

5. The Spanish Management of Imperial Chaos, 1698-1701

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In October 1698, a month before the arrival of the Scots, the *presidente* of the Audiencia of Panamá, the Conde de Canillas, wrote a scathing letter to Luis Carrisoli. Canillas had lost all patience with his subordinate and objected strenuously to his handling of matters in Indian country. The occasion for this hectoring outburst was the recent murder of three Franciscan missionaries working at the Gulf of Urabá. "You must give up your blind foolish thought," Canillas wrote, "that you have Indian friends, if the only reason that you have such friends is because you have *paniquiris* to give them." 1

The stepped-up foreign involvement in the region was weakening whatever small control Luis Carrisoli exerted on the fractious cadre of Tule leaders he had been cultivating. Although he consistently reported to his superiors in Panamá City and Madrid that his efforts were producing an increasing number of Christian Indian villages under Spanish influence, the ease with which foreign intruders operated on the isthmus illustrated that the Darién and its Indians were not secure. Supposedly loyal Indians were as likely to form alliances with the invaders as they were to provide the assistance required by their oaths to the Spanish crown.

On November 16, after the landing of the Scots, Canillas had even more reason to be upset. A month earlier he had been presented with the unhappy, if familiar, news that bands of rebellious Indians had attacked a Spanish encampment at Rancho Viejo. At this point, however, such a crisis could be classified as a minor problem, for Canillas also had to confront the presence of an armed Scottish garrison planted in the heart of his jurisdiction. The Scots were rumored to have come in great numbers, and it was assumed that they intended to build fortifications and disrupt Spanish transportation and commerce in the South Sea. The pirates had done damage enough, but the Scots had come in well-appointed ships and brought heavy armaments from Europe. In addressing Carrisoli, Canillas erupted in anger once again, stating this time, "you have written eight letters filled with news derived from the Indians. They are liars and argumentative people and we should not be mixed up in their quarrels." 2

Canillas faced a difficult situation and was forced to deal with what appeared to him to be two simultaneous problems: an Indian rebellion and the need to eject the Scots before they could consolidate their colony. In addition, he had bands of French buccaneers operating in the central portion of the isthmus, in the region near Panamá City, as well as pockets of buccaneer settlement to the east on the Gulf of Urabá. 3 The one piece of positive news that had reached him was notice of the recently negotiated Treaty of Ryswick, which had established peace between France and Spain. 4 This would bring a welcome respite from officially sanctioned pirate attacks by the French, even if it would also bring new actors to the region. While the state of war had fed

the distribution of letters of marque that enabled pirates to operate in the isthmus under legal cover, the peace would bring commissioned pirate-hunters who presented an entirely different sort of problem.

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Canillas was informed on November 17 that a Frenchman with a commission from the king of France had arrived at Portobelo and was seeking permission to operate in the region. ⁵ The commissioned captain, Duvivier Thomas, commanded the *Maurepas*, which had arrived in poor condition. The Frenchman informed Francisco de Castro, the *teniente* of Portobelo, that he had many sick men aboard and needed food and other stores. He had come to the Americas carrying proof of the recent peace between Spain and France, and his commission empowered him to find the rebellious Frenchmen living there and clear out the Río Coco region and the San Blas islands on the Atlantic coast. ⁶

Captain Thomas's arrival presented Canillas with considerable problems, the largest being that he now had to decide who was more dangerous to him at this point: the outlawed pirates who infested the San Blas coast or the pirate-hunter who had been dispatched from France. The methods available to Canillas to keep an eye on the movements of the *Maurepas* illustrate one of the themes of this chapter, which is the sophistication of the Spanish system of intelligence and information gathering. Although he did not possess the resources to seal his borders, Canillas's range of knowledge regarding the movements and goals of the mysterious French captain provides a window through which an active Spanish colonial administration dealing with a myriad of internal and external threats can be studied. The French threat may have been mitigated somewhat by the recent peace, but French forces comprising armed regulars and buccaneer auxiliaries had sacked the viceregal port of Cartagena in 1697, an occurrence that would take Spanish officials in the Americas a long time to forget. ⁷

The *teniente* of Portobelo included in his letter to Canillas a description of the testimony of a Portuguese named Estor Menez. While hunting for turtles near the San Blas coast, Menez had been picked up by Captain Thomas in the *Maurepas*, which Menez reported to be of thirty guns. He had not learned the name of the ship's captain, but he did know that the French ship, while carrying no slaves, did bear a large supply of linen and other cloth goods in her hold. Menez also reported that two other French ships were at the island of Bastimientos, one from Jamaica, and one from Curaçao. As if Canillas needed additional proof, Menez confirmed that the San Blas coast was porous, indeed. ⁸

Acting on this information, Canillas convened a *junta de guerra* that ordered capitán Felipe Betancur to rendezvous with Captain Thomas and move in concert with him to the San Blas coast to stamp out the pirates. In addition, two capitanes of the Darién Indian tribe, Ambrosio and Pedro, were to be arrested immediately and brought to Portobelo. Betancur's orders included a secret instruction from the junta, which directed him to burn the Indian

villages to the ground once their capitanes had been arrested. The goal of the expedition, therefore, was to prevent the French pirates from establishing secure bases of operation on the coast and coordinating their destructive activities with the rebellious Indians. Betancur was expressly ordered to confiscate whatever loot he could find at the French bases and Indian villages, for the French pirates still had in their possession items from the recent sack of Cartagena that they had been offering as gifts to the Indians. 9

Betancur left at once, and the reports that he dispatched to Canillas were not encouraging. The entire province of the Darién, he reported, was turned upside down, with the Indians in rebellion and the coasts infested with French buccaneers. The Indians had been acting in concert with the Frenchmen for some months and had been "teaching the buccaneers how to use the land to great effect." 10 Betancur and his companion de Castro urged Canillas to leave Panamá City immediately and come see for himself; he could then manage the Spanish response more efficiently. To this request the junta responded tersely that the *presidente* could not possibly be expected to leave Panamá City at such a sensitive time. They would, however, instruct a trusted deputy in the peculiarities of the issues and give him quantities of *paniquiris* to distribute to those Indians who would renounce the rebellion, beg for forgiveness, and reduce themselves to live in Christian towns. 11

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This turn of events must have been extremely disheartening to the Spanish officials forming the administration of *presidente* Conde de Canillas. The men whom he had sent to stabilize the situation on the San Blas coast, rather than establish control on their own, had filed apprehensive reports ringing with fear and alarm, culminating with a request for unreasonable actions to be taken on the part of the presidente. These reports, it must be kept in mind, were based on a survey of the status of the Indians of the Río Coco area and the San Blas coast. The informants did not yet have the information that a Scottish force had arrived on the isthmus. Betancur reported that the best that could be done with the men and materiel at their disposal was to enlist a volunteer named Juan de Retes to go from the town of Chepo to the Río Coco to inform the French pirates there about the peace between France, England, and Spain. 12 The junta, for its part, dispatched a letter to the governor of Jamaica to ensure that he, too, had knowledge of the cessation of hostilities. 13

Two weeks after this first report, Castro filed a follow-up containing even more alarming news. Betancur, having gone to the Río Coco, had returned to Portobelo and there had informed Castro that five Scottish warships were at anchor at Golden Island, the largest of them being an impressive vessel of some seventy guns. The Scots had come to the isthmus with the numbers necessary to build, settle, and defend a fortification. With few men and fewer supplies, Castro closed his letter with a plaintive lament, "How can I possibly carry out the orders that you are sure to give in this instance?" 14

The Tule Indians of the isthmus at this time presented the Spanish officials with several geographically specific problems. To the west of the Darién in the Río Coco region, which bordered the frontier town of Chepo, French buccaneers had dug in, forming alliances with Tule leaders. Before the arrival of the Scots, this outlaw community appeared to be the most threatening and the most difficult of its kind to dislodge. In this regard, the peace with France was certainly welcome news, but Canillas would have to handle the bearer of that news, Captain Duvivier Thomas, carefully. On the positive side, Thomas held a commission from the king of France that empowered him only to hunt and destroy all French pirates operating in the Caribbean. [15](#) On the negative side, his ship was reported to hold suspiciously large stores of trade goods as cargo. Although it would be a positive development to be rid of French pirates, Canillas was concerned by the introduction of contraband into his jurisdiction. [16](#)

Canillas decided that the best he could do in the circumstances was to allow the French pirate-hunter to operate along the Panamanian coast, but to have this occur under his closest supervision. Surmising that Captain Thomas's cargo was intended to serve as goods to exchange with the region's Indians, Canillas issued immediate orders to Luis Carrisoli to distribute competitive *paniquiris* to those Indians who would agree to reduce themselves to the region's few Christian towns. Reacting to the altered circumstances, on November 16 Canillas radically changed the course and the tone he had previously set in his private correspondence with Luis Carrisoli.

In October, Canillas had all but called Carrisoli a credulous fool for believing that a policy of gift-giving to the Indians could bring any positive result. Rather than make the Spaniards long-lasting friends, Canillas had protested, the policy painted the Spanish as spendthrifts. A month later, however, facing a Scottish incursion rumored to number 4,500 and a French ship full of "gifts," Canillas was forced to place his imprimatur on the practice. Canillas ordered that gifts be given on a scale larger, in fact, than anything Luis Carrisoli or his father would have been able to fund or arrange before the present crisis. [17](#)

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Canillas ordered Carrisoli to place a group of friendly Indians at the Yavisa River, where they would be given supplies and *paniquiris* to last them for an entire year. [18](#) This treatment was to be exemplary, and Carrisoli was to ensure that it became common knowledge among the Indians that a new Spanish policy was in place. Canillas believed that the Indians would be unable to resist so good a deal: provisions for an entire year in exchange for an acceptance of Spanish rule and the Catholic faith. The *presidente* would do his part by providing the funds and the goods, and he would have the terms of the pardon published throughout the province. [19](#)

Canillas and the junta operated under the assumption that a discrete tribe of the Darién's Indians had committed the brutal murders of the three

Franciscans missionaries in order to announce, in barbaric fashion, an open rebellion against the Spanish. That supposedly rebellious Indian band had allied itself with other upstart bands to the west. Acting now in concert, the rebellious tribes had taken advantage of the arrival of the Scots in order to expand the scope of the rebellion. They now possessed the capability to disrupt Spanish measures aimed at dealing with the new military crisis. [20](#)

The activities of the Scots might have illustrated to the Spanish that the Tule were not organized into fixed tribal bands under the government of men called chieftains. However, this would be the hardest formulation for the Spanish, or the Scots, to grasp, for it went against all of their suppositions regarding the manner in which human beings, even the most primitive ones, organized themselves. These presuppositions made it very difficult for officials to reject their timeworn and mistaken assessment of the situation. In the junta's view, the leaders with whom they were in conflict—Indian men they knew as Corbette, Ambrosio, Pedro, and Diego—caused them so much trouble because they had managed to drag Spanish officials into their internecine struggles for local power. The chieftains' contention for the overlordship of the entire tribal entity that the Spanish called the "Darién Indians" was the root of the instability in the region. In Canillas's mind, primitive politics was behind the persistently unstable Spanish position in the Darién. [21](#)

The foundations of Canillas's reasoning are clear, for the presence of the buccaneers, and the arrival of the Scottish invasion, did bring to Spanish attention a myriad of highly contentious Indian leaders who previously had been little known to them. But these leaders were not the organic product of centuries of Tule political evolution that the different Europeans supposed them to be. They were instead the products of nearly twenty years of activities by men such as the Carrisolis and the buccaneers. Julián and Luis Carrisoli had been making contacts with local Tule men whose good behavior they rewarded with titles (*capitán*), gifts (*paniquiris*), and favors (positions of responsibility at the *reducciones*). These Tule men were then imaginatively transformed into the tribal leaders of Indian bands that were thought to inhabit the Darién.

The activities of the Carrisolis and the other European intruders had the effect of bringing into the Spanish system Tule men who claimed to have the allegiance of a band, subgroup, or tribe within the larger entity now referred to as the "Darién Indians." These men claimed to wield the kind of regional power that the Spanish expected of Indian leaders, and this bidirectional dynamic, in which Indian men effectively came forward to meet European expectations, led to the evolution of the system that obtained at the time of the Scottish invasion.

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Throughout this process Tule men were accepting, at least for the duration of the time in which they were in the presence of Spaniards, the mantle of indigenous leadership within parameters the Spanish understood and allowed. This meant that the Tules' tribal leaders were expected to wield a

coercive, hierarchical power over their subjects and were allowed to hold dominion over the land and the peoples living within the boundaries of their jurisdictions. No provision was made for the possibilities that the Tule were migratory, not sedentary, or, more expansively, that the Spanish conceptions of Indian leadership and sovereignty were radically different from indigenous understandings.

The situation that I have been describing empowered indigenous men to place the mantle of leadership upon their own shoulders. For the next fifty years, as the situation in the region continued to be a precarious and complicated one for the Spanish, the expectations of how an indigenous leader would manage and express his rule became highly formalized. At the present point in 1698, however, the situation of indigenous leader-creation was in its relative infancy, and the presence of other Europeans meant increased opportunities and freedom of action for canny indigenous men.

Had European intrusions into the Darién been limited to the activities of the Carrisolis from the 1630s onward, Tule men would have had extremely limited opportunities to accrue power on a colonial stage. The conjunction of the pirate raids, the involvement of the Carrisolis, and the Scottish invasion, on the other hand, led to a maximization of opportunities for ambitious Tule men. The pirates had sought Indian leaders with whom to ally in order to secure guides, auxiliaries, food, and shelter with their opposition to the Spanish as their only calling card. They brought with them intellectual preconceptions similar to those of the Spanish administrators. They expected to find hierarchically ruled Indian societies throughout the forests of the Americas, and if an indigenous group lacked an emperor or a king, one was often "discovered" or created for it.

In addition, the English-speaking and French buccaneers assumed that the Indians uniformly hated the Spanish with an abiding passion due to purported Spanish mistreatment of the Indians. English-speakers were by this time familiar with Las Casas's *Brief Relation of the Destruction of the Indies*, and this work and others fueled assumptions of American Indians as a monolithic group of interrelated peoples. Misdeeds perpetrated on an already generically imagined Peruvian Indian in the sixteenth century would also resonate in the mind and soul of a seventeenth century Panamanian Indian. ²² The Scots, in turn, placed their own singular ideological requirements upon the shoulders of the Indian leaders with whom they interacted. The acquisition of Indian alliances was high upon their list of goals to accomplish during their colonial endeavor.

The entry of these different groups and individuals, all seeking to establish Indian alliances, each with their preconceived ideas of how the Indians actually lived, thought, and structured their lives, provided problematic opportunities for the Tule men who wished to put themselves forward as chieftains through their interaction and alliance with the outsiders. As we have seen in the case of the man known as "captain Andrés," European expectations of an Indian ally could be high and the consequences of failing

to meet those expectations dire.

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Indian men who wished to accrue social power that they did not formerly possess were provided with an additional stage on which to do so by the presence of the intruders. Tule society itself afforded localized and small-scale opportunities for men who wished to influence the affairs of their extended families. For those men who were not *leres*, however, the options for influence and power were limited. The organization of young men for war and the management of the village's relationships with outsiders were two functions that could be controlled by an individual of skill and purpose. These functions had no doubt always been necessary and important to the Tule in their localities. The onset of European colonialism highlighted the importance of these two functions. Men who could negotiate alliances with outsiders or with the Carrisolis would be an asset to any Tule community. But these alliances came with a price attached; the European allies required that the chiefs provide Indian warriors to bolster European military capacities.

Colonialism, therefore, drew on indigenous skills not normally associated with religious authority and power within the dispersed Tule communities. The *leres*, who facilitated the villager's relationship to divine entities, were men and women whose powers were focused internally on the indigenous villages. European intrusion opened up other avenues of power and authority, avenues that allowed Tule men to act on a public stage that was directed outward from their home villages. In their diplomatic activities and alliances, the Tule *capitanes* and *caciques* mediated their fellow villagers' interactions with allies, intruders, interlopers, and invaders. While the *leres* managed Tule relations with the divine beings, the Tule chiefs came to manage their relationships with the European outsiders.

This new node of indigenous power complemented the existing relationships of power in the Tule villages. The newly emergent chieftains did not challenge the authority of the *leres*, which remained powerful and, in many senses, paramount. In fact, several *leres* were skilled and able enough to take on the functions of the *capitanes* themselves. Highly skilled mediators operating from within the Tule villages and the Tule culture, they knew how to take on the responsibilities of managing relationships with outsiders.

Juan Antonio Cortés, who wrote to Canillas from the frontier outpost of Tubuganti on November 27, 1698, provided evidence of such an instance. ²³ Cortés reported that he had spoken to the notable *caciques* and *capitanes* of the area, in particular one man called "El Lere," who appeared to be more important than the others." ²⁴ The leaders had uniformly stated that they were well disposed to remove themselves to a place where they could be protected from the rebels, but that they would do so only if they were provided with the means to unite with other loyal Indians.

Cortés ended his letter by reporting that he had "received the machete [and other items], which I have given as a *mora* to El Lere The rest I will use

to assure that your orders are followed." ²⁵Cortés lectured Canillas on the only method that could ensure success in the Darién, stating that, "your majesty must consider that these functions are only brought to fruition by spending." ²⁶ He ended the letter by admonishing Canillas that "without this expense nothing can be done because in the north the enemy has given the Indians large amounts of paniquiris." ²⁷

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Spanish options were extremely limited in the short term, because chieftains such as Corbette, Ambrosio, Diego, and El Lere were willing to use the experience they had gained in their dealings with the Carrisolis and the buccaneers in order to bargain with the Scottish invaders. Intruders into the region could be assured that if they proceeded with tact they could acquire Tule assistance. Yet this assistance came with its own price, one that the invaders were perhaps unable to recognize or fully accept. In order to attain their objectives, the competing Europeans had to accept that isthmian diplomacy operated according to dynamic indigenous norms.

Canillas, in his turnaround regarding the granting of paniquiris, had come to realize that at least two and often three meanings attended every action in Spanish relationships with the Indians. There were the Spanish intention, the Indian understanding, and, in some cases, an additional factor, what might be called the colonial meaning of the act. The colonial factor was the meaning and repercussions of the action on the ground, where actions took on lives of their own, with ramifications independent of the intentions of any single actor. At that point, the actions and meanings became part of the colonial reality of the region. New meanings could then be ascribed to them, and reactions could be formulated to their repercussions.

The organizers of the Scottish Company miscalculated in planning their operations on the assumption that the Indian population of the isthmus was a single tribal entity that was uniformly hostile to the Spanish. Even the Tule leaders who pledged fealty to the invaders could not be dissuaded from providing detailed and much-needed information to local Spanish officials. Canillas, who a month earlier had denounced the Indians as liars had by late November begun to gather information on the movements of the French pirates and the Scottish invaders entirely derived from Indian sources.

Contrary to the belief of the Scots, the Spanish administration had not been engaged in a process of genocidal conquest of the Darién frontier. In fact, due to limited resources, they had evolved a long-term strategy of gradual missionization and diplomatic cooptation under the aegis of the Carrisoli family. This policy, consequently, provided Indian leaders considerable freedom to interact and enabled a cadre of men to acquire local power. Instead of frightened and hard-pressed "savages" in need of their protection, the English-speaking and French intruders found a confident, self-selecting group of Indian men who stepped forward to speak for their communities and extract the best deal that they could from the interlopers. By the close of the century, these new chiefs had become extremely adept at managing the

activities of the outsiders.

The interaction between the Tule leader known as Corbette and the French, Scots, and Spanish illustrates the high level of confidence and autonomy that could be wielded by an indigenous chieftain who accepted the mantle of tribal leadership on the colonial stage. Corbette was one of the first of the Indian leaders to board the Scottish ships. In early December, no more than a week following the arrival of the Scots, Corbette was a guest on Duvivier Thomas's ship. There he met Betancur, who provided a detailed transcript of their interview. [28](#)

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Betancur began the interview by asking Corbette a simple yet potentially dangerous question: "Have you been aboard the Scottish ships?" "I have," Corbette is said to have replied, adding, "I went to the ships in the first place because they were English; if they had been French or Spanish I simply would not have bothered to go."

Corbette's confident reply is notable, although the logic used in the second portion of the response is elusive. Having already established relationships with the French and the Spanish, perhaps there was no need for Corbette to visit every French or Spanish vessel that anchored along the coast. The next portion of Corbette's reply is more obscure than this one, and suggests that Betancur recorded the details of the interview much later, working from his memory of the event.

"I want no problems with the Spanish," Corbette added, "and I wish to live in peace with them." (This makes perfect sense. What follows is the problematic portion.) "This is why," Corbette concluded, "I had gone away with my Governor DuCasse."

Betancur was greatly offended by Corbette's attachment of the personal possessive pronoun to the French governor of Saint Domingue, peace with the French notwithstanding. He reacted immediately, retorting, "How can you say that DuCasse is your governor? Especially you, who are a sworn vassal of Spain?"

But Corbette held his ground: "I had been taken from the Río Coco to Jamaica as a young boy, and then was rescued from the English by the French Governor, with whom I was raised on Petit Goave."

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Betancur got to the point, asking Corbette somewhat plaintively, "Why don't you live in friendship with the Spanish?"

"I am a friend of the Spanish," Corbette replied, "and you are mistaken if you think otherwise. In fact, I got into a conflict with some of the other capitanes over this very issue while I was aboard the Scottish ships."

Corbette gave no impression of holding any information back, adding freely

that, "I fought specifically with Ambrosio and Pedro, who are the leaders of the eighteen other capitanes who form the Scottish faction."

Betancur, palliated by this substantial piece of unasked-for intelligence, left the issue of Corbette's loyalty aside and asked him, "Have the Scots left their ships yet?"

"They're on Golden Island now," Corbette tersely replied.

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Betancur then asked Corbette about the Frenchmen on the San Blas coast; he wished to know how many there were, and where they lived.

"I know of only two on the Río Coco." Corbette answered, "one of them is married, and there are no others at all on the entire coast."

Betancur's interrogation of Corbette was nearing its end, and he took this opportunity to deploy what must have seemed to him to be damning evidence of Corbette's treachery, a letter written in French by a band of pirates, addressed to the Spanish inhabitants of Chepo. The pirates threatened to take the town and burn it to the ground if their demands were not met. Problematic in and of itself, the incendiary paper was specifically Corbette's concern because it had his signature on it. When shown the letter, Corbette was not taken aback in the least, remarking wryly, "Though that is my *name* written there, I have had nothing to do with that paper. Some French man must have desired to write such nonsense and to use my name."

Leaving Corbette, who had parried each of his questions with a relaxed, informative, and logical reply, Betancur now turned his attention to the French seaman Duvivier Thomas. He first wished to ascertain whether the Frenchman would make a journey with him to Golden Island to see what was going on there, to which Thomas answered that he was prepared to leave with Betancur on a moment's notice. This was to be the simple part of their interview, for Betancur next asked Thomas to release into his custody several Indians whom he had seen aboard the *Maurepas*. The Frenchman vigorously demurred, stating that he could under no circumstances do such a thing. However, after delivering his negative reply Thomas stood up, embraced Betancur, and expressed the wish to satisfy Betancur in all things but this one.

As a sign of the trust and respect in which he held Betancur, Thomas showed the Spaniard a secret letter of instruction written by Governor DuCasse which urged Thomas to collect as many Indians as he could along the San Blas coast so that DuCasse might later place them on the island of Tortuga, which was then uninhabited. [29](#)

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In spite of the aura of respect in which this information was imparted to him, Betancur was not pleased. "How can Monsieur DuCasse," he protested, "take vassals out of the Spanish king's lands in order to populate other realms?"

"This is meant only to prevent their communication with the Scots," Thomas replied, somewhat disingenuously. The Scots had arrived, in fact, after DuCasse's orders had been issued to Thomas. Using this strange logic in order to get around Betancur's requests, Thomas continued to refuse to turn over the Indians he had on board. However, in a gesture aimed at keeping open his lines of communication with the Spanish, he again agreed to go to Golden Island and visit the Scots settlement in order to gather information that he intended to share freely with the Spanish. [30](#)

These two interviews illustrate the level of detailed information that Canillas had at his disposal in dealing with the crisis he faced. He fulminated against the naiveté of Luis Carrisoli's gift-giving to the Indians; in the midst of the Scottish crisis, however, Canillas empowered his lieutenants to distribute *paniquiris* to Indians who rejected rebellion and settled in reduced towns. In a new turnabout, after chiding Carrisoli for getting his news and information from the Indians, Canillas now found himself forced to rely primarily on information derived from these unreliable informants whom he had so recently denounced.

These sources gave him advance knowledge and warning of the arrival of Duvivier Thomas, [31](#) the movements of French pirates on the Río Coco, [32](#) Richard Long's arrival, [33](#) the arrival of the Scottish fleet, [34](#) and the allegiances of several Indian leaders. His information enabled Canillas to dispatch officers to coordinate activities with Captain Thomas and to place trusted men in action in the troubled area. This activity proved that the Scottish supposition that the Spanish administration on the isthmus was powerless, inefficient, and lacking in information was far from the mark. Although the Spanish had been unable to prevent foreigners from intruding into the Darién, they certainly possessed the ability to gather information about a large invading force.

As was so often the case in the Spanish defense of the Americas, the gravity of the threat would dictate the level of the response, and in mid January the Barlovento fleet arrived at Portobelo under the command of Andrés de Pez. The fleet, funded by contributions from the individual kingdoms comprising the Spanish empire in the Indies, consistently lacked the money necessary to sustain it in top condition, and it served primarily as a deterrent force. [35](#) For its deployment against the Scots, Canillas's meager local forces were augmented by the addition of the fleet's compliment of 650 seamen and soldiers, a sizable force. [36](#) Don Andrés de Pez argued in favor of an immediate ground operation to confront and dislodge the Scots from their incipient settlement, and Canillas agreed that given the forces available to him now this was the correct course of action. [37](#) Canillas collected two companies of men from the Portobelo garrison and placed them under the commands of Juan de Retes and Felipe Betancur, ultimately intending to unite these forces with the four companies of militiamen who were under Luis Carrisoli's command at the frontier garrison of Tubuganti. [38](#)

On March 9 Canillas and his forces reached the Darién, and decided to complete the rest of the journey to Tubuganti in ten large barges, which after six days at sail reached the port of El Escuchadero. Here Canillas ordered an overland march to the garrison at Tubuganti, which would be an ambitious undertaking during the rainy season that time of year. A note of hedging caution entered Canillas's account at this point as he acknowledged that it would not be a smooth journey. The trail was not a familiar one to the Spanish, and things were worsened by the fact that, as he stated hyperbolically, "we faced the impossibility of breaking through [the] impenetrable forests, which were penetrated only by some few Indians reared in that wilderness, who were our guides." [39](#)

With their Indian auxiliaries in the lead, Canillas's army reached Tubuganti and joined forces there with the companies under Carrisoli's command. The enlarged Spanish force now numbered 1,500 men and was formidable enough to challenge and dislodge the Scots. However, Canillas planned to carry out a complicated military action during the most inopportune time of the year, and a survey of the party's supplies ominously estimated that the troops had stores sufficient to last for only ten days. [40](#) Even so, he strove to make a good-faith effort to reach the site of the Scottish settlement at Rancho Viejo. The harsh weather conditions, however, lowered the morale of the men, and the incessant rains quickly spoiled what little supplies remained to them. After a month of campaigning Canillas reported that "in the locality and place called Guanauca Canti ... on the 7th day of April ... there being assembled ... Don Andrés de Pez. ... Conde de Canillas, President of the Audiencia, governor and Captain General of this kingdom; the governor of the ... fleet Don Francisco Buitron Y Moxic; the maestre de campo of the province, Don Luis Carrisoli ... the decision was made to return to Portobelo." [41](#) Canillas had squandered a reasonably good opportunity to expunge the Scottish threat to the Isthmus. Such a failure would be duly noted by his superiors and enemies and would have serious repercussions in the future.

The fledgling Scottish colony, spared for the time being, was experiencing problems of its own. The erection of forts and dwellings was tedious work carried out under difficult conditions, and morale plummeted as it became evident that it would take a great deal of labor to transform New Caledonia into an American paradise. To make matters worse, the many strong-willed men who had been selected by the Company's Edinburgh directors to serve as councilors could not manage their interactions on civil terms. As early as December 29, just two months after the settlers had arrived, Councilor Cunningham, William Paterson reported, "was become so uneasy ... that he gave us no small trouble, and at last would forsake not only his post, but also the colony." [42](#) At the close of March the remaining councilors chose a man to return to Edinburgh; the council of the colony had reached the nadir of its factional struggles, with each opposing group desiring to have a representative argue its case in person before the Company's shareholders in the capitol city. [43](#)

A Jewish man named Benjamin Spencer, who had been recruited in Amsterdam to serve as the colony's linguist, provided the Spanish with a detailed record of the downward evolution of the Scottish settlement. ⁴⁴

Spencer was captured at Havana in October 1699 and interrogated there by Spanish officials. The record of his questioning is an extraordinarily rich source for the history of the settlement, and merits transcription, translation, and publication so that it might be more widely consulted by historians. Spencer's relation contained more detail regarding the daily activities of the colonists than did the dispatches that the councilors conveyed to the Company's directors in Edinburgh. The linguist's capture and interrogation provided another example of the Spanish administration's adeptness at acquiring detailed information on their enemy's activities from a wide range of sources.

Spencer made clear that from its inception the Scottish colony had a strong military cast. Although Scottish defenders of the colony described it as a peaceful attempt by Scottish families to settle the unpopulated isthmus, the facts actually paint a picture of a settlement with a strong military component. ⁴⁵ Spencer reported that each ship "has four companies of forty-five men ... with a captain and two lieutenants, two alfarez, and one sergeant with a total of fifty-two men per squadron and thirty sailors." ⁴⁶ In addition, this military force was not even entirely Scottish. There had been on his ship alone six Italian soldiers and three Frenchmen. ⁴⁷

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The presence of non-Scottish mercenaries further undermines the national pieties of the pro-Scottish pamphleteers who described the colonizing effort as a peaceable expedition of Scottish families. Walter Harris, who abhorred Scottish pieties, noted pointedly that "the soldiers were not to go under that denomination, but that of planters. The sixty officers (twelve of them had been captains, the other forty-eight subalterns) were termed overseers, sub overseers, and assistants." ⁴⁸ This should come as no surprise, for any serious attempt to settle even a portion of the Spanish empire could not have been carried out by families. That said, even though the Company's charter contained military provisions, the colony's council would need to make a formal request to the Scottish Privy Council in order to raise soldiers once the colonists reached the isthmus. It was a prudent move for the Directors to have assured that a large number of the colony's "settlers" would already be military men.

Spencer, on the other hand, had been hired as a linguist, and he was expected to facilitate communication with the Indians, a fact that he did not divulge to the Spanish. ⁴⁹ His skills at European languages provided Spencer with no preparation whatsoever in communicating with the Indians, and Harris reported that "after Captain Andreas and several Indians boarded the *Saint Andrew* at Golden Island, they were aboard some hours before we could make them understand us, although a Jew (who was our linguist) endeavored it with his Spanish, Portuguese, French, and Dutch;

until once they were got drunk with our punch and Madeira wine, and then Captain Andreas with his lieutenant spoke as fast and much better than our Jew." [50](#) Harris was humorously alluding to the important fact that the Indians, whom the Scots had assumed were the sworn enemies of the Spanish, could actually best be communicated with in the Spanish tongue. This fact was a jarring and, in hindsight, humorous one to Harris, but it was a portent of more ominous things to come. If the Indians were not all implacably opposed to the Spanish, was it not possible that some of the Indian leaders were actually *allies* of the Spanish?

Spencer reported that after the eighth day ashore at Rancho Viejo, while they were at work creating the fort and the living quarters, several Indians visited the settlement and from then forward continued to do so on a daily basis. The Indians "came in groups of six or eight, always bringing birds and potatoes." [51](#) They often brought news to the men working on the shore, and they began consistently to inform whomever would listen that the Spanish were gathering a massive amphibious force in order to eject them from the isthmus. In a sign that Spencer was by no means the kind of sensitive cultural mediator who could have maximized relations with the local Tule, he added that these warnings were not credited, for "it was clear that the Indians came to eat and drink rather than to warn us." [52](#)

Whatever the motivations for these visits and warnings, the Scots, thinking like Canillas, refused to listen to the Indians who conveyed them. Only with the arrival of the cacique named Diego in February 1699 did the Scots see their dire situation in a realistic light. Diego, who had dealt extensively with Richard Long, was described by Spencer as "an Indian cacique who was held in high esteem by the Indians. ... [He] brought news that the *señores Españoles* were near to the *cacique* named Pedro, who was only five to six leagues distant from the Bay of Darién." [53](#) On hearing this, 170 men issued forth from the encampment to confront the Spanish, with councilor James Montgomery at their head. [54](#)

The Scots party that had set forth in such an intemperate rush was ambushed by a detachment of twenty-five Spaniards and twelve Indians from Carrisoli's Tubuganti garrison. The Spanish directed their fire down upon the Scots from a high vantage point, killing two and injuring fifteen, among them James Montgomery. The Scots, however, stood their ground, and having a large force in the field, they regrouped and then outflanked the attacking force, which quickly retired with its Indian allies. [55](#)

This altercation was reported to the Company directors as a monumental victory. They had no reason to doubt the report; indeed, it seemed beyond their collective imagination to think that the Spanish could possibly defend the isthmus. They responded to the council's ecstatic report by stating that they had received the report "of 6 March ... that Mr. James Montgomery ... with a detached party under his command, had been so successful in

defeating the first attempt of the Spanish against the settlement, and that the native Indians of your neighborhood were so hearty and faithful to you on that occasion." [56](#)

William Paterson, with the benefit of hindsight and the information gathered from a Spaniard captured during the engagement, provided a later, more realistic account, reporting that "upon information that a great party of Spaniards were come overland ... we sent Mr. Montgomery with a party of men to know the truth; but instead of a body of Spaniards, found only a few men who were sent thither to get intelligence, who, when our men came upon them, took the opportunity to fire at them ... and then run away, having killed two or three and wounded some others. ... This party had been detached from a body of 1,500 men, then at Tubuganti, and from thence designed to invade us from land, but by reason of opposition from the Indians ... they ... dispersed, and came to nothing." [57](#)

The Spanish were increasing the military pressure at a time in which the council of the colony was being torn apart by crippling divisions. Paterson, who had extensive experience in American trade, was a vocal proponent for the colony to offer deep trade concessions to Jamaica merchants in order to entice and encourage them to initiate large-scale trade with the colony, but Pennycook strenuously opposed this suggestion. Consequently, Paterson urged an increase in the size of the colony's council, in order to dilute the power of Pennycook and the other sea captains who dominated it. This issue was, of course, even more contentious than the last, and a final divisive matter before the council was the status of the food and other stores that had been procured by the directors to support the colonists. There were serious allegations that certain greedy men had supplied the colonists with inadequate supplies of food, clothing, and other necessary items in order to line their own pockets. [58](#) To these internal pressures were added the hostility of the Spanish and the high levels of mortality at New Caledonia. [59](#) Before long Pennycook and the colony's other councilors had to deal with mutinous soldiers and mass desertions.

Although the directors of the colony were heartened by the news of Montgomery's military victory over a Spanish army, the councilors of New Caledonia were still left to manage a deteriorating situation as best they could. Paterson reported that in early March Pennycook "began to be very uneasy, and to publish that there was not a month's provisions in the colony ... and this he published industriously on all occasions." [60](#) Matters reached a nadir in the spring of 1699; in April "a plot to run away with the ship Saint Andrew" was discovered, [61](#) and in mid-May the colonists received news from Jamaica that King William III had issued several proclamations that prohibited any of his subjects from assisting the Scots in any way. [62](#)

The royal proclamation closed off what few avenues remained to the colonists to establish a settlement through legitimate trade with the other English-

speaking colonies in the Caribbean. Its effect was striking and immediate, and all of the colonists were crushed. Paterson reported that "upon these and the like apprehension everyone ... began to be in haste to be gone." ⁶³ This line of action, however, was not what Paterson counseled, for he believed that the Council at the very least ought not "to design, or so much talk of going." ⁶⁴ Paterson fell ill soon after news of the proclamation arrived, and he was therefore unable to argue for his point of view with the other Councilors; the colony of New Caledonia was abandoned on June 16, 1699. ⁶⁵

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The Spanish first learned of the Scottish abandonment of Rancho Viejo at the end of July, when "seven Spaniards ... who had been prisoners of the Scots at Darién ... reported that the enemy had abandoned the place they had occupied and fortified." ⁶⁶ Andrés de Pez, commander of the Barlovento fleet, dispatched Captain Juan Delgado in a brigantine to examine the site at Rancho Viejo in order to establish the veracity of the account. Delgado informed de Pez upon his return to Portobelo that "he found ... remains of about 100 huts that had been burned. He saw graves, which according to his calculation, were about 400 in number, two of which, being within the fortification, were apparently those of officials." ⁶⁷ Delgado ended his report by stating that while he was at Rancho Viejo he "busied himself in burning and demolishing the fortifications." ⁶⁸

After the Darién problem appeared to have taken care of itself, Canillas was unceremoniously removed from his office pending an investigation into his activities. Canillas was out of office for but a short period, for he was removed on July 7, 1699, and replaced by the Marqués de Villarocho, only to be reinstated on December 23 of that year. ⁶⁹ In a letter to the Consejo de Indias of August 10, 1699, Canillas summed up his administration, listing his achievements and presenting himself as a man entirely free from graft, taint, or blame. He outlined the threats remaining to the good government of the isthmus, and named the Indians of the Darién as a major threat, stating that

 fear must be instilled in them, so that they do not repeat the warm relations they enjoyed with the Scots Last year they killed many people, beginning their reign of horror with the killing of the three missionaries. They committed this horror in the midst of Your Majesty's repeatedly giving the native inhabitants expenditures and contributions that they call paniquiris. These gifts have been remitted many times to maestre de campo Don Luis Carrisoli. The Juntas de Hacienda here pays not only for these gifts, but also to maintain those whom Carrisoli has accepted, by their own admission, as vassals of Your Majesty. The truth is that the Indians are only the vassals of the last person to give them gifts. ⁷⁰

This bit of self-exoneration on Canillas's part was motivated by his realization that although the Scots had left the region, serious challenges to the Spanish administration remained. Canillas would not exactly hand over a smoothly

running operation to his successor, and he felt the need to account for the underlying bases for the problems that Villarocho would face as he took up the post. Canillas argued that the Spanish weaknesses on the isthmus were attributable to the Indians. Although the system of gift-giving had brought no tangible benefits, Canillas admitted that he had been compelled to continue the pernicious practice because, as he put it, he "did not want the Indians to give [him] away to the enemy." 71

The Marqués de Villarocho acted quickly to place his stamp on the administration of the isthmus, issuing orders and reports relating to contraband, 72 salaries of officials, 73 and ecclesiastical matters. 74 Yet his short-lived administration would not avoid problems, and he immediately faced a crisis regarding the rank and standing of the officials operating in the Darién. In a letter to the crown dated November 11, 1699, Villarocho reported that some time earlier Don Miguel de Cordones had arrived in Panamá City. 75 Cordones had been named by the Conde de Canillas as the governor of the province of the Darién, a move that had greatly displeased Luis Carrisoli. Now that the Scots had left and the situation had normalized somewhat, Carrisoli had taken the opportunity to protest Cordones's appointment over him.

The matter was simple: Luis Carrisoli wished to be the sole governor of the province of the Darién, and not only that. He also wished to be given the treatment of a cacique. He argued that it was unjust for him to be repaid for having served the king loyally for more than thirty years by having the government of the province taken from him without notification. He had been thus maltreated even though he had been commended often in the past as the person most able to keep the province in peace because of the great esteem in which the Indians held him. Carrisoli made his request to the *presidente* not as some lowborn person unjustifiably seeking royal favor, but, rather, as the proud son of a Spanish *hidalgo*. His father's blood enabled him to serve in the highest offices of the Spanish state, and his mother's heritage was no less lofty, for she had been "the most noble and principal woman of the Darién." 76

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Because the Darién needed but one governor, and he had lost that position, Carrisoli requested that he be allowed to retire to the lands that had been granted to his father at the Gulf of San Miguel. Inasmuch as he had not profited in any way while he had been in the crown's service, the grant was especially necessary. Carrisoli proposed that if he was provided the lands promised to his father, he could support his family through the taking of wood. 77 The Marqués of Villarocho denied Carrisoli's request and ordered Carrisoli and Cordones to return immediately to the Darién to devote themselves to its defense. 78 By this action, the new *presidente* dealt with the matter by avoiding it and sent two men who were clearly antagonistic toward one another to work together in Indian country. This was a half-solution to the problem, which could do nothing but fester and make things worse.

After the departure of the Carrisoli and Cordones, Villarocho conceded his lack of knowledge about the Darién region to the Audiencia and turned to Gerónimo de Córdoba, the oldest oidor of that court, for advice. At the first junta convened to deal with the Darién, in deference to his long experience in the region, Córdoba was asked what course of action should be set. Perfectly encapsulating the Spanish problem, Córdoba curtly responded, "I have no such experience," adding that, "I have never been beyond the point of El Escuchadero." [79](#)

The Spanish administrators in Panamá City would not have very long to celebrate the Scots' flight, for the colony would soon rise again. On September 23, 1699, before they had learned of the colony's abandonment, the Company's directors had dispatched a second expedition from Scotland to the Darién, with reinforcements of men and supplies. [80](#) Three Scottish vessels set anchor in the Darién at the end of November 1699, each ship bearing seven hundred new settlers to the isthmus. [81](#) The settlement, so recently abandoned, was now reinforced. [82](#)

The second founding of the colony of New Caledonia was more intensely riven by internecine conflict than the first endeavor had been. The main councilor, James Byres, was an unimaginative and rigid man who refused to take the advice of subordinates. Dissension immediately arose among the councilors over the aims of the settlement, with Byres arguing against an actual colonial settlement, preferring to establish a trader's emporium, a move that he surmised the Spanish would find less obnoxious. [83](#) After assessing the less than perfect situation, Byres placed before the council a proposal that five hundred of the colony's male settlers be immediately resettled to Jamaica. [84](#) An acrimonious dispute ensued over whether New Caledonia, which had failed to attract the trading partners who could make the colony viable, should change course entirely and direct attacks against the Spanish towns on the isthmus. Byres vigorously opposed this line of thought, and he even imprisoned the councilor who argued most strenuously in favor of it. [85](#)

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While the Scots were engaged in these squabbles over what course to follow, the initiative on the Spanish side had passed to the newly appointed governor of Cartagena, Juan Díaz de Pimentá. The influential Conde de Canillas had gained reinstatement to his offices, but this did not occur until Díaz's maneuvers were well under way, and he found himself playing a secondary role in the actions Díaz directed against the second Scottish colony. Governor Díaz had been in Madrid as the crown organized its forces to confront the Scottish incursion, and he sailed to his post at Cartagena as the commander of a sizable squadron that included two warships, one lighter vessel, and a complement of five infantry companies. [86](#)

Following his arrival in the Americas in the fall of 1699, Díaz rendezvoused at Golden Island with an expeditionary force that had been dispatched from

Spain under the command of Francisco Salmón. This well-supplied party consisted of two infantry companies of one hundred men each and fifty grenadiers, with a compliment of officers. Salmón also brought to the region a large storehouse of arms and munitions. Things did not look good for the second Scottish colony in the Darién. [87](#)

While these forces amassed along the Darién coast, the fortunes of the Scottish colony were momentarily improved by the arrival of an energetic military man named Alexander Campbell, who had been commissioned as a councilor of the second expedition by the Company's directors. [88](#) Campbell had traveled to the isthmus by a circuitous route after having failed to rendezvous with the departing main fleet, and he did not arrive at New Caledonia until February 11, 1700, four days after Byres had abandoned the settlement for Jamaica. [89](#) News of a Spanish advance had reached the settlement at the same moment as Campbell's arrival, and he stepped in to provide forceful leadership, proposing that rather than wait for the Spanish to arrive and lay siege to the settlement, a Scottish column should issue from New Caledonia to surprise the Spanish force as it made its advance. [90](#)

Campbell described the engagement as a great victory in which two hundred Scots, backed by nearly a hundred Indian auxiliaries led by Captain Pedro, routed a large army of Spanish troops under the command of Miguel Cordones, the new governor of the province. [91](#) In reality, Cordones's force was not so large, numbering only two hundred men. Cordones, more important, had failed to coordinate his activities with Luis Carrisoli, who was carrying out his own surveillance operations in the area. Clearly still smarting from the recent slights he believed Canillas and Cordones had inflicted upon him, Carrisoli did not commit his indigenous auxiliaries to the battle. Thus, Carrisoli effectively left the governor of the Darién to fend for himself in a time of great need, enabling the Scots and their Indian auxiliaries to get the better of him in the field. Cordones had been taught a valuable lesson by the *maestre de campo*. Although he was the region's governor, Cordones could not expect to operate safely in the Darién without Carrisoli's assistance, for, at the end of the day, Indian country was Carrisoli country.

Meanwhile, Campbell would soon learn that the Scottish "victory" at Tubuganti was a minor one indeed when he observed, on returning to Fort Saint Andrew, that five Spanish warships under the command of *gobernador* Díaz had blockaded Caledonia harbor. It was only a matter of time before the Spanish forces commanded by Díaz tightened the noose around the settlement and forced the Scottish garrison to surrender two months later, on March 31, 1700. [92](#)

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Throughout its maneuvers in the Darién, the region's Indian leaders approached Díaz's expedition in the same way they had approached all other European intruders. Self-styled Indian chiefs sought him out to make their introductions, and to show him their good will they offered the governor of

Cartagena bits of information that they believed he might appreciate. On March 2, for example, Díaz came across a vessel containing six Indians. The spokesman of the party was an old man named Santiago, who, in spite of his name, was reputed to be no friend of the Spanish. His feelings toward the Spanish notwithstanding, Santiago informed Díaz that a force of two hundred Scots and fifty Indians had recently clashed with a portion of the Spanish force operating on land. The old Indian added that the Scottish settlement was in very poor shape, with many people ill from overwork and poor nutrition. Even a hardened enemy of the Spanish like Santiago, it seemed, knew the value in providing detailed answers to questions when he was interrogated by a leading Spanish official aboard a heavily armed man of war. [93](#)

Five days later an Indian leader named Brandy came aboard the governor's ship, [94](#) and on March 10 Corbette, who, the governor cluelessly remarked, "was friendly to the Spanish," visited Díaz. [95](#) On April 3, after the skirmishes through which the Scottish garrison had verified the overwhelming strength of the Spanish forces, Luis Carrisoli finally arrived at the Spanish encampment with his command of 120 Indian auxiliaries. [96](#) Carrisoli could take some pride in noting that he had made his appearance a full four days before Miguel Cordones limped into camp with his mauled Spanish troops on April 7. However, neither party made an impact on the outcome, inasmuch as a Scottish surrender had become a foregone conclusion weeks earlier.

Díaz's reaction to Carrisoli's arrival was indicative of a new, harsh attitude toward the type of colonial practice the mestizo warlord represented. Canillas had denounced the gradualist approach, which had built on diplomatic alliances established by using indigenous social forms, and Díaz saw things in an equally dim light. His well-supplied invasion, executed entirely by Spanish regulars, pointed to a more forceful way of dealing with crises in Indian country. Díaz did nothing to conceal the contempt he felt toward Carrisoli and his ragtag band of auxiliaries: his diary entry acidly stated that "this day, in the morning, arrived the *maestre de campo* Luis de Carrisoli with one hundred and twenty Indians from the Pacific side, who did nothing but devour supplies. For what little they brought for our men they got a good price." [97](#)

On October 10, 1699, Canillas certified a testimonial in which he extolled the services of Luis Carrisoli. [98](#) The *presidente* had recovered from his anger about his subordinate's overreliance on gift-giving, ultimately recognizing that throughout the recent crisis Luis had served the crown faithfully, as he had for several decades. It also made sense for Canillas, at this point in the investigations into his administration, to make known to the Councilors of the Indies in Madrid that he did have at least one asset on the ground in the Darién. Carrisoli's activities during the recent upheaval attending the arrival of the first Scottish colony had in fact been the crowning achievement of a distinguished colonial career spanning three decades. In recognition of this fact, the *escribano* of the Audiencia finally placed before the *oidores* the royal

cédula of 1670 that had granted to Julián Carrisoli lands on the Gulf of San Miguel.

The crown had expected the lands to serve as the nucleus of a new *reducción* to be personally directed by the Carrisoli clan. Julián and his sons had in fact attempted to start the settlement some years earlier but had been hindered first by an outbreak of smallpox and then by the pirate invasions of the 1680s. An additional shock hindering the development of the *reducción* was the death of Julián's eldest son Antonio of smallpox. Those setbacks, however, were long past, and the second ejection of the Scots, the dispersal of the pirates, and Luis Carrisoli's advancing age now made it an auspicious time both to reward the services of a key agent and to reignite the Río Congo *reducción* project. On July 19, 1700, Canillas extended the grant to Luis Carrisoli. [99](#)

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The grant required royal confirmation, however, and this was not a foregone conclusion. The Consejo de Indias debated Luis Carrisoli's petition for some time, and the deliberations, not surprisingly, centered on the question of his parentage. [100](#) This issue was not a trivial one for the bureaucrats, for, in addition to the grant of land, Luis was requesting membership in one of the prestigious military orders for himself and his sons. All of these crown perquisites, land grants, and places in the military orders were strictly reserved for Spaniards who could prove that they were of high birth. The Consejo did not dispute the importance of the contributions Julián and Luis had made over their lifetimes to the defense of the isthmus. The Consejo's conundrum, however, was to find the most fitting method to reward the distinguished members of the mestizo clan without having to reject the petition outright, which would send the wrong message. The Consejo neatly summed up the problem when it stated, with bureaucratic bluntness, that such a grant "had never been made to an Indian, and [these] honors have always been reserved for Spaniards." [101](#)

Although this statement would make it appear that the Consejo was not prepared to find Luis Carrisoli entitled to the higher forms of royal gratitude because he was simply not Spanish enough, on December 20, 1702 the Consejo arrived at an instructive solution to its quandary. The fact that the Darién Indians held great affection for him did not indicate that Luis Carrisoli was an Indian himself. Nor, it seems, did his mother's ethnicity. Although Luis was of mixed parentage, the Consejo found that this was, in the end, no problem, inasmuch as Luis "was not an Indian through the male line." [102](#) Furthermore, there were thought to be gradations within Indian society. No one could argue that his mother's heritage ought to bar him from the royal grant, for that woman had been an Indian of noble birth. [103](#)

Unfortunately, Luis Carrisoli could neither celebrate nor enjoy the outcome of the Consejo's deliberations. In July 1701 Canillas reported to the crown that he had recently learned of Luis Carrisoli's death. [104](#) However, the issuance of

the royal *merced* that granted the Carrisoli clan the lands on the Río Congo in December 1702 was not just a symbolic act. The Spanish crown was persuaded of its debt of gratitude to the Carrisoli family as a unit, and in granting their reward it simultaneously accepted the Carrisolian construction of the incremental conquest of the Darién. Instead of being a frightening place that harbored pirates, provided a haven for invading Scots, and swallowed up Christian Spaniards like Julián Carrisoli only to spit them out as barbarized white savages, the Darién was a land in the process of being tamed, its people so many educable pagans on the road to hispanicization under the sure hand of the Carrisoli clan.

The period covered by this chapter was the last moment in which this Carrisolian interpretation could be judged viable by an outside observer. The narrative skills displayed by Julián and Luis Carrisoli could only work their rhetorical magic upon their superiors in the age before and during the invasion of the Scots. That shocking invasion had forced officials throughout the Americas and in Madrid to take a closer look at the workings of the province, and the additional scrutiny had revealed a weak colonial foundation that had simply crumbled under the recent stresses. The Consejo de Indias had conceded, through its recent *merced*, that the Carrisolis had diligently devoted several lifetimes to the crown's service. At the same time, however, the Spanish state was forced to recognize that the clan's righteous labors had not even come close to effecting the conquest of the Darién. Their actions had instead brought onto the stage of colonial power a cadre of Indian leaders, some of whom had proven themselves to be the most dangerous and dubious of allies.

Notes:

Note 1: Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Panamá 159, f. 775r. Pedro Luis Henríquez de Guzmán, the Conde de Canillas, replaced and imprisoned the Marqués de Mina in 1696. This contentious act embittered the Marqués's supporters, and Canillas was himself later removed by the Audiencia in the summer of 1699. The crown, however, reinstated him by December. Canillas's vindication was made evident by the crown's naming him Viceroy of Peru in 1702. He died that year in Panamá while awaiting the official orders that would empower him to fill the higher office. See M. M. Alba C., *Cronología de los gobernantes de Panamá, 1510-1967* (Panamá City: INAC, 1967), pp. 101-104. [Back.](#)

Note 2: AGI Panamá 159, f. 767r. [Back.](#)

Note 3: AGI Panamá 159, f. 676r; and f. 686v. [Back.](#)

Note 4: AGI Panamá 159, f. 678r. [Back.](#)

Note 5: AGI Panamá 159, ff. 676r. [Back.](#)

Note 6: AGI Panamá 159, f. 685r. [Back.](#)

Note 7: For Spanish long-term resentment over the sack of Cartagena, see G. J. Walker, *Spanish Politics and Imperial Trade, 1700-1789* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), p. 21; and H. Kamen, *The War of Spanish Succession in Spain, 1700-1715* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), esp. pp. 167-199. [Back.](#)

Note 8: AGI Panamá 159, f. 680r-680v. [Back.](#)

Note 9: AGI Panamá 159, f. 687r-690v. [Back.](#)

Note 10: AGI Panamá 159, 695r-695v. [Back.](#)

Note 11: AGI Panamá 159, f. 696r. [Back.](#)

Note 12: AGI Panamá 159, 697r. [Back.](#)

Note 13: AGI Panamá 159, 697v-698r; AGI Panamá 159, f. 772r-780r. [Back.](#)

Note 14: AGI Panamá 159, f. 696v. [Back.](#)

Note 15: AGI Panamá 159, f. 685r; AGI Panamá 181, f. 163r-163v. [Back.](#)

Note 16: AGI Panamá 159, f. 681v; AGI Panamá 160, f. 723r. [Back.](#)

Note 17: AGI Panamá 164, f. 730r. The amounts allocated for *paniquiris* were: 1676, 485 pesos; 1680, 600 pesos; 1683, 76 pesos; 1691, 38 pesos; 1692, 233 pesos; 1693, 1,009 pesos; 1694, 848 pesos; 1695, 165 pesos; 1696, 1,010 pesos; 1697, 2760 pesos; 1698, 3,062 pesos; and 1699, 4,000 pesos. [Back.](#)

Note 18: AGI Panamá 159, f. 727r-727v. [Back.](#)

Note 19: AGI Panamá 159, f. 727r. [Back.](#)

Note 20: AGI Panamá 162, f. 45r. [Back.](#)

Note 21: AGI Panamá 162, f. 45v-46r. [Back.](#)

Note 22: For English translations of Las Casas, see L. E. Pennington, "The Amerindian in English Promotional Literature, 1575-1625," in K. R. Andrews, N. P. Canny, and P. E. Hair, eds., *The Westward Enterprise: English Activities in Ireland, the Atlantic, and America, 1480-1650* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1978); and G. Watson, ed., *The New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, vol. I, 600-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), col. 2161. [Back.](#)

Note 23: AGI Panamá 159, f. 758r. [Back.](#)

Note 24: AGI Panamá 159, f. 758v. [Back.](#)

Note 25: AGI Panamá 159, f. 758r. [Back.](#)

Note 26: AGI Panamá 159, f. 758v. [Back.](#)

Note 27: AGI Panamá 159, f. 758v-759r. [Back.](#)

Note 28: AGI Panamá 159, f. 747r-750v. Because the account that follows is my translation of extensive portions of the exchange, I will not provide a citation for every quotation. [Back.](#)

Note 29: For a discussion of French policy in the Caribbean during the latter half of the seventeenth century, see P. P Boucher, *Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), esp. chap. 2. [Back.](#)

Note 30: Thomas did make an appearance at the Scottish settlement around Christmastime, and, after having overindulged in celebratory wine, he ran the Maurepas aground at the entrance to Caledonia Harbor. See Hugh Rose's Journal, National Library of Scotland Adv. MSS 83.7.4, item 15, entry for 24 December 1698. [Back.](#)

Note 31: AGI Panamá 159, f. 701r-702v. [Back.](#)

Note 32: AGI Panamá 159, f. 680r; 743r-744r; 792v. [Back.](#)

Note 33: AGI Panamá 159, f. 702v. [Back.](#)

Note 34: AGI Panamá 159, f. 699r; 702r-702v. [Back.](#)

Note 35: AGI Panamá 159, 707v. For the Barlovento fleet, see Walker, *Spanish Politics*, chap. 6; and C. H. Haring, *Trade and Navigation Between Spain and the Indies in the Time of the Habsburgs* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), pp. 251-255. [Back.](#)

Note 36: AGI Panamá 160, f. 11r-14r; and AGI Panamá 162, f. 2v. [Back.](#)

Note 37: AGI Panamá 162, f. 2v. For an informative recent discussion of the Spanish response to the Scottish invasion, see C. Storrs, "Disaster at Darién (1698-1700)? The Persistence of Spanish Imperial Power on the Eve of the Demise of the Spanish Habsburgs," *European History Quarterly* 29 (1999): 5-38. [Back.](#)

Note 389: AGI Panamá 162, f. 4r. [Back.](#)

Note 39: AGI Panamá 162, f. 23r. [Back.](#)

Note 40: AGI Panamá 162, f. 24r. [Back.](#)

Note 41: AGI Panamá 162, f. 24r. [Back.](#)

Note 42: Paterson's narrative of the Darién colony's fortunes is reproduced in J. H. Burton, ed., *The Darién Papers* (Edinburgh: Bannantyne Society, 1849), pp. 178-198; the quotation is from pp. 181-182. The Directors noted Cunningham's arrival with some dismay on 20 September 1699; Bank of Scotland (BOS) 2, f. 2. [Back.](#)

Note 43: Burton, *Darién Papers*, p. 189; the Directors strenuously objected to the practice and forbade any more councilors to abandon their posts at the colony; BOS 2, p. 3. [Back.](#)

Note 44: AGI Panamá 161, f. 230r. [Back.](#)

Note 45: For this sentiment, see Anon., [Lord Belhaven?], *A Defense of the Scots Settlement at Darién, with an Answer to the Spanish Memorial Against it and Arguments to Prove, that it is the Interest of England to join with the Scots and protect it...* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1699), esp. pp. 75-90. [Back.](#)

Note 46: AGI Panamá 161, f. 230v. [Back.](#)

Note 47: AGI Panamá 161, f. 230v. This seldom-discussed component of the settlement's composition is made evident by the testimony taken from a group of non-Scottish mercenaries that deserted the settlement. Juan Bautista, Nicolás Grillo, Juan Codo, Simón Modesto, and Guillermo Strahan expected to serve in Europe, and were most discomfited to find themselves in the Darién. They deserted the settlement and made their way to Portobelo. Their testimony appears at AGI Panamá 164, ff. 604r-618v. [Back.](#)

Note 48: Harris, *Defense of the Scots Abdicating Darién*, p. 31; BOS 1, pp. 406-413, lists these officers. [Back.](#)

Note 49: When asked what he did at the settlement, Spencer replied that he possessed the skill of speaking well, which is technically the truth, but he did not elaborate further; AGI Panamá 161, f. 242v. [Back.](#)

Note 50: Harris, *Defense of the Scots Abdicating Darién*, p. 52. [Back.](#)

Note 51: AGI Panamá 161, f. 232r-232v. [Back.](#)

Note 52: AGI Panamá 161, f. 232v. [Back.](#)

Note 53: AGI Panamá 161, f. 233r. [Back.](#)

Note 54: AGI Panamá 161, f. 233v. [Back.](#)

Note 55: AGI Panamá 161, f. 233v-234r. [Back.](#)

Note 56: James Montgomery's own hyperbolic description of the engagement is contained in his letter of 6 February 1699; NLS Adv. MSS 83.7.4, item 59; the Directors' enthusiastic response is item 106. [Back.](#)

Note 57: Burton, *Darién Papers*, p. 184. [Back.](#)

Note 58: Harris, *Defense of the Scots Abdicating Darién*, p. 46. [Back.](#)

Note 59: The high mortality affecting the colonists can be gleaned from Anon., *An Exact List of all the Men, Women, and Boys that Died on Board the Indian and African Company's Fleet, during their voyage from Scotland to America, and Since their Landing at Caledonia...* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1699). [Back.](#)

Note 60: Burton, *Darién Papers*, p. 186. [Back.](#)

Note 61: Burton, *Darién Papers*, p. 190. [Back.](#)

Note 62: Burton, *Darién Papers*, p. 192. [Back.](#)

Note 63: Burton, *Darién Papers*, p. 192. [Back.](#)

Note 64: Burton, *Darién Papers*, p. 192. [Back.](#)

Note 65: The colonists experienced pandemic illness in the weeks before the abandonment of the settlement; two hundred died as the preparations to leave were being made. The survivors were loaded onto four ships, one of which, being barely seaworthy, foundered after successfully transferring her passengers. The weak and malnourished colonists were forced into extremely close quarters on the boats, and sickness caused the deaths of hundreds of the survivors. On 10 October 1699 the directors heard rumors from London merchants, which they discredited, that the colony had been abandoned; definitive proof for them came in 8 November. On 28 November the directors had before them a detailed account of the closing days and the flight by sea, penned by Robert Drummond, which revealed the manner in which the colonists' hardships had been unduly compounded, even in the midst of their escape, by the inflexibility and knavishness of Pennycook and some of the other Councilors. For Drummond's account of the final days, the incorrigible stubbornness of Robert Pennycook, and the difficulties the ships suffered after they left the colony, see BOS 2, f. 1r-3r. [Back.](#)

Note 66: AGI Panamá 160. [Back.](#)

Note 67: AGI Panamá 160. These two graves were possibly the burial places of the colony's two ministers, Thomas James and Adam Scott. [Back.](#)

Note 68: AGI Panamá 160. [Back.](#)

Note 69: For a brief description of the turbulent administrations of the Conde de Canillas, see Alba C., *Gobernantes de Panamá*, pp. 101-105. [Back.](#)

Note 70: AGI Panamá 162, f. 45. [Back.](#)

Note 71: AGI Panamá 162, f. 45. [Back.](#)

Note 72: AGI Panamá 161, f. 619r; AGI Panamá 162, f. 124r. [Back.](#)

Note 73: AGI Panamá 162, f. 128r. [Back.](#)

Note 74: AGI Panamá 162, f. 132r. [Back.](#)

Note 75: AGI Panamá 162, f. 136r. [Back.](#)

Note 76: AGI Panamá 162, f. 136r. [Back.](#)

Note 77: AGI Panamá 162, f. 136r. [Back.](#)

Note 78: AGI Panamá 162, f. 136r. [Back.](#)

Note 79: AGI Panamá 162, f. 136r. [Back.](#)

Note 80: Insh, DSP, p. 190. [Back.](#)

Note 81: Burton, *Darién Papers*, 199, 200. [Back.](#)

Note 82: José de Acosta traveled to Rancho Viejo in late October 1699 and reported that he had information from the Indians that there were foreigners at New Caledonia. On inspecting the site, he said, he spied the huts of the intruders with his own eyes; AGI Panamá 160, f. 727r-728v. [Back.](#)

Note 83: Burton, *Darién Papers*, pp. 220, 249. [Back.](#)

Note 84: BOS 2, f. 2. The foreign mercenaries who deserted were extremely worried that they would eventually be made indentured servants at Jamaica when they had learned of Byres's proposal. See AGI Panamá 164, ff. 604r-618v. [Back.](#)

Note 85: BOS 2, f. 2 ff. [Back.](#)

Note 86: Storrs, "Disaster at Darién?", p. 12. [Back.](#)

Note 87: Storrs, "Disaster at Darién?", pp. 12-13. [Back.](#)

Note 88: BOS 2, f. 2. Campbell had recently served as the lieutenant colonel of Lord Portmore's Regiment of Foot; before that he had been a commander in Argyll's regiment. See J. Prebble, *The Darién Disaster* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1969), pp. 234-235. [Back.](#)

Note 89: Burton, *Darién Papers*, 249-250. [Back.](#)

Note 90: See the accounts in the letters of Robert Turnbull in J. J. Spencer, ed., "Some Darién Letters," *Scottish Historical Review* 11 (1914): 404-408; see esp. Turnbull's letter of February 1700 on pp. 407-408. [Back.](#)

Note 91: Campbell's entry in A. Nisbet, *A System of Heraldry* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1722), contains a description of the battle of Tubuganti. The directors of the Company had a gold victory medal struck when they learned of the battle. For

an image, see G. P. Insh, *The Company of Scotland Trading to Scotland and the Indies* (London: Scribners, 1932), between 184 and p. 185. [Back.](#)

Note 92: For the process of the Scottish surrender, see AGI Panamá 164, 736r-821v; and AGI Panamá 181, 690r-694v. The exodus from the second colony was plagued with even worse luck than had attended the first. In this case 250 colonists died before the three ships carrying them could reach Jamaica. There the dying continued, and once the ships were made seaworthy the bad luck continued, with the *Hope* captured off Cuba, *The Rising Sun* nearly lost off South Carolina, and the *Duke of Hamilton* lost in a hurricane off Florida. For an account, see Francis Borland, *Memoirs of Darién, giving a short description of that Countrey, with an account of the Company of Scotland, to Settle a Colonie in that Place. With a Relation of some of the many Tragical Disasters, which did attend the Design ... Written mostly in the year 1700, while the Author was in the American regions* (Glasgow: n.p., 1714). [Back.](#)

Note 93: Díaz Pimienta's *diario* of the expedition, entry for 2 March, AGI Panamá 164. [Back.](#)

Note 94: Díaz Pimienta's *diario*, entry for 7 March, AGI Panamá 164. [Back.](#)

Note 95: Díaz Pimienta's *diario*, entry for 10 March, AGI Panamá 164. The only way such a construction could be believed was if one took notice that the French were now at peace with the Spanish and that Corbette was a great friend of the French; therefore, one could by extension believe that Corbette was a great friend of the Spanish. [Back.](#)

Note 96: Díaz Pimienta's *diario*, entry for 3 April, AGI Panamá 164. [Back.](#)

Note 97: Díaz Pimienta's *diario*, entry for 3 April, AGI Panamá 164. [Back.](#)

Note 98: AGI Panamá 181, ff. 969v-971r. [Back.](#)

Note 99: AGI Panamá 181, f. 817v. [Back.](#)

Note 100- AGI Panamá 181, ff. 1071r-1072r. [Back.](#)

Note 101: AGI Panamá 181, f. 1071r. [Back.](#)

Note 102: AGI Panamá 181, f. 1071v. [Back.](#)

Note 103: AGI Panamá 181, f. 1071r-1071v. [Back.](#)

Note 104: AGI Panamá 181, f. 783r. [Back.](#)

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