Noncompliance and flight from these village were countered by exile to distant regions when recapture occurred. The revolts of 1780-1 and 1790 culminated in a massacre, the 'Beach of Blood', in 1798. Thus, the early nineteenth century saw the effects of a long period of enslavement and forced labour being played out, with sporadic *descimentos* by Brazilian troops and with Carib slavers operating across the Amazon, Essequibo and Orinoco watersheds adding to the chaotic inter-relationships of the indigenous peoples of the region.

In contrast, the Capuchin Mission in Spanish Guayana successfully repulsed secular interference despite attempts at intervention by the Provincial Government from the 1770s onwards, wishing to control and commandeer indigenous labour to support the newly established town of Angustura (today's Ciudad Bolívar).¹⁵⁹ The Mission emphasized conversion, which was:

To colonize in order to civilize, to civilize in order to christianize in order to ensure their incorporation into national life and even more importantly into

spiritual life. (Matallana 1945: 47 describing the Capuchin work plan. Translation by Butt Colson.)

Both the the Spanish and the Portuguese settled the indigenous peoples in villages. However, there were some fundamental differences. After 1639 Spanish law prohibited the enslavement of indigenous peoples. The Capuchins did not tolerate the slave trade and complained bitterly about Dutch promotion of Amerindian enslavement activities beyond the Three Colonies through their alliance with the slave-raiding Caribs. They did their utmost to suppress Carib slavers by founding villages on their routes from Essequibo, notably those which linked the Cuyuni with the Caroní River. They were successful in that many Caribs, increasingly threatened by Spanish raids down the Cuyuni, moved during the 1760s to safer areas, notably to the upper Essequibo near the newly established Arinda Post where they continued slaving along southern routes. However, Capuchin missionary efforts to create and populate villages were not always benign and *entradas*, with their accompanying soldiers, sought out independent settlements and captured the inhabitants for enforced settlement in new mission villages or in those whose former occupants had fled or died in an epidemic.¹⁶⁰

In both the Portuguese and the Spanish spheres the need for Indian labour was paramount, underlying the basic policies adopted. The differences between these policies and those of the Dutch were emphasized during the British Guiana - Venezuela Arbitration process at the end of the nineteenth century. In the British Case it was noted that in 1768, when escaped Black slaves had established a formidable settlement in the interior and Akawaio help was needed to dislodge them, two Akawaio leaders visited the Commandeur in Demerara who related that: *After I had welcomed them with a glass of brandy and presented each of them with a suit of my every-day clothes, I asked them (after having acquainted them with the reason of my sending for them) whether they were willing to attack the negroes, or cut off their retreat if the negroes were attacked by the Caribs and put to flight.* (British Case, Appendix III: 162 (No. 440).)

A scornful comment on this followed in the Venezuelana Case:

Brandy and old clothes! And wre the Indians "willing"? Is this the conduct of language of one who is asserting control of these people as subjects? (Printed Argument on behalf of the U.S. of Venezuela II: 605-6.)

It was further noted that the Amerindian-Dutch relationship had been categorized as being an alliance for mutual benefit

...without any thought on the part of the Indians that they were surrendering their freedom or that they were recognizing Dutch sovereignty. In contract Spanish rule over Indians depended non on friendship or acquiescence but upon force exerted by a ruler over subjects. (Counter-Case of the U.S. Venezuela I: 103 & 105.)

Sentiments of the indigenous peoples themselves as regards colonial policies and relationships affecting them are recorded only occasionally. Where they exist, they are of considerable significance. Both Portuguese and Spanish sources noted that the indigenous population preferred an independent life in the Bush to one in a highly regulated mission

village.

The reasons for this were clearly stated by the 'Carib Chief of the Paragua', Oraparne, who in 1755 rejected mission settlement and openly asserted that *...he did not want to give up his Kingship and go into a state of misery in the Mission, where he could not have authority, guarichas [women/wives], freedom to capture poitos, [slaves] or to trade with his friends the Dutch, who provided him with cotton goods, axes, cutlasses, dye-woods and whatever he requires.* (British Case II: 111 (305).)

When, in 1817, the Mission was destroyed by Republican Forces, the majority of the inmates deserted and returned to their homelands, the Guaicas (Akawaio/Pemon, the recently settled) being the first to flee, some of them pursued by their perennial enemies, the Caribs. In the Three Colonies a different relationship developed, as described in a Despatch of February 21 1769 in which Governor-General van 's Gravesande, referring to the Caribs, wrote:

It is a very good thing to have them as allies or friends, for they render excellent services, but they are formidable enemies, capable of more bravery and resistance than one would think. When their principal or great Owls [Uil: leader] come to me, they immediately take a chair and sit down, and will eat and drink nothing but what I have myself, and they call me by no other name than that of "mate" or "brother." (Harris & de Villiers II: 598-9)

In April 1769 van 's Gravesande recorded a conversation that the chief of the Caribs from the upper Essequibo had had with the Commandant of militia, Johannes Backer (Bakker) who

...told him this morning that he would like to come up the river, [Essequibo] and asked him whether he would then let him be master. He answered, "No, I am master of the Caribs. You can be master of the whites and of the other nations, and then we can together become masters of everything." (Harris & de Villiers II: 610)

In 1772 the Guayana Capuchins recorded the feelings of the indigenous towards the three colonial nations in the Rio Branco, Essequibo and Orinoco watershed areas. After an arduous journey up the Caroní River, a Capuchin expedition crossed the mountainous divide into the Amazon basin, arriving on the grasslands of the Uraricoera at a village of 'Paraguayanes'.¹⁶¹ They were well received and spent a fortnight there, being visited by neighbouring Sapara, by 'Matisana' (Wapishana) from the 'Charumo'(Surumu) River and by Captains of the 'Ipurugotos' and 'Ipocotos'.¹⁶² They listened to the Padres speaking of how it was to be a Christian and to live in a Christian village and they agreed to the proposal that they should settle ('poblarse') but stipulated that each group should be in its own territory. The Captains were each given a staff of office and a slip of paper recording the agreement reached. A cross was erected in front of the house of the Paraguayan Captain, at the latter's request, and a chapel of poles and leaves was constructed. The Captains spoke of the numerous Indians around and of the Caribs who had fled the mission village of Murucuri on the Caroní River and who, now over 100 souls, were living in the Chipó (Essequibo) River on the other side of Lake Parime.¹⁶³ They referred to the abuses that the Caribs of the 'Canuco' (Kanakanu mountains) committed, seizing their children. They also said that the Portuguese were there on the pretext of taking a walk, but on departing they carried off many people - and it was suggested that when the present expeditioners left perhaps they would do the same! They asserted that the Dutch ('holandeses') did not do this, but they traded and gave clothes and ammunition for hunting. The missionaries concluded that this must be the case because there were many firearms, spears and cutlasses in evidence.¹⁶⁴

The Expedition's reports go on to describe how, on the morning of their departure from the waterside landing on the Mayarí River, they were suddenly attacked by the Sapara on one side of the river and by Paraguayan on the other and many dugouts with armed people in them blocked their path down river. The Expedition eventually escaped by night, one Spaniard having been shot dead, and after great privations arrived at Guri mission village from where it had departed. The two Capuchins noted, when under siege, that the Indians with guns were shouting: 'Go away Spaniards: we want the Dutch, who are our nephews and kin.'¹⁶⁵ In a second account, P. Benito de La Garriga reported that it would be difficult to reduce the many Indians of that territory because of their connections with the Dutch, whom they say are 'their friends, relations, sons-in-law and nephews'. He noted that this was the case because they sold their relations and strangers through a great trade in *poitos*, or slaves, to those foreigners in exchange for firearms, clothes and metal goods.¹⁶⁶

On the Portuguese side, Farage notes that Ribeiro de Sampaio¹⁶⁷ observed that *...the Indians of Branco love the Dutch, have a good opinion of the Portuguese and dislike the Spanish.*

She suggests that this statement might reflect the situation at the time when, resisting the Spanish attempts to found villages on the Uraricoera, the Paraviana and Caripun (Caribs) had assisted in attacking a Spanish detachment on the Takutu and regarded themselves as allied to the Portuguese who were also fighting to expel the invaders.

In short, the literature indicates that Indians in contact with the colonists considered the Dutch in Essequibo to be preferential allies who, practising a policy of non-interference, were profitable friends and potential affines. Indigenous-Dutch relationships were built on trading, payments and presents and non-interference with the customary way of life of the four protected peoples, the Arawak, Caribs, Warao and Akawaio living in the Three Colonies. They treated intertribal disputes and aggression with discretion and negotiation and, where possible, righted wrongs involving unscrupulous colonists, mostly private traders. In contrast, in Portuguese territory the eighteenth century had been one of enslavement, forced labour and exile. In Spanish Guayana it had been one of forced, if relatively prosperous, benign settlement and evangelization.

Amerindian Enslavement

Forcible enslavement of the indigenous, carried out by Caribs but also by Akawaio and to a lesser extent the Arawaks, was an important factor in trading relationships with the Dutch.¹⁶⁸ However, these slaves were to be obtained in the neighbouring Orinoco and Amazon valleys and sold via traders and the posts to the West India Company and private estate owners in the Three Colonies and in Surinam, where they were put to household tasks. To obtain them the Caribs positioned themselves so as to have a range of access across the whole of the Guiana region, their destructive raids entailing the killing of adult men and the taking of women and children.

Amongst the Caribs and Carib-speaking groups the term for an indigenous slave was *poito*.¹⁶⁹ In both the Pemon ('Arekuna') and Kapon (Akawaio and Patamona) languages today *poito* is a term used by men to refer to a sister's son/nephew, but who is also the preferred son-in-law in the customary system of cross cousin marriage - the marriage between the children of a brother and a sister.¹⁷⁰ Akawaio address him as *poitorĩ*, the suffix *-rĩ* being the

possessive form. A son-in-law (nephew) is expected to work for his parents-in-law (uncle and aunt) and with his brothers-in-law (cousins). Under the customary uxorilocal rule of residence he has, initially at least, to leave his parental home to reside with his wife and her family. Unless he marries within his parental settlement, this may entail entering a stranger community. Akawaio and Pemon mythology and stories emphasize the persecution and stresses that may be experienced by a young son-in-law who becomes a subservient member of his wife's family who constantly demand his labour.¹⁷¹

Poito is today a term applied to males, but is also used generally to indicate a helper/assistant. The relationships which it expresses appears to have facilitated an extension of its use to denote female slaves as well as males, in an indigenous system which expanded enormously when the acquisition of tempting European goods was presented in a colonial organization with a perennial labour shortage. However, there are several differences between the servitude imposed by the colonists and that of Amerindian customary practice. An Akawaio son-in-law, on becoming *payung*, 'father of the grandchild' (*pa*, grandchild: *yung*, father) gains in recognition and status. He will gradually take the place of his ageing parents-in-law and will take over their land rights. If he has daughters he will in turn gain the services of their husbands. He has the potential, through the resources their work provides, to feast and entertain his kin and visitors and so become a leading member or even the head of his community and their spokesman. Traditionally, a community leader (*epuru*) has a following of *poitoridong* (-dong is the group plural) who are his assistants in the organization of a village community. In the indigenous structure there is temporary servitude only, not the life enslavement that also passes down the generations which characterized the colonial system. The indigenous *poito* is lodged within the kinship network in a complex of male roles as a nephew (a man's real or classificatory sister's son) and potentially a son-in-law helper-servant. It is the model for the assistant-disciple relationship to a leader, whether in a secular or religious context. However, there is one enormous difference between the indigenous conceptual system and that of the enslaved *poito* relationship of the colonists. This is the associated custom of uxorilocality whereby the son-in-law enters the household of his wife's family, his wife not moving. Among the Akawaio and Pemon today a man of status, such as a village leader who has lost a wife by divorce or death, or who in times past wished to acquire an extra wife, and who was not able or willing to move residence and become a subordinate, may substitute presents and hospitality to satisfy his in-laws so that they allow him to take their kinswoman and to substitute virilocality for uxorilocality. The receipt of highly valued trade goods in recompense for a female *poito* would facilitate the transfer of that *poito* and her labour to a Dutch purchaser who would thereby be a 'receiver' and the indigenous conveyor could consider himself a prestigious and rewarded 'giver'. The position of today's *poito* is not necessarily that of times past, but it is perhaps significant that in 1831 it was observed that 'Indian wives are won by presents to the parents...'¹⁷²

However, it should not be forgotten that many of the enslaved Indians, both male and female, were seized by force, mainly by Caribs, from communities living on the periphery of Dutch influence and beyond. In selling their human booty and receiving payment and prestige from the receivers they effectively subverted the status and rights of the kin of the victims, taking these for themselves. In general, notably when selling their own close relatives into slavery, the affinal links and statuses they had in mind were different from those of the colonists. Seemingly, an indigenous system of temporary servitude of males developed in the colonial context into one of perpetual slavery. In the case of females, uxorilocality was replaced by payments and presents being obtained in recompense.

Factors Underlying the 'Movement of Indians to be Transformed to Whites' The Concept of Transformation

At the beginning of his Report Rodway refers to a subsequent instance of 'the curious notion that Indians would be changed to whites and become masters', and he quotes the c.1845 enthusiastic movement of Awacaipu at Mount Roraima as described in a previous Timehri Journal article.¹⁷³ However, the concept of transformation of physical appearance accompanied by the acquisition of new characteristics and behaviour is very frequent and intrinsic to Amerindian thought. It figures early on in colonial records, as a Brazilian reference to a Jesuit visit of c. 1690 to the mission of Nossa Senhora da Conceição on the Urubu River indicates; *The missionary had been having some difficulty with the Arawak pages (shamans), who had been telling their fellow tribesmen that soon the whites would turn into Indians and the Indians into whites. When this miraculous happening did not take place, the pagés caused such a stir that the Indians nearly killed Frei Theodózio [their missionary].* (Sweet 305, quoting the Jesuit chronicler Joao Felipe Betendorf.)

Transformation themes pervade the myths and stories of the Guiana region's indigenous peoples and are particularly notable in the creation myths which recount the changes brought about by Elder and Younger Brother, Twin Heroes and Children of Sun, at 'the beginning of time' (*pia'tai*). Younger Brother is often named by Akawaio and Pemon as Pia, 'the Beginner', so recalling that, as he and Elder Brother adventured on Earth, he changed living beings into the forms and with the habits that characterize them today. It is pertinent to note that in the Akawaio and Pemon syncretic religion of Alleluia today, the concept of change and transformation is sometimes expressed by the word 'chengima'/'zenchima'/'sengima', deriving from the English word 'change'.¹⁷⁴ A single phoneme is represented by s, z, sh, ch, zh, and the suffix -ma converts the noun into the infinitive. The Alleluia congregation sings that, as they are praying and getting strength from God's light-strength (*akwa*) in heaven, so they will change and become like angels. A past Akawaio leader of Alleluia had the name 'Engiman', 'Change man', a derivation sometimes linked to the adopted name Benjamin.

Demographic Change

The isolated, sparsely populated Dutch forts of the sixteenth century had, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, changed into established colonies dominated by an increasing number of sugar plantations with thousands of Black slaves and a small but growing White hierarchy with an increasing military presence. The history of the third colony, Demerara, with its Arawak and Akawaio population, is a good example of how land was being occupied and its indigenous inhabitants supplanted. At the beginning, the lower Demerara valley was a trading area with a couple of posts supervised from Fort Kijkoveral in Essequibo. Then, in 1746 its lands were opened up for general trade and over eighteen sugar plantations and ... *settlement along the river proceeded with remarkable rapidity and within some five or six years was outstripping that of Essequibo.* (Harris & de Villiers I: 67)

In 1750 the first Commander of Demerara was appointed. Borselen Island, some 20 miles up the river, was established as its administrative centre in 1753.¹⁷⁵ By 1771 nearly 200 plantations were recorded and there was a big jump in the Black slave population, from 1,648 in 1762 to 12,559 or more in 1782.¹⁷⁶ During the French occupation, the foundations of a town were laid out at the mouth of the river. On re-possession the Dutch named it Stabroek

and in 1789 it became the capital of the combined Colony of Demerara and Essequibo under one Governor and one general Court of Policy and Criminal Justice. The British re-named it Georgetown in 1812 and, with Berbice, it became the capital city of the combined Colony of British Guiana in 1831.¹⁷⁷ Whilst the colonial presence grew it was noted that Amerindian contact was receding. Bolingbroke, visiting 'Demerary' in 1796-1806 stated that even the more friendly Arawak and Caribs of the coastal areas kept their distance and placed their villages remotely enough to be free of interference. They were 'continually receding from the districts which the Europeans choose to colonize'.¹⁷⁸ However, Amerindian numbers were falling through epidemic diseases to which the New World peoples had no immunity.¹⁷⁹ The Dutch policy was not to assemble the indigenous in specially created villages and the plantation dwellings were widely separated, so that conditions for epidemic diseases were less favourable in the Three Colonies. Some instances were nevertheless reported. In Benjamin's view for example, the Berbice 1763 uprising of Black slaves '... was partly made possible by the fact that large numbers of Amerindians had moved out of the colony to escape an epidemic'. These were Arawaks.¹⁸⁰ There were smallpox epidemics in Essequibo in 1745 and in Demerara in 1784 and 1792. Cholera was introduced into the Three Colonies in 1796, imported through the movement of British troops from Barbados. Significantly, the Dutch Administration had noted in 1750 that:

An experience of many years has shown that of all the red slaves that are brought down by the postholders of Arinda very few remain alive but when sent to the various plantations nearly all die, this causing great loss; the number brought down is fairly large. (Harris & de Villiers I: 270.)

In Portuguese territory repeated epidemics, particularly of smallpox and measles, killed thousands of indigenous slaves in Para and Maranhão creating, as already noted, great labour shortages and impelling more slaving expeditions to travel ever greater distances into the hinterlands of Amazonia to obtain replacements. These expeditions sometimes brought disease with them, a prime example being the great measles epidemic of 1749. From Belém and Para it spread rapidly, depopulating the villages of the Rio Negro through the death or flight of their inhabitants.¹⁸¹ The troop of José Miguel Ayres brought the disease into the Rio Branco during his slaving expeditions.¹⁸² The toxic mixture of slave raiding and disease resulted in depopulation along the banks of the major tributaries, their inhabitants having died or having fled to remoter areas or been taken into slavery.

The Guayana Mission villages throughout their existence also suffered a series of epidemics. For example, the Alvarado Report of 1755 records that the Pariagoto Indians in the central village of Suay, between its foundation in 1724 and 1747 were annihilated in a series of smallpox and measles epidemics which attacked each replacement population taken from the forest by *entradas*.¹⁸³ A letter from the Prefect of the Mission, P. Buenaventura de Sabadell, in 1795 reported the deaths of around 2,000 due to a measles epidemic that afflicted a number of mission villages. He described how 160 souls had fled from Tumeremo village through fear of the disease and all the Indians of Avechica fled, leaving the Padre there completely alone. The same occurred in the village of Santa Clara and there were flights from Ayma and many more from Puedpa as all the eleven villages containing *guaiacas* (Pemon/Akawaio) were left in a state of chaos and consternation. He finished his letter reporting that smallpox, the worst plague for the indigenous peoples, had just entered the central mission village of San Antonio del Caroní and he prayed that it would not spread.¹⁸⁴ Smallpox had entered Venezuela in 1580, depopulating some of the coastal villages. There had been epidemics of it during the eighteenth century, as in 1729 and 1741 and of measles in 1747 and 1769, causing a very considerable loss of life in the Indian population generally. Contributing to the demographic

decline were the slave raids which the Caribs in particular were carrying out in territories adjacent to the Three Colonies, first of all via the Cuyuni - Orinoco route and then, from the 1760s and 70s, in the Rupununi and beyond along the Amazon divide.¹⁸⁵

As the Spanish colonial population increased it began to put a strain on the settled indigenous population in the Capuchin Mission. For example, a 1791 document complains of the quantities of meat being demanded by the civil authorities to supply the non-Indian population of the township of Upata and for sustaining the military. The missionaries recognized that the attraction and retention of Amerindians in their villages was largely due to regular, weekly supplies of fresh meat, and if the herds were to be ruined through these exorbitant demands from outside then the villages would also be exposed to ruin since without meat to eat the inhabitants would have to return to the forest.¹⁸⁶

During the latter part of the eighteenth century the Guayana Mission experienced increasing pressure from successive Governors from Manuel Centurio n onwards, to agree to the introduction of secular government in the older established mission villages and to enter Spanish families into these villages so as to 'civilize' the Indian population. The indigenous were also to pay tribute and the missions were expected to provide more labour for the estates (*haciendas*), townships and the capital at Angostura. With royal support, the Capuchins successfully resisted these measures, their villages remaining in the category of new reductions. However, the first popular uprising against Spanish rule occurred on 13th July 1797, initiating a process that was to lead to the Civil War and the destruction of the Mission by Republican Forces in 1817.

The prevalence of disease epidemics throughout the Guianese region in conditions of contact led to a perennial shortage of indigenous labour, both for food production and for State enterprises. Each Colony attempted to solve its labour problems in different ways. As already described, the Portuguese used military force, enslavement and secular domination in villages. In Spanish Guayana it took the form of religious settlement, often enforced and consistently controlled. The Three Colonies of the Dutch utilized the indigenous themselves, mainly Caribs, to seize and enslave Indians from the two neighbouring territories, employing them for domestic work and relegating plantation labour to imported Black slaves.

The Rise of the Free, Coloured Population

In the Three Colonies Amerindian settlements in the region of the plantations gradually retreated and were replaced by the 'Bovianders' who, as St.Clair described in 1807, were a mixed, coloured people.¹⁸⁷ The process of miscegenation began early, between Postholders, White plantation owners and personnel with both Indian and Black slave women. Some of their offspring settled on the estates but others founded their own settlements up the rivers. In 1741 for example, there is reference to 30-40 'Creoles' born of Indian mothers and Black fathers, reported to be living on the lower Cuyuni at the base of the first falls.¹⁸⁸

In Spanish Guayana there was also friction between the Indian communities and the increasing Spanish and coloured families settled near them. For example, in 1803 the Indian population of the township of Barceloneta situated a short distance up the Paragua River, containing Guaica and Arinagoto, petitioned the Capuchins for permission to move to another site in order to evade 'the conspicuous and grievous vexations that they suffer from the Spaniards of that town'.¹⁸⁹ These vexations were spelt out. The secular authority in the township had taken the Indians out of the care of the missionaries, made them work

excessively and prevented many from attending prayers. Sons and daughters had been removed contrary to the provisions of a royal decree of 1797, and had been given to Spanish occupants and people of colour, without knowledge of the good or bad conduct of these recipients. The new site chosen by the Barceloneta Indians was the other side of the Paragua River, away from the township but where the Capuchins had their house and cattle ranch. However, Barceloneta was not the only focus of problems. The Spanish and mixed inhabitants of the township of Upata also created grievances having, it was alleged, taken over the cultivation lands of the Indians.¹⁹⁰ The increasingly mixed population was partly due to liaisons, sometimes encouraged, between Spanish soldiers and Indian women.¹⁹¹

Sweet gives an interesting account of 'transfrontiersmen' in Portuguese Amazonia, whom he defines as 'a floating population of white and mestiço sertanistas who sought their fortunes (and more often than not a refuge from the oppressive colonial society of Para) in the wide-open society of the transfrontier.'¹⁹² He refers to them as mostly Paraenses born of Portuguese fathers and Indian mothers, 'raised speaking the *lingoa geral* and trained from early childhood to control the productive activity of an Indian work force'. Others were deserters from military units, civilian outlaws or involved in collecting forest products and slave trading. Referring to them as present on the Solimo es and Rio Negro there were, in Sweet's judgement, 'scores of them in more or less permanent residence in the sertão at any given time during the second quarter of the 18th century'. They collaborated with the Carmelite missionaries and/or with the leaders of Indian villages, often taking the latter's daughters as wives. Sweet notes that they might establish their families in mission villages which they used as supply bases and sources of manpower and he considers that the Rio Branco valley was opened to slave trading and forest product collection by transfrontiermen working in this way. A classic example was Francisco Ferreira, the pioneer explorer of the Rio Branco (referred to above).

There is an interesting comparison to be made between the growing number of transfrontiermen in Amazonia, as described by Sweet, the miscegenation in Guayana, described in Capuchin documents, and the increasing number of Bovianders in Essequibo, as described by St. Clair in 1807. All three groups sprang from interbreeding of two or more different races and culture mixes forming an intermediate group of people, between the White colonists, their Black slaves and the indigenous Indians. These mixed groups represent the beginnings of a widespread change in the population composition across the region, to become the 'criollos' in Venezuela, the 'mestiços' in Brazil and the 'mixed, coloured population' of Guyana. In all three areas the indigenous population was experiencing comparable difficulties with this new, increasing stratum. As St. Clair graphically describes, this intermediary sector of the population sometimes led to friction and even open hostilities - as in the Three Colonies in 1807 at the time of the 'Transformation of Indians into Whites'.

Changes in Present-Giving

As already described, trading relations between the West India Company and the indigenous peoples of the Three Colonies began to be replaced around the middle of the 18th century by payments made in return for policing, the quelling of Black slave revolts on the plantations, chasing down runaway slaves and ensuring that they did not establish independent settlements or take refuge with the Spanish in the Orinoco. The payments grew from the time of the 1763 Berbice Revolt onwards and became accompanied by regular giving of presents and feasts through the Postholder system. Of necessity, this policy was continued during the

period of the changes of sovereignty at the end of the century and was inherited by the British when they took effective possession of the Colonies from 1803.¹⁹³ Retaining fees and rations for the Indians were continued until Emancipation in 1838. However, subtle differences emerged during the troubled years of the turn of the century which affected the social and political status of the indigenous communities in contact with the colonists.

In January 1792 the West India Charter expired and was replaced by a Council appointed by the States-General. During the following years, until late 1803, sovereignty of the Three Colonies was in dispute between Dutch, British and French. Although the rapid changes were peaceful, directly affecting only the colonists in the narrow coastal strip, they had indirect effects in the interior. Notably, there was a number of incidents which indicate that a lack of presents was of major concern among the Amerindians in contact with the posts. Rodway was of the opinion that, from the 1790s onwards, the potential for increasing conflict between the growing communities of the free coloured people and those Amerindians living near the colonial establishments was one of the causes of the desertion of the lower river areas by the latter, although 'not so conspicuous as long as the presents were regularly distributed'.¹⁹⁴ However, this regularity was being breached and the posts neglected. Arinda on the upper Essequibo lapsed and with it the payments, presents and entertainments associated. It was last recorded in 1791 but Harris & de Villiers suggest that it may have remained up to 1796 when the British took the Colony for the second time.¹⁹⁵ There were delays in present-giving at other posts in the years leading up to and following the establishment of British sovereignty from September 1803, (confirmed in 1814) whilst successive Governors grappled with the inescapable need to maintain the security of the Colonies through the inherited system of payments and gifts.¹⁹⁶ For example, there was dissatisfaction and unrest among Essequibo Caribs in 1803-4¹⁹⁷ due to their not being informed in time for them to claim their share of the presents given out by the Batavian Administration in April 1803. One of the Carib leaders, Arawara, who had participated in the suppression of a slave revolt of 1795 had, in protest, returned his Captain's Commission by leaving it with a previous Essequibo Postholder's widow, Mrs Tome, who figures in the Movement of 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites'. The affront to the Caribs was deemed sufficiently serious for a deputation from the Court of Policy (including the Essequibo Protector of Indians, Mr Mack) to be sent up-river to feast them, make presentations and give promises of more presents as soon as these arrived from overseas.¹⁹⁸ When Mr Mack died, presents destined for the Moruka Indians (Arawak) were found stored in his house. The agitation of the Indians for these overdue presents was reported by the succeeding Protector, Mr Knollman, who early in 1807 petitioned the Court of Policy

...to make a long overdue payment to the Morocco [Moruka] Indians who had been employed in a bush expedition under the late protector, Mr. Mack.
(Menezes 1977: 96, see footnote 5)

Mr Knollman was duly requested by the Court of Policy, 30th April 1807, to collect and deliver them and to share out 100 gallons of new rum every month among the Indians near 'Morocco' Post and also a similar quantity to the Indians of the upper Essequibo River.

Friction was also developing between the Caribs of the upper Essequibo and the British Administration relating to the Carib traditional role of acquiring and selling Indian slaves from distant peoples - a practice that the British Government was determined to suppress. This came to a head shortly after the Transformative Movement, when the Carib leader, Mahanarwa,¹⁹⁹ came down the Essequibo in October 1810 with his entourage from the area of

the defunct post of Arinda, wishing to sell as slaves Indians he had taken prisoner and demanding presents.²⁰⁰ On threatening to kill his prisoners if his requests were not met, the Court of Policy agreed to give him the articles demanded and to make annual distributions of presents. The items given included guns, powder and shot, cutlasses, knives, beads and corals, linen and salem pores (for men's laps), looking glasses, axes, hats, salt, 2 parasols, iron pots, crockery etc. In return Mahanarwa was to abstain from future expeditions to obtain Red slaves, to keep the prisoners he already had as domestic servants and to behave peacefully and amicably towards the Whites. Charles Edmundson, an eminent colonist and Protector of Indians in the Demerara, was deputed to distribute the presents.²⁰¹ The alarm that this incident caused in the Colonies only subsided when an expedition sent to the Rupununi - Essequibo confluence discovered that the Caribs there were relatively few, impoverished except for the presents they had received and that they posed no threat. Mahanarwa's power had been over-estimated.

Although retaining fees and rations for the Indians continued there was a perceptible difference in the attitude between the Dutch and the British, the latter being reluctant givers. *From an anonymous memorial regarding these colonies in 1802 we read that, since the British had taken over the colonies, the Indians had retired farther inland, 'because they go no encouragement from the English, received no presents, and obtained no signs of that esteem and friendship on which they prided themselves on being held by the Dutch'.* (Menezes 1979: 27)

Menezes notes that the Indians 'did not always receive the promised, much less prompt payment, nor did they hesitate to claim remuneration for their services'.²⁰² Significantly, she states that many instances were brought before the Court [of Policy] by the Protectors who presented the claims of the Indians, and in a footnote she refers to the Minutes of the Court of Policy for the 20th, 28th and 30th April 1807 - earlier in the year of the Transformative Movement. By 1810 the Indians of the Demerara River were complaining to their Protector of Indians that

...they were grieved to find they were not treated by the British Government with as much consideration as they had been by the Dutch, who gave them more presents than they now received. (Rodway 1890 IV, Part I: 27.)

Discontent thus arose out of neglect and delays, more sporadic, less spontaneous and reduced distributions. The discrepancy is emphasized by the amounts recorded. Thus:

In 1803 the cost of allowances and rations to the Indians in Demerara and Essequibo had dropped to approximately £594, in comparison with £3,294 ten years [1894] before! (Menezes 1977: 63.)

The Dutch had cultivated Amerindian friendship with presents and expectations had been built up over a long period so that they became regarded as a customary due. The indigenous peoples now felt unjustly deprived, considering that the service they provided gave them a right to a high degree of reciprocity in both goods and status. The British declared that payments had to be earned and presents were to be more closely tied to particular instances of service rendered as well as being less generous than they had been under the Dutch Administrations. Some of the free nations 'were not unmindful of their power to blackmail the Government'. In 1785 some of them had visited the Governor-General of Essequibo *...who "were very insolent, and in the presence of the negroes said that if they obtain no presents, they, if once again a revolt occurred, would not alone abstain from helping the whites, but would assist the negroes and murder the whites". The Governor knew that he had no option but to*

"gratify" them. (Benjamin 1992-3: 18. Extract from Diary of Governor-General, Essequibo 30 July 1785.)

A similar incident, involving 'Arowauks' from the Demerara River, occurred in 1812 when a considerable body of them came to Georgetown demanding *...presents as their Right; from the Lofty tone they held, with menaces that if refused they would procure Slaves.* (Menezes 1979: 32-3.)

The Acting Lt-Governor, Major-General Hugh Lyle Carmichael, gave an Order from them not to attempt such a step: they were not to receive any presents at that time and that they

...must learn to be convinced that this Government would only bestow Friendship as their good behavior merited.

He also ordered that no more than six Indian men were to come to Georgetown at any one time because of the

...immoderate and Useless Expense of considerable numbers of these Idle people being daily victualled by the colony, exclusive of annual presents'.

Being necessary to counteract the false notions that their peremptory demands could not be refused

...they will now be thankful for any kindness and Sensible of generosity voluntarily shown to them, they will also be happy to Serve (where necessary) for pay or presents, they before considered as their right, without any equivalent from them. (Menezes 1979: 33.)

The Dutch and British differences in attitude towards the favoured indigenous nations as represented in these statements, could not be plainer. As Menezes observes,²⁰³ the expectation of receiving presents never fully subsided. It can be traced to more recent times. Thus, upper Mazaruni Akawaio in the 1950s related their belief that their ancestral culture heroes, Makunaima and Chikí /Pia, had left them and travelled to the east (the place of the rising sun, the font of light and life). There, they were busy fabricating all the desirable goods to send back to their grandchildren, the Akawaio. However, as these did not arrive it was postulated that wicked White people were impeding this and retaining them for themselves.

Colonial Policies and the 'Movement of Indians to be Transformed to Whites'

The eighteenth century, in Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese colonies of Guiana, was one of irreversible changes for the indigenous inhabitants at large who were coping with the incomers and their administrations. Those Carib, Arawak, Akawaio and Warao communities, the favoured nations living in the Three Colonies, had regarded the Dutch as preferential allies. It might be argued that they were privileged compared to their relatives and neighbours in Portuguese and Spanish territories, with whom they were either in direct contact or indirectly through the indigenous trade network which channelled goods and news over a vast area. Both Portuguese and Spanish policy was to uproot the indigenous peoples and settle them in highly controlled villages in order to civilize, christianize and acquire their labour and, in the case of the Portuguese, through an extreme system of enslavement. By contrast, Dutch policy was not to interfere with the indigenous life-style, but to cultivate the friendship of the Indians for purposes of trade and, notably, defence against rebellious Black

Slaves and Spanish infiltration from the Orinoco. Indigenous assistance could be recruited locally²⁰⁴ but indigenous slaves were to be derived from regions outside Dutch influence and a system of payments for services, subsidies and generous presents cemented this relationship, as described above. Indigenous leaders attending the posts, fortified their own status amongst their followers as agents of distribution, but, on British acquisition, began to be subject to State authority and made responsible for the organization of their followers.²⁰⁵

The following description of Dutch policy by Director - General Storm van's Gravesande in a 1769 dispatch to the West Indian Company sums up the Dutch Indian policy: *There is no one, Your Honours, who is more convinced how advantageous and necessary the friendship of the Indians is to this Colony, because so long as we are fortunate enough to have them living around us we are quite safe inland, and have nothing to fear concerning the desertion of our slaves. I therefore neglect no possible opportunity of cultivating the friendship of the same and of protecting them from all the ill-treatment and tyranny of the whites as far as it is expedient to do, and in this way I have made myself so beloved by them that I can now get them to do whatever I wish. In order to attach the Arawaks to this Colony and to prevent them from removing to Berbice upon the arrival of the new Governor have even given them a Commander to their liking, under whom all who live between this river and Berbice now stand.* (Harris & de Villiers I: 88.)

Similarly in Berbice:

No Governor left for Berbice and no year passed without the Directors issuing the most stringent orders to continue living at peace with the Indians, to keep themselves aloof from their mutual wars, to engage in trade with them as might be possible and not to permit them to be ever mal-treated or swindled by the colonists. Furthermore, the regulation was strictly enforced in Berbice (as it was in Essequibo) that no other Indians were to be enslaved except those who were brought in of their own free will by the surrounding and friendly Caribs, Arowak and Accoway from among the slaves captured by them from other tribes living deeper in the interior. (Netscher, W.E.Roth translation: 86)

The experiences of the Portuguese and Spanish Indians with their respective colonial regimes previous to 1807 might well explain their involvement in the Transformative Movement and its intention to destroy colonial rule. Although they were one of the favoured nations living in a relatively benevolent Three Colonies, the Akawaio appear to have been prime instigators of that Movement. As the documentary record shows, the British inherited a Dutch policy of payments and presents based upon the unavoidable need to secure the Three Colonies from Black slave revolts. Although wishing to dispense with this policy the British Administrations had to come to terms with reality during the first three decades of the 19th century - until Emancipation in 1838. Nevertheless, there were the major destabilizing factors mentioned above - changes in the demographic balance, including the increasing effects of incoming diseases and epidemics and the rise of an ever-growing mixed race, coloured population with its own agenda. Above all, there were worrying signs that the system of payments and present-giving was becoming unstable. There were delays, reduction of amounts and the abandonment of Post Arinda up the Essequibo and of its associated present-giving. Although partially explicable as due to the rapid changes of sovereignty deriving from European hostilities, a reluctance and a difference in attitude was detected when the British finally took over from 1803 onwards. This is well illustrated by the

Mahanarwa incident which was fomenting among the Rupununi Caribs at the time of the 1807 movement, erupting in 1810.

A British Ordinance of 1793 had prohibited any form of Indian slavery and was repeated in 1808, immediately after the Governor's visit to the conflict area of the free coloured population with the up-river Akawaio. The Caribs in particular, the closest Indian allies of the Dutch, were thereby deprived of their major source of income. This had been exacerbated by the demise of Arinda and the cessation of the anticipated entertainments there and the expected presents. Neighbouring Akawaio and Makushi Indians were also affected. We can compare van 's Gravesande's Despatch of 1762 with that of Governor Hugh Lyle Carmichael in 1812, the former expressing a policy of peaceful and prosperous co-existence, the latter showing a clear lack of esteem or friendship towards the indigenous people, regarding the giving of presents to the Indians as placing the government 'in the somewhat anomalous position of paying "tribute" to their native subjects'. The Colonial Office outlined British policy stating that: *His Majesty's Government will not forget their services but presents received in the future were to be considered as a boon and not as a right, as a reward for their past good conduct rather than as a purchase of their future friendship.* (Menezes 1977: 56. Communication from Bathurst to Carmichael 25 Nov. 1812.)

Efforts were also made to reduce the expenditure involved when present-giving was inescapable. Succinctly, the Dutch Administrations had treated the indigenous peoples in the Three Colonies as prestigious allies. The British were reluctant givers who thought of them, and treated them, as native subjects. The Dutch regarded Amerindian leaders as a medium for co-operation and friendship with the communities whereas the British regarded them as the medium for control of their communities and as the lowest in the administrative hierarchy of the nation.²⁰⁶

'They Had hid God in the Sea': The Transformative Movement Unravalled

Presentations were of profound and lasting importance to the indigenous peoples of the Three Colonies. Many of the items had become indispensable in their economy, especially metal tools. A surplus was traded through a network which extended southwards to the Amazon River and a lack of them impoverished the exchange system and its anticipated rewards. Within the indigenous societies, presents indicate reciprocity and are a vital expression of friendship and alliance, notably between affines and between settlement groupings within ethnic as well as inter-ethnic unities. Any disruption in gift-giving and accompanying feasts and entertainments had, as well as economic effects, profound social and psychological ones. Their lapse upset the social order at two levels: it removed a customary means of contact between the colonial government's representatives and a substantial number of indigenous leaders and their followers and it also diminished a leader's prestige amongst his own people in a system whereby the giving of feasts and gifts is the mark of status as a big man. This was clearly stated by Mahanarwa in 1810 on referring to the consequence of any inability to fulfil these expectations of his followers and associates.

In the light of this investigation into the situation in which the indigenous peoples of Western Guiana found themselves at the beginning of the nineteenth century, specifically in 1807, we are able to draw some conclusions on Rodway's account of 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites'. It was envisaged as a pan-Amerindian movement, involving Akawaio

of the Essequibo and its two major tributaries (the Mazaruni and Cuyuni), the mixed Akawaio-Arawak (the 'Woujejannen') of the lower Demerara River and the Spanish and Portuguese Indians, (those in the Orinoco - upper Cuyuni area in Spanish Guayana and those in the Rupununi - Rio Branco area implicating the Waika/Akawaio and Makushi respectively). On the transformation being completed 'they would conquer the colony' and displace the British Administration in power in Essequibo and Demerara in 1807.

Recognizing the unfavourable, unacceptable power structure in the social order, the Transformation Movement was an attempt to rectify it by a process of inversion in an invisible field accompanied by the activation of combined military force. It is noteworthy that the Amerindians had a concept of God as being the source of White colonial power. Given the missionary endeavours of the eighteenth century Capuchinos Catalanes, at the height of their prosperity by the time of the Movement, and the evangelism carried out by the Carmelites in the upper Rio Branco although sporadic and in a secular context, this is not surprising. Although there had not been any systematic Christian teaching authorized by the Dutch Administrations in the Three Colonies, nevertheless there had been Arawak and Akawaio converts in the Moravian Mission in Berbice and Corentyne and Moravian visits to Akawaio communities further west. There had been family prayers on some plantations and the administration headquarters had a succession of Protestant Ministers or Chaplains attached, so that the Services held in the Council Chamber of each Colony would, to Amerindian visitors, lead to an assumption of God's association with and support of the centres of colonial governance. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that the indigenous bystanders concluded that 'God' was important to White people, was empowering them and thereby relegating the indigenous peoples to a subordinate status. It was necessary to reverse this unequal power base by a disposal of this malevolent force called God.

That they had 'hid God in the sea' was a significant and appropriate measure to have taken within this conceptual system. The word in general use for 'White person' is *Paranakiri*. In both the Kapon and Pemon languages *parana* refers to 'a big stretch of water, a flood or sea', the suffix *-kiri* adding the meaning of 'something that is agreeable to' or 'liking'.²⁰⁷ It was applied to the Dutch colonists and to their British successors and to any fair-haired, pale-skinned individual. Having arrived by sea and settling along the coast, it was appropriate that their powerful spirit force, God, should be removed by being submerged in that sea. In indigenous cosmology this is a dark underworld, opposed to the life and vitality of the sun's radiance (*akwa*) in the upper regions of the cosmos. This scenario, we might suppose, would have been played out in a shaman's performance, the seance being the context in which a shaman's spirit aids (*iachiton*) fight and overcome enemy agencies, to provide a remedy, to redress and to restore health and strength to victims and their communities. A theatrically symbolic disposal of the oppressive spiritual force and of its source of power (*merunti*) would have been an appropriate enactment.²⁰⁸ There are parallel instances today, when Pemon shamans have summoned God to be interrogated during their seances. One such incident recounted is that of a shaman summoning God who, preceded by an angel and Jesus Christ, was asked about evil in the world and requested to lock up the 'father of evil' inside a mountain.²⁰⁹ Pemon use the word *kachima* to express a process of 'make-belief', 'pretending' or 'romancing'. The purpose of 'playing' or 'depicting', as in a theatrical performance, is described as *amuipa*, meaning 'to bring by suggestion', 'to induce', 'incite' or 'lure'.²¹⁰ Akawaio use the same word for 'something that causes something to happen'.²¹¹

That the sign of transformation was the appearance of two cows in the village of one of the nominated 'chiefs' of the Assembly strongly suggests Capuchin missionary influences deriving from the upper Cuyuni savannas, from where the westernmost settlements of the four favoured nations of the Dutch were being raided, pressurized or enticed into Mission-

dominated villages, each with its own cattle herd (*hato*). As already noted, the Guayana Mission owed its success to the vast number of cattle underpinning its economy. Nearly every mission settlement founded began with the introduction of a few cattle, which marked its beginning and would become the village herd and a major source of food.

The overall transformation envisaged in the Movement was that 'the world was going to be changed'. It was to be both a physical change and a social and cultural one. Physically 'the Indians would be changed to whites, and the whites to Indians'. It was additionally asserted 'that the Indians were already transformed into white blood, and that the whites would soon appear in their skins'. A fundamental change in the social order would accompany the physical ones whereby the Whites would be the Indians' subjects and the troublesome Mulattoes, the coloured people, would become the Indians' slaves. A house had already been erected to hold the presents the Indians destined for the subjected Whites - perhaps mimicking a Postholder's or Protector's storage capacity for presents and for entertainment. Overall, an inversion, a mirror image, was created of the socio-political status of Amerindians at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The 'Movement of Indians to be Transformed to Whites' can be classified as being essentially a role reversal one. The concept of transformation of living beings, in both appearance and qualities and therefore of behaviour and related status, is a familiar one across much of indigenous South America. In the ethnic groups referred to in Rodway's Report these are themes encapsulated in myth, notably in the creation myths relating the adventures of the twin heroes, Elder and Younger Brother, Sons of Sun. It is not therefore surprising that the indigenous concepts relating to transformation began to emerge in the Guiana region in conjunction with the fundamental changes stemming from the establishment of colonial society. That a form of syncretism was beginning is indicated by linguistic borrowings and adaptations, as referred to above.

With the British governing the Three Colonies after a number of changes of sovereignty involving the Dutch and French, the indigenous inhabitants experienced a partial disruption in their customary relationships with the colonial administration, notably via the posts and their associated entertainment and handouts, which were becoming erratic and grudgingly given. They perceived a change in these relationships which was detrimental to their economic interests, which distanced them from the colonial administration and, most notably, was reducing their status as favoured allies to that of subordinated subjects. They thus experienced grievances and fears which drew them to contemplate a unification with those in neighbouring Spanish and Portuguese spheres who had, during the course of the eighteenth century and before, suffered greatly from colonial policies of dislocation, invasion of their lands, extreme control, exile and slavery. Those involved in the 1807 Transformative Movement saw a need to rid themselves of these abusers of power. This was their motivation and the means of its achievement was consonant with shaman practice, a basic ritualized expression of their conceptual system which guided them in their objectives.

In the Arbitration documents at the end of the nineteenth century, it was noted that the Spanish had continually asserted their right to control the Indians, whom they pursued, captured, chastised, compelled:

Their relation to the Indians was not that of suppliants, but that of masters. It is suggested that this mastery was sometimes cruel, but it cannot be denied that it was the assertion of a right to control, and in sharp contrast to the bribing, coaxing policy of the Dutch. (Printed Argument on behalf of the U.S. of Venezuela II: 610.)

Although obliged to continue payments and rewards and the system for their distribution, the British attitude veered towards that of the Spanish in that allies were being converted into subjects. When Amerindian assistance was no longer needed after Emancipation, the British Administration then pursued a policy of support for conversion to Christianity and the foundation of mission villages inculcating a European work ethic and its hierarchy.

Fears of the indigenous as regards their eroding status, which arguably underlay the 1807 Movement and was manifest in the defects in present-giving and friction involving an increasing coloured population, became fully justified as later Amerindian policy was to show. In 1807 St. Clair noted that the anger and discontent of the Indians was reported as due to the free coloured people who had defrauded them and retained their children as slaves. The reason why the Acting Governor Col. Nicholson determined to make a journey in person up the Essequibo River, to visit the different settlements, discover the offenders and give redress to the victimized Indians, was that:

The procedure charged in this last accusation [of enslavement of Indian children] would have been a direct violation of the laws of these colonies, which are particularly strict on this head; because it is to the interest of our government to reconcile these people to our possession of their lands, and conducive to our peace and comfort to keep on amicable terms with them. (St. Clair II: 8. Underlining by Butt Colson.)

The reconciliation of Amerindians to the loss of their lands never occurred. Instead, a struggle to obtain legal recognition of them became a prominent feature in indigenous relationships with a succession of national administrations, to the present day.²¹² From the time of Emancipation, Government policy in British Guiana changed irrevocably from that inherited from the Dutch. The indigenous peoples were to be put in the care of Protestant Church Missions and to become part of the national workforce. As Noel Menezes aptly remarked, '- for earth the white man had offered heaven.'²¹³ Numerous enthusiastic movements of the nineteenth century, following that of 'Indians to be Transformed to Whites' in 1807, also took a different direction. Instead of rejecting God, He was to be harnessed to the process of empowerment of the indigenous peoples.

APPENDIX
ESTATES AND SLAVE NUMBERS IN THE THREE COLONIES

Late 17th to early 19th century

	SLAVES	PLANTATIONS & WHITES
ESSEQUIBO		
C.1700 ²¹⁴	644 approx. (Black & Indian)	
1762 ²¹⁵	2,571 (at least)	68 private: 3 West India Co. plantations
1769 ²¹⁶	3,986	On 92 plantations
1782 ²¹⁷	8,000	
1800 ²¹⁸	21,259	
DEMERARA		
1762 ²¹⁹	1,648	On 93 private plantations
1769 ²²⁰	5,967	On 206 plantations
1782 ²²¹	12,559	
1782 ²²²	18,000	
BERBICE		
1627 ²²³	6 African slaves	60-80 Whites
1720 ²²⁴	895 Black slaves	
1762 ²²⁵	3,833 Black slaves: 244 Red slaves	346 Whites
1763-4 ²²⁶	[3,370 total] 1,308 negro men 1,317 negro women 745 negro children	116 Whites
1764 ²²⁷	More than 7,000	
1782 ²²⁸	8,000	
1796 ²²⁹	8,232	
THE THREE COLONIES		
1764 ²³⁰	Essequibo & Demerara: together no more than 5,000.	

1782 ²³¹	15-300 Blacks	On 387 large plantations
1782-4 ²³²	About 34,000 total negroes (See notes 217, 222, 228, 231, referring	
1783 ²³³	25-28,000 Black slaves	On 300 Estates:
1803 ²³⁴	The Three Colonies: about 60,000	
d1811 ²³⁵	In Demerara & Essequibo 71,180 slaves (out of total population 77,031)	

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The ethno-historical nature of this article inevitably led to the early classic literature on Western Guiana in the 18th century and first years of the 19th century. However, there is now a number of excellent, more recent publications available. Notably, they include studies by Anna Benjamin, Sister Mary-Noel Menezes, James Whitaker and the late Professor Neil Whitehead on Guyana; Nadia Farage, John Hemming and David Sweet on Brazil; and the late Revd. Padre Buenaventura de Carrocera on Venezuela. I owe them all my special thanks for the data and insights their publications have provided. Without their research, added to that of many others, this article could not have been written.

NOTES

¹Rodway's major works include 'Chronological History of the Discovery and Settlement of Guiana, 1493-1893', 4 vols. (1888-1894, co-author Thomas Watt); 'History of British Guiana, from the year 1668 to the present time', 3 vols. (1891-1894); 'In the Guiana Forest: studies of nature in relation to the struggle for life', (1894 & 1911); 'Guiana: British, Dutch, and French', (1912). He was Curator of the British Guiana Museum and published numerous articles in Timehri, the Museum's Journal, being its Editor in 1894-98, with J.J. Nunan in 1911, and in 1917-19 and 1921.

²The Journal of the Royal Agricultural & Commercial Society of British Guiana 1917 Vol. IV (third series): 296-7.

³Butt Colson 1994/1996: "God's Folk": The evangelization of Amerindians in Western Guiana and the Enthusiastic Movement of 1756. Antropologica No. 86: 3-111.

⁴The literal meaning is 'buck', he-goat.

⁵Butt Colson 2009: 86-91 summarizes the literature that shows where and when the Kapon (Akawaio and Patamona) ethnic group communities have lived. It is noteworthy that the Caribs do not figure, perhaps because they were perennial enemies of the Akawaio and in close alliance with the colonial administration.

⁶Butt Colson 1973 & 1985.

⁷A useful account of the development of the Three Colonies is given in Whitehead 1988: 151165.

- ⁸There was a very brief exception. During the Second Dutch War, in 1666, Essequibo was attacked and taken by the English under Major John Scott but quickly regained by the Commander of Berbice.
- ⁹The Netherlands fell under French rule from 1795-1813. Defeated by France in a campaign of 1794-95, the 'Batavian Republic of the Netherlands' was established, its mode of government being patterned on the Directory in France. From June 1806 the Netherlands was the 'Napoleonic Kingdom of Holland' under Luis Napoleon and incorporated into the Napoleonic Empire between 1810-1813.
- ¹⁰For example, a 1614 Spanish report records that 50 married Dutchmen, besides others with Carib wives, had settled in the Corentyne area. Spaniards from Trinidad and the Orinoco, accompanied by Arawak Indians, found the Dutch and their Carib allies there in a small fort, with knives, axes and guns and other articles stored for barter and a large tobacco plantation begun. The settlement and its inhabitants were destroyed. (Rodway 1895 II: 325-6 & 328.)
- ¹¹Previously temporary authority on shore was wielded by successive Captains of trading vessels during their stay.
- ¹²For a detailed account of the Dutch West India Company's history from 1675 onwards see Goslinga 1971: Chapter 16 & Goslinga 1985: Chapters 1 & 12. Harris & de Villiers I: 9-27 give a useful account of the settlement of Essequibo from 1600 - 1738.
- ¹³The Court of Policy was established by the Dutch in 1732 and had legislative and administrative functions. When the British acquired the Three Colonies, effectively from 1803, they kept the Court of Policy until 1928.
- ¹⁴See Rodway 1997. (Reprint of original 1920 edition): 'The Story of Georgetown.'
- ¹⁵Webber 13-5: Rodway 1891 I: 44-62 & 1912: 60, 64, 83.
- ¹⁶Harris & de Villiers I: 15-21. Goslinga 1971: 421, 423-5.
- ¹⁷Anna Benjamin 1992-3: 1-21 gives an excellent account of trade during the 17th and 18th centuries in the Three Colonies. See also Whitaker 'Amerindians in the Eighteenth Century Plantation System of the Guianas'.
- ¹⁸This was the name given to the coast between Amazon mouth and the Orinoco Delta, but was applied especially to the western sector.
- ¹⁹Berkel 32.
- ²⁰Anna Benjamin 1992-3: 4-6 gives an assessment of the importance and duration of the Dutch *urucu* trade.
- ²¹Armellada & Gutierrez Salazar 99, define *-ken* as the angle formed by the union of two rivers.
- ²²Rodway 1896 X, I: 22.
- ²³Burr, U.S. Commission on Boundary Between Venezuela and British Guiana I: 204-210, gives a useful account of the Dutch trading system.
- ²⁴Harris & de Villiers I: 17, 19-20; II: 388-9. See Edmundson 673-4 referring to early Dutch trading at the mouth of the Amakura River (North-West region) and the establishment of a fortified post there in the 1630s under private Dutch auspices. Harris & de Villiers II: 460-473 has a 'Brief Treatise' on the trading places, sent to the West India Company by Storm van 's Gravesande in 1764. See Whitehead 1988: 152 Map 5 and 160-3 referring to Carib-Dutch early trading and to Dutch posts.
- ²⁵See Harris & de Villiers I: Map. Robert Schomburgk, during his first expedition into the interior of 'British Guayana' in 1835-6 (1836 VI: xv 229, 234, 263) noted the three locations of the upper Essequibo post.
- ²⁶Mr Smith, the Arinda Postholder, reported in 1790 (British Case Appendix V, 1781-1814: 78,

- (No 633). 'Extract from the Journal of G.E. Van Meyerhelm, Commandeur, Essequibo, July 18 1790'. Harris & de Villiers I: 107, speculate that the post was likely to have remained up to 1796, when the British had control of Essequibo for the second time.
- ²⁷Netscher 42. British Case I: 129-130 (No. 47).
- ²⁸Venezuela Case II, Appendix Part 1: 40-4 (Nos. 38, 40, 44, 46).
- ²⁹Venezuela Case II, Appendix Part 1: 52 (No.51): 59 (Nos. 57 & 58).
- ³⁰Pinkard 285-8 describes a Demerara Postholder's dwelling visited in 1797.
- ³¹BritishCase, Appendix II: 3 (Doc.174). This trade was mentioned as early as 1693. See U.S. Commission on Boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana, Report and Accompanying Papers II: Extracts from Dutch Archives II: 194 (No. 75) referring to a trade in horses up in the Cuyuni River at that date.
- ³²Robinson 239-248.
- ³³See Butt Colson 2009: Part I: The Historical Record, especially pp.99-101.
- ³⁴Benjamin 1992-3: 1.
- ³⁵There are no statistics available for the Amerindian population at large for this early period. Anna Benjamin refers to an estimate, given by the Moravian missionary Schumann for around 1750, of approximately 5-6000 indigenous people domiciled in Berbice. This would probably not have included the Corentyne area.
- ³⁶Rodway 1896 X, I: 15.
- ³⁷Menezes 1979: 165, section 3 quoting a British Colonial Office Report of 28 Jan. 1828.
- ³⁸Whitehead 1988: 180-88 gives a comprehensive account of Carib slaving. See also Whitehead 2011 and Whitaker 31-5.
- ³⁹Carrocera 1979 I: 365 (No. 126). Letter of the Prefect of the Mission P. Benito de La Garriga.
- ⁴⁰Whitehead 1988: 180-88 gives a comprehensive account of Carib slaving. See also Whitehead 2011 and Whitaker 31-5.
- ⁴¹R.H. Schomburgk 1836 JRGs VI: 263.
- ⁴²Benjamin 1992-3: 6.
- ⁴³Benjamin 1998: 3-9.
- ⁴⁴Venezuelan Case II, Appendix Part I: 232-3 (No.308): 252 (Nos. 329 & 330).
- ⁴⁵See Harris & de Villiers 2 Vols: 'Storm van 's Gravesande and the Rise of British Guiana'.
- ⁴⁶A legal obligation was developed either to return the slaves if they were claimed, or to sell them and give the money to the former owner. This practice was not frequent.
- ⁴⁷Butt Colson 1994/1996 No. 86: 50 & 62 refer to this aspect of the Royal Boundary Commission's plans.
- ⁴⁸Benjamin 1992-3: 11-12.
- ⁴⁹Harris & de Villiers I: 206-7. Commandeur to West India Company, April 1744.
- ⁵⁰Benjamin 1992-3: 14.
- ⁵¹Goslinga 1985 Chapter 13, gives a detailed account of the course of the uprising. Hartsinck 1770, I: 361-520, (translated by W.E. Roth) has a blow by blow account of slave uprisings during the period 1734-1764.
- ⁵²Harris & de Villiers II: 638. For details of some major occasions when Amerindian aid, notably Carib, was invoked, see Harris & de Villiers II: 438, 445-7 (footnote), 561-4, 573, 577, 664-9.
- ⁵³Harris & de Villiers II: 664-9. The Director-General of Essequibo to the W.I. Company, 27 August 1772.

⁵⁴Rodway 1896 X, I: 18.

⁵⁵Benjamin 1992-3: 17.

⁵⁶See Menezes 1977: 44-104 & 1979: 27-50 for details of the policy of present-giving to the Amerindians.

⁵⁷Rodway 1896 X, I: 15-6.

⁵⁸Rodway 1896 X, I: 18.

⁵⁹Menezes 1977: 7, 49-50, 74 (footnote 3).

⁶⁰Menezes 1979: 33-6, Sections 7 & 8, correspondence between Governor Bentinck and the Colonial Office 1812 concerning the former's promise of annual presents to the Indians. Bentinck's reply indicates very clearly why following the Dutch policy and the giving of presents was necessary and inescapable.

⁶¹Menezes 1977: 6.

⁶²Menezes 1979: 27-50.

⁶³Menezes 1979: 38-40 gives a list of presents and a model for 60 silver 'slides' [broaches?] that well illustrate the kinds of presents given out.

⁶⁴Menezes 1977: 90.

⁶⁵St. Clair II: 106.

⁶⁶St. Clair II: 121-2.

⁶⁷St. Clair II: 59.

⁶⁸St. Clair II: 64, 82. This is probably a reference to a movement of Makushi eastwards in order to escape Portuguese slave raids.

⁶⁹Menezes 1977: 95-6. See footnote 6 on p. 95 & footnote 4, p.96.

⁷⁰Menezes 1977: 96, footnote 2 quotes the Minutes of the Court of Policy for Tuesday 1 Sept. 180, referring to a case against Postholder H. Linau relating to an incident on the Pomeroun River, but in which Linau was supported by his Protector.

⁷¹Menezes 1977: 96. Wahl's Essequibo Protector at that date was Councillor Knollman. Both Linau and Wahl continued as Postholders in the Colony of Essequibo for many years, the latter being described as 'Postholder H.C.Wahl of Massaruni' in 1812-3. In 1839 Hilhouse recorded that, like a number of other Postholders said to have drunk themselves to death, Wahl in 'Massaruni' had died of gout. (Menezes 1977: 83). Mr Knollman probably resigned his position as a Protector of Indians in April or May 1808, having threatened to do so in January that year during a dispute with the Court of Policy. (Menezes 1977: 100-1). It is noted that the Hon. W.H.Knollman died between late 1808 and August 1809. (Menezes 1979: 60, Section 4, list of 'Monies voted to the Protectors for distribution to the Indians 1808-1814'. Minutes of the Court of Policy.)

⁷²Menezes 1979: 55-60. Her Section III, although mostly dealing with the posts and Postholders in the 19th century, gives an especially useful account of the system, its merits and of its alleged abuses.

⁷³A previous site for the Essequibo Post was Ampa, situated on the right bank of the Essequibo a short distance down from the confluence of the Mazaruni opposite. St. Clair described a visit to Ampa, made on the expedition's journey back to Demerara, and he noted that 'Not a vestige now remained of any buildings.' (St. Clair II: 138-9.)

⁷⁴Menezes 1977: 93-104.

⁷⁵PRO:C.O. III, 1. Demerary, Essequibo & Berbice 1781-1784: 96, 102, 102A. Letter of Lieut.

Col. Kingston to Lord George Germain, H.M. Principal Secretary of State, dated Demerary 18 July 1782.

- ⁷⁶Netscher (W.E.Roth translation) 34, 61-2, 81-2, 84-5. Hartsinck (W.E.Roth translation) 1958 No. 20: 35.
- ⁷⁷Robert Schomburgk 1840: 52-3.
- ⁷⁸Darnell Davis 142-152 describes in detail the problems encountered in obtaining and retaining suitable Ministers.
- ⁷⁹Riviere 10 and footnote 1 clarify date discrepancies for the beginning of this Mission.
- ⁸⁰For a detailed account of the Moravian missionaries in Berbice and Suriname see Joel Benjamin 1991: 18-40.
- ⁸¹Menezes 1977: 210.
- ⁸²The Pilgerhut diary was published by F. Staehelin, a former President of the Surinam Mission. I remain greatly indebted to the late Professor Neil Whitehead, and to his students in the Netherlands for references and their translation taken from the 6 volume work.
- ⁸³Minister of the Church of Scotland in British Guiana, the Revd. Robert Duff 7-10.
- ⁸⁴Menezes 1979: 249-250.
- ⁸⁵Duff 9-10.
- ⁸⁶Harris & de Villiers II: 459. See pp. 461-5 for further details.
- ⁸⁷Harris & de Villiers II: 461-2.
- ⁸⁸There is reference to a crystal mine and reports of its being the mother of the emerald.
- ⁸⁹Harris & de Villiers I: 167-174 reproduce a copy of Horstman's Journal which he himself had handed to La Condamine who published it in his 'Relation Abre ge e d'un Voyage fait dans l'Interieur de l'Amerique Meridionale'. (Paris, 1745).
- ⁹⁰Harris & de Villiers II: 616-20. The Ireng River is referred to as Maho, Mahu and Mao in early documents and still today by Brazilians.
- ⁹¹Sweet 216 footnote 59. Portugal and Spain were united under one monarch for sixty years, between 1580-1640.
- ⁹²Freitas 87-9 gives the foundation date of 1669.
- ⁹³Sweet 819, Appendix P: Glossary of Terms in Portuguese, Spanish & Lingua Geral. He details the social changes that occurred in the valleys of the Rio Solimoes and Rio Negro between c.1640 and c.1755, that he categorizes as '...the story of their destruction as ethnically and linguistically distinct human groups' (xii).
- ⁹⁴Sweet 137.
- ⁹⁵Sweet Chapter 9: 465-495 details private trading in slaves.
- ⁹⁶Reis 44-5, 47.
- ⁹⁷Sweet 637-640.
- ⁹⁸Sweet 81 refers to depopulation through smallpox as a principal reason for a 1697 slaving and exploring expedition to the Rio Negro region being led by Carvalho, Governor of Para.
- ⁹⁹Freitas 90.
- ¹⁰⁰Freitas 90.
- ¹⁰¹Sweet 603.

- ¹⁰²Sweet 598-603. On his page 600 Sweet describes a succession of commanders but the *tropa*, crewmen and the accompanying missionary chaplain stayed.
- ¹⁰³Farage 71.
- ¹⁰⁴Harris & de Villiers I: 185-9. Farage 62-5.
- ¹⁰⁵Harris & de Villiers I: 173. Paraviana refers to the indigenous name for the Rio Branco as well as being attributed to the people living on its lower reaches. The basic meaning of the name has been subject to speculation (see Myers 15). The common factor in the meanings proposed appears to be that of speed, fast running river water being compared to fast running people as in competitive racing by guests to dance festivals. Horstman maintained that he encountered a group of Paraviana who had been attracted to visit or settle near Arinda Post, then located on the Essequibo near the Siparuni confluence. In the 19th century Brazil claimed that the Siparuni was its boundary with British Guiana.
- ¹⁰⁶Sweet Appendix 0: 794 (No. 113).
- ¹⁰⁷Regarded as the 'mother of the emerald' the Dutch in Essequibo periodically put out a search for this mine, the exact position of which remained unknown within an are of the Rupununi and neighbouring Ireng River. 'Calikko' refers to the Kanuku Mountains of the Rupununi.
- ¹⁰⁸Accordingto Sweet 649, 657, 677 (footnote 46), 797 (No. 159), the Tarumas were encountered in the late 17th century and early 18th century on the Rio Anjurim, lower Rio Negro. They were first visited by Jesuits in 1657 and later missionized by Carmelites at the village of Santo Elias dos Tarumazes, who eventually moved them to a new site, Santo Elí as do Jau (Jahu) at the mouth of that river. From there they fled to the Essequibo headwaters and were referred to by the Dutch in the 1760s. (Harris & de Villiers II: 459.)
- ¹⁰⁹Harris & de Villiers II: 486.
- ¹¹⁰R.H. Schomburgk 1836: 263-4, 269.
- ¹¹¹The research by Dr Iokin e Rodriguez into the oral tradition of the Taurepang Pemon at Roraima, relating to the Pichawu gok demonstrates how displaced groups frequently cause serious conflict with the host community, even when they belong to the same ethnic unity. See Roroimo kok Damu k Chapter 2: 28-30.
- ¹¹²Rodway 1896 X, I: 24.
- ¹¹³Hemming 1987: 11 quotes Mendonça Furtado's reference to the change in policy as due to 'these miserable rustic ignoramuses'.
- ¹¹⁴See Hemming 1987: 40-61 for a detailed account of the *Diretório* and its abuses.
- ¹¹⁵Hemming 1987: 10.
- ¹¹⁶The Spanish military had been preceded by an independently organized expedition of Capuchin missionaries accompanied by 14 Spaniards from the township of Upata and 25 Caribs from the mission of Guasipati. They paddled up the Caroní River to the Icabaru River and crossed the watershed to arrive on tributaries of the Uraricoera where they encountered 'Sapara',
- ¹¹⁷The Dutch, via their Arinda post, appear to have informed the Portuguese of the presence of the Spanish forces. (See Reis 125.) This resulted in a Spanish expeditionary force under Antonio Lopez de la Puente being ambushed by the Portuguese under Captain Felipe Sturm lying in wait on the Takutu River. (Hemming 1990a: 2.)
- ¹¹⁸See Hemming 1990: 296, Map 1. Also see Farage's Map on page 58 and Chapter 4 for approximate locations and further details.

- ¹¹⁹Farage 124-7. Tables 2 and 3 give population numbers for the 1784-1789 period and also the ethnic identities of the settlers.
- ¹²⁰Farage 167 referring to the report of Francisco Xavier Rodrigues Barata on his 1798 journey through the region.
- ¹²¹Farage 129-145 et seq.
- ¹²²Farage 130-2. See also Hemming 1987: 11-17.
- ¹²³Riviere 38-9.
- ¹²⁴Sweet 637-664 gives a detailed account of the Carmelite Order, its origins and activities in Brazil.
- ¹²⁵Butt Colson 1985.
- ¹²⁶Farage: 129-130.
- ¹²⁷Armellada 1960: 118. Carrocera 1979 II: 343. The Prefect of the Capuchin Mission, Benito de La Garriga, recounted in 1776 that Tumutu and Mayaraca, Carib leaders with their people, fled in 1762 to the 'Cerras de Canucu' (Kanakanu Mountains) via the Caroní and Paragua Rivers.
- ¹²⁸The date and exact site have been disputed. See Harlow lxxxv-xc and Ojer 563-572.
- ¹²⁹Del Rey 1977: 95-102. See also Tavera Acosta 105-9. Paria-goto, people of Paria, is an environmental designation referring to the Carib-speaking group of Indians living along the southern banks of the lower Orinoco and the steep hills behind.
- ¹³⁰For details of Guayanese early Capuchin Mission history see Carrocera 1979 Vol. I: xxv-xxx and following chapters covering the period 1682-1758, Tavera-Acosta Chapter IX and Gonza lez Oropeza 77.
- ¹³¹Those who repulsed the Caribs are generally referred to as the Caberres, or Cabres, whose identity is uncertain but are thought to have been an Arawak-speaking people. (Lodares II: 188-9.)
- ¹³²Carrocera 1979 I: XXVI-XXVII.
- ¹³³Carrocera 1979 III: 318-323 (No.324).
- ¹³⁴A comprehensive account of the organization of the Mission and its villages, the economy, its benefits for the Padres and for the Indians and the religious life observed, is given in the Report of Eugenio de Alvarado, April 1755, entitled 'Religious and Economical Life of the Fathers...' Alvarado was a member of the Royal Boundary Commission, created in 1750, which spent a year in Guayana preparing for an ascent of the Orinoco and an attempt to determine the boundary with the Portuguese in Brazil. (Counter-Case of the U.S. of Venezuela III, Appendix Part 2: 51-63 (No. 23.) Whitehead 1988: 133-5 gives a useful account of 'the organisation and economic development of the missions'. See also the Ph.D thesis of David Robinson which has extensive information on the Mission.
- ¹³⁵Carrocera 1979 III: 208-228 (No. 298) Report on the State of the Mission of Guayana made by the Prefect Luis de Castelltersol, 30th September 1802. His Report lists each village and its total population, also distinguishing those married, widowed, single and children.
- ¹³⁶Carrocera 1979 III: 314-7 (No. 323) Report on the State of the Mission by the Prefect Fulgencio de Barcelona, 13 October 1816.
- ¹³⁷Cayetano de Carrocera 1953 An o I, Tomo I: No.1, 39.
- ¹³⁸Lodares III: 318-9 gives details of mission village life. The Prefect's Report on the state of the Guayana Mission, village by village in September 1802, is given by Carrocera 1979 III: 208-228 (No. 298). John Princep (1975) made plans of the villages of Cupapuy (page 17)

- and Altagracia (page 18) with descriptions of these and others as he saw them during his 1818 journey from Angostura to the Guayana Mission area. The villages were largely deserted and ravaged by disease, the Capuchin missionaries having been murdered by Republican forces the previous year.
- ¹³⁹Letter of P. Joseph de Guardia, Prefect of the Capuchin Mission in Guayana, to P. Estevan de Olot, Provincial of the Capuchinos, on the state of the Mission of Guayana, dated 1765. Strickland 9-10 (No. 6).
- ¹⁴⁰The 1791 Report of the Prefect of the Capuchin Mission in Guayana to the Governor of Guayana, giving the reasons why the civil government of the Indians should be left to the Capuchins. Strickland 55-7 (No. 34). See Carrocra 1979 III: 228-230 (No. 299) for a refutation of accusations against the Mission.
- ¹⁴¹These two names were recorded by the early explorers and settlers to identify those Indians living along the south bank, north-facing slopes of the Orinoco, from the Caroní River to the Delta. It is not clear from the early literature as to whether these Carib-speaking peoples belonged to separate ethnic groups or were one people with alternative names. The later reports often fused the two, as in the statement 'Guayanos or Pariagotos'. Marc de Civrieux concluded that their autodenomination was So'to (Civrieux 191, Glossary under So'to) which is also the autodenomination of the Carib-speaking Ye'kuana (also known as Makiritare and to the Pemon and Akawaio as Maionggong) living in the Caura and westwards in river valleys in the Amazonas Territory of Venezuela.
- ¹⁴²After the destruction of the Guayana Mission in 1817 the majority of the inhabitants fled, back to their previous, family lands. The Akawaio, fled eastwards, carrying their nickname with them, where in British Guiana it was spelt 'Waika'. The Capuchins may have adopted this name from Pemon speakers such as the (B)Arinagoto, who today refer to their Akawaio neighbours as Guaica. (Butt Colson 2009a: 64-5.)
- ¹⁴³See Carrocera 1979 III: 20-21 (No. 247) for January 1788; 106-7 (No. 272) for January 1792; 162-5 (No. 289) for June 1797; 314-7 (No. 323) for October 1816.
- ¹⁴⁴See Butt Colson 2009:114-128 for details of the evangelization of the Akawaio (Guaica) by Spanish missionaries in Guayana. Further details from the documentary evidence are published in Butt Colson 1994/1996, 86: 34-41.
- ¹⁴⁵Carrocera 1979 III: 159 (No. 287).
- ¹⁴⁶Armellada 1960: 149-154, 155-160, 161-174, describes Mariano's most prominent expeditions.
- ¹⁴⁷See Butt Colson 2009: 124-8 for detailed information on Capuchin missionary incursions among Akawaio (Guaicas) of the Cuyuni and Mazaruni Rivers.
- ¹⁴⁸Harris & de Villiers II: 609-10.
- ¹⁴⁹Butt Colson 1973 & 1985.
- ¹⁵⁰St Clair I: 110-1.
- ¹⁵¹Harris & de Villiers I: 330.
- ¹⁵²Bolingbroke 65-6.
- ¹⁵³Pinckard 129-130.
- ¹⁵⁴British Case Appendix V: 197-8 (No. 705). The text reference is to Mrs C.L.Thome.
- ¹⁵⁵Farage: 164-5. Hemming 1990: 323 notes that the cattle derived from those left by the Spanish Boundary Commissioners when they departed from the Solimo es.
- ¹⁵⁶Cayetano de Carrocera 1953 Tomo I, No. I: 39.

- ¹⁵⁷Carrocera 1979 II: 378 (No. 243); III: 20-1 (No. 247), 106-7 (No. 272), 192-3 (No. 293), 164 (No. 289), 192 (No. 293), 227 (No. 298).
- ¹⁵⁸Robinson 278-291.
- ¹⁵⁹See for example Carrocera 1979 III: 90-3 (No. 266), arguments of the Prefect of the Mission in a communication to the Governor of Guayana, April 1791, concerning a proposal to place the mission villages under the Bishopric.
- ¹⁶⁰Butt Colson 2009: 124-128 which gives details of long-distance *entradas* involving the Akawaio (Guicas).
- ¹⁶¹Armellada 1960: 117-139. The two missionaries involved were Tomas de Mataro and Benito de La Garriga, accompanied by 25 Caribs from Guasipati mission village and 14 residents from Upata township, some of them Spaniards. The expedition was undertaken without government permission and it pre-dated Comandante Manuel Centurion's military incursions into Amazonia from 1773, which resulted in the Portuguese construction of Fort Sao Joaquim (1775-6). The Capuchin prime motive was to be the first religious to arrive there, to claim this new field of evangelization for themselves and upstage the Franciscanos Observantes favoured by the Administration.
- ¹⁶²Ipurí goto meaning 'Swamp people' is an environmental designation attributed to Pemon living at the foot of the Amazon-Orinoco divide, where the streams flood and inundate the forest during the wet season. Ipocoto is probably the same as Ipurugoto but without the insertion of *-ri*, the possessive suffix stressing 'belonging to' - ie., 'living in' the swamps.
- ¹⁶³Armellada 1960: 118. Lake Parime, long thought to be the site of El Dorado, was probably a reference to the area of Pirara, in North Rupununi, a marshy stretch of territory which floods in the wet season.
- ¹⁶⁴Armellada 1960: 131.
- ¹⁶⁵Armellada 1960: 132. The Spanish text reads: 'Va yanse los espanoles y queremos los holandeses, que son nuestros cunados y parientes.'
- ¹⁶⁶Armellada 1960: 138.
- ¹⁶⁷Ribeiro de Sampaio (1777): quoted by Farage 1991: 149.
- ¹⁶⁸See Whitehead 1988:180-8 and 2011 on Carib slaving. There is now a considerable literature on different forms of South American indigenous slavery and servitude. For example Grotti and Brightman 2016.
- ¹⁶⁹Arawak Arawak speakers use the term *maku* (*macu*).
- ¹⁷⁰The term cannot be used for a man's brother's son or a woman's sister's son because these are denoted siblings in the indigenous kinship system.
- ¹⁷¹This is strikingly emphasized in the Maichapí myth. See Armellada 1964: 87-97.
- ¹⁷²Alexander Chapter IV: 40.
- ¹⁷³Timehri 1893, VII (New Series) Part II: 318-348, which is an English translation made by H.L. Bayrhofer of the story of Awacaipu, taken from C.F. Appun 'Unter den Tropen' II, Chapter 4.
- ¹⁷⁴s, z, sh, ch, are dialectical renderings of one phoneme. The term *era'ti* (turn) is the indigenous usage.
- ¹⁷⁵Rodway 1920: 11-2.
- ¹⁷⁶Benjamin 1992-3: 16.
- ¹⁷⁷Rodway 1920: 'The Story of Georgetown'.

- ¹⁷⁸Bolingbroke 96.
- ¹⁷⁹Alexiades 10-15 discusses the impact of infectious diseases and depopulation on Amazonian societies in general and the promotion of increased mobility and dispersion. See also Hemming 1987: 5 and Whitehead 1988: 22-30.
- ¹⁸⁰Benjamin 1992-3: 14-5.
- ¹⁸¹Sweet 735-7, Appendix K: 'Deaths Reported from Missions on the Negro and Solimo es during the Measles Epidemic of 1749'. The total number of recorded deaths for the Rio Negro is given as 1,153. In this river 169 had fled from the mission villages to avoid contagion.
- ¹⁸²Farage: 72.
- ¹⁸³Carrocera 1979 I: 335-7 (No. 117); Whitehead 1988: 135-140 gives a detailed account of the effects of disease on Carib populations in the Spanish mission villages in the Orinoco basin.
- ¹⁸⁴Carrocera 1979 III: 156-7 (No.285).
- ¹⁸⁵Alexander von Humboldt and Aime Bonpland give an account of Carib areas formerly occupied compared with those at the time of their travels of 1799-1804. Caribs living between the sources of the Essequibo and the Rio Branco at the time of travel were estimated to number 5,000, (Vol. III: 77). In Vol. II: 388-9 is a description of the extensive area of Carib trading and raiding.
- ¹⁸⁶Carrocera 1979 III: 86-90 (No. 265). The 'Procurador general of the missions' to the King in 1791.
- ¹⁸⁷St. Clair II: 49-50.
- ¹⁸⁸US Commission on Boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana: Report & Accompanying Papers I: 305.
- ¹⁸⁹Carrocera 1979 III: 238-241 (No. 306). Petition of the Prefect of the Mission to the Audiencia de Caracas.
- ¹⁹⁰Carrocera 1979 III: 250-4 (No. 309). Royal Order to the Audiencia de Caracas for the spiritual and temporal advancement of the Mission villages of the Capuchinos in the Province of Guayana, 19 November 1804.
- ¹⁹¹Venezulan Case II, Appendix Part 2: 403 (No. 418) The Report of Centurion 1771, referring to his arrangement of thirty-five marriages between Spaniards and the principal Indian women of the 'Cariva' (Carib), 'Guayca' (Pemon or Akawaio) and 'Guarauna' (Warao).
- ¹⁹²Sweet 664-7. 'Sertanistas' refers to people of the remote hinterland of Amazonia.
- ¹⁹³In her Section II entitled 'Policy of Presents to the Amerindians' Menezes lists the amount of money voted for annual and triennial presents, rations and payments made to the Indians during the first three decades of the 19th century (Menezes 1979: 27-50).
- ¹⁹⁴Rodway 1896 X, I: 24-5.
- ¹⁹⁵Harris & de Villiers I: 106-7.
- ¹⁹⁶Menezes 1979 Section II: 27-37.
- ¹⁹⁷Menezes 1979: 275-6, quoting the Minutes of the Court of Policy, 29th May 1804. The reference is to 'those of the Caribbean nations in the upper River of Essequibo', denoting the Caribs and possibly the Carib-speaking Makushi and Akawaio in the Arinda area as well.
- ¹⁹⁸Rodway 1896: 23-4 states that on the 30th April 1805 it was reported to the Court [of

Policy] that the goods ordered 'had come out, with invoices amounting to £3,179 13 6, when it was agreed to have a distribution as soon as possible'.

- ¹⁹⁹The spelling of this leader's name varies in the literature and one encounters Mahanarva, Manariwau, Manariwan, Manariwa, Minarawa and Maranari. Apart from problems of spelling in different languages, Amerindians often change or modify their names to mark a change of circumstances.
- ²⁰⁰Menezes 1979: 34-6. Farage notes that a Portuguese escort in 1786 learnt of a Carib called Maranari with other Caribs (Caripuna) and a Paraviana chief, staying at Arinda Post at Rupununi mouth with two Dutchmen there. He and the Caribs, together with some Paraviana settled in the Cuitaru (Kwitaro), had been taking slaves in Atorai territory and had just raided a local group of Wapixana, capturing fifteen women and some children. This information was transmitted in clear Spanish - suggesting that the informants were Caribs who had derived from Spanish Guayana. A message was sent to Maranari urging him to settle but diplomatically he replied that he would, but that he needed to bring his people together first. He then went off to the Rupununi into the Dutch sphere, where the Portuguese felt unable to pursue him. (Farage: 151, 169-173.)
- ²⁰¹Rodway 1890 IV, Part I: 27-31. An account of this incident is also given by Rodway in Timehri 1921, VII: 154-5, 'Treaty with Manariwau'. See also W.E. Roth 1921 VII: 34-5.
- ²⁰²Menezes 1977: 53.
- ²⁰³Menezes 1977: 68-9.
- ²⁰⁴For example, the 1792-3 Capuchin expedition down the Mazaruni was informed that Akawaio were absent, having gone to work for the Dutch and with the expectation of being sent to seek *poitos* (slaves/assistants) afterwards. (Butt Colson 2009: 126.)
- ²⁰⁵Farage: 173.
- ²⁰⁶Menezes 1977 Chapter IX: 254-264 gives a comprehensive account of British policy on Amerindians during the nineteenth century.
- ²⁰⁷Armellada & Gutierrez Salazar 147.
- ²⁰⁸Butt, Epton & Wavell Chapters 19 and 22 give an account of the Akawaio shamanic seance. See also Butt Colson 1977:43-65.
- ²⁰⁹Armellada 1973: 96-8 (No. 29) 'The Piache that brought down God.'
- ²¹⁰Armellada & Gutierrez Salazar 11.
- ²¹¹Stegeman & Hunter 24-5.
- ²¹²Menezes 1988: 353-374.
- ²¹³Menezes 1979: 163.
- ²¹⁴Benjamin 1992-3: 5.
- ²¹⁵Harris & de Villiers II: 398-9.
- ²¹⁶Harris & de Villiers II: 400.
- ²¹⁷Goslinga 1985: 456-7, a French report.
- ²¹⁸Goslinga 1985: 439. 'At the end of the eighteenth century'.
- ²¹⁹Harris & de Villiers II: 399.
- ²²⁰Harris & de Villiers II: 400.
- ²²¹Benjamin 1992-3: 16.
- ²²²Goslinga 1985: 456. 'According to a French report'.

²²³Benjamin 1992-3: 1.

²²⁴Benjamin 1992-3: 5.

²²⁵Whitehead 1988: 156.

²²⁶Hartsinck: W.E. Roth translation No. 27: 66. The numbers are according to official returns in 1763-4, immediately after the quelling of the Berbice Revolt.

²²⁷Harris & de Villiers II: 449, Letter of the Director-General Storm van 's Gravesande to Gedney Clarke 23rd April 1764, referring to the Berbice population at the time of the Berbice Rebellion and expressing surprise at such a large number of slaves compared to the official figure for 1762.

²²⁸Goslinga 1985: 456-7. A French report.

²²⁹Goslinga 1985: 439.

²³⁰Harris & de Villiers II: 449. Letter of Director-General Van 's Gravesande to Gedney Clarke 23rd April 1764, comparing the number of slaves in Essequibo and Demerara combined to that of Berbice before the Berbice rebellion. (see Note 227).

²³¹Goslinga 1985: 457. A French report.

²³²Rodway 1912: 103-4 quoting a French report. The 34,000 Black slaves included 18,000 in Demerara and 8,000 in each of the other two colonies.

²³³Bolingbroke 95.

²³⁴Menezes 1979: xviii.

²³⁵Menezes 1977: 90. 26 Dec. 1811 Census return for Demerara and Essequibo.

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Article

Archaeological Survey within the Vicinity of Karaawaimin Taawa, South Rupununi, Guyana

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Abstract

This report provides an overview of the findings of the archaeological assessment conducted within the vicinity of Karaawaimin Taawa, South Rupununi, which was executed as part of an ongoing research corporation between the South Rupununi District Council (SRDC) and Sustainable Wildlife Management (SWM). As part of an exploratory biodiversity assessment of a culturally important area of the Wapichan people which is today under threat by mining activities. The archaeological assessment of the Karaawaimin Taawa was limited to exciting trails created to facilitate a rapid assessment of the area and provided access to sites impacted by heavy rain fall and rising water levels.

Keywords: Pollisoirs, Cupule, Kwitaro River

Introduction

The Rupununi Savannah accounts for nearly half of the national territory of Guyana (Williams 1979, Plew et al., 2010) though; the archaeology of the Rupununi remains relatively unexplored (Williams 1979, Evens and Meggers, 1960, Plew et al., 2008, 2010). Previous archaeological investigations of the Rupununi identified a range of stone tools (Evans and Meggers 1960; Roth 1929; Williams 1978) and features including rock alignments (Brown 1876; Henderson 1952), rock circles (Brown 1873; Henderson 1952), and rock piles (Henderson 1952). The region is also characterized by the presence of pollisoirs and petroglyphs (Plew 2010). Earlier explorers to the area noted petroglyphs in the north savannahs while additional glyphs have been described by Brown (1876) on the Kwitaro. Petroglyphs have also been reported by Dubelaar and Berrange (1979), Hanif (1967), Poonai

(1970), Goodland (1976) and more recently Dagggers, Pereira and Pitamber (2016) at Aishalton, at Shiriri Mountain (Plew and Pereira 2001) and in the vicinity of the South Pakaramias (Dagggers, Pereira and Plew 2019).

The work conducted by Evans and Meggers (1960), remains the most extensive research conducted in the savannah, one which identified a number of site types and pottery forms which serve as the basis for definition of the Rupununi Phase which is characterized by two pottery types, Rupununi Plain and Kanuku Plain. The seriation of these types suggests an inverse distribution over time (Plew et al, 2008, 2010, Plew and Dagggers 2022).

According to Plew 2010, Pollisoirs have not been routinely described in the Rupununi. Through several recent archaeological investigations in the Rupununi reported pollisoirs in a number of archaeological contexts. Plew et al, (2008) reported a number of pollisoirs within the vicinity of Sawariwau River near Imprenza. These were categorized into four types. Type 1 pollisoir include shallow circular-to-oval basins measuring 15-30 cm in diameter while Type 2 include elongated features having widths of 8-9 cm and lengths between 18 and 20 cm. Type 3 features consist of narrow elongates measuring c. 20 cm in length, 3-4 cm in width, and 2 cm in depth. Type 4 pollisoir include large, shallow trough-like features set end-to-end and measuring 20 by 30 cm. Over sixty individual features were noted. Pollisoirs have not been routinely described in the Rupununi, making the Sawariwau finds relatively unique. Recent work in the vicinity of Yupukari and Toka villages has cast light on the nature of Rupununi occupations. In and around the village of Toka, pollisoirs similar to those at Imprenza on the Sauriwau River were noted (Plew and Pereira 2009). More recently Dagggers et al., (2016) reported a cluster of 30 pollisoirs within the vicinity of the Moco Moco creek, the site measures 10.2X6.10 meters and comprise of types 1,2 and 3 pollisoirs. Archaeological investigations within the vicinity of Aishalton in the south Rupununi also recorded a cluster of eleven (11) pollisoirs within the vicinity of petroglyph site S19 (the fish hole) (Williams 1979 and Dagggers et al., 2016) fitting the categories outlined by Plew et al (2008), recent assessment of the Shea Rock shelter as recorded two (2) circular pollisoir features, positioned on a narrow ledge below the pictograph panel (Dagggers and Pereira 2017). Though there are undoubtably similar pollisor features within the region they have generated very little interest hence, the limited record of their existence and context.

Beginning in 1999 a series of archaeological surveys have been conducted in the south savannahs with the intent of determining the extent to which there is a greater range of variation in site types documented by Evans and Meggers (1960) and Williams (1979, 1985) (Dagggers, Pereira and Plew 2019). These surveys have identified cemeteries, ceramic scatters and petroglyphic sites providing new insights into the archaeology of the Rupununi. Given the presence of rock features in the Rupununi they are presumed to have played a culturally significant role in the prehistory of Rupununi. This is further demonstrated in the petroglyph landscape of the Rupununi, where the Rupununi's best-known petroglyph site is the Aishalton enumerative style petroglyph complex which was extensively documented by Williams (1979a) and more recently by Dagggers, Pereira and Pitamber (2016) Williams (1979a) suggest that the Aishalton petroglyphs were used as a method of communication and resource management. Williams (1979b) further describes the fish trap petroglyphs on the Essequibo in association with water levels and seasonal fish holes as part of a communication system which facilitated resource management (Dagggers, Pereira and Plew 2019)

To further investigate the range of archaeological contexts in the Rupununi an archaeological survey was conducted within the vicinity of Aishalton Proposed extension more specifically Karaawaimin Taawa and the Kwitaro river during the period of March 10 – 18 2022, working with community ranger and cultural resource personnel attached to the SRDC the team visited a number of archaeological sites that date to the historic and

Environmental Setting

The pollisoirs and Cupules of Karaawaimin Taawa are situated along small creeks and tributaries of the Tooto wa'o, and on rapids situated across the Tooto wa'o and Kwitaro River, That runs west and southwest from the Rupununi river. The landscape consist of hills, and steep mountains, with flat sedimentary rocks. As is typical most recorded grinding surfaces of pollisor sits are located in riverine area in Guyana, which offers exposed dark grey granite which was used by indigenous groups to produce stone implements for resource exploitation within the landscape.

The Tooto wa'o and Kwitaro Rivers continue to be major fishing sources for the Wapishan people. Within the vicinity of Karaawaimin Taawa mountain there were two notable Brazil nut reefs and sparsely distributed bullet wood trees which played an important role in the British Guyana latex industry.

Results and Discussion

The archaeological assessment recorded seven archaeological sites including five (5) pollisoirs sites, including what is presumed to be a cupule site and one historic balata base camp site and whetstone site which fits the historic context. All prehistoric sites are situated horizontally which is generally typical of grinding surfaces and some cupule locations.

Pre-historic Sites

Site No.1 - Pepper Creek: Pollisoirs

Site No.1 is located approximately 12 miles NE of Aishalton village and approximately 6.01 miles from the foot Karaawaimin Taawa Camp 1 location. The site is situated on an outcrop in the center of (Pepper creek) while other features are noted on the outcrop to the bank of the creek. It is important to note that these outcrops are visible during the dry periods, however; they are completely inundated or (submerged) during heavy rain fall as a result of rising water levels. This site is characterized by a several cluster of ground stone features situated on the 3x 1.5 meters outcrop in the creek. The grooves are represented in three clusters or groups with a total of 17 visible pollisoirs. The pollisoirs are arranged side by side in most instances. The grooves on the outcrop situated in the creek can be categorized into three types of noted by Plew (2008). A total of (N=7) Type 1 pollisoirs were recorded, these include shallow circular-to-oval basins measuring 8 to 9 cm cm in diameter while a total of (N=5) Type 2 pollisoirs were recorded, these are elongated features having widths of 5-7 cm and lengths between 8 and 10 cm. and a total of (N=5) Type 3 features consist of narrow elongates measuring c. 8.5 10 cm in length, 2-4 cm in width, and 2 cm in depth were recorded. On the Northern bank of the creek a single pollisor was recorded fitting the description of Type 4 pollisor described by Plew (2008), a single large oval feature measuring 10x8 cm (see Figure 2)

Table 1. Site No. 1, Pepper Creek

Type	Number
Circular to Oval shaped	7
Elongated	5
Narrow elongated	5
Shallow trough-like feature	1

**Figure 2: Image Showing Pollisoir Features Found at Site No.1 (Pepper Creek)***Site No.2 - Shii Tozoowan or Swollen Falls: Kwitaro River: Pollisoirs*

Site No.2 is located on a large outcrop which forms a rapid across the Kwitaro River. The site was recorded during a period where there was a sudden onset of rain resulting in fluctuating water levels. The pollisoir features are concentrated on the Eastern and Western Banks of the river a single feature was noted in the center of the rapid, the grooves are concentrated at the edge of the current water level when recorded. It is possible that other features are present within the vicinity of the rapid and may become visible when the water reaches lower levels. These features like the features located on pepper creek become submerged seasonally. This site consists of nine (9) grinding grooves that represents two

types of pollisoirs. Type 1 pollisoirs (N=8) were recorded, these include shallow circular-to-oval basins ranging 14.5-26 cm in diameter with depth ranging 1.5 - 4.5 cm. A Type 2 pollisior (N=1) was recorded, these are elongated features having a width of 14.5 cm and length of 23 cm. (see Table 2, Figure 3).

Table 2. Pollisoir at Shii Tozoowan or Swollen Falls

Type	Number
Circular to Oval shaped	8
Elongated	1



Figure 3: Image of a Cluster of Five (5) Circular Pollisoirs Found on Shii Tozoowan or (Swollen Falls) (Site No.2)

Site No. 3 - Karada Pao or Crack Falls: Kwitaro River: Pollisoirs

Site No.3 is located within the vicinity of camp 4, on a large outcrop or bedrock (a visible exposure of geologic formation on the surface) which forms a rapid across the Kwitaro River approximately 0.44 miles away from swollen falls. The pollisior features are situated on the Eastern bank of the river where the grooves are concentrated at the edge of the current water level when recorded, and in the center of the rapid. Like Swollen falls, It is possible that other features are present within the vicinity of the rapid and may become visible when the water level is lower. This site consists of seventeen (17) grinding grooves of two types. Positioned on the outcrop on the eastern bank of the river are 2 clusters of pollisoirs. One cluster comprising of Type 2 pollisoirs (N=4) were recorded. These are elongated features having a

width ranging between 7-10 cm and length ranging between 17-23 cm. Approximately 2.7 meters away is another cluster of (N=4) grooves consisting of Type 1 (N=2) pollisoir, circular-to-oval basin measuring between 11-24cm in diameter. Type 2 pollisoir (N=1) elongated pollisoirs measuring 18 x10cm and Type 3 (N=1) a narrow elongates measuring 20 cm in length, 8 cm in width. Two (2) pollisoirs positioned 40 cm apart are located in the center of the rapid. This cluster consist of Type 2 pollisoirs (N=2) elongated pollisoirs measuring 28 x 12.5cm and 29 x 7cm respectively on the western bank of the river are (N=3) pollisoirs of type 1 (N=2) measuring between 23-12 cm diameter and Type 2 (N=1) measuring 24 x 8cm. Approximately 20 meters from the western bank pollisoirs are a cluster of (N=4) of Type 1 category pollisoirs ranging between 11-22cm in diameter (see Figure 3). In the center of the falls at least two (2) naturally occurring features referred to as fish holes were visible (see Table 3, Figure 4).

Table 3. Karada Pao or Crack Falls Pollisoir

Type	Number
Circular to Oval shaped	8
Elongated	8
Narrow elongated	1



Figure 4: Image of Pollisoirs Located on Crack Falls (Site No.3)

Site No.4: Tributary of the Tooto Wa’o: Pollisoir

Site No.4 is situated approximately 50 meters from camp one which is locate 18 miles from the community of Aishalton. The pollisoir site is located in small rocky tributary of the Toot wa’o river. The grooves are on a rocky rapid downstream. The site consists of (N=4)

pollisoirs. The pollisoirs are arranged side by side on a 136 x 65 cm rock. A total of (N=2) Type 2 pollisoirs were recorded, these are elongated features having widths of 10-11 cm and lengths between 23 and 28cm. Type 3 (N=2) features consist of narrow elongates measuring widths of 3-2.5 cm and lengths between 23 and 36cm (see Table 4, Figure 5).

Table 4. Tributary of the Tooto Wa'o Pollisoir

Type	Number
Elongated	2
Narrow elongated	2



Figure 5: Image of Pollisoirs Found at Site No.4

Site No.5: Tributary of the Tooto Wa'o: Pollisoir

Site No.5 is located approximately 1 mile upstream from Site No.4. The site is positioned on a large Granite outcrop or bedrock in the tributary which forms a small flowing fall. A large portion of the of the bedrock which forms the site was submerged at the time the site was recorded as a result of the sudden onset of rainfall as with the previous four sites recorded. The site in its entirety may become visible during dry seasons and completely inundated during periods of continuous rainfall. Twenty five percent (25%) of the site was covered by

sediments and leaf litter and required clearing. While a small portion was visibly eroded from water flow. Site five (5) contains of a total of (N=84) pollisoirs manufactured and arranged in clusters within the vicinity of the bedrock and the water fall, 34 of the 84 documented pollisoirs are on a single 2 x 1.6 meter rock on the bank of the stream. The pollisoirs consist of four types. Type 1 consists of shallow to deep (1-5.7 cm) deep circular to oval basins measuring between 15-38 cm in diameter. Type 2 are elongated features averaging 23 cm in length, 7.5-15 cm in width and 2- 6.8 cm in depth. Type 3 features consist of narrow elongates measuring widths of 6-13 cm and lengths between 38 and 15cm. The site also presents two unique clusters of what appears to be anthropic depressions or small circles (N=17). These are believed to be cupule depressions which ranges between 3-6 cm in diameter and 1.5 and 3 cm depth. Though cupules were never reported in the context of Guyanese archaeology the circular features fit the characteristics of cupule petroglyphs and may well be the oldest and unique rock art feature of Karaawaimin Taawa as they present the same patination of the Granite outcrop from which it was manufactured (see Table 5, Figure 6).



Figure 6. Image (A) and (B) Depicts Both Cupules and Pollisoirs, While Image (C) is of the 2 X 1.6 meter Rock Containing 34 Pollisoir Features

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Cupules and Pollisoirs

Type	Number
Circular to Oval Shaped	12
Elongated	35
Narrow elongated	37
Cupule glyphs	17

Historic Sites

Site 1: Sharpening Stone or Whetstone Site

Approximately one (1) mile away from Camp No.3 and from the Kwitaro River Camp No. 4 are a number of triangular and rectangular shaped stone, which line the existing trail situated on a slop next to a small running creek. The site is densely vegetated with shrubs, palms and larger trees including balata (bullet wood) trees. The GSV is less than ten percent (10%) and more than 60% of the stones are covered by moss. The stones vary in sizes ranging on average between 14x15 m and are between 6-8 cm thick. There are visible signs of abrasion on the stones suggesting its use in sharpening metal/ iron type tools. It is believed that these stones were intentionally placed along the trail during the balata bleeding trade and is continuously used today by hunters and fishers who exploit resources along these trails.



Figure 6. Image of the Whetstone or Sharpening Stone Along the Trail

Site 2: Abandoned Balata Camp

Approximately 1 mile away from Camp No.4 location continuing along the bank of the Kwitaro River is an abandoned balata camp. The site is situated approximately 50 meters away from the western bank of the Kwitaro River. The GSV of the site is approximately 15%. The site is largely overgrown with shrubs and domesticated citrus fruit trees such as limes and oranges and partly covered by leaf litter and roots. Beneath the roots and leaf, a single enamel plate was noted. Closer to the bank of the River, three (3) Shovel test pits (STPs) were dug approximately Two (2) feet apart to a depth 10 inches, but proved sterile. The soil is sandy with dense root intrusions. Although the site was abandoned at the end of the balata trade more than five decades ago, the base camp remains partly cleared. According to the ranger

Mr. Brown, the area was cared of a former resident of Aishalton Village who was also a balata bleeder until his passing 10 years ago.



Figure 8. Image of Enamel Plate Beneath the Leaf Litter

Summary and Conclusion

The Archaeological survey of Karaawaimin Taawa, South Rupununi, Guyana recorded seven archaeological sites. Five (5) of the recorded sites are prehistoric while two (2) are historic in nature. These include five (5) pollisoir locations, which also include one (1) cupule site, one (1) whetstone or sharpening stone site and one (1) abandoned balata base camp site.

Four types of pollisoirs were noted and distributed across the five sites within the vicinity of Karaawaimin Taawa. Type 1 pollisoirs include shallow to deep circular to oval basins measuring 11-38cm in diameter and (1-5.7cm) depth. Type 2 include elongated features having widths of 7-15 cm and lengths between 17 and 28 cm. Type 3 features consist of narrow elongates measuring c. 15-38 cm in length, 5-13 cm in width and Type 4 consist of shallow trough-like features. A total of one hundred and thirty-two (N=132) individual features were recorded during this survey. Pollisoirs have not been routinely described in the Rupununi; to date, the most notable are the those documented by (Plew et al., 2008) of Sawariwau (Plew and Dagers 2022). Making Karaawaimin Taawa an exceptional find for the South Rupununi. The presence of pollisoirs at differing depth levels of the river suggest a pattern similar to that described by Williams (1979b) in which fish petroglyphs were positioned to coincide with variable water levels a position also posited by (Plew 2008). Additional features visible underwater suggested that pollisoirs were manufactured for seasonal use depending upon water levels (Plew et al., 2008). This appear to be the case at the (5) five pollisoir sites recorded within the vicinity of Karaawaimin Taawa. Pollisior site No.3 Crack falls, cluster of pollisoirs also coincide with the presence and visibility of naturally occurring fish hole features within the rapids.

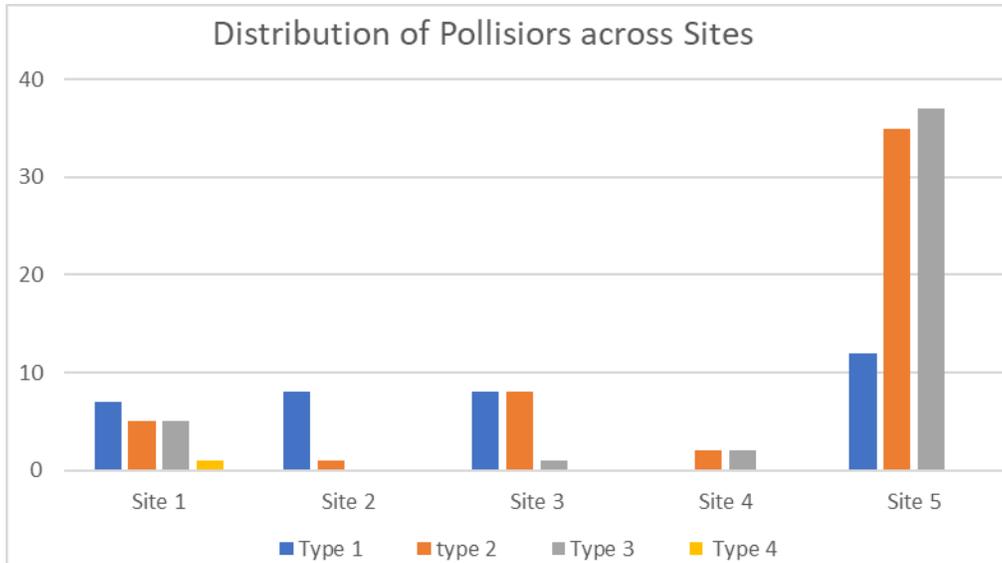


Figure 9. Distribution of Pollisoirs Across the Five Recorded Prehistoric Sites within the Vicinity of Karaawaimin Taawa

Located among the pollisoirs of site No.5, a tributary of the Tooto Wa'o are the presence of seventeen (17) circular depressions arranged horizontally in two distinctive clusters of (7 and 10). The circular depressions are positioned on the Granite outcrop on both banks of the tributary within the vicinity of the falls. These intentionally made features measure between 3-6cm in diameter, and a depth of 1-3 cm fitting the characteristics of what we believe to be cupule petroglyphs. Cupules are anthropogenically manufactured cultural depression and are believed to be among the older surviving rock art features (Van Hook 2003). Though previously reported in south America, cupules have not been reported in Guyanese archaeological context. Cupule features were linked ethnographically to a number of cultures and are related to fertility, rituals, hunting, among other uses. These non-utilitarian markings are found across the world and may have varying functions in varying context. They are largely found in clusters, lines, arch, circles grids or sometimes random (Pie-lin Yu 2016). Defining their function may depend on their location (Smith and Lerch 1984) (Hector 2009). Considering that cupules have not been previously reported further investigation unto the site and the south Rupununi savannah is necessary to determine their relationship to the landscape and possible use.

In addition to recording pollisoirs, the survey recorded two late 19th century mid-20th Century sites Balata trade sites in close proximity to the Kwitaro River. These sites remain an important aspect of British Guyana's history and the role of indigenous peoples in trade and travel and can provide greater insight into the lives and activities of coastal merchants and indigenous traders and the industry.

The survey recorded a total of seven (7) new archaeological sites, these sites to some extent reaffirms what is currently known about the prehistory of the Rupununi, The pollisoir sites documented within the vicinity of Karaawaimin Taawa is the largest such find in the region when compared to the number of pollisoirs recorded in the North Rupununi, suggesting greater variability in the use of the South Rupununi landscape use and resource exploitation; while the discovery of the new cupule petroglyphs within site No.5, will allow for the assessment of the greater variability of the patterns previously known about the Archaeology of the south Rupununi and provide greater insight into the prehistory of the Region.

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Article

Contemporary Parishara and Hummingbird Dances in the Rupununi Savannah, Southwestern Guyana

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Abstract

This paper looks at two well-known indigenous dances from Amazonia and Lowland South America known as the Parishara and Hummingbird dances, both of which were very popular with the Makushi and Wapishana of the Rupununi savannahs in southwestern Guyana. The Parishara dance was at one time part of indigenous hunting ritual, an appeal to the 'Master of Animals' or 'Master of Wild Hogs' to send his children (the peccary herds) out of the forest into the savannah to palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*) swamps to feed the hungry people; while the Hummingbird (Tukui) dance was another ritual appeal to the 'Master of Fishes' to replenish the fish stocks at the beginning of the main or primary rainy season into the following dry season. The dances in this paper were both organized as part of an Exxon-Mobil funded project with a local Non-Governmental Organization, the Kanuku Mountains Community Representative Group (KMCRG), who represent twenty-one indigenous communities surrounding the Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA) in south-western, Guyana. The Wapishana Parishara dance was held in Maruranau Village in the South savannah from the 7–8 December, 2021, while the Makushi Parishara dance was held in Yupukari Village in the Central savannah on the 23rd September, 2022.

KEYWORDS: Parishara dance, Hummingbird dance, Ritual, Peccary, Fish, Guyana, KMCRG, KMPA

Introduction

In January, 2020, the Kanuku Mountains Community Representative Group (KMCRG) who represent twenty-one indigenous communities surrounding the Kanuku Mountains Protected Area (KMPA) in south-western, Guyana, were to start a new project, called the 'KMCRG Water

Well Drilling and Amerindian Cultural Revival Project,' which was being funded by Exxon-Mobil (KMCRG 2021). This project concerned the drilling of water wells to help with improving the water capacity of KMCRG communities, and also had a cultural component dealing with the hosting of a large Parishara dance in one community, as well as the collecting of indigenous stories from elders. Unfortunately, the project start was delayed until January, 2021, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown which led to the closure of the KMCRG office in Lethem, as well as restricted access to indigenous communities throughout the Rupununi savannahs. Due to this one year delay some of the project objectives were later revised to fit the current situation.

One major decision taken was to host two Parishara dances, instead of just one dance. Thus, one dance was to be held in the Makushi village of Yupukari in the central savannah, while the second dance was to be held in the Wapishana village of Maruranau in the south savannah (Figure 1). Both communities were later contacted via written correspondence and field visits to speak with village representatives. Unfortunately, problems were again encountered when national village elections were held leading to changes in Village Councils, followed by an upsurge in Covid-19 cases throughout the region. This all resulted in further delays, however, despite these additional problems the Project Manager was able to organize the Maruranau Parishara dance from the 7th - 8th December, 2021. For its part the Yupukari Parishara dance was held nine months later on the 23rd September, 2022, during Amerindian Heritage Month.

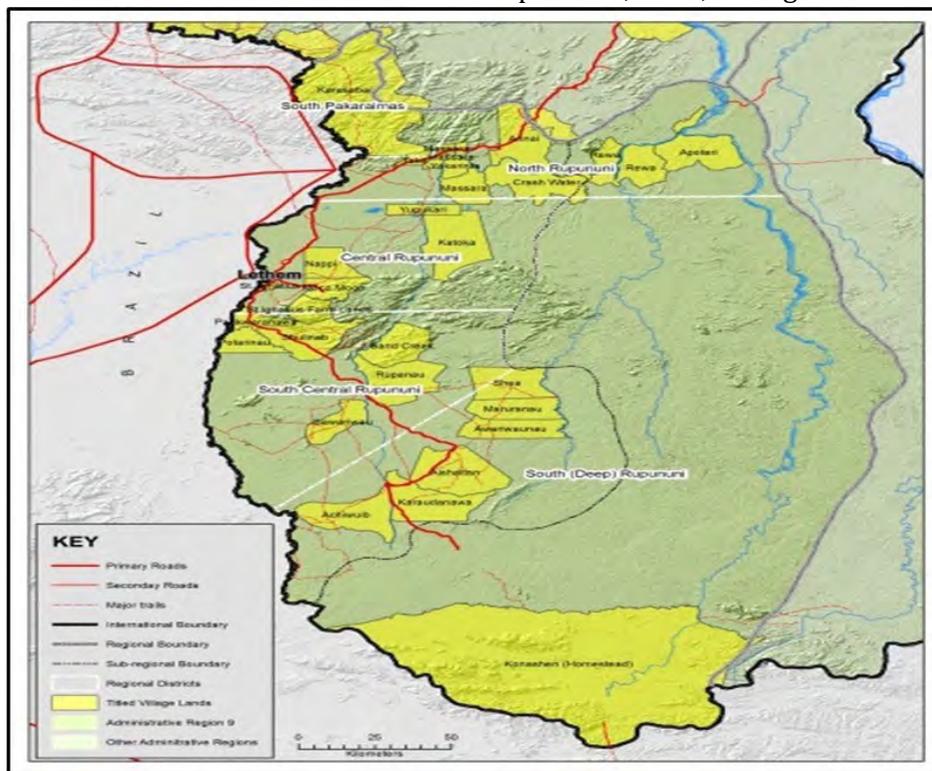


Figure 1. Indigenous communities in south-western Guyana.

The Parishara and Hummingbird Dances

Regarding festive and ritual occasions in indigenous society we find that many dances and feasts took place which were closely related to how the community subsisted, their cultural norms, their belief systems and to their natural environment. Thus, these were mainly

formalized occasions, usually directed by the shaman (locally 'Pia-ai man' (also Pia'san – Makushi; Marunao – Wapishana)) and village leader or toshao, to occur at certain times of the year when they connected celebrations with seasons, the stars, and fertility. By the use of songs, dance, music, mimicking actions, body painting, rock painting/art and basketry, people achieved their objective of getting animals, fish, birds and wild fruits within reach of the hungry people. It was further believed that each animal, bird, fish, plant and resource has its own symbols, stars, songs and associated dance which results in a compulsion for that resource to come within reach of people. Thus, song, music, dance, art and body painting act the same way as hunters who mimic the call of an animal or bird, or a fisherman with a hook, lure, bait, or fruit (Koch-Grunberg 1923; Roth 1924; Steward 1948; Butt-Colsen & Armellada 2001; Pereira 2022).

The dances chosen as part of this project were the Parishara and Hummingbird (Tukui) dances, both of which were once very important throughout Amazonia and Lowland South America. The Parishara dance was at one time an important part of Makushi and Wapishana hunting ritual₁ as it was an appeal to the 'Master of Animals' or 'Master of Wild Hogs'₂ to send his children (the peccary herds or wild hogs) out of the mountains and forests into the savannah ite palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*) swamps to feed on the ripe palm fruits, while simultaneously feeding the hungry people. For its part the Hummingbird (Tukui) dance was another ritual appeal but this time to the 'Master of Fishes'₃ to replenish the fish stocks at the beginning of the main rainy season into the following dry season (Schomburgk 1840, 1923; Roth 1922, 1924; Steward 1948; Butt-Colsen & Armellada 2001; Pereira 2008).

The Parishara dance was traditionally held at the beginning of the intermediate dry season (September) just after the main rainy season ends, as it is during this time that the peccary herds start to come out of the mountains and forests into the savannah ite palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*) swamps to feed on the ripe palm fruits. Parishara dances were also traditionally held towards the end of the year around the time of the Winter Solstice (21st December), and at New Year's. Further to this they could be held when new buildings were being constructed or commissioned, during birthday parties and other village celebrations, and during village self-help work. While Hummingbird dances were mainly held towards the end of the main dry season and beginning of the main or primary rainy season (April/May) before the annual flood pulse when fishes spawn. They could also be held towards the end of the year at Winter Solstice, and New Year's, during general celebrations or together with the Parishara dance. Both dances tended to be held during the dry seasons when flood waters could not prevent the arrival of family, friends, guests and/or allies who wished to join in. As in addition to the ritual, ceremony and joys of the festivals themselves the dances further served to foster neighborly relations with friends, relatives, and members of other tribes, renewing old friendships and promoting new ones. The socializing at the dances further encouraged the exchange of news, gossip, finding wives and husbands, having love affairs and for trade purposes (Koch-Grunberg 1923; Schomburgk 1923; Roth 1922, 1924; Steward 1948; Forte & Melville 1997; Butt-Colsen & Armellada 2001; Pereira 2008, 2022; A. Pablo pers. comm.).

The Parishara dance deals in ceremony with the people's relationship to the forest animals, mainly the peccary herds, who come out of the forest into the savannah at the beginning of the intermediate dry season after the main rainy season has just ended. The name Parishara is Arawakan and refers to the dance costumes worn, which consists of headdresses (males), headbands (females), neck fillets, and skirts made of the bright yellow-green tibusiri or shredded kokerite palm (Maripa - *Maximiliana regia*) leaves, or the tibusiri/shredded leaves of the ite palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*). The costumes serve multiple purposes such as protection of the dancers from malevolent forest spirits, as well as relating the dancers to the palm trees of the savannah swamps, which hold the ripe fruits that attract the peccaries, tapir, deer and

smaller mammals such as paca (labba) and red-rumped agouti. The fruit especially attract the large peccary herds. The male dancers emphasize their relationship to the peccary by the use of hollow trumpets made from the Congo pump or Pumpwood (*Crecopia angulata*) tree which sound like the grunting of wild hogs in the forest, and which often have affixed to them wooden effigies of peccary and other animals, and fertility figures, as well as animal claws and seeds which rattle. As for the women they usually carry a dancing-stick which can be painted with designs and be festooned with animal claws, feathers, shells and seeds which rattle as they beat and stamp the ground. For their part the Parishara dance songs are time-honored and pass from generation to generation, usually from father to son and mother to daughter, for what maybe hundreds of years in some cases. To the point where many of the songs no longer make much sense to the singers today due to possibly being archaic forms of their language. The songs themselves mainly call on the peccary and other animals such as tapir, deer etc, and large forest birds, e.g. powis (curassow), guans and toucans to come out to the forest edge or into the savannah within reach of the people. The Parishara dance is also linked astronomically to the 'One-foot man' constellation (Orion and Taurus) as it begins to rise in the East during the intermediate dry season. It should be further noted that this dance is thought to be linked to the ancient Timehri petroglyphs which are associated with the Arawaks and their northward migration from the Amazon to coastal South America and the Caribbean (Koch-Grunberg 1923; Roth 1922, 1924; Schomburgk 1923; Steward 1948; Williams 1985a, 1985b, 2004; Forte and Melville 1997; Butt-Colsen & Armellada 2001; Pereira 2008).

The Hummingbird (Tukui) dance deals in ceremony with the people's relationship to the major fish season and highlights the unique characteristics of their environment at that time of year. Connections between the 'Glittering-throated Emerald Hummingbird' (*Amazilia fimbriata*) (Tukui - in Cariban languages) and fish is explained due to certain similarities between the two. Unlike other birds the Hummingbird drinks nectar (similar to water) and does not eat fruit, seeds or insects⁴. Thus, it sucks at flower nectar like a fish "gulping in water." The fast motion of fish is similar to the darting, hovering motion and quick wing movements of the Hummingbird. The Tukui dancers imitate the side to side, swaying movements of this bird, also the circling around and swaying side to side of fish is imitated. Hummingbird (Tukui) dancers paint bands of white clay (kaolin) around their necks, shoulders and chest imitating the 'Glittering-throated Emerald Hummingbird's' white collar. Traditionally the dancers also painted fish patterns on themselves, and the dance leader traditionally holds a small hand drum, while the other dancers use small pan-pipes which are representative of the tweeting of birds, although gourd rattles can also be used. Their songs are about fish eating, jumping, and dancing around, about frogs singing, and about certain 'spiritually powerful' species of fish (Fish Masters) which assist the other fish. It should be noted that the Hummingbird (Tukui) dance is also associated with the 'One-foot man' constellation (Orion and Taurus in Western astronomy) as it begins to dip below the western horizon towards the end of the primary dry season and beginning of the primary rainy season (Koch-Grunberg 1923; Roth 1922, 1924; Forte and Melville 1997; Butt-Colsen & Armellada 2001; Pereira 2008, 2022).

Maruranau Village Parishara Dance

Pre-dance Preparations

The Project Manager was able to visit Maruranau Village from the 7th – 15th November, 2021. During this time he managed to meet with re-elected Toshao, Ambrose Bento, and members of his new Village Council, as well as the Maruranau Culture Group on several occasions in order to make final plans to hold the dance and to pick a date. The culture group further finalized the structure of the dance, decided on the final dance route, how many dancers would take part and what part they will play in the dance, etc. For this particular dance it was decided to construct a small parakari canoe as in the large dances of long ago it was normal to make a very big canoe, to be placed in the centre of the host building, to dance around and to hold all of the parakari drink₅ needed for the celebration. The eventual date chosen for this dance was the 7th December, 2021.

Every Parishara dance must have a host and host building₆, so for this one it was decided by the Maruranau Culture Group (the hosts) to hold the dance in the village benab (round house) which would be acceptable by all for a major village celebration and as a host building. The village benab further served as the perfect practice venue, and the Project Manager was able to attend one of the culture group's Parishara dance practice sessions which were held every Sunday (Figures 2-3). Regarding the amount of dancers they decided to have at least thirty-one (the Master of Animals, Master's tail, the Basket, and twenty-eight dancers). It should be noted here that one dancer was changed at the last moment when it was discovered that she was pregnant₇.

For the amount of parakari drink it was decided to get a minimum of two large plastic barrels, which amounted to twenty-eight 5-gallon buckets of unstrained parakari mash to be bought from several village women. In traditional dances the parakari was expected to last for several days, sometimes up to one week, although this was not a requirement of this dance.



Figures 2-3: Parishara dance practice session on the 14th November, 2021, at the village benab.

The Project Manager returned to Maruranau Village on the 5th December, 2021, so as to reach the village early to catch the final preparations for the Parishara dance two days later. The excitement started immediately when the minibus the Project Manager was traveling in

to Maruranau punctured at Mountain Point (one of the many hazards of outback savannah roads); luckily this was only a short delay (Figure 4). While in Maruranau the Project Manager was able to witness a lot of the pre-dance preparations such as the setting up of the village kitchen (Figure 5), the slaughtering and butchering of the cow at the O'Connell family ranch for the village meal (Figure 6), decorating of the village benab host building by the culture group (Figures 7-8), the examining and tasting of the parakari drink by Village Councilor, Basilia O'Connell and several members of the culture group, and examining the parakari canoe and bark barrel amongst other things.



Figure 4. Fixing the minibus puncture; Figure 5: Setting up the water tank outside the kitchen; Figure 6. Butchering the cow that will ritually feed the village towards the end of the dance.



Figures 7-8. The Maruranau Culture Group decorating the village benab host building.

Day 1

7th December, 2021

On the morning of the dance the thirty-one dancers, including one baby, traveled to the site where the dance was to start at a bush or forested island not far from bush mouth (where the high forest begins) at 5:30am. Luckily for the dancers a businessman from neighboring Awarewaunau Village, Mr. Lester (Chico) Beck who happened to be in Maruranau gave them a drop in his truck. Once there the dancers conducted their manoro (Wapishana for collective self-help work) to prepare their costumes⁸ (Figures 9-13), paint themselves and their instruments with annatto⁹ (Figure 14). They also prepared their ceremonial meal¹⁰ consisting of roasted beef and boiled fish with no salt, pepper or seasoning, as well as cassava bread, farine, ite fruit and parakari drink (Figures 15-17). Before eating their ceremonial meal at 8:30am they said a prayer for the dance (Figures 18-20). After the meal the dancers put on their costumes (Figures 21-23) before conducting the ant stinging with wiiko ants¹¹.

It should be noted here that not all Parishara dances are the same and most are slightly different from each other, even within individual villages. This dance for example had the

wiiko ant stinging which was missing from a dance conducted in September, 2002. The flageolets used in this dance were also not as highly decorated as in September, 2002, and this dance did not feature a decorated cow horn instrument for Yarim. Further to this the dance like most others conducted in Maruranau Village had the Parisharas and Hummingbirds (Tukui's) dancing together, although they both have their own particular dance moves, costumes, and purpose within the overall dance. It was, however, stated later by the dance leaders that some of the dance songs in Maruranau were specific to the Hummingbirds and their part in the dance (Pereira 2008; J. George pers. comm.; V. George pers. comm.).



Figures 9-14. Preparing their costumes and painting the instruments with annatto.



Figures 15-17. The ceremonial meal being prepared.



Figures 18-20. Eating the ceremonial meal before the dancers bathe and put on their costumes.



Figures 21-23. The dancers putting on their costumes.

Along with the wiiko ant stinging (Figures 24-26), which the Project Manager took part in, there was the usual parakari drinking (Figure 27). There was then a brief wait (Figure 28) until the dance started at 9am. For this the Parishara dancers^{12 13} formed two lines with the men to the right and the women to the left. The dance leaders then began calling the names of nearby mountains where peccary and other animals are to be found. They next began calling for the 'Master of the Animals' to join them and take the lead. After the 'Master of Animals' joined them everyone danced on the spot for several minutes while two Hummingbirds weaved in between the Parishara dancers. The men also blew their trumpets in imitation of the wild hogs while pointing their trumpets in the directions of mountains and the different areas known to have peccary and other wild animals. After this they began the 4 km trip back to Maruranau Village. It should be noted that this dance group opted to have a banner with two Hummingbird youths to carry it. This is not a traditional practice, however, everyone was happy with this decision, including the Project Manager. In the photograph below the banner is being held by two Parishara dancers of Taruma¹⁴ descent, who live in Maruranau Village, just before the beginning of the dance (Figure 29).



Figures 24-25. Putting the Wiiko ants on the woven ant frames

Figure 26. Stinging the dancers.



Figure 27. Hummingbirds serving parakari to the dancers just before the dance begins.



Figure 28. Hummingbirds waiting for the dance to begin.



Figure 29. The dance group banner.

After the dancers set off they danced in their two lines for about 30m before merging into single file, with the men in the lead behind the 'Master of Animals' and 'basket,' the women and children following, 'Yarim's Tail' and the banner to the rear, to climb through the recently constructed village fence 50m away which protects the village farmlands from domestic animals, mainly cattle (Figures 30-31). This fence it should be noted was not there when a previous dance in September, 2002, was conducted. Next the dancers went through a small swamp still in single file (Figure 32). After this they reached the first big hill or inselberg, Awii-it tau¹⁵ which they started to ascend. While going up steep-sided Awii-it tau the dancers again stayed in single file with Yarim, the basket and the men in front, the women and children following behind, and 'Yarim's Tail' taking up the rear with the two Hummingbird youths with the banner. When ascending Awii-it tau Yarim and the men were blowing their trumpets as the women did most of the singing (Figures 33-43).



Figure 30. The dance about to begin.



Figure 31. Crossing the village fence in single file.



Figure 32. Entering the swamp in single file with the women and children following the men. 'Yarim's Tail' can be seen to the rear of the dancers.



Figures 33-35. Climbing the steep-sided inselberg Awii-it tau, one of the main local landmarks in the area.



Figures 36-38. Dancing to the summit of Awii-it tau. Yarim can clearly be seen leading in front and blowing his trumpet along with the men.



Figures 39-40. Near the summit of Awii-it tau with the dancers in single file due to the steep-sided nature of this inselberg. The women can be seen to the rear.



Figures 41-43. Descending Awii-it tau with the dancers still in single file.

Steep-sided Awii-it tau was descended in single file with difficulty. The dancers then continued over the savannah for approximately 100m, also in single file, before dancing over a large prominent laterite rock (Figures 44-46). After this they formed back into two parallel lines to dance through the savannah again. The dancers returned to single file to cross over a large ite swamp before dancing in the savannah again in two lines and continuing onto Red Hill₁₆. As this hill was not too high or steep they danced over Red Hill in two lines, past

someone’s house, and down the opposite side where they met three more Hummingbirds at the base of the hill. Upon reaching the new Hummingbirds the Parisharas began dancing on the spot in their two lines. While dancing on the spot the new Hummingbirds served them with parakari and its fruit (Figures 47-52). After several minutes the dancers stopped to rest briefly and snack on more its fruit before resuming the dance.



Figures 44-46. Dancing over a large prominent rock in the savannah after Awii-it tau.



Figures 47-48. Dancing through the savannah in two lines with the women on the left and the men on the right with Yarim leading.



Figures 49-50. Meeting the three new Hummingbirds at the base of Red Hill.



Figure 51. Dancing on the spot and drinking parakari served by the 3 new Hummingbirds below Red Hill.

Figure 52. The dancers resting briefly after meeting the new Hummingbirds below Red Hill.

After their brief rest and snack below Red hill the dancers continued on their journey through the savannah and over several smaller hills while dancing in two lines (Figures 53-55). On one of these hills they were joined by three older Hummingbirds who stayed to the rear behind 'Yarim's Tail.' The dancers eventually proceeded over Marurawau Creek behind the O'Connell family in central Maruranau Village before going onto Marurawau Bridge where they met two more Hummingbirds with parakari to serve them (Figures 56-57).



Figures 53-55. Dancing through the savannah in two lines on the way to central Maruranau. The two Hummingbirds with the banner can also be seen following to the rear of the dancers.



Figures 56-57. Meeting the two new Hummingbirds before Marurawau bridge who serve the dancers with parakari.

After meeting the two Hummingbirds in front of Marurawau Bridge the dancers began dancing on the spot and drinking parakari. A large crowd of villagers together with Primary School children and visitors also gathered to view the dancers and follow them on the last leg of their journey to the village benab host building (Figures 58-59). The dancers then crossed Marurawau creek again, while swimming, splashing around and making grunting noises like wild hogs¹⁷ (Figures 60-61). After crossing over the dancers made their way over the last hill (where the Gomes family live) with Yarim following behind them. When they reached the top of the hill the dancers stopped to dance on the spot, blow their trumpets, wave their dancing sticks in the air and point them in the directions of areas known to have animals, shout and sing loudly, and drink parakari (Figures 62-65).



Figures 58-59. Villagers, Primary School children and visitors meet the dancers near Marurawau bridge.



Figures 60-61. The dancers cross over Marurawau creek and splash around like peccary (wild hogs) in a savannah creek.



Figures 62-63. Ascending the last hill in central Maruranau before circling the playing field.



Figures 64-64. Dancing on the last hill.

When they resumed the dance they descended the last hill while in their two lines with Yarim leading and circled the school playing field to reach their final destination, the village benab host building (Figures 66-67). Upon reaching their destination the Parisharas danced on the spot not far from the village benab₁₈ and drank copious amounts of parakari which was still being shared by the Hummingbirds. The dancers in their two lines then moved a short distance to the front entrance, the women on the left and the men on the right where they again danced on the spot, swaying with a two-step movement backward and forwards, and drinking parakari. When the dancers stopped drinking parakari all of the villagers and visitors began to ceremonially pass between the two lines to enter the host building (Figures 68-69). After all of the villagers and visitors had entered the host building the dancers came inside last to begin dancing around the centre of the benab in two lines in a counter-clockwise direction while the Hummingbirds continued to serve parakari₁₉ to them (Figures 70-74).

While dancing around the centre the Parisharas allowed any villagers or visitors (including the Project Manager) who wished to join the dance to do so. The dancing continued for over half an hour before the dancers formed a mixed circle in the centre to dance on the spot taking four steps forwards and four steps backwards and drinking parakari before stopping for a break. For this dance when they stopped dancing the Hummingbirds filled the canoe, bark barrel and balata gobi's in the centre of the benab with parakari, followed by the Maruranau Culture Group hosts ritually feeding the dancers, villagers and any guests₂₀.

After the ceremonial meal the Parisharas once more resumed dancing around the centre of the host building in their two lines in a counter-clockwise direction for approximately half an hour before forming a mixed circle to dance on the spot, swaying forwards and backwards in a two-step motion for another 10 minutes. They then stopped dancing for the day around 3:30pm (Figures 75-76).



Figures 66-67. The Parisharas dance in front of the host building.



Figures 68-69. Villagers and visitors pass between the two rows of dancers and enter the benab.



Figures 70-73. The dancers about to enter the host building.



Figure 74. Dancing around the centre of the host building in a counter-clockwise direction.

Figure 75-76. The last dance after the ritual meal closing off.

After the dancing stopped there was some socializing and parakari drinking by the dancers, villagers and visitors who wanted to drink. There was also some more wiiko ant stinging outside the benab of dancers and any others who wished to be stung (Figures 76-79). Again the Project Manager took part in this activity to the delight of many onlookers! The socializing continued until the Village Council closed off the festivities and host building for the day at 5:30pm.



Figures 77-79. The wiiko ant stinging of dancers and villagers outside the host building.

In the traditional Parishara and Hummingbird dances of long ago the dance usually continued throughout the night and into the next day. Often the dance would continue for several days lasting until all the food and drink ran out. In fact it is expected that everyone should get extremely drunk so as to vomit, stagger around the place, fall over and eventually get knocked out. As if this does not happen it is not considered a successful dance. Very important is the fact that the dancers in particular must arrive at the host building extremely intoxicated. For the present dance it was noted by the dance leaders that the dancers did not arrive at the host building drunk, unlike at the dance in September, 2002, when one of the dance leaders collapsed outside the host building! (Schomburgk 1840, 1923; Roth 1922, 1924; Koch-Grunberg 1923; Steward 1948; Forte & Melville 1997, J. George pers. comm.; V. George pers. comm.).

For this particular dance the Village Council closed off the dance at 5:30pm so as to avoid any over drinking and disorderly behavior by both the dancers and villagers. This was a decision welcomed by everyone, including the culture group and Project Manager.

Day 2

8th December, 2021

On the following morning of a big Parishara dance, or whenever the dance comes to an end, it is usual for the dancers to ritually discard their costumes. For this part of the dance the dancers donned their costumes and reformed the next morning in two lines outside the host building to restart the dance. They danced on the spot moving one step forwards and one step backwards, the men blowing their trumpets, and the women doing most of the singing, for several minutes before everyone jumped around shouting and pointing their trumpets and dancing sticks in different directions; the Hummingbirds were also busy blowing their panpipes during this time. After the Hummingbirds served parakari to the parisharas they all danced back inside the host building where they formed a circle in the centre of the host building with the women and children on one half and the men on the other half of the circle (Figures 80-85). Two Hummingbirds then danced in between the Parisharas while blowing their panpipes before retiring to the centre with the other Hummingbirds to let the

Parisharas dance around the centre of the host building in a counter-clockwise direction for approximately half an hour. Next the Parisharas danced on the spot for several minutes with the women singing and the men blowing their trumpets, while two Hummingbirds danced in between them blowing their panpipes (Figures 86-87). After the Hummingbirds stopped dancing in between them the Parisharas danced on the spot for several minutes, while drinking parakari served by another two Hummingbirds. After ending that particular song the women began singing another song to end the dance in the host building before the dancers made their way out of the western side door while forming back the two lines, and with the two Hummingbirds weaving in between the Parisharas and blowing their panpipes (Figure 88).

Everyone then danced slowly to a rubbish pit which was located several metres from the host building. On the way the dancers briefly stopped several times to dance backwards for several paces before going forwards again and repeating this dance move. They also stopped one time to jump up and down, shout and wave their trumpets and dance-sticks in the different directions known to have animals. When they reached the rubbish pit they surrounded it and danced on the spot for several minutes blowing their trumpets at the rubbish pit, before stopping one last time to shout and jump up and down. Lastly they ritually began discarding their costumes and dancing-sticks, and throwing them into the pit₂₁ (Figures 89-91). This marked the end of the dance proper. It was noted that these dancers kept their trumpets, calabashes, warishis and a few other items used in this dance, possibly for other dances, ceremonial occasions and/or personal usage.

The dancers then returned to the host building (Figure 92). There they cleaned up the host building and divided up the left over parakari amongst themselves, although some of the parakari was also given over to the Village Council for any manoro's involving village work. It was unfortunate that right at the end there appeared to be a disagreement between Christian members of the Village Council and the Maruranau Culture Group. As the Christians had disagreed with the holding of the dance due to it being thought of as the work of the devil. Another sad example of how indigenous peoples are slowly losing their culture due to adopting foreign ideas and concepts, many of which are not applicable to them or show a total lack of respect for their history and culture.



Figures 81-82. The dancers reforming outside the host building on day 2 and getting ready to dance.



Figures 83-84. Restarting the dance outside the host building.



Figures 85-86. Dancing outside the host building.



Figures 87-88. Dancing in the centre of the host building.

Figure 89. Leaving the host building through the western door.



Figures 90-91. Dancing to the area where they will discard their costumes.



Figure 92. The dancers discarding their costumes into the rubbish pit.



Figure 93. The dancers returning to the host building.

Yupukari Village Parishara Dance

The next Parishara dance for Yupukari Village was unfortunately canceled from its proposed date in December, 2021. After discussion with Toshao Shamir Khan at the KMCRG Annual General Meeting on the 17th December, 2021, the Project Manager decided to visit Yupukari sometime in early 2022, in order to speak to both the Village Council and Yupukari Culture Group to try to arrange the next dance for later in 2022.

Due to everyone's busy schedules during the year, as well as heavy unseasonal rains followed by extensive floods during the rainy season, the Project Manager was not able to visit Yupukari Village until the KMCRG Board Meeting held there from 18th – 19th August, 2022. At this forum it was agreed to hold the Parishara Dance sometime in late September, 2022 (Amerindian Heritage Month), the final date to be decided later. While in contact with Toshao Khan two weeks later it was finally agreed to hold the Parishara dance on the 23rd September, 2022.

Pre-dance Preparations

21st September, 2022

The Project Manager traveled to Yupukari Village on the 21st September, 2022, so as to reach the village early to catch the final preparations for the dance over the next two days. The heavy rain which fell during his journey was a reminder about the extended rainy season and unseasonal rain we were currently experiencing in the Rupununi due to the La Nin a weather phenomenon. Once the Project Manager arrived at Yupukari Village he settled into Caiman House Lodge where he met briefly with Toshao Shamir Khan, Deputy-Toshao Cindy Holland, and Caiman House Manager, Delene Lawrence, and began preparations for tomorrow.

22nd September, 2022

The following morning the Project Manager met briefly with the Culture Group Coordinator, Anthony Roberts, Toshao Shamir Khan and Deputy-Toshao Cindy Holland. For his part the coordinator was able to explain about aspects of the Yupukari Parishara Dance. He stated that it was decided by the Yupukari Culture Group to hold the entire dance in the village centre and that the dance would only last for about two hours in the morning when the sun was still low. Also for this dance each of the four sections of the village had constructed a small benab

(round house) to represent themselves, and also had a banner; so there was a benab for the North, South, El Dorado (East) and Muruca (West) sections (Figures 93 & 94). Each section would further decorate their benab and provide a small dance contingent. However, the main or host building would be the South benab where the sixteen core or lead dancers representing the whole village would dance too, followed by the other contingents which included children.

The Project Manager was able to witness a lot of the pre-dance preparations such as the setting up, cleaning and decorating of the four benab's (round houses)(Figures 95). For the decorations fruits (ite , banana, plantain, papaya, oranges, grapefruit, sugar cane, pumpkin, squash, avocado, etc), plants (banana, papaya, coconut) and crafts (Makushi hammocks, pottery, warishi (backpacks), sifters, fans, baskets, balata gobi's (rubber drink containers), etc) were used. There were also firesides to cook food in the North benab. The main posts of the benab's were further painted with traditional designs (geometric designs, arrows, frog, bird, etc). It should be noted that the benabs were thatched with different types of palm leaves to highlight the different types of traditional thatch, two benabs were thatched with ite leaves (*Mauritia flexuosa*)(the South and East), one with kokerite (*Attalea maripa*) leaves (North), and one with awara (*Astrocaryum vulgare*) leaves (West).

There was also the making of the costumes (Figure 96), making and tuning the flageolets (long flutes or trumpets)(Figure 97), the cleaning of the village multi-centre, and the filling of the barrels with parakari, etc. Later in the day the Project Manager was also able to follow the Toshao and several of the villagers to Makedon Outstation (part of Karanambu Lodge) with the village tractor and trailer for the slaughtering and butchering of, Mr. Ashley Holland's, cow for the village meal the next day (Figure 96). Soon after we reached back to Yupukari with the beef a heavy rain fell which lasted until midnight that again reminded us to still look at the weather carefully.



Figures 94-95.
The North benab and the El Dorado benab (East) being prepared.



Figure 96. Cleaning the South benab (Host Building).



Figure 97. Making the costume skirts, in the South benab.



Figure 98. Making the Flageolets (long flutes or trumpets).



Figure 99. Slaughtering the cow for the village meal at Makedon Outstation.

The Parishara Dance

23rd September, 2022

Luckily for everyone the heavy rain passed during the early morning and the weather cleared for today. The day's activities began with a marathon race beginning from three mile bush²² on the border with Karanambu Lodge which started at 5am. The race finished at the village centre, not far from where the parishara dance would begin²³. After this race the sixteen core dancers reported to the South benab for 6am. Along with other helpers they completed the decorating of the benab with plants, fruits and indigenous crafts. They further completed the making of all their costumes, as well as finishing off the tuning of their flageolets (long flutes or trumpets). The other benabs also conducted their final decorating, completion of costumes, dance preparations, etc (Figures 99-107).



Figures 100 and 101. Final decorating of the South benab. (Host Building).



Figures 102 and 103. Final decorating of the North benab.



Figure 104 and 105. Finishing off the Parishara costumes.



Figures 106-108. Finishing off tuning the instruments.

When decorating of the South benab was completed the sixteen core dancers went to form opposite the Yupukari Nursery School, where they waited for another fifteen minutes until they received word that the other dance groups were ready near their completed benabs (Figures 108-111). Initially the three hummingbirds were waiting to begin with the Parishara dancers but they were told to return to the North benab at the last moment in order to greet the dancers as they returned to the village centre from the West.



Figures 109-112. The Parishara dancers waiting opposite the Nursery School for the dance to start.

For instruments the men mainly used flageolets (long flutes or trumpets) which were painted in red geometric designs, although some had seeds tied onto them. A few men had dancing sticks painted in red geometric designs with palm fruit (ite) tied onto them. This was considered unusual as these are usually reserved for women dancers. For their part some of the women had dancing sticks made from palm leaf stalks, while others used clay whistles made into animal forms (tortoise and tapir) (Figures 112-115), and a few even used flageolets. It should be noted that this was the first time that the Project Manager had encountered women using flageolets which are usually reserved for men dancers. Regarding clay whistles being used in a Parishara dance, the Project Manager had come across mentions about the use of clay and other whistles in festivals, dances and celebrations so this was very exciting (Koch-Grunberg 1923; Roth 1922, 1924; Schomburgk 1923; Steward 1948).



Figures 113-115. Clay whistles in the shape of tortoise and tapir used by the women.

At the last moment a woman elder with extensive knowledge of the Parishara dance arrived from Quatata Community to join the group resulting in one extra dancer. As they now had an odd number of dancers it meant there was a lone woman dancer without a partner to the rear. There was also some last minute decorating of instruments in red, as well as the decorating of the dancers in red. However, it was noted that while some of the dancers used annatto which is the traditional dye, others used lipstick as a quick fix.

The dance started at 9am. For this the seventeen dancers formed two lines with the men on the left and the women on the right-hand. The dancers then proceeded to dance slowly towards the village centre. Once they were opposite the Primary School Feeding Programme building the dancers described a large circle before resuming in the direction of the Primary School. Once they were opposite the Primary School they made another large circle before continuing towards the Anglican Church and church presbytery (Figures 115-120).



Figures 116-117. The dance about to begin.



Figure 118: Passing the School Feeding Programme



Figure 119: Passing the Anglican Church



Figure 120: Passing in front of the Anglican Church.



Figure 121: School children following the dancers.

From the Anglican Church and presbytery the dancers continued past the Women's Centre building towards the El Dorado (West) benab (Figures 121-123). They then circled the El Dorado benab in a counter-clockwise direction before dancing away from the village centre to the West (Figures 124-126). After dancing for another 50m they described a circle before turning South then East and headed back to the village centre (Figures 127-129).



Figure 122. Dancing past the Anglican Presbytery.



Figure 123. Dancing past the Women's Centre.



Figure 124. Dancing around the El Dorado benab.



Figure 125. Dancing towards the West.



Figures 126 and 127. Dancing towards the West.



Figures 128-130. Dancing back to the East towards the centre of the village.

As the Parishara dancers were arriving back at the centre of the village from the East they were met by the three Hummingbird dancers who began offering them parakari (Pí rakkari in Makushi) to drink (Figures 130-131). The dancers then danced past the Muruca (West) benab before heading towards the North benab which they circled. The dance groups from all three benabs, Muruca, North and El Dorado, also began to follow the Parishara dancers around the village centre. Everyone further circled around a private benab before going onto the host building (South benab)(Figures 132-135).



Figures 131-132. The three Hummingbirds meet the Parishara Dancers with parakari drink.



Figures 133-134. The dancers circling around the private benab.



Figure 135. The core dancers reaching the host building (South benab).

Figure 136. The other dance groups following the core dancers.

After circling the host building in a clockwise direction the Parishara dancers entered it to dance in the centre of the benab for several minutes while being served parakari by the three Hummingbirds and Tuama²⁴ (Figures 136-138). They then rested briefly before reforming into two lines and resuming the dance around the outside of the host building in an anti-clockwise direction. This was for the purpose of blessing the host building. After dancing around the outside of the host building the dancers reentered it to dance around the centre for several more minutes, while being served parakari by the Hummingbirds and Tuama (Figures 139-140). This was followed by another brief respite for the consumption of yet more parakari.



Figure 137. The core dancers reach the host building (South benab).



Figures 138 and 139. Dancing around the centre of the host building.



Figures 140 and 141. Dancing around the inside of the host building (South benab) and drinking parakari after blessing it.

After this brief rest the dancers reformed into two lines to resume dancing around the outside of the host building in an anti-clockwise direction while being followed by the other dance groups. The Parishara dancers then headed in the direction of the village Multi-centre where the official opening of the Yupukari Village Heritage Celebrations was about to be conducted. They then entered the Multi-centre to dance around the inside of the building several times followed by the other dance groups. To end this performance the Parisharas danced onto the main stage where they danced on the spot for several minutes. After they stopped dancing the Parisharas then sat down for the brief opening ceremony which included one of the Parishara dancers (Marcellous Thomas) ritually cleansing the building with smoke (Figures 141-147).



Figures 142 and 143. The core dancers and other dance groups entering the village Multi-centre.



Figure 144. The Parisharas on the stage dancing on the spot.

Figure 145. The other dance groups with their banners inside the Multi-centre.



Figures 146 and 147: The Parisharas sitting through the opening ceremony.



Figure 148: Ritually cleansing the Multi-centre with smoke.

After the opening ceremony had finished the Parisharas reformed into two lines in the Multi-centre and resumed dancing. They then danced out of the building followed by the other dance groups and headed back to the host building. There they danced around the South benab in an anti-clockwise direction before reentering it to dance around the centre for several minutes while being served parakari by the Hummingbirds and Tuama. When they stopped dancing the dancers took off their costumes which officially ended this Parishara dance. The dancers then socialized and drank parakari with the villagers, to wait on the opening ceremony of Amerindian Heritage Month to finish, and for the ceremonial village meal to be served (Figures 148-161).



Figures 149 and 150. Reforming in the Multi-centre to restart the dance.



Figures 151 and 152. Dancing back to the host building.



Figures 153 and 154. Dancing around the outside of the host building in an anti-clockwise direction.



Figures 155-157. Ritually taking off their costumes to end the dance.



Figures 158-160. The village meal being prepared.



Figure 161. Group photo of the core Parishara dancers.

Figure 162. The Parishara dancers drinking parakari after the dance.

Concluding Remarks

This Parishara dance in Maruranau Village could be seen to have been very successful, and in many respects resembled a previous dance held in September, 2002. The Project Manager was very happy with the dance, and the village was also seen to be extremely happy with the dance. In fact the village is already calling for yet another Parishara dance. It was noted that, like the previous occasion, some people followed the dance from beginning to end, while many others came out in the village to follow the dancers on the last leg of the dance to the host building, the village benab. Like the dance in 2022 it was the first time that many of the younger people had witnessed a full Parishara dance, as these dances are now rarely held in their entirety. Usually only a small part of the Parishara or Hummingbird dance is performed during culture shows, exhibitions or during Amerindian Heritage Month celebrations.

Of interest is the fact that white-lipped peccary (bush hogs) came out of the forest into the savannah at bush mouth near Maruranau Village about two hours after the dance ended on the 8th December, 2021. This is believed by villagers to have been caused by the dance successfully calling them. Unfortunately for people one villager killed two of the first peccary upon sight which chased the rest back into the forest. Peccary had also apparently come out of the forest on two previous occasions which again had been attributed by villagers to the successful dance practice sessions calling them out.

It was unfortunate that right at the end of the Maruranau Parishara dance there appeared to be a disagreement between Christian members of the Village Council and the Maruranau Culture Group. The Christians for their part appeared to have disagreed with the holding of the dance due to it being thought of as the work of the devil, and an evil influence. Yet another sad example of how indigenous peoples are slowly losing their culture due to adopting foreign ideas and concepts, many of which are not applicable to them or show a total lack of respect for their history and/or culture. Because of this disagreement the culture group had initially refused to hand over any of the left over parakari to the Village Council to assist with village work. In the end they managed to settle some of their differences and the culture group did give the Village Council some of the parakari.

As for the Yupukari Village Parishara dance this too was very successful. This dance like the one in Maruranau Village was also well supported by everyone, and they too are now calling for another Parishara dance for next year when they hope to construct a new village benab. This dance was different from the Maruranau dance due to the whole dance being conducted within Yupukari. This village also made use of more than one benab (round house) for their celebrations with each village section having prepared their own small benab. These represented the North, South, Muruca (East) and El Dorado (West) sections who all decorated their benabs with traditional designs, local crafts, and local fruit, etc. Also of interest with this dance was that it was the first time the Project Manager has noted women using flageolets, which are usually reserved for the men, as well as other women using clay whistles. It should be mentioned here that historical references do mention clay and other whistles and flutes, e.g. bone, reed, palm fronds, etc. being used in dances and celebrations (Koch-Grunberg 1923; Roth 1924; Steward 1948). To be also noted here is the fact that during the dance preparations one woman was observed to make a whistle out of palm fronds for the children to play with, although these were not used by any women during the actual dance. Of further note was the fact that some of the older men were observed using dancing sticks as these are usually reserved for the women. However, as mentioned already most Parishara and Hummingbird dances are slightly different from each other.

One other interesting observation concerned, Mr. Clifton Laurindo, who assisted the Yupukari Parishara dancers with making their costumes, tuning the flageolets, and making leaf baskets, among other things. He is a pastor in one of the local churches and he was highly criticized for giving assistance to the Parishara dancers, with Christian critics accusing him of assisting the devil, etc. Again this was yet another instance of how indigenous peoples are losing their cultural identity by adopting foreign ideas and concepts, while criticizing and speaking out against people who are still clinging to their native cultural practices.

Although once very popular and culturally important these significant indigenous dances are now rarely held in any of the villages. Not only that but the younger generation do not now seem to have much of an interest in these dances anymore, especially due to the influence of religion, modern society and enculturation. As such these dances are now being viewed by the younger generation as no longer being of any relevance, old fashioned, and in some cases as an embarrassment. Added to this is the fact that some elders themselves are not passing on these traditions to young people who are willing to learn them. Because of this situation these dances and traditions are now slowly beginning to fade away in the villages with the passing of the older generation, as well as the lack of interest and/or indifference, and acculturation of the younger generation.

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Notes

¹ According to Wapishana informants the Parishara and Hummingbird dances were not originally Wapishana dances but were acquired from Makushi people who went to live amongst them (J. George pers. comm.; V. George pers. comm.).

² The 'Master of Animals' or 'Master of Wild Hogs', known as Yarim in Wapishana and Tamona in Makushi. He is the spiritual entity who controls the large herds of peccary in the mountains and the forest, the White-lipped Peccary (*Tayassu pecari*) who are known as his children. It is the duty of the 'Master of Animals' to send his children from the mountains and forests into the savannah ite palm (*Mauritia flexuosa*) creeks and swamps to feed the hungry people. However, it is the duty of the people to show respect to the 'Master of Animals' and his children and not to overharvest the peccary. They must further not kill the leader of the peccary herd (iicue in Wapishana) who is often the largest peccary in the herd, and also the peccary that Yarim rides through the forest (J. George pers. comm.).

As a passing note it has recently been proven by researchers that White-lipped Peccary (*Tayassu pecari*) experience population crash cycles every 20 to 30 years, and can reduce in numbers to the point where they disappear from many areas from 7 to 12 years (Fragoso et al. 2020, 2022). In both Amazonia and the Guianas indigenous people are fully aware of these cycles and believe that the reason for them is that during such times the 'Master of Animals' or powerful shaman lock up the bush hogs in caves underground, and only release them when they are ready, or with the help of other powerful shaman (Fragoso et al. 2022; M. Hallett pers. comm.).

³ The 'Master of Fishes' is the spiritual entity who controls the fishes in the rivers and creeks. In particular he controls the main fish spawn to replenish the fish stocks at the beginning of the main rainy season or annual flood pulse. This further ensures that there is enough fish for the following dry season.

⁴ It is a common misconception that hummingbirds only drink nectar. In fact they are known to also consume insects for the protein, as witnessed by the author on the banks of the Rupununi River when he worked in tourism. However, for the purposes of the dance the fact that it mainly drinks nectar is always highlighted.

⁵ Parakari drink is an alcoholic beverage made from burnt cassava bread (manioc cakes) which have been soaked with water, and had parakari 'yeast' or inoculum spread over the wet mass. One kind of inoculum (used by the Wapishana) is made from the leaves of *Trema micrantha* (L.) Blume (*Ulmaceae*), a successional tree, ('parakari mother' or bishawad in Wapishana) which are sun-dried, then parched before being pounded into powder in a wooden mortar or ground in a hand mill. Another kind of parakari inoculum (used by the Makushi) is 'bitter' cassava leaves that are also sun-dried, parched and then pounded into a powder in a mortar. This wet mound is left for about three days covered under banana leaves, until a mold grows over everything. The wet mass, with the mold, is then put into balata

(Bulletwood sap – a type of wild rubber - *Manilkara bidentata*) gobi's (goglets) for a further several days, until it is deemed ready for mixing with water and straining before being put into large balata gobi's or other suitable containers. Depending on how well it is strained there are usually still pieces of cassava bread evident in this 'thick full bodied' drink. As such this beverage is also a food and a tonic, as well as at times a potent alcoholic drink. The mold also has traces of penicillin, and thus the drink has medicinal properties (Henkel 2005; Pereira 2008).

The offering of parakari drink is extremely important in indigenous culture during manoro (self-help work) and other work, dances and any social gatherings. To refuse to drink a bowl of parakari that is offered to you is considered a serious insult to the host offering you the drink. It should be noted here that parakari needs to be checked before and after it is strained, and/or drunk as if it is not made properly it could be slimy and/or sour, or even have large hairy caterpillars swimming around in it! (Pereira 2008)

⁶ Each dance must be initiated by a dance host(s) who will pick the area where the dance will start and the farm and/or other work carried out, and will provide the building where the dance will end off. For this dance the host building was the village benab or village round house.

⁷ Pregnant women, women and young girls experiencing their menstruation and people with recently deceased relatives cannot take part as it is believed that they will negatively affect the outcome of these dances, e.g. the peccary will not come out of the forest, etc.

⁸ The Maruranau dance preparations were conducted in the savannah at the area chosen by the dance hosts which is how a Parishara/Hummingbird dance is supposed to start. This dance was performed after the manoro to make the costumes and instruments had finished. In fact traditionally while the costumes are being made there is often another separate manoro where a farm is being cleared or a building being constructed. Then when both manoro's are finished the dance commences. With this particular dance however, there was only the one manoro to make the costumes and instruments (J. George pers. comm.; V. George pers. comm.).

These costumes consisted of crowns, neck fillets, skirts, armbands, wristbands, leg-bands and anklelets, and are made by plaiting & weaving shredded (tibisiri) kokerite palm (*Maximiliana regia*) spire leaves. Inner tree bark strips and tibisiri (from ite' (*Mauritia flexuosa*) leaves) were also utilized but not as much as the kokerite tibisiri. Dance costumes serve multiple purposes such as protection of the dancers from malevolent forest spirits, as well as relating the dancers to the palm trees of the savannah swamps, which hold the ripe fruits that attract the animals. Most of the women also danced with small warishi's (native backpack), gourds and/or baskets. It should be noted that in a previous Parishara dance conducted in September, 2002, the crowns and headbands, were also decorated with Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*), Powis (Black Curassow - *Crax alector*) and other bird feathers, also seed necklaces and bracelets were also worn by the dancers. As is usual the men wore brightly decorated crowns while the women wore plain headbands. The 2002 dance was further performed barefoot which is how these dances should be performed (J. George pers. comm.). It should be noted here that part of the significance of bird feathers is that certain large forest birds (Powis, Toucans, Macaws, etc) are believed to precede the peccary before they emerge from the forest into the savannah. Informants relate that sometimes these birds, e.g. Toucans, have even been known to fly into people's houses if they enter into the village (J. George pers. comm.). Toucans in particular are thought to be associated with peccary as the Wapishana believe they follow them through the forest, especially during the peccary season (L. O'Connell pers. comm.).

As noted above these Parishara and Hummingbird costumes were made from mainly Kokerite palm (*Maximiliana regia*) leaves, and also ite' (*Mauritia flexuosa*) leaves. Three of the dancers were dressed differently. The first was the person who represented Yarim, the 'Master of Animals' or 'Master of the Wild Hogs.' His costume consisted of a deer skin lap, wild banana leaf neck fillets and leg-bands, as well as an anteater (*Barim - Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) claw necklace. His crown was also the most highly decorated of anyone present. He further carried a flageolet and another type of flute. Although at the previous dance in 2002 he carried a decorated ceremonial wand and a highly decorated cow horn. Associated with this particular individual is the belief that when the wild hogs come out of the forest, one week after the dance is conducted, he is not allowed to kill any of them. This is because he is a representation of Yarim. Instead other hunters will have to provide him with meat. Also, to be noted is the fact that the leaders of the peccary herds must not be killed by anyone. If these two rules are not obeyed the bush hogs will not come back even if a successful dance is held.

The second person dressed differently was the leader or head of the Hummingbirds (also known as either 'Yarim's Tail' or the 'Eyes of Yarim.') His costume consisted of wild banana leaves which had been cut into strips. These were used as neck fillets, armbands, knee bands and headband. The wild banana leaves signifies bird feathers. He is also noted for using a pan pipe instrument.

The third person dressed differently was only noted in the current Maruranau dance. He was a special dancer, known as the 'basket,' whose job it was to only dance up and down between the two lines of dancers. The basket was representative of Daruwan – the old, thin peccary with white stripes down its sides – who follows behind the main herd. Daruwan is further known as the "peccary's grandmother." The basket (Daruwan) is dressed in a kokerite palm (*Maximiliana regia*) skirt resembling the hummingbirds, has a distinctive headband, carries a calabash (gourd) drinking vessel and holds a stick or wand. He further has the distinction of being the only Parishara dancer not allowed to drink any parakari. Thus, in this particular dance a youth was chosen as the basket (Daruwan).

⁹ In Parishara dances the red dye annatto, from the *Bixa orellana* plant, is smeared all over the bodies of the dancers, especially the face, arms and legs. Annatto's purpose is spiritual and is used to ward off evil spirits and other malevolent influences which may seek to attack or interfere with the dancers. The annatto is usually applied after the ceremonial bath. Although it is usual for the dancers to bath together, for this particular dance everyone bathed individually.

Like the previous dance in September, 2002, the Hummingbird (Tukui) dancers in Maruranau painted themselves with annatto. It should be noted that most of the available literature indicates that Hummingbird (Tukui) dancers traditionally paint their faces and arms with white stripes, using a type of clay (Kaolin – known locally by the Brazilian name Tabatinga); although they also used a type of red clay sometimes, as well as balata masks (Forte and Melville 71). The purpose of the Kaolin is to imitate the markings of the Glittering-throated Emerald Hummingbird (Tukui – in Makushi and other Cariban languages). It should be noted that kaolin was in fact used in a previous Parishara dance conducted in Karasabai Village in September, 2002.

It should further be noted that the only Maruranau dancer who was painted differently was the 'Master of Animals' who was painted in annatto, as well as a black dye from the fruit of the Genipap (*Genipa americana*) tree.

¹⁰ After the costumes and instruments have been completed everyone must eat a ceremonial meal of fish, cassava bread or farine and fruit, particularly ite palm fruit. The meal is prepared using clay pots, and is eaten out of calabashes or plates made from wild banana or banana

leaves. Usually no meat of any kind is eaten and no salt, pepper or seasoning used in cooking, otherwise the animals may not come out of the forest after the dance is completed. However, for this Maruranau dance roast beef was allowed. Before the meal is eaten the dance leader must say a prayer over the food.

Usually after the ceremonial meal there is a ritual bath in an adjacent creek which in this case is 'Aa-wii-it-wau' (wau being the Wapishana suffix for river or creek). For this ritual the men always bath first followed by the women. The bath symbolizes the peccary bathing in the forest mouth before entering the savannah. However, for this dance the ritual bath was not observed.

¹¹ Many years ago it was customary whenever a manoro (self-help work) or Parishara/ Hummingbird dances were conducted to start with ant stinging. For this purpose several large ants, known as wiiko in Wapishana, were put onto a woven frame which was then used to apply the ants to sting people over various parts of their body. The purpose of the ant stinging is to drive away laziness and to make you more willing to work or dance, although it is also used to deal with wayward children. It is usual for everyone to be stung, men, women and children.

It should be noted here that ant stinging is sometimes used to cure sickness, and recent scientific evidence is now beginning to support its use for certain conditions (Costa-Neto 2005).

¹² Parishara dancers form two lines with the women on the left and men on the right. Each woman must further have the same male partner for the whole dance. Also whenever they have to dance close to one another the women will rest their right-hand on the left shoulder of their male partner. However, it was noted in the present Parishara dance, as well as a previous one in September, 2002, that dancers often held onto one another arm in arm at the elbow. Those dancers stated that this method of holding onto one another was preferred as they could assist each other up and down hills or over rough terrain. Also, they could hold up one another if their partner was about to fall through being tired or too drunk! It should be mentioned that the dancing sticks and flageolets also had the secondary function of serving as walking sticks to further assist the dancers on their journey, especially up steep hills. It should further be noted that as most of the dancers were arm in arm, it meant that they were husband and wife. Also interesting is the fact that long ago people frequently met future husbands and wives at Parishara dances, as an important aspect of these dances was the sex play involved during the height of the drinking, and the search for partners.

Every column of dancers has its leading dancers and singers, so there will be both men and women leaders. For this dance the leaders began by calling the names of all nearby mountains where peccary are to be found, while the men pointed their flageolets in the same direction and started blowing. For their part the women were also calling on the peccary and pointing their dancing sticks in the same directions. The leaders then called on the Makushi, Wapishana and Taruma tribes for a successful Parishara dance before calling for the 'Master of the Animals' to join them to take the lead. After the Master joined them from the direction of the creek they danced on the spot for several minutes while two hummingbirds weaved in between them. After several minutes they began the slow dance back to the village.

The musical instruments for the Parishara dance consisted of flageolets (long flutes or trumpets), in several sizes, used by the men. These were made from hollowed out sections of the Congo Pump or Pumpwood tree (*Creecopia angulata*) which had been debarked. These flageolets further had notches cut into them, not far from the mouth piece, into which small tuning wedges were inserted. When blown the trumpets made a sound similar to peccary grunting in the forest. As noted above the Maruranau instruments were only decorated using annatto (*Bixa orellana*), unlike in a dance held in September, 2002, when they decorated the

flageolets with feathers, animal claws, animal teeth, seeds, and shells. Also in traditional Parishara dances effigies, which would include fertility and animal figures, would be carved from wood and put onto the end of the flageolets; which was also noted in the September, 2002, dance. The next instrument, which was used by the women, was the dancing stick. These were basically wooden sticks with palm fronds on them. Again these were unlike a previous dance in 2002 when those sticks were decorated with feathers, seeds and shells, and which sounded like gourd rattles when struck on the ground. It should be noted that decorated cow horns were sometimes used by the male dance leaders, and a decorated cow horn was in fact used by Yarim in the September, 2002, dance.

The Parishara dancers mainly perform a two-step movement by stamping on the ground on their right foot with bent knees and taking a long step forward then one short step backward by dragging their left foot, slowly making their way in a forward direction; the same movements being carried out by each individual as if they were a coherent whole. They also occasionally stopped their forward motion to go backwards a few steps, and/or to dance on the spot. While dancing on the spot they were able to point to different directions where animals are found, and just as importantly to be served parakari which must be drunk throughout the dance. The dancers sing continually at the instigation of the lead singers, however, the men will still be blowing their trumpets, in imitation of the peccary, at regular intervals. For their part the women will be holding their long dance-sticks with their upper ends festooned with animal claws, seeds, feathers, shells etc which they beat on the ground to the tune (Koch-Grunberg 156-157).

The dancers will usually be in two lines, the women on the left and the men on the right, with the women holding their dance-sticks in their left hand and placing their right hands on their male partner. However, when they are climbing high hills the dancers will often proceed in single file with the men in front, the women following and the children taking up the rear. The women will then also use their dance sticks as staffs to help them climb both up and down the hills. When the dancers reach the host building they will dance around it several times in an anti-clockwise direction before they halt in either two lines or form a circle. They will also form circles on hill tops. When this is done the dancers may alternately sway to the left and right, moving forwards or backwards. They may further stamp on the spot several times while blowing their trumpets and pointing them in different directions. At a sign from the dance and song leaders everyone will go quiet and stand still while facing inside the circle. The song leaders will then restart a few bars of a song for the others to resume singing. While in a circle the dancers will of course be served parakari. While inside the host building the dancers will dance around the centre in an anti-clockwise direction. They will also dance while still in pairs, with the women on the left and men on the right. At a signal from the dance leaders they will then form a circle and alternately take one or two steps towards the centre and repeat the same moves backwards, all the time while being served parakari.

Years ago the Parishara dance had different parts such as the wild hog or peccary dance, the powis dance, tapir dance, etc. Informants have also stated that there were different versions of the Parishara dance with some versions consisting only of men or women dancing, sometimes from different directions until they meet at the host building (J. George pers. comm.). Further that it was an amazing sight to see over two hundred men perform the wild hog dance while dressed in full Parishara costumes (S. Allicock pers. comm.). In those dances the job of the village women was to greet the men (or women dancers) while carrying warishi's to serve them with parakari and fruit, which is the job conducted by the Maruranau Hummingbirds (J. George pers. comm.).

The Parishara songs are further noted for not being able to be fully translatable. In fact Richard Schomburgk in the 1840's commented that the Akawaio passed down songs from

father to son for which the words were no longer understood, due possibly to changes in the language. This was also noted by Koch-Grunberg (154-155). When the Project Manager asked about the present Maruranau Parishara songs he was informed that part of the songs were in Wapishana and part in Taruma; some Atorad and Makushi words were also put in by the dancers. Further to this parts of the songs were in an unknown dialect which may be similar to what Richard Schomburgk and Koch-Grunberg both mentioned.

Regarding the songs they usually include the names of fruits and fruiting plants and trees which peccary eat. The areas where these trees, plants and fruits are found are also mentioned so that the 'bush hogs' can visit those areas to feed. The Parishara songs do not mention the names of farm crops or domestic plants such as cassava, corn, etc as it is believed that the peccary will then eat out and/or destroy the village farms (J. George pers. comm.).

¹³ For the Hummingbird dancers the men wore crowns and skirts, while the women had necklets, skirts and headbands made from the same tibiriri or stranded kokerite palm (*Maximiliana regia*) leaf as the Parishara dancers. Their instruments consisted of the usual single reed panpipes, approximately 10cm long, which are representative of birds (a species of maam (unidentified)) singing, although it should be noted that Hummingbird dancers are also known to use gourd rattles and small drums. It should further be noted that for the maam it is believed that 'Yarim' is their grandfather and they help him to call the animals and birds (Peccary, Deer, Monkeys, Toucans, Parrots, etc) in the forest, especially the peccary. Informants state that this particular maam often calls in the forest at 6am and 12pm (J. George pers. comm.; V. George pers. comm.).

In these mixed dances the Hummingbird's leader is 'Yarim's Tail' or the 'Eyes of Yarim' who follows behind all of the other dancers and whose distinctive dress consists of wild banana leaves which are representative of birds feathers. The Hummingbirds further carried Warishi's (native backpacks) filled with ite' palm fruit, cassava bread, calabash bowls and balata goggles filled with parakari; as it is their job to serve parakari to the Parisharas, and to feed them with snacks.

Similar to Parishara songs the Hummingbird (Tukui) songs are sung in local languages as well as what appear to be unknown dialects, which are most likely older versions of the original languages (Roth 1922).

¹⁴ Officially Guyana only has nine tribes (Arawak, Carib, Warrau, Akawaio, Arecuna, Patamona, Makushi, Wapishana and Wai-Wai). Up to the early 20th century there were also two other tribes who inhabited southern Guyana, the Atorad and Taruma. Due to frequent epidemics most members of these two tribes died out so both tribes have now been officially declared extinct in Guyana. However, some Wapishana villages in the south Rupununi savannahs do report a few families of Atorad and/or Taruma descendants. Maruranau is one such village which has a few families of Taruma descent to the south of the village. In fact one female village elder is still considered one of the last full speakers of Taruma in Guyana.

N.B.

Roth (1922, 1924), Schomburgk (1923) and Brown (1877) all mention the serious decline of the Atorad, Tarumas and Caribs, mainly due to epidemics (measles, influenza) and sickness (malaria, worms), in southern Guyana and the upper Essequibo.

¹⁵ This was the first major hill or inselberg to be crossed by the dancers. It is the Wapishana name for a plant (unidentified) with red flowers and small yellow fruit which resembles a pineapple.

¹⁶ Red Hill (Wudra-tauda (Red hill) in Wapishana) gets its name from its red laterite mud (V.

George pers. comm.).

¹⁷ This is supposed to be a ceremonial bath that portrayed peccary bathing and feeding in a savannah river. During this bath the Parishara men are supposed to make grunting noises like peccary's bathing. It should be noted here that the dancers should never cross any bridges but always cross over the water like all animals.

¹⁸ In traditional Parishara and Hummingbird dances the dancers are all supposed to dance around the host building several times in an anti-clockwise direction before entering the building. This did not happen in the present Maruranau Parishara dance, although it was observed in a previous Maruranau dance in September, 2002, also in the Karasabai dance of September, 2002. The reason for not doing it this time appeared to be that the fence for the Roman Catholic Church compound was very close to the village benab which would have made it difficult for the dancers to go around the host building. This fence it should be noted was not there in 2002.

¹⁹ In the traditional Parishara dances of long ago everyone would have danced around a large canoe full of parakari in the centre of the host building. This canoe would have been specially made for the occasion. The parakari in a Parishara dance is supposed to last until at least the following day. This is because the dancers are supposed to drink right through the night until day clean. In fact the dancers and everyone else participating are supposed to drink until they stagger, fall over and vomit, then drink again until they again stagger, fall over and vomit and so on throughout the dance until they get knocked out. There is even a special way of vomiting so that it will come out of their mouths as a fine stream that can be aimed at a convenient corner. Informants even speak of vomit competitions where men used to bet on who can send their stream of thin vomit the farthest. When the dancers get knocked out they will sleep it off where ever they drop, even if it is in the middle of the dance floor and the dancers have to step over them as witnessed by the Schomburgk brothers in the 1840's. When the drunken revelers revive, the dance will be rejoined and the drinking resumed. As noted before some Parishara dances have been known to last for several days, for which the parakari is expected to last throughout the proceedings.

N.B.

Long ago the whole village would have participated in a Parishara dance, as well as any visiting communities, as it was held for the benefit of everyone.

²⁰ After the Parishara dancers reach inside the host building and dance around the centre (in a counter-clockwise direction) they will stop to eat a ritual meal. This ritual meal is also joined by every community member present, as well as any visitors. After this meal it is usual for the dancing to resume until all the drink and any remaining food is finished. It should be noted that normally the parakari canoes, bark barrels, goglets etc are filled to capacity before the dancers reach the host building. Also that in many dances of long ago village women would run out of the host building to greet the dancers with gourds filled with parakari.

²¹ The end of a Parishara dance is marked by the dancers discarding their costumes. For this particular occasion the Maruranau dancers danced to a nearby rubbish pit and ritually discarded their costumes on the second morning. It should be noted that in a previous dance in September, 2002, the dancers ritually shed their costumes by using a young Hummingbird girl to take off the men's costumes, while a young Hummingbird youth took off the women's costumes in the host building on day one. All of the costumes were then hung on the wall to be used for the final part of the dance the following morning after sunrise.

It should be noted that in the September, 2002, Parishara dance it was stated by the dancers that the final dance can sometimes be the 'Howler Monkey Dance' or 'Baboon Dance' (N.B. howler monkeys (Suburu or Soburu in Wapishana) are known as baboons in Guyana) which

was often conducted at sunrise on the final day of the dance.

²² Three mile bush is noted for being the largest forested (or bush) island in the Rupununi (Myers 1936). It currently forms part of the border between Yupukari and Karanambu Lodge and is approximately 7 km from central Yupukari. Three mile bush is known as Piipiisho in Makushi (after the 'Screaming Pilha' bird (*Lipaugus vociferans*)). It is called 3 mile bush in English because the road through it is reputed to be 3 miles long.

²³ Years ago many important festivities, celebrations and dances would have started after holding a marathon race. The race would have started several miles away in the forest or on a mountain, very early in the morning, and ending at the village centre or Parishara dance host building. In these races women would have been waiting at the entrance to the village to chase the runners and throw parakari mash on them, sometimes even trying to prevent them from reaching the finishing line or host building (A. Roberts Jr. pers. comm.; M. Li pers. comm.).

In Karasabai in September, 2002, the holding of marathon races before large Parishara dances was also mentioned to the Project Manager. Further mentions about marathon races before Parishara dances were also made in St. Ignatius Village regarding their joint Parishara dances involving Shulinab Village years ago (L. Alexander pers. comm.).

²⁴ In the Yupukari Parishara dances of long ago there was always a dance leader called Tuama (the parakari giver or giver of parakari) This was a man in Parishara costume who would sit in front of the host building next to a large container of parakari with a large bowl. His job was to call people to the Parishara dance and to start sharing the parakari. Of course his job was to also drink a lot of parakari so people often joked that his 'belly' has be very big! (A. Roberts Jr. pers. comm.; L. Park pers. comm.)

According to the Wapishana in Maruranau their parakari sharers are always supposed to be women who are not allowed to drink, only share parakari to all the dancers, guests and other participants. This job was now given to the Hummingbirds, who were all younger women or school girls, and who were not allowed to drink J. George pers. comm.; V. George pers. comm.).

Article

A Report on Archaeological Survey near Rupunau and Shulinab

LOUISA B. DAGGERS, GERARD PEREIRA AND MARK G. PLEW

Abstract: This is a summary report of the investigation of petroglyphic sites located near Rupunau and Shulinab. In addition to petroglyphs two burial urn locations were documented near Shulinab. Petroglyphic elements include geometric, phytomorphic, anthropomorphic and zoomorphic elements. Although common geometric elements are found at all locations, other elements vary somewhat from location to location. Two sites near Shulinab document the practice of urn burials. No human remains were observed leaving open the possibility that the practice of urn internments may relate to more than burial.

Keywords: Petroglyphs, Rupununi Phase, Buried Urns

Introduction

With the intent of identifying cultural properties in the southcentral Rupununi area archaeological survey was conducted near Rupunau and Shulinab. The purpose of the survey was to record reported petroglyph sites near Rupunau and conduct reconnaissance of areas near Shulinab where archaeological sites had been recently discovered by local rangers. Survey was conducted during October 2022.

Rupunau

Three archaeological sites were recorded in the vicinity of Rupunau, two of which are Petroglyph sites and one lithic reduction site. Site No. 1 is located on a hilltop approximately 11.5 miles south of Rupunau. The site is a broad open space of exposed black granite that extends 120 meters E/W and 80 meters N/S. Two areas are identified—one extending over an area of 90 x 50 meters on a N/S axis and a second smaller area measuring 30 x 30 meters

on the farthest southern extent of the greater site area. The elevation of the location affords a view of the surrounding area. This area has a concentration of anthropomorphs. Elements include spirals, connected circles by lines, rectangles with lines, ladders, multiple dot patterns and sunburst spirals (see Figure 1). A single Rupununi Phase ceramic vessel and sherds were noted on the north edge of the granitic table. The vessel measured 35 x 24 cm with wall thicknesses ranging between 3 and 9 mm. The vessel measures 5mm at the base and 9mm at the neck. The vessel is believed to be a burial urn with a constricted neck relatively similar to the vessels present within the Shiriri Cemetery context reported by (Plew 2005, Plew and Dagers 2022).

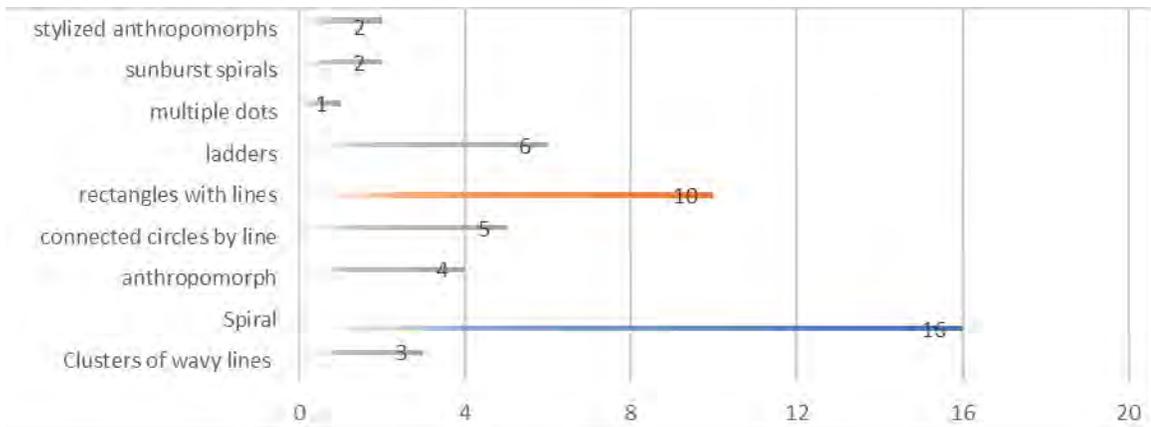


Figure 1. Frequency Distribution of Elements Site No. 1



Figure 2. Elements of Site No. 1: (A) Depicts Rupununi Phase Ceramic Vessel (B) Image of the southern end of the Petroglyph Panel.

Site No 2. is a workshop area surrounding the petroglyph field. The area extends around the exterior edge of Site No. 1 and up the adjacent hillslope. Quartz/quartzite nodules and flakes are relatively abundant over an area that appears to extend over an area of 150 square meters. A number of shaped cores were noted. These range in size between 3-5 cm in diameter.

Site No. 3 is a petroglyph site located approximately one mile north of Rupunau. Located in an open area, the site consists of a black granite boulder measuring 8.5 x 4 x 1.5 meters.

Elements include spirals, connected circles, connected circles with lines and rectangles with bars, wavy lines and two lines running parallel. Connected circles occur in combinations of 8, 4, 7, 6, 3 and 2 that run E/W across the boulder. The largest circles are 20 cm in diameter with most measuring 9 cm across. In one instance 12 circles are contained within a circular configuration. Two tubular elements are present. One facing west measures 50 x 35 cm while a second set to a circle, line and ladder measures 35 cm in length. This site, while having figures similar to site No.1, exhibits a noted focus on the use of connected circles (see Figure 2).

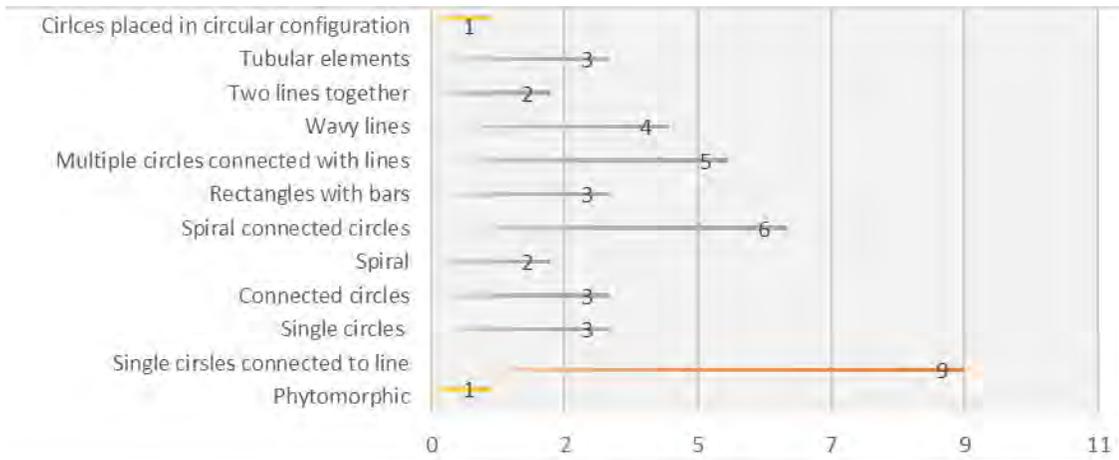


Figure 3. Frequency of Elements Site No. 3

Site No. 4 is a large raw material prospecting/workshop site adjacent to the petroglyph boulder. It covers an area of approximately 150 x 150 meters. The sites contains evidence of primary reduction in the form of early stage flakes. Quartz nodules varying in size between 10 and 30 cm in diameter are common. Several faceted cores were noted.

Achimeriwau Savannah

Achimeriwau Savannah is situated 9 Kilometres North East of Dadanawa Lookout within the boundaries of Shea and Rupunau Villages (see Figure 4). Site No. 5 is a relatively steep black granite face rising from the savannah floor. The facing extends over an area of 30 meters that is broken or separated by an open space that faces north. The petroglyph panel extends upward some 30 meters from the floor. Elements include circles, circles within configurations, connected spiral, ladders, tube-like features, circles connected to tube-like features, phytomorphic and zoomorphic representations (see Figure 6). Motifs appear similar to other Rupunau area sites though phytomorphic and zoomorphic designs are rare at other locations. Further, no anthromorphs are present.

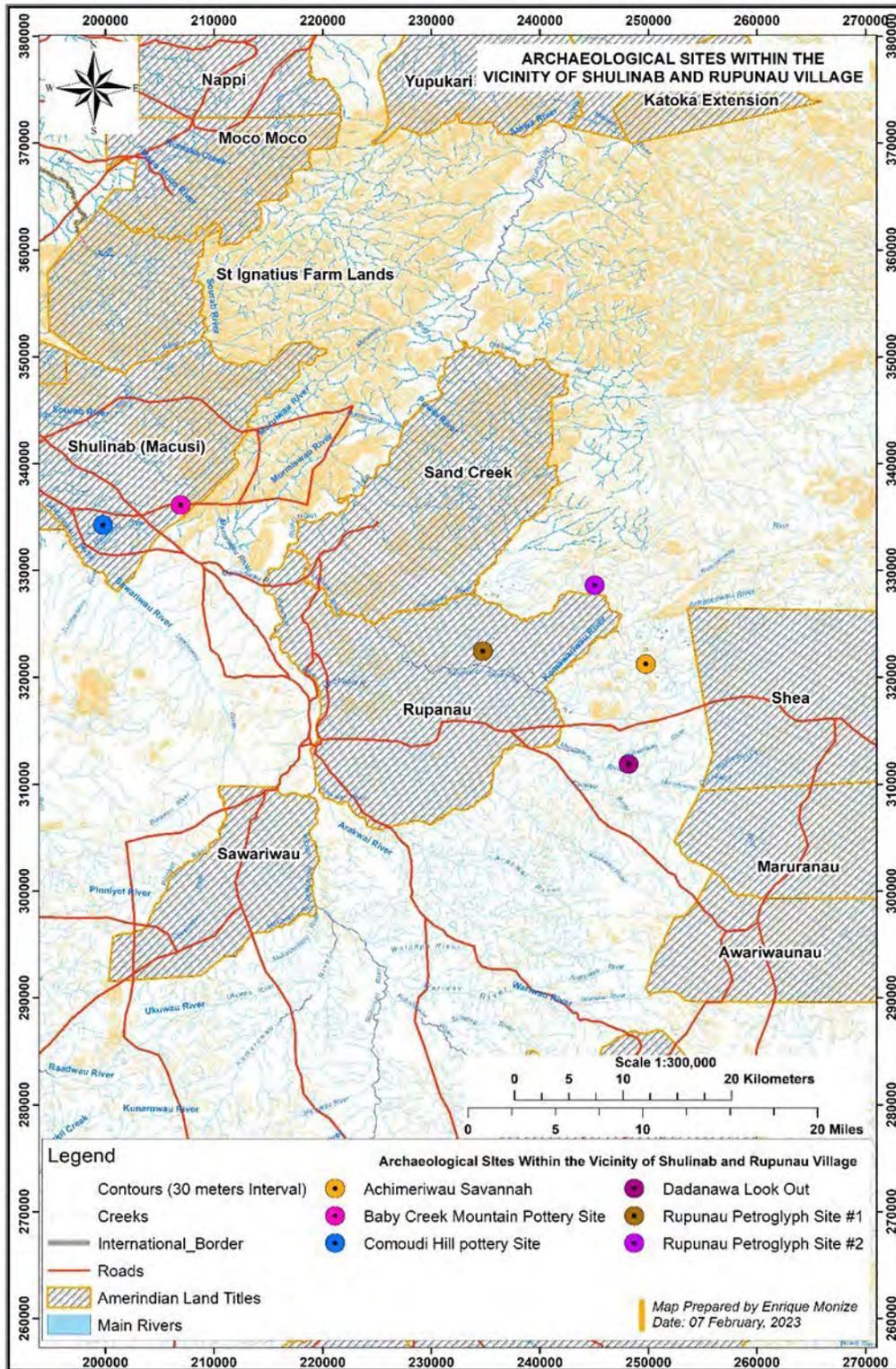


Figure 4. Map Showing General Site Locations in Achimeriwau Savannah, Rupunau and Shulinab

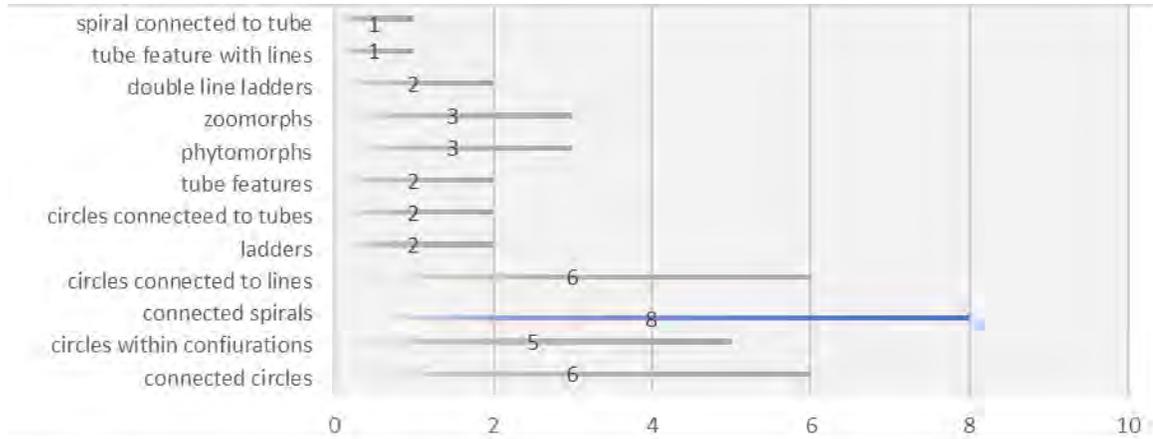


Figure 5. Frequency Distribution of Motifs at Achimeriwau Savannah



Figure 6. Image Depicting a cluster of Connected circles and Spirals of Site No. 5

Small circles measure 7-9 cm in diameter while larger spirals measure 20 cm in diameter. Configurations include circles and other elements grouped together within boundaries of 30-40 x 30 cm. The width of individual grooves is 3-5 mm. Approximately 150 meters northwest of the main petroglyph site is a small boulder field that has four non-descript petroglyphs. The area containing the petroglyphs extends over an area of approximately 15 x 15 meters.

The rock art of the Rupunau area exhibits broad similarities but notable differences in the presence and absence of some motifs. Although circles and circle and line combinations are quite common at all sites zoomorphic elements are found only at Achimeriwau. Notable as well is the presence of highly stylized anthropomorphic designs that occur at site No. 1 but at no other locations. We posit that anthropomorphic designs may be more commonly associated with specific geographic settings that are somewhat unique as is the location of site No. 1.

Archaeological Survey Near Shulinab

Site No. 1 is located about three miles from Shulinab and 2 1/2 miles above Camoudi Savannah at an elevation of 1539 feet. The site area, which measures c. 15 x 15 meters, is situated on a grass- covered saddle that is backed on its south edge by a boulder field with small to medium scrubs and trees. Three vessels and four sherd scatters are present within an area of approximately 8 x 6 meters. Vessels appear to have been recessed into the ground though it not clear as to whether any are stacked upon other vessels. There are three relatively complete vessels within the site, these are situated approximately 1 meter apart. The two most complete vessels measure 59 cm and 55cm in diameter. The larger vessels that are interred have relatively straight walls and rims. The third vessel though the larger recessed pot appears to be largely fragmented a second vessel is superimposed an inverted rim and flat lip.



Figure 7: (A) Superimposed recessed Vessel (B) Inverted rim and flat lip sherd (C) Two relatively complete recesses vessels.

No evidence of human remains were observed. stabilized by the accumulation of sediments All are Rupununi Plain vessels. One large sherd has

Site 2. Some 10 km south of Shulinab an archaeological site is located above Baby Creek. The location is a narrow grass covered saddle at an elevation of 1559 feet. The saddle which measures c. 6 meters across is in direct view of Shiriri Mountain to the south. One ceramic vessels is recessed below surface. A second large vessel was observed broken 30 cm away from the recessed vessel, believed to have been previously superimposed. sherd scatter is found around and to edge/slope of the saddle. The site is located within a 4.4 x 4 meter area. The complete vessels measure 31 X 27 cm the internal width below the rim measures 51 cm. The vessels have relatively straight rims though lips are slightly rounded. Partial excavation of the vessel to approximately 40 cm below surface confirms the vessel to be a large bowl. The sherd scatter includes sherds in a size range of 21-4 cm. Vessel wall thickness are 4-6 mm. The vessels and associated sherds are Rupununi Phase ceramics. No evidence of human remains was observed. It was reported that a vessel had been removed from this site.



Figure 8. Partly excavated recessed vessel from Baby Creek Mountain

Site No. 3 is located at Mountain Point opposite “Cassava bread Mountain” some 10 km from Shulinab. The site is located on a slightly elevated flat above the savannah floor and some 100-150 meters from the adjacent foothills. The site consists of a light sherd scatter over an area of approximately 200 square meters. The sherds noted are small (5-6 cm in diameter) and Rupununi Plain. A quartz core and 3 flakes were noted.

Discussion

Petroglyphic rock art is common in Guyana and has been reported from the forested regions of the north and the savannahs of the south (Brown 1973, Dubelaar and Berrange 1979, Evans and Meggers 1960, Hanif 1967, Henderson 1952, Plew and Pereira 2001, Plew and Saras 2008, Poonai 1970, and Williams 1979, 1985, 1996). Williams (1985) has described

what he terms Enumerative and Cuneiform styles in the rock art of Guyana. The Enumerative style which is most common, includes varied biomorphic and geometric elements which are well represented in the petroglyphs at Aishalton and Makatau Cave in the south Rupununi Savannas (Daggers, Pereira and Pintamber 2016, Williams 1979). Characterized by broad deep grooving, Williams (1985), following Reichel-Domaltoff (1967, 1972) proposes that the Enumerative style represents a system involving different combinations and directional orientations indicating the location of raw materials and edible resources in which the motifs through a sequential “reading” of combinations of elements “sign” the presence of specific resources in different areas. In this regard Williams describes a Fish-Trap sub-style, believed to mark the seasonal availability of different fish species as part of a communication system that facilitating resource management. In contrast, the so-called Cuneiform style, characterized by narrow deeply grooved geometric and biomorphic glyphs, that have been largely reported from the region of Iwokrama in the central Guyana rainforest (Plew and Daggers 2022 and Williams 1996).

Description of the rock art near Rupunau provides additional documentation of the similarities and differences in petroglyphic elements. Notably, connected circles, spirals, connected spirals, circles connected to lines are the most abundant elements at all three sites though connected circles and spirals are most common at sites no. 2 and 3. The connected circles motif is most common at site No. 2. Rectangles connected to lines are present only at site no. 1. Anthromorphs occur only at site No. 1 while zoomorphic designs appear only at Achimeriwau Savannah. The anthromorphs at site No. 1 are situated in a setting very much apart from sites No(s). 2 and 3. This setting is elevated with views of the corresponding valley areas while the other sites are in open savannah. The most unique elements are what are here described as tubes or tube-like features. The features are rare and occur in combinations with other elements at site No. 2. Of some note is the association of sites No. 1 and 2 with adjacent prospecting/workshop/reduction areas. Whether this is incidental or related to material acquisition associated with manufacture of the glyphs is uncertain. In general, motifs are of the Aishalton style.

The archaeological survey of newly discovered sites near Shulinab provides documentation of a site pattern first observed some twenty years ago opposite Skull Mountain (Plew and Saras 2008). This pattern is one of recessing one burial vessel upon another. At elevations in the foothills east of Shulinab are what appear to be burial or caching locations of ceramic vessels placed on high natural saddles. Camoudi Swamp and Baby Creek documents at least two instances of probable vessel stacking though no evidence of human remains was observed. This in all likelihood relates to the filled content of the vessels which were not excavated. While we assume these to be burial locations, it is possible that sites like these also saw the caching of vessels for purposes of later use. The Rupunau and Shulinab surveys increase our knowledge of the prehistoric lifeways of the Rupununi and demonstrate the necessity of continued archaeological assessment of these areas.

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Article

Using Thermally Altered Rock as a Proxy for Assessing Cooking Strategies in Early-Middle Holocene Shell Mounds of Northwestern Guyana

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Abstract: Utilizing results of experimental analyses of thermally altered stone fracture patterns associated with dry and wet cooking, this paper evaluates the evidence for differing cooking strategies of ten Early-Middle Holocene Shell mounds in Northwestern Guyana. Analysis suggests dry roasting as a primary strategy.

Keywords: Shell mounds, Early-Middle Holocene, Cooking strategies, Thermally altered rock

Introduction

The coastal plain of northwestern Guyana is characterized by several Early to Middle Holocene-age shell mounds (Figure 1). The mounds consist of shell refuse that served as living areas and as places for burials. Archaeological assemblages include chipped and groundstone artifacts of the so-called Alaka Phase originally dated between 1950 and 1450 B.P. (Evans and Meggers 1960). More recent radiocarbon dates, however, indicate pre-ceramic occupations of several shell midden deposits as early as ca. 7300 B.P. (Williams, 1981, 1998, 2004, Plew and Willson 2010). Some mounds including Barabina (Williams 1981) and Kabakaburi (Plew, Pereria and Simon 2007) contain early ceramic remains. Though shell mounds are not found in adjacent Suriname and French Guiana they are common in the south Caribbean where around 6,000 B.P. the Banwari and El Conchero shell midden occupations which represent a regional Archaic pattern similar to Alaka phase sites though different in assemblage variation (Boomert 2000:54-56)

Radiocarbon dates establish a temporal range of between 7500 BP and 2600 BP. The earliest dates are from the Siriki mound (Cal 7545-7510 BP, Beta 449110) and from Piraka, (7545 BP, Beta 449110) together with the earliest ones occurring at Barabina where a radiocarbon date of 6885±85 BP has been reported (Williams 1981). Other Middle Holocene dates in the range from 5965±50 BP (Barabina) to 5710±80 BP (Koriabo) are not common, suggesting that there may be a more limited shell mound occupation in this time frame—though the sample size is too small to provide a level of confidence. An additionally early date was obtained

from carbon collected from the Wyva Creek shell mound near the Barima River. Wyva Creek returned a conventional radiocarbon age of 6340 ± 50 BP (Beta 264970, Plew and Willson 2009). A recently obtained date for Little Kaniballi dates its occupation to 6340 ± 30 BP (Cal 7320-7245 BP (Beta 449111, Dagggers and Plew 2017). The recent date is from the upper levels of Hosororo Creek (2660 ± 45 BP, SI 6636, Williams 2003). Most mounds were occupied between 4000 and 2600 BP.

Alternating layers of shell refuse from different species of mollusks include the small striped snail, clams, oysters and crab remains that reflect changing environmental conditions of the early Holocene (Williams 2003, Plew 2009) as well as seasonality. The early Holocene saw exploitation of mollusks associated with relatively brackish environs (Williams 1981:16, 30-32; Jansma 1981). The remains of peccary, agouti, turtle, large birds and cayman have also been reported (Williams 2003, Plew 2016, Plew and Dagggers 2016, Dagggers and Plew 2022). Excavations have produced evidence of features that include hearths, postmolds and storage pits (Plew, Willson and Dagggers 2013, Plew and Dagggers 2016, Williams 2003). Of note are heavily burned areas viewed as hearth areas. Brett (1868), Im Thurn (1883) and Osgood (1946) all report the recovery of “baked clay” which Im Thurn interpreted as remnants of prehistoric fires—an interpretation Evans and Meggers (1960:36) viewed as likely. These are slight depressions some measuring 40-80 cm in diameter and others 15-20 cm in depth. The features are heavily burned and normally appear as deeply red orange in color. They are often associated with a variety of rock types.

Experimental Analysis of Thermally Altered Rock

There has been a widening interest in thermally altered rock (TAR) during the past twenty years though much of this has occurred in North America. Studies include attempts to assess altered morphological characteristics of rock exposed to heat (Crandall 2007, Gur-Arieh et al, 2012, Graesch et al 2014, Pagoulatos 2005) while others have sought to evaluate the varied thermal characteristics of different hearth types or features (Odgaard 2003, Thoms, 2008, 2009). Of particular interest are those studies that have examined fracture rates and types (Custer 2017, McDowell-Loudan 1983; McParland 1977; Neubauer 2018, Taggart 1981; Zuerl 1979). At the present time such experimental studies have not been conducted in Guyana.

Insights from Experimental Shellfish Roasting

Though as noted, investigators have recognized common mound features (burned areas, shallow depressions, what appear to be remnants of scattered fuel remains) they have generally failed to provide data that could make possible an interpretation of what such features and their associated material cultures may reflect with respect to site functions. One way of thinking about site activities may be provided by experimental investigations designed to develop a picture of the fingerprints associated with specific activities.

To investigate microarchaeological traces of shellfish cooking activities, Aldeias et al (2019) conducted a set of experiments with direct roasting of shellfish using wood-fueled fires. Their concern was assessment of mineralogical transformation of heated shells. Their experiments focused on three types of roasting procedures that included the construction of shallow depressions with heated rocks (*pebble curvette* experiments), placement of shellfish on top of

ash and hot embers (*fire below* experiments) and by short-lived kindling fires atop shellfish (*fire above* experiments). Their results suggest that similar types of roasting create microstratigraphic signatures of anthropogenically reworked combustible materials spatially distant from actual combustion loci. They also conclude that fire below roasting may leave noticeable features and importantly show that visual modifications and mineralogical characterization of shellfish maybe indicative of specific cooking activities. (Aldeias et al. 2019: 402-405).

Features resembling those created in the *pebble curvette* experiments are perhaps most common in Northwest Guyana shell mounds. These as noted are shallow, sometimes basin-like, features and appear to be most associated with the presence of TAR. Although we assume that what Aldeias et al. (2019) discuss as fire-above and fire-below strategies were likely utilized, we lack the ability to identify those archaeologically. We observe, however, evidence of materials appearing to be distributed across areas apart from the combustion sources. The relevance to our assessment relates primarily to their recognition that depressions with heated rocks are preferred for cooking as they may produce higher temperatures—regardless of whether fires are located above or below. Burned areas lacking any TAR are common and most probably representative above and below fires. Examining shellfish (nerite) remains for differing degrees of mineralization, color and burning may be useful to inferences about these types of roasting.

Assessing What Hearth Features Tell Us About Cooking

Though hearth features as defined are generally believed to be heating and cooking areas, archaeological validation of their type functions has not occurred. In addition to experiments geared toward identification of microstratigraphic imprints associated with differing roasting activities (Aldeias et al 2019), there is a need to determine whether cooking consisted largely of wet (steaming) or dry cooking. To gain insight into processing it is essential to review what these features contain and how fracture patterns and their morphologies of thermally altered rock (TAR) may provide insights into the strategies employed.

A commonly held view is that TAR in shell mounds primarily served to steam shellfish (Plew and Dagers 2017, Williams 1981)). As noted, the presence of TAR may reflect there association with heating and lighting functions having no direct relationship to shellfish processing/cooking. In other instances, TAR rock has served as rock “griddles” in dry cooking (Black and Thoms 2014, Ellis 1997). Neubauer (2018) and Custer (2017) have recently provided detailed summaries of use-alteration attributes that include fracture types and size grade morphologies. Fracture patterns which are the result of dry and wet cooling of stones reflect expansion-fracturing vs. contraction-fracturing dynamics (Custer 2017, McDowell-Loudan 1983; McParland 1977; Taggart 1981; Zuerl 1979). Notably, dry-cooled materials commonly display flat, convex, or concave breakage that is smooth while wet-cooled TAR exhibit irregular and jagged fractures with rough undulating interior surfaces (Custer 2017: 244-246, McParland 1977:32). The problem is to determine if functional insights may be gained by examining fracture patterns and morphologies of thermally altered rock (TAR) relating to shellfish preparation or of other game.

Frequency Distribution of Thermally Altered Rock

One problem in assessing the nature of TAR in shell midden sites is the failure of excavators to have consistently provided morphological and metric data for such items. A review of the

literature does document the noting of materials which we take to be TARs. Evans and Meggers (1960:25-34) describe the presence of “burnt” rock at all mound sites they investigated. They describe the material as quartz, quartzite, andesite, feldspar, and laterite but without reporting numbers of items or size ranges. Williams observes the presence of so-called manuports and pebbles in many of his excavations but does not generally detail associations or descriptions of type (Williams 2003). At Barabina, however, Williams (1981) notes the presence of piles of rock (manuports) surrounding or located near fire hearths which he describes as boiling stones. Plew, Pereira and Simon (2007) recovered jagged unmodified stones measuring 5-10 cm in diameter at Kabakaburi while similar items have been reported from Siriki (Plew, Willson and Dagers 2012, Plew and Dagers 2017). The stones noted at Siriki range between 8-7 cm in diameter. Pebbles (n=23) and waterworn stones have also been reported at Koriabo (Plew 2019), Waramuri (Plew 2018) and Piraka (Plew, see also Williams n.d.). Owing to the lack of detail reported in most instances, it appears that much of the rock reported is not angular. At Siriki and Kabakaburi a considerable number of stones are angular or jagged in shape. No assessment of the materials from Alaka Creek, Alaka Island and Akawabi Creek can be made. Accordingly, the materials from Barabina, Koriabo, Piraka and Waramuri appear to reflect dry cooling while the more angular TAR debris from Kabakaburi and Siriki suggest wet cooling. While it seems likely that both types of cooking occurred, the data indicate dry cooling to be somewhat common (Table 1). The angular TAR from Kabakaburi and Siriki may reflect the re-use of stones in steaming (Pagoulatos 1992). Experiments conducted by Greasch et al (2014:180-183) note that cobbles do not immediately crack upon first heating but that breakage occurs most commonly when stones came in contact with water. They also note that quartzite fractured commonly.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Thermally Altered Rock with Associated Fracture Patterns

Site	Thermally Altered Material	Fracture Type	Reference
Barabina	Rocks (manuports)	Dry-cooled/Fracturing	Williams 1981
Alaka Creek	Burnt rocks	?	Evans and Meggers 1960
Alaka Island	Pebbles	?	Plew 2021, Williams n.d.
Akawabi Creek	Burnt Rock	?	Evans and Meggers 1960
Kabakaburi	Angular broken rock	Wet-cooled/contraction	Plew, Pereira and Simon 2007
Koriabo	Smooth stone, pebbles	Dry-cooled/fracturing	Plew 2019
Piraka	Smooth stones and water worn pebbles	Dry-cooled/fracturing	Plew 2016, Williams n.d.
Siriki	Angular rock	Wet-cooled/contraction	Plew and Dagers 2017
Waramuri	Smooth stones	Dry-cooled/fracturing	Plew 2018, Williams n.d.
Wyva Creek	Smooth stones	Dry-cooled-fracturing	Plew and Willson 2010

Discussion

A literature review shows the presence of TAR associated with hearth-like features at many shell mound sites in the Northwest. The greater issue is the specific nature of the materials that maybe considered to be thermally altered. As noted, there has been little consistency in the accurate reporting of TAR. First, descriptions of what is taken to be TAR are not clearly provided by excavators, leaving us to assume that, for example, the reporting of the pebbles by Williams (1981) and others are items that were exposed to fire though this is not the case with the reporting of Evans and Meggers (1960). Assuming that what have been called manuports and pebbles are TAR there is a consistent absence of reporting of rock type morphologies, fracture types and sizes ranges of rock materials. Aldeias et al. (2019) observe most TAR appears to be associated with shallow depressions with heated rocks. As noted, these types of depression features are most common. Notably, many of the items typed as cores and large choppers exhibit exposure to fire. It is expected that such items may have been multifunctional.

Owing to the ability of such features to increase temperatures (Aldeias et al 2019), it is seems reasonable to conclude that differences in rock types used—their sizes, and condition may provide some preliminary insight into the nature of Early and Middle Holocene cooking. We assume that both dry and wet cooking occurred. Dry cooking involved roasting of shellfish while wet cooking involved steaming or some form of boiling. As noted, these activities result in fracture patterns that are the result of dry and wet cooling of stones that reflect expansion-fracturing vs. contraction-fracturing dynamics (Custer 2017, McDowell-Loudan 1983; McParland 1977; Taggart 1981; Zuerl 1979),⁰¹ we can infer something of the heating/cooking that occurred. As noted, dry-cooled materials commonly display flat, convex, or concave breakage that is smooth while wet-cooled TAR exhibit irregular and jagged fractures with rough undulating interior surfaces (Custer 2017: 244-246, McParland 1977:32). Based on the known fracturing dynamics, we can infer something about the nature of cooking types from the TAR debris found associated with shell mound hearth features.

Based upon TAR forms and expanding fracture patterns dry cooking activity (roasting) is present at Barabina, Koriabo, Piraka, Waramuri and Wyva Creek. In contrast, TAR forms at Kabakaburi and Siriki are indicative of contraction fracturing that reflects what is taken to be steam cooking of shellfish. Though data at present allow only a cautionary note on the nature of these strategies more detailed analysis of TAR may provide additional insights. Further exploration of these correlations will require better reporting of TAR densities, material types, stone morphologies, size ranges and fracture types.

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