

Introduction

*Cuando entres al Darién
encomiéndate a María;
en tu mano está la entrada,
en la de Dios la salida.*

— poem rumored to have been engraved on the walls
of an abandoned fort at the entrance to the Darién 1

A history of this structural type produces great men,
even geniuses, by transforming the intelligent acts of
individuals into fateful outcomes for the society.

— Marshall Sahlins 2

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This book is a contribution to the rejuvenated and redefined field of Atlantic world history, which positions itself at the junction of world history and the history of the Americas. Its practitioners explore the complex interconnections between European and American peoples who were confronted with the task of creating and maintaining viable societies in an era of contact and of marked economic and cultural change. Early modern eastern Panamá, an area subject to frequent foreign intrusion, was the site of the creative interaction of indigenous, Spanish, English, Dutch, French, Scottish, and African peoples, a process that can be explored only by adopting a point of analysis that looks beyond circumscribed national geographical boundaries: the region's history cannot be understood if it is addressed from a Panamacentric point of view, and examining it from the viewpoint of the Spanish empire or the history of the Spanish or English Caribbean is also problematic. The Darién's history makes sense only if it is examined from an Atlantic vantage point.

In the early modern period the Darién's Tule 3 Indians interacted not only with Spanish colonizers, but also with English, French, and Dutch smugglers and pirates who entered the region. Indigenous people had dealings with Europeans from each of these categories, and a single Tule leader could find himself engaging in complicated relationships with various European rivals on the same day. Historians and anthropologists of the Darién have studied the interaction between Spanish officials and the Indians; the buccaneers and the Indians; and the Scottish settlers, the Spanish, and the Indians. Each researcher has chosen to address individual aspects of the region's history in isolation. By compartmentalizing the experiences of the Europeans through separate studies, scholars have dispossessed the regions' Indians of the interactive complexity that characterized their historical experience. In order to avoid the problem of

fragmentation, my book centers on the Tule Indians and their interactions with Europeans in eastern Panamá from 1630 to 1750. By grounding my research with and targeting my analysis at the region's indigenous people, I hope to avoid the pitfalls that have plagued previous studies of this vital region.

The Darién's Indians, an eighteenth-century Spanish encyclopedist alleged, enjoyed no higher pleasure than to drink the blood of their enemies out of hollowed human skulls. ⁴ Contemporary Iberian readers of that racist text could well assume that the skulls in question were Spanish, for not only did the Tule seem to resist all attempts at missionization, they also did so by murdering the friars and Jesuit priests dispatched to evangelize them. In truth, the Darién's Indians did more than just resist the Spanish attempts to force colonial submission. In the nineteenth century they similarly defied the government of Colombia, and in the twentieth century they confounded the attempts of the Panamanian state to subjugate them as well. The Tule are, therefore, almost unique among Indian peoples. After engaging in long-term, intensive contact with Europeans for more than three hundred years, they have emerged from the process as an autonomous, self-ruled group. ⁵ In the chapters that follow I add my voice to those of present-day Kuna, anthropologists, and historians who are engaged in exploring the historical evolution of this remarkable situation.

The early modern Indian country of the Darién conforms to the modern Panamanian province of the same name, which consists of some 16,671 square kilometers. The region is bisected into Atlantic and Pacific portions by the Serranía del Darién (Darién Range) and the sinuous Río Chucunaque. On the Pacific side, the Río Tuíra leaves the Darién at the Gulf of San Miguel after passing through the town of El Real de Santa María. The Chucunaque flows into the Gulf of San Miguel below the town of Pinogana. Many rivers flow into the Chucunaque, and the region's terrain varies dramatically, consisting of tropical riverine floodplain, montane rainforest environments of moderate elevations, coastal areas, and mangrove swamps. ⁶ Early modern observers reported that the Tule Indian men of the Darién caught fish in abundance and were also unerring marksmen who hunted forest animals with bows and arrows. ⁷ The Indians supplemented their diets with grains cultivated by the women of the group, and one of the complaints Tule leaders lodged against the Christian practice of monogamy was that it would certainly destroy the Indians' ability to feed themselves by striking at the heart of their gender-based division of labor. ⁸

Intruders, travelers, and the odd Spanish official could observe that Indians inhabited the country alongside the region's many rivers, but piecemeal urbanization and the Darién's unforgiving terrain made it too difficult for a reliable census ever to be taken. The indigenous population of the isthmus, estimated at between 150,000 and 200,000 at the time of contact with Europeans, ⁹ was reported to have declined very rapidly. This

decline was so precipitous that an estimate of 1522 placed the number of Indians at only 13,000 persons. ¹⁰ The Darién region, decimated by disease and slave raiding, was reported by an observer in the later sixteenth century to have been almost emptied of its Indians, with a mere 700 human beings to be found in the entire area. ¹¹ These figures, however, must be viewed with caution, for meager and inflated counts alike could serve a reporter's purposes, depending on the circumstances. ¹² In addition, the lower population estimates conflict with the eyewitness reports of later visitors to the Darién. Figures proffered after regional entradas in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries agreed in reporting that the region contained a surprisingly large population of some 20,000 or more indigenous inhabitants. ¹³

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Studies that take care to portray the Tule Indians as members of a society as complex, multifaceted, and imbued with meaning as that of the Europeans they confronted are sorely lacking in the historiographic literature. The author of a recent monograph dramatically crystallized all of the problems inherent in the outmoded methodological approaches when he surmised, in a statement that could have been written by an eighteenth-century Spanish official, that "the contextualization of the sources suggests to me that war was the most important activity of the observed indigenous communities." ¹⁴ That armed conflict occurred in the Darién cannot be denied, but by no means did it define the Tule community. This perspective arises from an uncritical acceptance of the characterizations that colonial administrators made of the Indians. Confronting a people whom they could not bring under their effective control, eighteenth-century Spaniards generated documents that depicted the Tule as base, stubbornly pagan, and inherently violent. I will suggest in the chapters that follow that although the Tule always reserved violence as an option in their relationships with European outsiders, Indian leaders also displayed a considerable grasp of the subtler arts of negotiation and peacemaking.

This book, on the other hand, studies the mechanisms and circumstances through which the Darién's Indian inhabitants confronted, resisted, and, in most cases, managed European expansion into their home region from 1640 through 1750. Although historians have not ignored the isthmus of Panamá, none has yet satisfactorily examined the region's indigenous people as historical actors. I hope to go beyond the racist rhetoric of Spanish and Scottish contemporaries regarding the region's inhabitants in order to explore internal Tule politics and the evolution of the successful strategies with which the Indians confronted expansionist Europeans.

Not very much has been written about the Darién by English-speaking historians, and those who do discuss the region for the most part ignore

the Amerindian population in single-mindedly focusing on the short-lived Scottish incursion of 1698 through 1700. Their studies have been almost entirely Anglo- or Scotocentric, and have displayed an ignorance of the indigenous world into which the Britons they studied were inserting themselves. ¹⁵ The authors of these works have often taken their English and Scottish sources at face value, depicting the Darién as a wild and barbarous region and the Indians living there as simply the region's local color. In contrast, my research has centered on the Indians, exploring how Spanish, Scottish, English, and French activity in the Darién was influenced by Tule political leaders and by the norms of Tule political culture.

Historians writing in Spanish have also largely ignored the Darién. Due to Panamá's relatively recent establishment as an independent nation and the complexities of the region's status in the colonial period, a vacuum exists in the region's historiography. Although the Darién lies within present-day Panamá, in the early modern period it was integrated into the Nuevo Reino de Granada, a territory that encompassed what is now Colombia, and for a long time it was also administered as part of the vast Viceroyalty of Peru. The fact that the disparate sources necessary for a study of the region's history are housed in scattered archives has also mitigated against a full treatment. Historians and anthropologists have thus relied on a small corpus of printed, and idiosyncratically transcribed, sources to construct the history of the Darién, which has led them to present an incomplete picture of the region's historical development. Aiming to provide a depiction of the Darién and its people during a century-long period of international rivalry, I have sought to be sensitive to sources that illuminate the activities of the region's indigenous inhabitants, and I have worked to recover them as agents in the historical processes of expansion, intrusion, and resistance taking place during the early modern period.

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William Paterson, one of the central figures behind the Scottish attempt to colonize eastern Panamá at the close of the seventeenth century, grandly called the region the "Door of the Seas and Key to the Universe." ¹⁶ Eastern Panamá was important not for its Indian population, nor for its precious minerals, though it had both in some abundance. Rather, the isthmus of Panamá was central to Paterson's projected empire because it would serve as the literal door that, when opened, would connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. The Spanish conquistadors, having arrived in the Darién at the end of 1502, soon discovered the region's strategic importance. They quickly established the isthmus as a springboard for their various expeditions of conquest and exploration.

In 1513 Vasco Núñez de Balboa, with the assistance of indigenous allies, discovered the transisthmian route connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Balboa derived fame but little profit from his discovery, and in 1519 he fell victim to a judicial murder at the hands of his rival, Pedrarias

Davila, governor of Castilla de Oro. ¹⁷ Pedrarias presided over the plundering of the isthmus, during which the indigenous population of central Panamá declined precipitously. ¹⁸ After the conquest of the Inka state in Peru in 1532, the Spanish population of Panamá diminished as the richer realm siphoned off unattached adventurers. Furthermore, economic and social development in New Spain to the north and Peru to the south relegated early Panamá to the position of a tertiary economy reliant on shipping and the transportation of goods from other realms across the isthmus. ¹⁹ By the latter part of the sixteenth century English and French pirates, recognizing the value of attacking the Spanish empire at its vulnerable isthmian chokepoint, stepped up their disruptive attacks, establishing a durable model for future intruders by coordinating their activities with the region's indigenous people and African rebels. ²⁰

By the start of the seventeenth century, Spanish officials had established colonial rule over the central isthmus; decimated, converted, and subdued that region's Indians; and secured a negotiated peace with the rebel African communities. ²¹ The isthmus was more or less secure at its center, but its eastern border proved impossible to seal off from foreign attack and intrusion. Spanish actions to incorporate the region's Indians into a workable colonial structure began in 1635 and were intertwined with, and reliant on, the members of a family named Carrisoli. In the early seventeenth century the activities of Julián Carrisoli de Alfaraz were central to the missionizing activities of a band of Dominican friars, and at the end of the century Julián's son Luis provided the local Spanish defense against the incursions of the buccaneers and the short-lived colony of the Scots. ²² Spanish efforts were directed at controlling and converting the region's indigenous population, and throughout the seventeenth century Julián and Luis Carrisoli, as *maestres de campo* of the province of the Darién, pursued a gradualist policy of indigenous pacification through the selective cooptation of local indigenous leaders. Spanish officials came to measure colonial success in eastern Panamá through assessing the number of client Tule leaders who were willing to pledge allegiance, and provide services to, the Spanish crown.

The Carrisolis' modest goal was to have at their disposal a reliable party of men who could muster indigenous militia troops to defend the colony whenever the isthmus was threatened. However, in their communications with their superiors the Carrisolis described the indigenous polity with which they interacted in a way that made it conform to Spanish preconceptions, and they placed on their own shoulders the mantle of homegrown warlords. The officials depicted themselves as the controllers of a "tribal" entity that the Spanish termed the "reduced Darién Indians." This group, presumably, was made up of peoples who had voluntarily removed themselves from their native realms and had placed themselves under Spanish administration at *reducciones*, or "reduced towns." Following Neil L. Whitehead, I term this process tribalization and see it as one in which European actors and indigenous leaders exercised an equal agency as

they reimagined, and worked to create, a new Indian polity. 23

Thinking primarily of the best way to defend the isthmus from foreign attack, Spanish officials believed that Christianized, loyal Indians would serve as surrogates for Spanish settlers or troops. Consequently, their attempts to administer eastern Panamá were focused on establishing alliances with Indian leaders. At the same time, non-Spanish European intruders attempting to gain a foothold in eastern Panamá also saw the need for acquiring alliances with local Indian men. These different Europeans seeking indigenous chieftains with whom to make alliances were often able to find them. Indeed, the need for these alliances was so great that when such men could not be found, they were created.

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The process through which new Tule leaders were created was a complicated one. It involved much more than the simple imposition by Europeans of unwanted leaders upon an unsuspecting, or resistant, indigenous polity. Rather, new Tule leaders were "made" through a process of mutual interaction and negotiation that was primarily driven by dynamics operating within indigenous society. When it became clear that the management of relationships with European outsiders had become a vital function within Tule society, ambitious men attempted to monopolize this function, thereby establishing new forms of indigenous power. Although the Tule had not known such chiefs before the arrival of Europeans, these leaders were created through a process in which Europeans and Indians both played a part. Therefore, I argue that Spanish colonialism, coupled with the presence of persistent European intruders, led to the creation of a unique imperial space in the early modern Darién. Other scholars, while agreeing that the Darién was a special case in the Spanish system, have argued that the region was singular because of the Tules' ability to frustrate every Spanish attempt to impose colonial order. In contrast, I contend that individual Tule leaders contributed as much to the creation of an imperial space as did Spanish officials, the buccaneers, or Scottish military men.

The Tule chieftains who emerged through the group's interplay with Europeans did not completely revolutionize the manner in which the Tule thought about politics and leadership. Rather, their power was deeply enmeshed within older modes of Tule thought and belief, which were all undergoing a process of change and adaptation through extended contact with Europeans. The chieftains who interacted with outsiders were forced by circumstances to create new ways of ruling as they navigated through an evolving colonial world in the Darién. This world, though built on indigenous models, was not exactly indigenous. And though it drew on European administrative forms and symbols for a good part of its legitimacy, it was not recognizably European either.

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In addition to the examination of indigenous oral sources, which I make use of in the first chapter and to which I allude later, I have studied texts primarily generated by the European intruders. For the most part, these sources were produced by individuals and institutions hostile to or at the very least insensitive to the peoples whose information they recorded. Even in the cases in which the words or experiences of a Indians are recorded with curiosity, sympathy, or at considerable length, the nature of the colonial relationship under which they were recorded must always be kept in mind. The value of documents such as the Jesuit missionary Jacobo Walburger's *breve noticia*, which provides significant source material for the final chapter, has often been questioned, and the uncritical use of accounts produced by biased European observers has been an issue of debate. [24](#)

In the first chapter I draw on contemporary ethnographic knowledge in order to assist in the unraveling of the complicated depictions of indigenous rulership written by Europeans intruders in the Darién in the early modern period. [25](#) In addition, I rely in subsequent chapters on European colonial reports, letters, and travel narratives, believing that, if used with care, they can provide crucial information about the Indians depicted in them. I consider these sources to be more than literary artifacts that simply reflect the mental worlds of the Europeans who penned them for publication or to further political goals. My approach is reinforced by Neil L. Whitehead's remark that "an understanding of the internal tropes through which Western historiography has been construed is only one element in the methodology of interpretation which a historical anthropology must bring to its sources. We must also consider native social and cultural praxis, particularly as expressed in native tropes, of course retrospectively constructed from artefactual, textual, and oral records." [26](#)

As a historian of European-Indian interactions, I treat my textual and documentary sources as products of situations in which Europeans and indigenous peoples were not only in contact but were also working through the power relationships that characterized early modern colonialism. In addition, personal, political, and colonial factors influenced the elements of indigenous practice that observers chose to place within their narratives. Texts such as Walburger's *breve noticia*, although biased, racist, and sometimes exaggerated, do embed the voices and experiences of the native informants who provided the raw materials that the authors used to fashion their accounts. Interpreters of documents such as these must understand that the author's "selection from the range of propositions he might have about native praxis certainly reflects an editorial process. Yet the occasion and basis of his text is a real encounter with native peoples ... and may be compared with the corpus of anthropological data and theory to provide a keener insight into the text." [27](#)

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In reading these sources, my search for verifiable or suggestive information was grounded by the recognition that an exchange of information between

an indigenous informant and a European recorder (and later narrator and distorter) went into their production. A useful ancillary aid in the process of their interpretation is an awareness that these colonial texts were at times the product of contacts between individuals whose relationships with their respective cultures were as problematic as were their relationships with each other. "When such encounters persist or become institutionalized as colonialism," Whitehead notes, "a shared cultural network of meanings is generated." ²⁸ In the process of examining my sources, I explore the evolution of a mutually established, unstable, and vigorously contested vocabulary and grammar of indigenous power. The shared colonial meaning of this form of authority, which was distinctive from its "purely" indigenous or European definitions, can be perceived, studied, described, and understood. It gives this book its central theme.

Given the importance I have placed on the careful interpretation of European archival sources, I have been very gratified that the preparation of this book as an electronic publication has allowed me to provide readers and scholars with a representative selection of the primary sources that I interpreted to create my narrative. I have selected documents from English-language archives and Spain's Archivo General de Indias, taking care to weight my selection toward texts that have been relatively little consulted in discussion of the history of the Darién. Insofar as this book is a component of a group experiment forging a new path in the production of the historical monograph, I understand that some of the readers may wish to gain access to and consult these documents without making recourse to the narrative that represents my interpretation of them. An author cannot control the actions of his readers, no matter the format in which his monograph appears. That said, it is my hope that my book and the sources that illustrate it will be read and used by scholars, teachers, and students of indigenous history, European-Indian relations, colonialism and imperialism, and the history of the early modern Atlantic world.

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In the text that follows I have taken special care in the use of two linked terms, *frontier* and *Indian country*, and the equally connected Tule Indian people and Darién tribe. The term *frontier* describes the regions of eastern Panamá in which Spanish administrative forms and institutions had taken hold; indigenous *alcaldes* officiated over recognizable towns that contained churches, militias, and priests. These "frontier" areas, due to their geographic remoteness or other important factors, were still in the process of cementing their ties to the regional cores. "Indian country," on the other hand, was a place devoid of Spanish settlers and institutions, and the text describes the various methods employed by Spanish officials who attempted to transform the "Indian country" of the Darién into a manageable imperial "frontier."

The "Tule Indian people" are the subjects of this study. The "Darién tribe,"

on the other hand, was the polity under which Europeans imagined these Indians to have organized themselves. The purported tribal polity, one ruled over by paramount chieftains, was also the structure into which the various Europeans worked to mold the Tule Indian groups with whom they interacted. In the text, therefore, Tule men are described as leaders of the "Darién tribe," or a portion of that entity, only after they have, of their own volition, accepted a specific relationship to the Spanish administration or to other European intruders.

Notes:

Note 1: "When you enter the Darién,/_Commend your soul to the Virgin Mary,/_Your entrance is in your hands,/_But your exit is in God's." This poem is reproduced in Severino de Santa Teresa, O.C.D., *História documentada de la iglesia en Urabá y el Darién desde el descubrimiento hasta nuestros días* (Bogotá: Biblioteca de la Presidencia de Colombia, 1956-57), vol. 4, p. 280. [Back.](#)

Note 2: This quotation comes from Sahlins's essay "Other Times, Other Customs: The Anthropology of History," in *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 41. [Back.](#)

Note 3: The San Blas Kuna Indians, the descendants of the early modern indigenous peoples of Panamá, use the word "Tule" to describe themselves, and I will use this term to denote the early modern actors in this book. (Tule means "person" in the Kuna language.) The need to differentiate between the present-day San Blas Kuna and the agents in this book is more than a semantic distinction. The early modern Indians of eastern Panamá and the present-day San Blas Kuna of Panamá occupy different physical, political, and temporal places. The Darién's peoples have experienced considerable change since 1600. Confronted by epidemic illness and pressures from the encroaching Chocó people to their east, the inhabitants of the Darién migrated from the interior to the San Blas Islands of Panamá's Atlantic coast during the second half of the nineteenth century. (A small band of Kuna still occupy the area around the Chucunaque River.) In addition to this profound geographical reorientation, the San Blas Kuna experienced deep political change, attaining their autonomy from the Panamanian government in the early twentieth century following an armed struggle and the intervention of the United States. For the Kuna migration and the group's ideological explanations for their present autonomy, see E. Nordenskiöld, *An Historical and Ethnological Survey of the Cuna Indians* (Göteborg: Göteborgs Museum, 1938), and J. Howe, *A People Who Would Not Kneel: Panamá, the United States, and the San Blas Kuna* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998). For a well-illustrated collection of articles and photographs relating to San Blas Kuna life, art, and culture, see M. L. Salvador, ed., *The Art of Being Kuna: Layers of Meaning Among the Kuna of Panamá* (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Art, 1997). For studies of the ethnohistory of the Kuna and their ancestors, see M. W. Helms, *Ancient*

Panama: Chiefs in Search of Power (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), and the work of Reina Torres de Araúz: "Aspectos etno-ecológicos de los grupos humanos del este de Panamá," in *Actas del II Simposio Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología, y Etnohistoria de Panamá* (Panamá: Centro de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Universidad de Panamá, 1971), pp. 291-311; "Datos etnohistóricos Cunas, según documentos (1699-1799) [sic] de la colonia escocesa en Darién," *Actas del II Simposio Nacional*, pp. 93-111; "La historia de Caledonia o la colonia escocesa en Darién: Analysis de un opusculo documental," *Actas del IV Simposio Nacional de Antropología, Arqueología, y Etnohistoria de Panamá* (Panamá: Centro de Investigaciones Antropológicas, Universidad de Panamá, 1973), pp. 497-507; "Etnohistoria Cuna," *Revista Lotería* 221 (1974): 53-79; and "Las culturas indígenas panameños en el momento de la conquista," *Hombre y Cultura* 3, no. 2 (1977): 69-97. [Back.](#)

Note 4: Antonio de Alcedo, *Diccionario geográfico histórico de las Indias occidentales o América* (Madrid: n.p., 1786-1789). The entry on the "Darién" includes Alcedo's comments on the bloodthirstiness of the Indians. [Back.](#)

Note 5: For a discussion of the Kuna's recent struggles, see Howe, *A People Who Would Not Kneel*. [Back.](#)

Note 6: The various environments of Panamá are discussed in J. Kircher, *A Neotropical Companion: An Introduction to the Animals, Plants, and Ecosystems of the New World Tropics*, 2d ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 16-20. [Back.](#)

Note 7: L. E. Elliott Joyce, ed., *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America, by Lionel Wafer*, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1933 [1699]), p. 94. [Back.](#)

Note 8: Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Panamá 305, f. 300r. [Back.](#)

Note 9: For Panamá's population at contact, see A. Castellero Calvo, *Conquista, evangelización y resistencia: ¿Triunfo o fracaso de la política indigenista?* (Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura [Editorial Mariano Arosemena], 1995), pp. 39-40; W. M. Denevan, ed., *The Native Population of the Americas in 1492*, 2d ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), pp. 38-39; and N. D. Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492-1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 84-85. [Back.](#)

Note 10: Castellero Calvo, *Conquista, evangelización y resistencia*, p. 39. [Back.](#)

Note 11: Castellero Calvo, *Conquista, evangelización y resistencia*, pp. 50-51. [Back.](#)

Note 12: For a discussion of the problems of colonial demography, see D. P. Henige, *Numbers from Nowhere: The American Indian Contact Population Debate* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998); and "Primary Source by Primary Source? On the Role of Epidemics in New World Depopulation," *Ethnohistory* 33 (1986): 293-312. Also relevant is K. V. Powers, "The Battle for Bodies and Souls in the Colonial North Andes:

Interecclesiastical Struggles and the Politics of Migration," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 75 (1995): 31-56. [Back.](#)

Note 13: For the population figure of 20,000 for the Darién, see the peace treaty of 1738, AGI Panamá 305, f. 318r; Balcárcel's *diario* of his *entrada* in 1739, AGI Panamá 305, f. 300r, which estimated nearly 10,000 Indians for the Darién's northern band alone; Alcedo, *Diccionario*, "Darién"; and the undated and unsigned "Descripción de la provincia del Darién," in A. B. Cuervo, ed., *Colección de documentos ineditos sobre la geografia y la historia de Colombia*, vol. 1, pp. 273-281, which estimates (p. 281) that there were nearly five thousand households (each with an average of four members) in the Darién. The text of this document makes it clear that it was the product of Balcárcel's *entrada* that followed the signing of the peace treaty of 1738. O. Jaen Suárez, *La población del Istmo de Panamá del siglo XVI al siglo XX* (Panamá: n.p., 1979), rightly attributed this document to Balcárcel, but, following Alcedo's "Darién" entry in the *Diccionario*, mistakenly dated the "Descripción" as a document of 1747. The document was written in 1739 or soon thereafter, for it is a companion to the *diario* of the *entrada*, and in several places it mentioned Juan Sanni as a living Indian leader. By 1747 Sanni had been dead for two years. [Back.](#)

Note 14: Castellero Calvo, *Conquista, evangelización y resistencia*, p. 28; emphasis added. [Back.](#)

Note 15: The Scottish imperial adventure of the late seventeenth century is examined by G. P. Insh, *The Company of Scotland Trading to Scotland and the Indies* (London: Scribners, 1932), which provides the best modern treatment. Insh, however, was more interested in the Company as an institution than in the interactions between Scotsmen and Amerindians on the ground in the New World. Insh carefully titled his work to correct the popular misnaming of the Company as the "Darién Company" and provided extensive information about the Company's single trading venture to Africa. J. Prebble, *The Darién Disaster* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1969), is a readable popular history centering on the Company's new world activities. Although Prebble's narrative takes more of an interest in the details of what went on in Darién, his study unfortunately lacks footnotes. The work also has two even greater problems: Prebble in some cases stretches the documents further than they ought to go in order to make his points, and his study is filled with stereotyped images of drunken Amerindians. Other early treatments are J. S. Barbour, *A History of William Paterson and the Darién Company* (Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons, 1905), and F. Cundall, *The Darién Venture* (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1926). An exception to the Anglocentrism of the aforementioned authors is F. R. Hart, *The Disaster of Darién: The Story of the Scots Settlement and the Causes of Its Failure, 1699-1701* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1929), which is based on Spanish documents, a selection of which are provided in extensive appendices. Hart, however, was interested entirely in the military aspects of the Spanish response to the Scottish intrusion and was not listening for the Indian voices in his documents. Two recent articles with a focus on Amerindians have proven thought-provoking and helpful: C. H. Langebaek, "Cuna Long Distance Journeys: The Result of Colonial Interaction," *Ethnology* 30 (1991): 371-380; and B. McPhail, "Through a Glass Darkly: Scots and Indians Converge at

Darién," *Eighteenth Century Life* 18 (1994): 129-147. Langbaek's interesting, though brief, piece is well annotated and based on Spanish archival sources; McPhail's, though centering on Scottish-Amerindian interaction, is based primarily on pamphlet literature produced after the failure of the Company's efforts. McPhail's study therefore is useful in that it affords a description of some Scottish ideas and images of Amerindians, but it does not provide a documentary-based study of what took place when the Scots and Indians interacted in Darién. [Back.](#)

Note 16: Paterson described the Darién in this fashion in the preface to his "A Proposal to Plant a Colony in Darién; to Protect the Indians against Spain and to Gain the Trade of South America to all Nations, 1701," in Saxe Bannister, ed., *The Writings of William Paterson: Founder of the Bank of England* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1858), vol. 1, p. 117. [Back.](#)

Note 17: Balboa's activities are examined by A. de Altolaquirre y Duvale, *Vasco Nuñez de Balboa* (Madrid: n.p., 1914); K. Romoli, *Balboa of Darién: Discoverer of the Pacific* (New York: Doubleday, 1953); and C. O. Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), esp. pp. 218-237. [Back.](#)

Note 18: For Pedrarias's activities, see P. Alvarez Rubiano, *Pedrarias Davila* (Madrid: n.p., 1944); Sauer, *Early Spanish Main*, pp. 247-265. [Back.](#)

Note 19: For the evolution of the isthmian economy, see A. Castellero Calvo, *Economía terciaria y sociedad: Panamá siglos XVI y XVII* (Panamá: Imprensa de la Nación_/INAC, 1980), and *La Ruta transístmica y las comunicaciones marítimas hispanas siglo XVI a XIX* (Panamá: Imprensa de la Nación_/INAC, 1984); R. D. Hussey, "Spanish Colonial Trails in Panamá," *Revista de História de América* 6 (1939): 47-74; E. D. C. Ward, "Imperial Panama: Commerce and Conflict in Isthmian America, 1550-1750" (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 1988), and *Imperial Panama: Commerce and Conflict in Isthmian America, 1500-1800* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994). [Back.](#)

Note 20: For translated Spanish documents dealing with Sir Francis Drake's destructive operations against the isthmus in the sixteenth century, see Z. Nutall, ed., *New Light on Drake* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1914); I. Wright, ed., *Spanish Documents Concerning English Voyages to the Caribbean, 1527-68* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1929), *Documents Concerning English Voyages to the Spanish Main, 1569-80* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1932), and *Further English Voyages to Spanish America* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1951). For a discussion of the place of Africans in the early modern history of Panamá, see A. Fortune, "Los negros cimarrones en Tierra Firme y su lucha por la libertad," *Lotería* 171 (Feb. 1970): 17-43; 172 (Mar. 1970): 32-53; 173 (Apr. 1970): 16-40; and 174 (May 1970): 46-65; and "Bayano, precursor de la libertad de los esclavos," *Lotería* 234 (Aug. 1975): 1-15. Fortune's essays have been recently collected in *Obras Selectas*, ed. G. Maloney (Panamá: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, 1993). Also thought-provoking is E. Vila Vilar, "Cimarronaje en Panamá y Cartagena: El costo de una guerilla en el siglo XVII," *Caravelle* 49 (1987): 77-92. [Back.](#)

Note 21: The Spanish population of the capital, Panamá City, hovered around five hundred adult householders throughout the early modern period. Portobelo, the Atlantic port that was the point of debarkation for the fleets, never recorded more than fifty permanent householders. As a benchmark figure, the entire isthmus was estimated to contain no more than four thousand Spaniards in 1574. The large slave population, which provided household service and manned the transisthmian route of goods and silver, was estimated to fluctuate between three thousand and fourteen thousand persons at different points of the early modern period. Portobelo came to life only when the fleets were at anchor, becoming the site of the world-renowned trade fair. For the population figures, see Castellero Calvo, *Economía*, pp. 72-76. [Back](#).

Note 22: The activities of the group of buccaneers that set off from Jamaica in 1679 to operate in the Darién region are told in several first-hand accounts. See "W. D.", "A Brief Account of Captain Sharp and other his companions; their voyage from Jamaica unto the province of Darién and South Sea ...," book 3, chap. 12, of Alexander Oliver Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America*; P. Ayres, ed., *The Voyages and Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp and others, in the South Sea* (London: Printed by B. W. for R. H. and S. T., 1684); Basil Ringrose, *The Buccaneers of America, The Second Volume Containing the Dangerous Voyage and Bold Attempts of Captain Bartholomew Sharp and Others ... From the Original Journal of the Said Voyage* (London: n.p., 1685); William Dampier, *A New Voyage Around the World* (London: James Knapton, 1697); Lionel Wafer, *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (London: James Knapton, 1699); William Hacke, *A Collection of Original Voyages: II. Captain Sharps Journey over the Isthmus of Darién, and Expedition into the South Seas, written by Himself* (London: Printed for James Knapton, 1699); Anonymous, "An Account of our Intended Voyage from Jamaco ... to Poartavell," and Anonymous, "The Journall of our Intended Voyage ... over land into the South seas," in John F. Jameson, ed., *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period: Illustrative Documents* (London: Macmillan, 1923), pp. 84-137. Although the Indian leaders depicted in the accounts are vitally important to pirate activities, they are in fact often perfunctorily described. For accounts of the earlier exploits of Sir Henry Morgan, see J. W. Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Preserved in the Public Record Office, Colonial Series, America and West Indies* (London: Her Majesty's Stationers Office, 1889), docs. 483 [p. 190], 504 [pp. 201-203]; and Peter Earle, *The Sack of Panama: Sir Henry Morgan's Adventures on the Spanish Main* (New York: Viking, 1982). The following have also provided useful background information regarding buccaneers and piracy: Violet Barbour, "Privateers and Pirates of the West Indies," *American Historical Review* 16 (1911): 529-566; A. P. Thornton, "Agents of Empire: The Buccaneers," in *For the File on Empire: Essays and Reviews* (London: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 79-89; Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), and *Pirates: Myths and Realities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Library 1986). For an important contribution to the study of the French naval bureaucracy's interest in the South Sea, Central America, and the Darién, see A. Lafuente, "Una ciencia para el estado: La expedición geodesica hispano-francesca al virreinato del Perú (1734-1743)," *Revista de Indias* 43 (1983): 549-629. Also still useful for their descriptions of French buccaneers activities are two works by E. W. Dahlgren: "Voyages Francais a destination de la Mer du

Sud avant Bougainville (1695-1749)," *Nouvelles-Archives des Missions Scientifiques et Littéraires* 14 (1907): 423-568; and *La France et les côtes de l'océan Pacifique: Le commerce de la Mer du Sud jusqu'a la pais d'Utrecht* (Paris: n.p., 1909), esp. pp. 76--146. [Back.](#)

Note 23: For an analysis of the anthropological concept of the tribal zone, see Neil L. Whitehead and Brian Ferguson, "The Violent Edge of Empire," in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare* (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 1992), pp. 1-31; Whitehead, "Tribes Make States and States Make Tribes: Warfare and the Creation of Colonial Tribes and States in Northeastern South America," *War in the Tribal Zone*, pp. 127-151; and Whitehead, "Ethnogenesis and Ethnocide in the European Occupation of Native Surinam, 1499-1681," in J. D. Hill, ed., *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), pp. 20-36. [Back.](#)

Note 24: For a discussion of this question, see S. Krech, III, "The State of Ethnohistory," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 20 (1991): 345-375; B. G. Trigger, "Brecht and Ethnohistory," *Ethnohistory* 22 (1975): 51-56, and "Ethnohistory: The Unfinished Edifice," *Ethnohistory* 33 (1986): 253-267. [Back.](#)

Note 25: Neil L. Whitehead, "The Historical Anthropology of Text: The Interpretation of Raleigh's Discoverie of Guiana," *Current Anthropology* 36 (1995): 53-74. [Back.](#)

Note 26: Whitehead, "Historical Anthropology," p. 55. [Back.](#)

Note 27: Whitehead, "Historical Anthropology," p. 59. [Back.](#)

Note 28: Whitehead, "Historical Anthropology," p. 59. [Back.](#)

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