

CHAPTER 7: CONQUEST OF THE SOLIMOES

At the dawn of the 18th century, as we have seen, the Rio Solimões was the scene of an open confrontation between a small number of European missionaries and secular transfrontiersmen, claiming to represent the territorial interests of the vast Spanish and Portuguese empires. None of these actors was the official representative of the imperial authorities they served; none were in regular communication with their superiors; none had clear instructions, or the means to carry out any instructions they might receive in a decisive manner. The native inhabitants of the Solimões várzeas, for their part, were too few in number by this time, too uncertain about the character of the forces arrayed against them, and too lacking in confidence -- after a half-century and more of a continuous battering from both the macroparasitism of the colonial economy of Pará and the microparasitism of the Old World's acute crowd diseases -- to offer any concerted resistance.¹ This was a historical situation that must have appeared hopeless, much of the time, to all participants; but with hindsight it is clear that the advantage, such as it was, lay decidedly with the Carmelite missionaries and the slave-raiding forest product collectors of Pará.

Decline of the Omagua Mission

The Omaguas had experienced serious difficulties with Samuel Fritz for some time before any Carmelites appeared along the Solimões. As early as 1697, the Jesuit missionary had complained to his Superior of "some disturbances that arose . . . without my being able to appease them." On that occasion, a squad of Spanish soldiers had been sent from Laguna under an experienced bush captain to help restore his authority. The soldiers had travelled down as far as the Omagua town of San Pablo, meting out punishment right

¹ The useful distinction between micro- and macro-parasitisms in world history is a contribution of William McNeill's Plagues and People (NY, 197?), pp.

and left; and they had caused the disgruntled villagers to fear Spanish arms for the first time in more than a century. They had also sowed so much terror among the Omaguas' neighbors the Pebas, Camurís and Ticunas that these still-independent tribesmen were hastening to make peace with the Spaniards as well.

Far from protesting this blatant and unprecedented use of force to discipline his flock, Padre Samuel had found it both reassuring and appropriate. He went so far as to write to the Viceroy in Lima, asking that he instruct the Governor of Maynas to send such an expedition to his missions once every two years, or whenever he might ask for one, "in order to retain in subjection the Indians recently converted." His only apparent reservation about this seemingly un-Christian proposal was that if the soldiers who came were not sufficiently well paid by the Royal Treasury, they might be tempted to behave like the Paraenses and "carry off natives for their service in payment for the toil that they have in these duties."

This deterioration of Fritz's relations with his prized Omagua converts can probably best be explained by his increasing inability to deliver the iron tools and other trade goods that by this time they required -- after more than a decade of otherwise exemplary missionary activity, and repeated promises that material assistance would be coming soon. In addition, the padre seems like many missionaries in other times and places, to have been a bit heavy-handed in his efforts to remake the lives of his "converts," and resettle them in locations which they deemed undesirable. As the years went by, his correspondence revealed Fritz to be increasingly impatient with the resistance to change that he was encountering among the Indians of Central Amazonia -- especially among the more recently introduced people from the tribes of the terra firme. Of the Pebas of San Joaquín, who had simply abandoned the mission station in exasperation with its regimen, and had been brought back only with difficulty and thanks to the help of the Spanish soldiers, he wrote that :

They appear to be of bad disposition, since all possible means have been tried

with them to convert them by kindness, presents, and by the sternness of the Spaniards, but no progress has been made, since the wild beasts themselves are more quickly tamed. In their retreats, they kill and destroy each other for the iron goods they have received of me, or have carried off by theft from the Omaguas.

Within a few weeks, the same people withdrew once again and he despaired of bringing them back into the fold. The Ticunas near San Pablo had proved to be chronic backsliders as well. Fritz learned that they had "disinterred a Pano Indian who had been left dead in a skirmish, extracted his molar teeth for their necklaces, and of his shin bone made flutes, dancing around his head." They had also recently killed the daughter of an Omagua chief, a young woman whom they had held captive since childhood, in reprisal for the chief's having given the hated Spanish soldiers some information about their whereabouts.⁹⁷

Late in 1697, Fritz was joined at last in his mission by the long-awaited colleagues to help with his work. Padres Wenceslas Breyer and Francisco Vidra made it possible to visit to the Omagua and downriver settlements more frequently, while at the same time maintaining a permanent presence in San Joaquín -- even when Fritz himself was obliged to be away in Maynas. Breyer made his principal residence at the newer Omagua mission of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe. But both of these newcomers appear to have been less vigorous and skillful than the younger Fritz had been, in maintaining cordial relations with the Indians. Perhaps they arrived too late on the scene, after resistance had already developed among the Omagua. Fritz never attributes the subsequent problems of the mission to any inadequacies of his companions; but the impression one gathers from the mission's correspondence of the early 18th century is that all three of them were complaining more about the impossibility of their task, than working to overcome their difficulties.

⁹⁷ Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 99-100.

Shortly after Breyer and Vidra had settled in, Fritz was asked by the Superior at Laguna to lead a reluctant party of Omagua warriors up to join the levies from other tribes who were being dispatched to the Rio Ucayali to punish the Cunibo people there for having killed their Jesuit missionary. That expedition was a disaster. The Cunibos were victorious, killing nineteen Spanish soldiers and seventy-seven of their mission Indian followers, among them a number of Omaguas. While Fritz and his companions were on the Ucayali, moreover, they received word from Padre Francisco Vidra that he had "lost control" of the Omaguas at the mission of Guadalupe, and was afraid for his life. During the year 1699, relations with the Omaguas continued to deteriorate to the point at which both Breyer and Vidra, "being afraid of some treachery," withdrew from the mission altogether to join their Superior in Laguna.

Fritz then travelled alone down to his once-promising mission, to investigate the source of these problems. What he found there was that the threats to his brother priests had resulted from

the faults of some Indians who, naturally proud, were estranged by subjections and chastisements. They were desirous of keeping up certain customs heathen and contrary to Christianity, and, as the Fathers carried away by their zeal were wishing to correct effectively this abuse, the Indians hastily came to spread about certain confused reports, that they would kill them, to see if they could thus frighten them, just as they done some many times with me. I found indeed that an Indian with the blow of a club had broken in pieces the box of the church jewels and profaned some sacred images.

When Padre Samuel arrived in San Joaquín, the young man guilty of this sacrilege went with his mother to visit him and beg forgiveness, saying that he had been out of his head with the hallucinogenic drug curupá when he broke the box and images. Fritz forgave him in the interest of avoiding further trouble and because he noticed that this benighted soul had "not even quite recovered his sight" since the period of his intoxication. At Guadalupe,

he summoned the principal men to ask what had been happening and was told that the other priests had been frightened away by nothing more ominous than their customary shouting and carousing "when they wished to be merry; as likewise the custom they had of painting themselves and carrying their arms, when they met in any house to drink or imbibe curupá."⁹⁸

Since the moment of his encounter with Frei Manoel da Esperança at Yurimaguas in 1697, one of Fritz's principal concerns had been to try and resettle the people of the "evangelized" middle and lower Solimões tribes in new villages situated above the country of the Omaguas on the Rio Marañón. His object was to create a no-man's land between the Spanish Jesuit missions to the Omaguas, and those of the Portuguese Carmelites to the tribes of the lower Solimões and Negro, within which though the Paraenses might collect cacao or carry out slave raids against the remaining forest tribes, they would no longer be able to rely on any settlements of Christianized várzea dwellers for provisions, for the replacement of dead canoe crewmen, or in the worst case for the already "domesticated" mission Indians whom the more cynical Paraenses viewed as prime candidates for enslavement.

In 1697, the chiefs who visited Fritz at Yurimaguas had agreed in principle to such a defensive relocation of their communities to the Rio Marañón. A year later, his friend Chief Mativa had travelled up to San Joaquín to tell him that the surviving Yurimaguas, Aisuares and Ibanomas were all then ready to resettle if the appropriate upriver sites could be provided for them. They would, in fact, have migrated long since had they not been told by some Omaguas, at a crucial juncture in their deliberations, that the Spaniards themselves only wanted them as their slaves. The chiefs also feared that the proposed moves would leave them exposed as "the first against whom from this time forward the Portuguese would bear a grudge." Mativa for his part, however, was so committed to resettlement that he

⁹⁸ Journal, p. 105.

assured Padre Samuel that he was willing to leave the community behind and bring his own household to settle at San Joaquín, if nothing better could be arranged.⁹⁹

The proposed mass emigration seems to have hinged on the chiefs' appraisal of the relative strengths of the Spaniards and Portuguese by this time, rather than exclusively on the question of how they were to supply themselves with European goods. It was clear that the Paraenses were growing stronger on the Solimões; but in addition to offering some interesting prospects for trade, they threatened darkly to carry everyone on the river off into slavery. The downriver chiefs therefore had either to withdraw, or to work out some satisfactory pattern of coexistence with the Paraenses -- one in which the principal victims of their rapacity would be the forest peoples rather than the várzea dwellers themselves.

Early in 1700, Fritz was visited by an Aisuares chief who had been sent along by Mativa to tell him among other things that his people were worried lest a recent abnormal muddying of the river (caused as Fritz understood it by a volcanic eruption near the headwaters of the Pastaza river, tributary of the Napo, in June of 1698) might be a sign that the Jesuit missionary was angry with them for having postponed the resettlement. A few weeks later, another delegation arrived to ask that Padre Samuel travel down to conduct these people up to their new homes. They could not, they said, "endure the Portuguese any longer, who amongst their injuries had destroyed almost all their sustenance." The cacao collectors who now frequented the middle Solimões during each low-water season were relentless about requisitioning supplies from the villagers, and sometimes left them without sufficient stocks of food for their own maintenance.

Fritz was unable to travel down the river at that time, having been ordered by his Superior to go up to Quito and accompany a new group of missionaries back to Maynas. But at Laguna in September of 1700, he received a message from Breyer that a large party of Yurimaguas had arrived at San Joaquín, "flying from the claws of the Portuguese . . . in

⁹⁹ Journal, pp. 102-03.

more than twenty-five canoes, and that the rest were on their way upstream in company with the Aisuares." At this he obtained special permission to go down and receive the refugees with a supply of food and clothing; and he found them at a spot below the mouth of the Napo on the Marañón, perhaps twelve hundred kilometers upriver from their home country, where they had already begun to fell trees for their roças or garden plots. He then sent all the additional supplies he could spare down the river with some reliable Omagua assistants, to meet the remainder of the migrants so that they would not be obliged by hunger to turn back. With them he sent his cross, as a token that the Omagua grumblers had been wrong in threatening these refugees with future enslavement by the Spaniards.

Chief Mativa, who had arrived at the head of the first group of migrants, told Fritz the reason for their hasty withdrawal from the middle Solimões. His story helps put into perspective the "martyrdoms" and early setbacks of the Carmelite missionaries to the Solimões, reconstructed above from the sparse Portuguese sources. The Indians there had been faced in the late 1690's with a direct threat to their freedom. The threat was posed by the very Carmelite missionaries who had recently promised to protect them against enslavement. First a friar had taken possession of the Ibanoma village of Chief Ayraparú (Antônio de Miranda e Noronha's friendly host in the summer of 1694). Then he had killed the chief and seized all the women and children of that district, intending to send them off in a large canoe for sale in Pará. When this faithless Carmelite had tried to "fetter the men that he had in his canoe, they began to cry out, and hearing their shouts, the Guayupes, who lived close to them, had killed the Friar with cudgels and the servants that accompanied him."¹⁰⁰

In April of 1700, another Carmelite friar had gone to Mativa's settlement of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves with the intention of transporting all of its people downstream as well,

¹⁰⁰ Journal, p. 106-07. It is not clear whether this was Frei Francisco de Santo Anastácio, killed by the "Coxiguaras" on the islands of the Solimões in 1700, or Frei Francisco Xavier, who died in the same way a year later. Wermers, "Estebelecimento," p. 544.

"for which purpose he brought in the canoe a large set of stocks with many handcuffs." But Mativa had deceived him by suggesting that in view of the severe food shortage that plagued the entire river during that flood season, he ought to wait there until they could get at the Yurimaguas' stocks of manioc, stored in pits that still remained under water. At this the Carmelite had withdrawn for a while; and the Yurimaguas had lost no time in gathering what provisions they could find, and making good their escape. Fritz encouraged Mativa and his followers to settle at the suitable new site he had chosen for them well above San Joaquín on the Marañón; and he himself consecrated there a new mission to be known as Santa Maria Mayor de los Yurimaguas.

Having provided thus for Mativa's people, Fritz travelled on to Quito whence he returned in August of 1701. This time he brought with him a new stock of the necessary trade goods, and a promise from the Audiencia that from then on they would send troops to the Omagua mission each year, "for the protection of the missionaries and the correction of the Indians who had been to blame." With him too was a new collaborator, Padre Juan Baptista Sanna. At San Joaquin they found Padre Breyer "very grieved for the misdeeds that the Omaguas had meanwhile been guilty of." The offending actions are not specified, but Fritz thought them so serious that he sent to Borja to ask that the first of the proposed annual military expeditions be sent down right away. The Captain there obliged him with twenty soldiers and two hundred Indian levies, commanded by an officer of the regular Spanish army.

These representatives of the colonial government conducted a formal inquiry into the "uprising" against the Jesuit missionaries, which the Omaguas were said at that time to have been planning. What they found was that

the principal chief, Payoreva, with his confederates had invited the heathen Camurís and Pebas to come suddenly and set fire to the Church and the house of the Father, and that they should be ready to kill him with their clubs should

he come forth alive from the conflagration; and they would do the same for the Indians that were on his side.

Having "intimidated" the Omaguas with a systematic investigation of this plot, the Spanish captain had the miscreant Payoreva and another Omagua chief named Canuria, whom they found to be "guilty of many other crimes" arrested and clapped in irons. The soldiers travelled with Fritz down to San Pablo, where they came upon a gathering of angry Omaguas who had gone so far as to invite the Ticunas of the back country to join them in attacking the Spaniards as soon as they arrived. Upon nearing this town the captain, having been forewarned of this danger, ordered his men to disembark with their arms at the ready. When the Omaguas saw them thus prepared, they prudently desisted from their plan; and one of the Ticuna chiefs "at once announced that he was a friend of the Spaniards." The captain nevertheless had all of the suspected rebel leaders seized on the spot, and ordered some of them publically flogged and the others banished. Then, while Padre Samuel gathered the faithful in for services at the mission church, the captain had all of the houses in the villaged searched:

They found in them among many other things human teeth placed in the belly of some small figures in the form of idols, many scrapers for painting the shoulders, and some pots of powdered curupá with which to deprive themselves of their senses so as to carry out any evil deed without compunction.

Fritz ordered all of these diabolical objects placed in a heap outside the church; and he burned them in a public bonfire, just as soon as he had finished saying the Mass.¹⁰¹

Having completed these exemplary punishments of the Omaguas for their "insolence," in hopes that the stern procedure would prevent any further apostasy and disorder, the captain sent his soldiers into the forest to hunt down those Ticunas and other members of the "wild" tribes, who were said to have conspired with the Omaguas. This was

¹⁰¹Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 109-10.

a convenient pretext for slave-raiding, and in a short time the Spaniards indeed returned with forty captives taken from the Cautimares people, who were carried off to be sold in Borja, as a reward for their efforts on behalf of the mission. In November, the armed party took leave of the Jesuits, taking Chief Payoreva and several of his associates along with them as prisoners. On their way up the Marañón, they stopped to carry out a raid against the pagan Payaguas tribe, from whom they kidnapped some "interpreters" (young boys intended to be raised at Laguna by the Jesuits, so that they might be used in future efforts to "pacify" and Christianize their relatives).

Not long afterwards, the proud Payoreva escaped from his prison in Borja and managed somehow to return in secret to San Joaquín in February of 1702. There he gathered his people together for a meeting in the dead of night, at which he persuaded a number of them to abandon the mission station altogether, and withdraw with him to a place well beyond the Jesuits' sphere of influence, somewhere up the Rio Juruá. This subversive project was at first successful; within a short time, Padre Samuel found himself alone in his mission headquarters with only a few faithful retainers. These Christian Omaguas warned him that the dissidents had threatened to kill any Spaniards or priests who dared so much as to approach the new villages they intended to establish. Fritz saw no easy remedy to this situation; and he was afraid in the meantime that the perennially hostile Camurís might seize the opportunity to attack San Joaquin while there was no one there to defend it. So he gathered his few remaining parishioners together, packed up the church ornaments, and went to stay with Chief Mativa at Santa Maria Mayor de los Yurimaguas. In so doing, he abandoned the headquarters of the mission to the Omaguas which he had labored for sixteen years to build. The Christian Yurimaguas, always loyal and by this time dependent on the Jesuit missionaries for their very subsistence, were of course glad to receive them.

In March of 1702, Fritz was visited at the new Yurimaguas mission by the Carmelite Frei João Guilherme, who had been sent by Vice-Provincial Pimentel on the improbable errand of negotiating a return of the refugee Yurimaguas and Aisuares to their homes. Fritz

responded that the Portuguese had no sovereignty over those people, and that they had come with him simply because it was he who had "given them the first news of the Faith of Christ." Guilherme appeared at first to accept this explanation, and he set out soon afterwards on his return trip to Pará. But Fritz, "moved by an inward impulse," decided that it would be prudent to travel with him down through the Omagua country so as to prevent any raiding of the remaining mission villages, while at the same time looking for the fugitives from San Joaquín. Some of the one-time rebels were indeed residing then at Guadalupe and others at São Pablo; all of these agreed to return as soon as possible to their homes at San Joaquín.

At San Pablo, Fritz learned moreover that while Guilherme had been on his way up to talk with him, a party of sertanistas led by his companions the Ornella brothers had gone hunting along the riverbanks for slaves. They had raided the country of the Caivisanas (Cayuvicenas) and Guareicús, terra firme tribes living near the mouth of the Içá with whom Fritz had enjoyed some friendly previous encounters that left him thinking they were "on the point of settling" in Christian missions. But now the Paraenses had killed some of these people and captured a good many others. Fritz protested these acts of aggression, and asked Guilherme to do what he could to prevent any such violent incursions in the future. He did not insist that the unfortunate captives be released, so that they might return to their homes.

At Ibarate, one of the last Omagua settlements, Fritz met at last with the intractable Payoreva. As it turned out he and his men had not yet managed to install themselves on the Juruá; and they were camped there while they made plans for the future. Fritz spoke to the apostasizers "affectionately," trying to persuade them to return to San Joaquin; and he promised the chief that if he would "give proofs of amendment" the Spaniards would refrain from sending him to prison again. Guilherme, for his part, thought that Payoreva ought to be sent off in irons to Pará, because he said that the treacherous fellow had made an attempt on his life as well while he was at San Pablo. But Fritz sent Guilherme on his way; and he

managed somehow to persuade most of the fugitive Omaguas to return to San Joaquín, although the unreconciled Payoreva remained downriver with a few supporters.

Not long after, Padre Samuel travelled down to the middle Solimões once more, to search out the Yurimaguas and Aisuares who had remained scattered there when the others decided on resettlement. He visited all the Omagua villages along the way attempting to mend his fences. Everywhere he went, he counselled people not to believe "the lies and threats of Payoreva, who was still a rebel." The disgruntled Omagua leader himself did not appear on this occasion; and as it turned out he was to have no further encounters with Samuel Fritz. Sometime in 1704, "either as a prisoner or by his own choice," he joined the great number of his fellow inhabitants of the shores and islands of the Solimões who were by then being carried off to forced labor in Pará.¹⁰²

Late in May of 1702, Fritz met up with Frei João Guilherme once again in the old Aisuares town of Zuruite. They travelled together to Guilherme's mission headquarters at Tefé, another day's journey down the river, and conferred there with two other Carmelites and some Paraense sertanistas who were waiting there for Fritz "outside the limits of these my missions." On this occasion, the Jesuit was courteously received by his fellow missionaries and returned to the sertanistas a stock of "iron and other goods" which the Ornella brothers had distributed among the Omaguas as an earnest of future slave-trading transactions. He pointed out that even under their recent de facto division of the mission field, the Omaguas settlements and their neighboring regions of the terra firme were still in Spanish Jesuit territory. The presence and procedure of the Paraense slavers was therefore "against all law . . . an occasion for unjust wars and likewise destruction of life among those Indians."

Frei Victoriano Pimentel's Portuguese version of this encounter between Fritz and Guilherme maintains that Fritz had come down intending to persuade the Indians of the

¹⁰²Journal, pp. 112-14.

recently established Carmelite missions to relocate to a place where "white men couldn't reach them to upset their lives and subject them to extortions, kidnapping their wives and children as the Portuguese did (and the worst of it was that he spoke the truth)." Pimentel was sure, moreover, that these people would all gladly have returned with Padre Samuel, had it not been for "one of my missionaries [Guilherme], assisted by two soldiers who happened to be there, who prevented it by threatening to make him prisoner and send him to Pará if he didn't return upriver right away."¹⁰³ The Portuguese nevertheless promised, according to Fritz, that they would not again return to the Omaguas territory until the border question had been formally settled between the two Crowns.

Once the parties had separated after the meeting at Tefé, Fritz set out on his return trip to San Joaquín de los Omaguas. He had not gotten far, however, when his progress was disturbed by an ominous and unexpected occurrence:

a tonsured religious named Frei Antonio de Andrade, a companion of Frei Guilherme, went with some soldiers on my heels, and attacking with fury one of my canoes, took a chief prisoner that was going upstream with me.

The next day, perhaps having been admonished by Guilherme, the impetuous Andrade returned this captive to Fritz's party, "contenting himself with uttering a thousand threats against me and my poor catechumens, that he would carry us all laden with fetters to Gran Pará."¹⁰⁴ Not long afterwards, the Carmelite founder Frei João Guilherme appears to have turned his attentions to the missions of the Rio Negro valley. The most noticeable, and as it appears often the only Carmelite missionary on the Solimões for the next several years was the irascible Frei António de Andrade, an unrelenting enemy to the Spanish Jesuits and collaborator with the sertanistas of Pará.

¹⁰³Pimentel, "Relação," in Wermers, p. 556. This meeting with Guilherme seems to have been the occasion on which Fritz delivered the manifesto against Carmelite incursions into the Solimões valley, the discussion of which by the Junta das Missões in Pará was the occasion for dispatching Pimentel to inspect and reform those missions in 1703.

¹⁰⁴Fritz, *Journal*, p. 113.

The following year, Vice-Provincial Pimentel visited the Solimões with the object of interviewing the obdurate Fritz. He travelled a great distance beyond the last Carmelite mission, to find his Jesuit antagonist alone and somewhat despondent at his new mission residence of Santa Maria Mayor de los Yurimaguas near the mouth of the Napo, on Ash Wednesday of 1703. Fritz was startled to see him, but he received Pimentel courteously, and acceded to his request for another conference on the question of the mission frontier. Pimentel was the most important personage who had involved himself in the matter directly up to that time. He pointed out to Fritz how "frivolous" his claims to Spanish sovereignty over the Solimões valley were, since this was an area which had regularly been traversed by the Portuguese for some years, in which the Spaniards were unable to maintain a military force, or a permanent settlement, or so much as a regular supply of trade goods. Veterans of the Teixeira expedition had, moreover, assured the authorities in Pará that the famous border marker was in fact located somewhere above the Omagua territory after all.

The Portuguese, according to Pimentel, had tolerated Fritz' presence in the Omaguas missions only so as not to deny the Indians their spiritual sustenance! They would now be pleased to welcome him in Pará as well, if he could see his way to carrying on his priestly work among the wayward settlers there. But in the Vice-Provincial's view it was a missionary's business "to capture souls for God, and not be preaching the latitudinal degrees of geographical demarcations." Finally, he said that he had been instructed by his King, and by the Governor and Junta das Missões of Pará, to inform Fritz that if he ever again showed his face below the "four villages he was serving" (presumably a reference to the new Yurimaguas, San Joaquin, San Pablo and Guadalupe), the Portuguese intended to make him prisoner, transport him to Pará and send him on to Lisbon for punishment. In support of this threat, he presented Fritz with copies of letters from all of those authorities, as well as a letter from the Jesuit Provincial of Pará which indicated the chapters of the Jesuits' own statutes that Fritz had been violating by carrying on in his truculent way.

Afterwards, Pimentel recalled that this threat appeared to have made Fritz very apprehensive--so much so that thereafter he had made no more trips down below the Omaguas mission, which after all had been "the principal purpose of this enterprise." The Carmelite Vice-Provincial was proud to say that he had accomplished that goal "without failing to observe the rules of priestly urbanity, within the limits of modesty and courtesy." It was his impression that Fritz had been left with a respectful opinion of him,

which I will always correspond by speaking of his great virtues, because there is no question that he is an apostolic man with a zealous and charitable spirit. For this reason he felt badly there, after so many years, not to have been joined by more missionaries able to follow his example, and complained that the Spaniards were very remiss in this. He had intended to establish nine more mission stations, and even had with him the images with which to adorn their chapels.¹⁰⁵

Pimentel's account of this meeting underscores the ultimate failure of Samuel Fritz's great enterprise. It is perhaps appropriate that Fritz's own version of what must have been a dismal day for him has not survived. The veteran missionary's journals for 1703-1707 were lost in a canoe accident; and in later reconstructions of his career he made no mention at all of his "historic" encounter with Pimentel. In 1704, Fritz was made Superior of the Maynas missions with his residence at Laguna, and thereafter the administration of the mission to the Omaguas and Yurimaguas devolved upon his Sardinian colleague, Padre Juan Bautista Sanna. Fritz would make the occasional correctional visit to his old mission, but never again had his residence there, and his attentions were concentrated on the affairs of the mission province as a whole.¹⁰⁶

Shifting Balance of Power

¹⁰⁵Pimentel, "Relação," in Wermers, pp. 556-58.

¹⁰⁶Fritz, Journal, p. 114.

Juan Bautista Sanna wrote no such voluminous account of his missionary labors as that which has made possible most of this reconstruction of the Omaguas' experience with Fritz; but it does appear that he was more skillful at his work than either Breyer or Vidra had been, and bolder in carrying it out. With the exception of the fascinating but evasive Chief Payoreva, he managed to persuade all of the fugitive Omagua to return to his missions. He gathered a number of the once-hostile Camuris people into a new village known as San José located at some distance above San Joaquin. At Mativa's new Yurimaguas village, just below the mouth of the Napo, he had a church built in honor of Santa Maria Mayor. This sanctuary was decorated with a beautiful statue of the Virgin carved by a Portuguese deserter named Manoel da Silva, who had "sought retreat" there. Sanna also set up a mission to the Mayoruna, a people living south of the Marañón and east of the lower Ucayale, who had been missionized by the Jesuits on the Ucayale in the mid-17th century but had withdrawn following the harrowing experience of a smallpox experience, from all contact with white men.¹⁰⁷ Above all,

with great firmness he protected his mission against the artifices of the Chorist [unordained friar] Frei Antonio de Andrade, who, with a military vigor little in accordance with his condition [that is, with his religious vows], being placed in command of some Mamelukes [mestizo sertanistas] tried repeatedly to make himself master of all Omaguas.¹⁰⁸

Andrade appears to have assumed charge of the Carmelite missions on the Solimões not long after Pimentel's visit, and from then on to have maintained close relations with the slavers and cacao collectors who came there. There is no more documentary evidence concerning his early activities than there is about Sanna's; but in June, 1707, Pimentel was

¹⁰⁷Sanna-Bolarte (San Joaquín, 19 may 1708), ms. AGI Quito 158.

¹⁰⁸Fritz, *Journal*, p. 114.

able to report to the King from Pará that the consolidation of the Carmelites' Solimões missions had proceeded quite satisfactorily.¹⁰⁹

One important development of this period was great progress in the cementing of Paraense relations with the Omaguas (Cambebas) of the lower mission villages -- a process which led ultimately to a division of that people between those dependent on the Portuguese and those dependent on the Spaniards for their critically needed supplies. Pimentel had returned to Pará in 1703 with two sons of Omagua chiefs, "who were the first flat-headed Cambebas seen in Maranhão and Pará" -- an assertion which is almost certainly mistaken, but may be taken as an indication that in the very early 18th century there were as yet no substantial numbers of Omagua slaves there. After these boys had lived in the Carmelite convent for a year and a half, and become fluent in both Portuguese and the lingua geral, Pimentel sent them back to their country with official appointments from the Governor as "Captain" and "Assistant Captain" and a supply of trade goods provided by the Carmelites.

And when their relatives saw them with this new status, they offered to come down with the missionaries to Pará. They noted too that the two young men had not fallen sick there as their parents had feared they might. If either of them had died, it would have been hard to persuade others to resettle in Pará.

The result, as Pimentel reconstructed it, was that some Cambebas grew so fond of the Portuguese that one of their leaders, Principal Leopoldo of São Paulo (Fritz' San Pablo) offered to move with his people downstream to settle at the Carmelite mission of Sao Jose dos Aisuaires.¹

¹⁰⁹Wermers, "Estabelecimento," p. 559, citing a royal letter acknowledging receipt of Pimentel's report. Wermers, who did exhaustive research on the history of the Carmelites of Pará in the Portuguese, Brazilian and Carmelite archives, apparently did not find Pimentel's 1707 report nor any correspondence of Andrade's which would fill in our picture of this crucial four-year period in the history of the peoples of the Solimões.

¹ Pimentel, *Relação*, in Wermers, p. 548.

The role of the mysterious "rebel" Payoreva in these developments is impossible so far to establish, since the Portuguese sources do not refer to him by that name. It may be that he was the "Principal Leopoldo" of Pimentel's account, or the father of one of the two "sons of chiefs" taken to Pará for reeducation. The receptiveness of a portion of the Omagua people to a Portuguese alliance may be attributed to several causes: 1) their impatience with the chronic poverty of the Spanish Jesuits on this frontier, and with their comparatively zealous enforcement of the missionary's standards for Indian social and religious life; 2) the ability of the Portuguese to deliver at least modest amounts of trade goods to the Solimões on a more or less regular basis, combined with the relative laxity of the Carmelites in mission administration; 3) the ease with which as they, as speakers of a Tupían language, could learn the *lingua geral* and with which the Paraenses could make themselves understood to the Omaguas in that language; 4) the fluency in the *lingua geral* and the general familiarity with Amazonian ways which characterized the sertanistas in general and presumably Frei António de Andrade in particular; 5) the great need of the Paraenses for the Omaguas as guides and as skilled canoemen for travel in the region; and finally, 6) the Omaguas' perception of an opportunity for collaboration on terms favorable to themselves, so long as the slave-raiding were done against their enemies rather than against themselves.

Despite the success of this apparent "marriage of convenience," the Carmelites like the Jesuits before them found it difficult to make any impact on the Omaguas' way of life. Their "barbarity," and that of the other peoples on the Solimões, was so great (after two decades of apparently successful missionary work by the indefatigable Fritz!) that even where there was a resident missionary who would instruct the children every day in Christian doctrine, Pimentel was forced to acknowledge that there had been no genuine conversions beyond a few at the hour of death. Children learned their catechism well enough; but as they grew up

they are so negligent of what they've been taught that I found baptized men who had married according to their diabolical rites with ten or twelve pagan women and would not be moved from this blindness for love of heaven nor fear of hell--and even less for fear of Portuguese arms, living in places as remote as they do.

The distance and the shortage of supervisory personnel encouraged the Indians to live pretty much as they chose, so that the poor missionary was obliged to live among these "brutes", and tolerate this un-Christian way of life of theirs, on pain of suffering a violent death -- always hoping that in time and by dint of great effort, he might be able to open the eyes of these people whose faith had so far put down such shallow roots that it was really just beginning to get established.¹¹⁰

The distilled experience of these newly minted Carmelite missionaries, veterans of less than a decade of work in the field, had taught them that no miraculous developments were possible in the way of converting adult Amazonian forest-dwellers to the Portuguese Christian ideal way of life. Nor in truth did the Paraenses and Europeans who made their way into the transfrontier, the Carmelite missionaries among them, themselves represent any such alien pattern with firm conviction. In Central Amazonia, the terms of any sojourner's existence were to a great extent laid down by the physical environment itself, and by the changing culture of the surviving inhabitants of the region, as they struggled to adapt and respond to European challenges. Foreigners who endeavored to impose their wills too vigorously on either the people or the natural environment ran the risk of losing their lives -- whether by violent means, or simply as a result of abandonment by the Indians upon whose labors every European's sustenance depended. This was the same lesson as had been learned, if never fully acknowledged, by the Jesuits around Samuel Fritz. Pimentel's admission of the difficulty of missionary work goes a long way toward explaining how the

¹¹⁰ "Relação," in Wermers, p. 548-49.

young Fritz, pragmatic and tolerant as he was, had survived as long as he did in an environment which proved inhospitable to the more rigid Breyer and Vidra.

Following the experience of two decades of relentless social disintegration -- a process which must inescapably have been associated in their minds with the presence of missionaries -- the very notion of baptism had become suspect for many Indian people on the Solimoes. At Sao Jose dos Aisuaires, the travelling Pimentel had offered to baptize a sick little girl, but found that her father would not allow it unless he would use for the purpose a bit of "unholy" water which he would bring from his own house,

because during an epidemic that struck that village, the missionary had baptized twenty-seven children on the verge of death; and since all of them died, he'd gotten it into his head that it was the baptism that had killed them.

The water provided by the anxious father had been blessed instead ("cursed" says Pimentel) by the village feiticeiro (witch doctor), who assured him that it could do no harm.

A final difficulty in the way of mission growth and expansion was the impossibility of keeping the mission stations staffed with priests. The Carmelites of Pará were short-handed to begin with, and the more their commitments to the mission field grew, the more difficult it was to meet them. Some missionaries died in service. Others came down to Pará so debilitated by disease and other hardships that they were simply unable to return to their posts. Another problem was that novices sent to Portugal for ordination often failed to return -- preferring the well-established routine of conventual life to the unquestionable dangers of the Amazonian sertão.¹¹¹

In July of 1707, less than a month after Frei Victoriano had reported to the King on the satisfactory development of his missions, he was obliged to inform the Governor that the Spaniards appeared to have "invaded" the middle Solimões once again. This time Juan

¹¹¹"Relação," in Wermers, pp. 549-50.

Bautista Sanna had descended the river, hoping to repropagandize the lost villages of the Omaguas in which by this time the Carmelites were feeling themselves to be on firm ground. The energetic Jesuit had attempted to carry on and do the same with the "Solimões" people further down, but he had been prevented from carrying out that part of his plan by the alertness of Frei António de Andrade. The rumor that had reached Pará was that Sanna, in a desperate attempt to offset the recent Portuguese advances, was celebrating wholesale baptisms and marriages of people who were not yet Christians, which if true represented a major departure from the normal Spanish Jesuit practice, while at the same time proclaiming to them that they were all vassals of the Spanish rather than the Portuguese King.¹¹²

Pimentel proposed that to put a stop to such incursions and pretensions once and for all, the Portuguese ought to establish a garrison and build a fort on the river at a spot some ten days' journey above the last Carmelite mission, deep in Cambeba (Omagua) territory. The Governor agreed at the time to this plan, and allowed himself to be convinced that such a defensive outpost could be erected without cost to the State by a private citizen, someone who would carry out the project as an investment in the business opportunities available along the Solimões. Once built, the fort would also facilitate the expansion of trade and evangelization, not to mention the recruitment of labor for Pará, among the Cambebas and their neighbors. Sent on to Lisbon for approval, this plan was rejected out of hand by the King's Overseas Council as impractical and too costly to carry out. But the idea died hard. Two years later the Governor reported that an enterprising soldier from Maranhão, José da Cunha d'Eça, had indeed offered to build a fort on the Solimões at his own expense, in return for an appointment as its commander with the appropriate salary.¹¹³

¹¹²King-Gov. Freire (Lx, 20 mar 1708), in Livro Grosso 67, pp. 24-25.

¹¹³Wermers, "Estabelecimento," pp. 559-60; King-Freire (Lx, 20 mar 1708), in Livro Grosso 67, pp. 24-25.

While the officials in Para were waiting for instructions from Lisbon in this matter, the "men on the spot" along the Solimões took matters into their own hands as was so often the case in the history of colonial expansion around the world; and they led the Portuguese government into an imperial adventure which the King would almost certainly not have approved. In August, 1707, a group of Ibanoma captives escaped from the Paraense *tropa de resgate* under Ignacio Correia de Oliveira which was operating on the Solimões below the mouth of the Japurá; and the refugees made their way upriver to the Province of Maynas. The slaving captain pursued them as far as the Jesuit missions, where he failed to find them because the missionaries had had the foresight to conduct them to a hiding-place near a lake deep in the forest; and the Paraenses were obliged to return down the river empty-handed.¹¹⁴ In December of the same year, a flotilla led by Frei António de Andrade arrived at Santa Maria Mayor de los Yurimaguas with *cabo* José Pinheiro Marques, eleven soldiers and some two hundred Indian crewmen, and with their flags struck as a sign of peaceful intention. Andrade announced that he had come to take back a number of Yurimaguas and others who had absented themselves from his mission of São José dos Aisuares, among them eight canoemen with their families who had been provided to Samuel Fritz years before, for a trip back to his mission. These people had never returned to their homes; and Andrade asked that they be handed over without argument, adding that the missionaries should consider themselves responsible for any damage his men might do to the recently established mission settlement if they refused to cooperate.

The Jesuits at Santa Maria (Father Sanna and his newly-arrived collaborators Pedro Bolarte and Mathias Laso) refused to deliver the people in question. They argued that this was a matter for negotiation with the secular authorities at Borja; and in the meantime they arranged for most of the Yurimaguas to make a hasty escape to "the deep forest, and the many lakes with which they abound." Marques and his men continued up the Marañón and

¹¹⁴Fritz, *Journal*, p. 117.

Napo as far as the mouth of the Rio Coca in search of the escapees, but could not find them. While the search party was gone, however, Frei António found that one of the families he was looking for still resided in the town. Those people agreed to return with him peaceably, to prevent any violence against the rest.¹¹⁵

Sanna pled with Andrade to leave the Yurimaguas alone, because by this time all of the survivors of that people had been missionized by the Jesuits, and they had gone to great lengths to continue living under Spanish rule. When Frei Victoriano Pimentel had visited there, he had assured them moreover that thereafter the Portuguese would leave them in peace. He offered to raise the question of repatriation with the Spanish Governor in Borja; and after inquiring among his parishioners, he reported that the eight missing crewmen had in any case all either returned to the Portuguese settlements or died long since. Andrade stayed at Santa Maria for a week without giving further cause for alarm; but when his search party returned without having found any people further up the river, the angry Carmelite ordered Marques and his men to attack. The Paraenses fell upon the village one midnight, burned many of the buildings there and captured half of its inhabitants. Next day, Andrade freed all but twelve families and a few individuals whom he had previously threatened to take captive unless they went with him peaceably. In all, he set off down the river with about one hundred people, all but two of them baptized Christians (and as such, legally free persons and subjects of the King of Spain).¹¹⁶ Before withdrawing, Andrade informed the Jesuits that he intended to return before very long to build a fort at the mouth of the Napo, or possibly of its tributary the Aguarico, which would thenceforth mark the limit of

¹¹⁵Sanna-Fritz (Santa María Mayor de Yurimaguas, 26 dec 1707), ms. in AGI Quito 158.

¹¹⁶To the reader's astonishment Fritz, the inveterate enemy of Indian slave-trading, uses here the slaver-trader's phrase "más de cien piezas" (more than a hundred pieces) to refer to the members of his flock who were carried away by the Paraenses. Informe, (Xeberos, 23 mar 1721), ms. AGI Quito 158.

Portuguese territory. Then, he swore, they would use the Indians of Maynas as crewmen to take them on to the conquest of Pasto, Popayan and Quito.¹¹⁷

Andrade's attack on Yurimaguas could not fail to cause great consternation among the Jesuits of Maynas, who had virtually no means to defend themselves against such incursions other than the occasional visit by soldiers from the garrison at Borja. Sanna reported that according to his baptismal records, of the thirteen hundred families of Omaguas and Yurimaguas remaining to them, a large number had by this time fled to places unknown on the forest lakes. The fifteen Omagua chiefs of the eighteen remaining settlements attached to the missions of Santa Maria, San Joaquin, San Pablo and Guadalupe were threatening to abandon the missions altogether unless they could be provided with Spanish soldiers for their protection. Even the loyal old Yurimagua Chief Gerónimo Mativa of Santa María (Fritz's collaborator since the 1680's) in particular was saying that he wanted now to take his people and found a town on some other river far away. There was now once more a rumor afoot that the Spaniards had only baptized and resettled the Omaguas and Yurimaguas in order to make it easier for the Portuguese to take them off as slaves!

Padre Juan Bautista Sanna was particularly exasperated by the impossibility of reasoning with the truculent Andrade, whom he saw as the real commander of the Portuguese forces on the Solimões. Frei António had not even completed his studies for the priesthood, complained the well-trained Sanna; and to his way of thinking it was a scandal that this upstart friar should pretend to any kind of authority. The Carmelite

¹¹⁷Sanna-Fritz (Santa María Mayor de Yurimaguas, 26 dec 1707), ms. AGI Quito 158. Cabo José Pinheiro Marques was apparently somewhat disgruntled with Andrade's leadership. He was persuaded by the Jesuits to leave them a sworn deposition concerning his participation in the attack on their mission, according to which he was the "Cabo da Escolta de Peças de Resgate da Vila Nova de Santa Maria do Icatú" (a settlement in Maranhão), and it was in that capacity (as an official slave-trader!) that he had accompanied Andrade in search of his "runaway" mission Indians. Reluctant to carry out the night attack on Yurimaguas, he had been compelled to do so for fear of being reported to the Governor of Pará for insubordination by the imperious Andrade. Marques, Certidão (Yurimaguas, 21 dec 1707) ms. AGI Quito 158. Sanna himself was satisfied that the cabo had only been obeying orders.

sources themselves say nothing about Andrade's background status within the order; but it seems likely that he was a man of Paraense origin who had entered the order specifically for mission duty, and had never been sent to complete the full course of Carmelite training in Portugal. According to Sanna, Andrade had boasted to him in fact that he had never completed any studies at all! Nevertheless, he claimed to be well-connected with the Governor of Pará as well as with the respected Frei Victoriano Pimente; and it was clear that he had little fear of any official diapproval of his behavior. This disagreeable encounter of late 1707 seems to have had a great influence in forming the image, projected abroad by Fritz and other Jesuit writers, of the Portuguese Carmelite missionaries to the Solimões as ignorant louts and shameless slavers, men who had no commitment at all to the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Before departing, Andrade shocked the Jesuits' sensibilities even further by asserting that he had really only come up the river to capture Padre Samuel Fritz, that he intended to do so at the earliest opportunity, and that if anyone objected to this procedure he had plenty of money with which to go to Rome and obtain a writ of absolution from the His Holiness the Pope!¹¹⁸

Military Confrontation.

During the months that followed these ominous events, the news reached Pará that a war had broken out in Europe over the matter of the Spanish Succession. This conflict ranged Portugal against Spain, and lent a new urgency to any potential test of force on the remote Solimões frontier in South America. Governor Christóvão da Costa Freire returned to Belém from a stay in Maranhão in June of 1708, bringing with him a royal order that the Spanish missionaries were to be cleared out of the Cambeba country once and for all. The Governor supported this policy, for if the missions in question came to be "authorized by King Charles II" (Portugal's candidate for the throne of Spain), the matter could be settled

¹¹⁸Sanna-Fritz (Yurimaguas, 26 dec 1707), & Fritz, Informe (Xeberos, 23 mar 1721), both ms. in AGI Quito 158.

peaceably later on; but if the opposing Gavachos or Basques emerged victorious in that conflict, it would serve the interests of Portugal to have taken advantage of the war to enlarge its territory as much as possible in that direction.¹¹⁹

In order to accomplish this objective, the Governor sent a Captain's papers to the seasoned Indian slaver Ignacio Correia de Oliveira, who had been hard at work on the Solimões for some months in an effort to remedy the shortage of labor in Pará. With the commission went instructions that he press on to the mouth of the Napo and consolidate the position there as best he could, with the admittedly limited means at his disposal. Oliveira was expected to outfit this expedition at his own expense, and to pay his own Indian crewmen -- on the unspoken understanding that he might compensate himself by selling as slaves whatever Indians he might capture along the way. He agreed to this assignment with some trepidation, having been informed that the Spaniards were waiting for him with two hundred soldiers and a great following of Indian bowmen.¹²⁰

Early in 1709, Oliveira set out from the Carmelite mission headquarters at Tefé with twelve soldiers and sixty Indian levies. When they reached San Pablo (then the easternmost Spanish Jesuit mission), the Captain delivered a legal document informing the missionaries of "San Pablo, San Joaquin, Santa Maria Mayor and Annexes" that they had two months in which to clear out of all the territory below the mouth of the Aguarico (see Map 2), or be captured and taken as prisoners to Pará.¹²¹ Sanna, to whom this communication was delivered in person, reported to his superiors that the Portuguese intended to build a fort at the site of the Jesuit mission of Santa Rosa near the mouth of the Aguarico, that this threatened to cut off all communications between the Maynas missions and their source of

¹¹⁹Fritz, *Journal*, p. 119, citing correspondence with his Jesuit countryman Xavier Marloves, in the missions of Pará. Fritz had written to ask that Marloves intervene to prevent the Governor from authorizing attacks on the Spanish missions. Marloves replied that he would have been pleased to do so, had he not chanced to overhear the Governor expressing these views.

¹²⁰Berredo, *Annaes*, paragraphs 1452 and 1453 (1905 ed. II, pp. 309-10); Baena, *Compêndio*, pp. 137-38.

¹²¹Oliveira, *Certificação* (São Paulo, 2 feb 1709), ms. AGI Quito 158.

supplies in Quito, normally conducted by way of the Rio Napo). This would surely put an end to them. The Portuguese expedition was being accompanied, moreover, by their arch-enemy Frei António de Andrade, who was travelling up the river more slowly than the rest so as to visit each one of the twenty established Omagua villages which the Portuguese intended now to take from the Jesuits once and for all. Sanna feared that if he failed to get everything wound up in the two months they had allotted to him, the invaders would go so far as to profane the churches by billeting in them the pagan Indians they had brought along as soldiers--some of whom had already made a kitchen and gambling-house out of his church in San Pablo.¹²² Rather than submit to such humiliation, and unable to do anything to resist the Portuguese advance, Sanna's three Jesuit colleagues sent the people of Yurimaguas away into hiding at Lake Jurapa (Zarapa, Yalapa) just east of the mouth of the Ucayali. Then they gathered up all the ornaments and other valuable from their mission churches and withdrew to Laguna, leaving the entire Omagua territory and its people in the enemy's hands. Sanna then remained for a time in San Joaquin, the determined captain of a fast-sinking ship, having been instructed in the meantime by Fritz not to abandon his mission.¹²³

The Spanish sources record a number of atrocities committed by Ignacio Correia de Oliveira's men during this expedition. Fritz was informed that two Portuguese soldiers named Pereira, together with a "mameluco" (Paraense) from their company, had assaulted a Cayuvicena settlement somewhere near the mouth of the Ica). Finding themselves surrounded there in a large maloca by "these pagan friends of ours, they shot and killed so many people that they left a pile of bodies at each door [presumably of a large multifamily house], and a rivulet of blood flowing from the scene." Padre Samuel was also under the impression that the Portuguese canoes had transported to Pará a number "in the thousands" of Indians of the "Tobacana, Iuma, Itipuna, Guareicú, Ticuna and Cayuvicena" tribes

¹²²Sanna-Provincial Abad (Rio Marañón, 2 feb 1709), ms. AGI Quito 158.

¹²³Leite, HCJ III, p. 414; Fritz, Journal, p. 121.

(peoples of the forests with whom some contacts had been made by the Spanish Jesuits over a twenty-year period, but none of whom had been resettled in the missions on a significant scale, for lack of priests to attend them).¹²⁴ When Oliveira's men found Santa Maria Mayor de Yurimaguas virtually abandoned (except for four small Icahuate boys who had remained behind there with the Jesuits), they pursued the inhabitants of the place all the way to Lake Jurapa, where they killed some of the Yurimaguas and captured all the rest. They were prevented from getting away with these captives, however, by a storm which blew up on the river, during which most of the Yurimaguas got away and managed to return to Santa Maria, whence they conveyed their missionary priests up to safety in Laguna. The Yurimaguas, now thoroughly tired of running from the Portuguese slavers, never returned to Santa Maria Mayor. Instead, the few pitiful survivors of this once-numerous people who had dominated the middle Solimões valley just a century before, took refuge at a mission station on the Rio Huallaga, to form the village which bears their name to the present day.¹²⁵

Father Superior Fritz wrote to Ignacio Oliveira from Laguna to protest this invasion, reviewing his hoary arguments about the correct location of the border, including the entirely plausible contention that Teixeira's marker was at the village he had called the Aldeia do Ouro after trading there for platelets of gold -- which were the very items of commerce that Fritz himself had seen being delivered by the Manaos to the Yurimaguas near the mouth of the Japurá years before. "Gracious God!" he protested, "Is it to this that Portuguese Christianity has arrived, to oppress and carry away by violence our toil and labor of so many years for Christ...?" An invasion such as this one was unjust, because whatever arguments might be alleged for it could stem only from the current conflict in Spain. On the Solimões, however, the Spanish missions had been developed peacefully for more than two decades without "any controversy or injury to the Portuguese dominion."

¹²⁴Fritz, Informe (Xeberos, 23 mar 1721), ms. AGI Quito 158.

¹²⁵P. Thomas Polo, Informe (Madrid, 30 aug 1741), ms. AGI Quito 158; Fritz, *Journal*, p. 121.

The outraged Fritz concluded by warning Frei Antonio and the slaver Correia to desist and return home without doing any more damage to his missions, or beware of the wrath of God. Alternatively, they should have the decency to provide the Jesuit priests with "canoes, rowers and the necessary sustenance" so that they might make their way with their possessions and especially the ornaments of their churches either to Laguna or to Puerto de Napo -- something that "has been done even in the wars in Hungary" [that is, even by the Ottoman Turks in their wars against the Christians]. He expected Andrade to forward his letter to his Governor and King, and to refrain from doing anything of lasting importance on the Solimões until he had received some official reply from Lisbon and Pará with regard to these allegations.¹²⁶

Oliveira did nothing to impede the Jesuits' withdrawal, and however freely he smote the other tribes, he seems to have been at pains to keep his relations with the Omaguas/Cambebas on a friendly basis. After a time, having taken a considerable number of slaves from the forest peoples and sent word to Pará of a resounding "victory" against the Spaniards, he withdrew downriver with his tropa to wait for further instructions.¹²⁷

The tiny Spanish defense establishment for the Maynas frontier proved creaky as an aging doorman in responding to this Paraense challenge. Fritz, upon first learning that Oliveira was coming many months before, had written to Borja to demand somewhat hysterically that the militamen there all come down forthwith to fight the Portuguese "on pain of death as traitors to the King." Two months after António de Andrade's attack on Santa Maria late in 1707, the chief military officer at Borja had arrived in Laguna to discuss what might be done about it. At that time he had agreed with Fritz that perhaps he ought to plan to go down to the Omaguas missions with some soldiers and trustworthy Indians some time after Easter. But by the time Spanish the expedition was actually gotten together,

¹²⁶Fritz-Oliveira (Laguna, 7 mar 1709), in Fritz, Journal, pp. 119-21.

¹²⁷Baena, Compéndio, p. 138, who notes approvingly that Oliveira treated the Cambebas generously and as a result was able to "aduná-los á sociedade civil!"

Ignacio Correia de Oliveira had come and gone. The doughty commander, Don Balthasar de Rioja, finally reached Laguna with a detachment of sixteen men late in June, 1709. A little later, more men arrived from Moyobamba and Fritz set out with forty soldiers and two officers to try and pick up some of the pieces of his mission to the Omaguas. He wrote to Quito at that time that unless a permanent Spanish garrison could somehow be stationed on the lower Marañón, the mission was certainly were lost.¹²⁸

Meanwhile, the Audiencia of Quito (agitated like the authorities in Pará by the news of war in Europe) had responded with unprecedented alacrity to the first news of a Portuguese attack upon the mission of Santa Maria de Yurimaguas. It had called at that time on the "Governor of Maynas" (an aging oligarch of Quito who had never been to the Amazon basin, but who enjoyed the Governor's fat salary as a sinecure in recompense for other services to the Crown) to fit out an expedition which he himself would lead down into the rainforest to defend the King's domains. The Governor preferred at that point to give up his salary and privileges rather than rise to meet any such challenge; and the Audiencia was obliged to accept instead the offer of an ambitious officer, Luis de Iturbide, to go in his place.¹²⁹ Iturbide pulled together a motley and ill-equipped force led by himself and one Antonio de Oviedo, with fifty soldiers whom Fritz characterized as "for the most part worthless folk, intolerable for their disputes, pilferings and other misdeeds, without discipline or knowledge of the handling of arms." Some of these men arrived in Maynas without weapons, because the raft which was bringing them down had capsized in the Rio Napo.

The Spanish expeditionaries had intended to drive the Portuguese out of their fort at the mouth of that river; but when they got there they found that no such fort had been built,

¹²⁸Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 120-22.

¹²⁹The timorous Governor was one Antonio Sánchez de Orellana, Marqués de Solana. He had succeeded in the post to Gerónimo Vaca de Vega, son of the founder of Borja, who had in his day taken a somewhat more active hand in the affairs of of the province. Consejo de Indias, Consulta (Madrid, 3 oct 1715), ms. AGI Quito 103.

and that Oliveira's men were nowhere in sight. The company arrived at the all but abandoned mission of Santa María de los Yurimaguas in July, 1709, and sent some men ahead to collect provisions and do some fishing, while preventing the Omaguas from going downstream to warn the Portuguese. Later that month, they set off with Fritz and Sanna in tow, to recover the lost province and to see if the Paraense tropa de resgates might be hiding out somewhere in the islands.¹³⁰

The Spaniards travelled as inconspicuously as possible, bypassing the nearly abandoned Omagua villages except where it was necessary to stop for food. At one of the last settlements, they stumbled on a solitary Paraense whom they took captive. On August 6, they drew near the mission of "Papate of the Aisuares" (possibly São Jose). The Captain sent Fritz and Sanna ahead so that the Carmelite there would not be alarmed at the arrival of the whole troop. The Jesuits found Frei João da Luz in residence with another Portuguese, who received them with the ringing of their church bells. Fritz landed, summoned all the people, and celebrated Mass in the chapel. At "Papate" (Hupapate, Guapapate, Jupapate) they found most of the Yurimaguas the Portuguese had carried off from Santa Maria. But when they were coming out from the chapel, Frei João saw a Spanish soldier with his weapon ready for action and "became so enraged, that he tore his beard in his passion, crying out that no one but himself was in command there." A messenger was immediately sent down to Ignacio Correia de Oliveira with a request for reinforcements. Fritz tried unsuccessfully to placate the iracund friar, while Luis de Iturbide went ahead with his men to the village of Zuruite (Surnite), which was Frei António de Andrade's residence and the home of the Cambebas from four of the ex-Jesuit mission villages who had been persuaded to resettle under Portuguese administration.

Arriving at Zuruite next day, Iturbide learned that the feared and detested Andrade was off on a visit to Pará. But Ignacio de Oliveira was there with five soldiers (four white

¹³⁰Fritz, *Journal*, p. 122; Castañeda-Escalera (Madrid? 18 mar 1714), ms. AGI Quito 189; Maroni-Presidente de Quito (Quito, 15 jun 1733), ms. AGI Quito 158.

men and a black; Fritz was ever careful about such details) and a dozen firearms, ready for action. The Spaniards avoided conflict at the outset by saying that they had come in peace, and later succeeded in disarming the Portuguese without actually arresting them. One of Oliveira's men got away in the night with a canoe load of Indian slaves, however, and was able to warn all the downstream settlements that the enemy were coming. At this Iturbide then placed his prisoners under guard, sent to Papate for some soldiers to transport them back up the river, and asked Fritz to come down and join him. In the meantime the soldiers from Borja and Moyobamba in the Spanish expedition, "having stirred up a riot with the Indians of Laguna and Xeberos," abandoned the party and returned to their homes.

Iturbide and Fritz then went with a few soldiers down to the Aisuares village of Yocuzurite, where they found that a seventy-year-old Carmelite named Frei Andrés Solo had taken up residence with a young Portuguese (or Paraense) servant. Solo appears to have been allowed to withdraw unmolested, in recognition of his age, since there is no mention of him in the Spaniards' list of prisoners. The Indians of that village had all fled beforehand, having been told by an Omagua fugitive (who was hastening downstream to avoid being taken by force back to Maynas) that the Spaniards were attacking by night, and burning and killing as they went. Continuing on their way past the mouth of the Japurá, they landed at the fourth Aisuares settlement (Carmelite Tefe?), from which Carmelite missionary, Frei Balthasar da Madre de Deus had fled ahead of them,¹³¹ taking his two assistants along with him. This was at that time the last Carmelite mission before the Rio Negro, and the Spaniards stayed there for a day while Fritz performed some priestly functions and tried to persuade people of his customary solution, that they all move upstream beyond the Omaguas, as soon as they could lay in a stock of farinha.

When the Spaniards set out on their return journey to Maynas, Fritz recalls, a number of Aisuares decided to drop everything and go along with them, with or without

¹³¹Prat, *Notas* I, p. 292, says that Frei Balthasar was captured and taken prisoner to Maynas, but Fritz seems a more reliable source on this point.

supplies. These people burned their houses before leaving, so that the Portuguese could not make use of them. It is perhaps more likely that the Aisuares were forced to make this move, and that the Spaniards themselves put the torch to their abandoned villages.¹³² Iturbide then sent one of his prisoners, an old Portuguese named José Rodrigues, to Pará with letters explaining to the Governor what he had done, and with the ornaments and furnishings of all the Carmelite churches on the Solimões.

By the end of August the Spaniards were back in Omaguas, where they overtook Antonio de Oviedo on his way up the river with their prisoners: Frei João da Luz, Ignacio Correia de Oliveira and four Paraense soldiers. All appeared to be going well with the migration of the Aisuares, until a Spanish soldier publically raped the wife of an Aisuares chief. "May God free us from such a set of rascals," complained Fritz, though at this time he fell seriously ill and was in no position to do anything himself to try and write the wrong. The Aisuares for their part were so enraged that many of them turned about once more, and returned to their now devastated homes. Those who remained were sent to the new Yurimaguas village on the Rio Huallaga, far from the now ghostly várzeas of the devastated Solimões. In 1710, a great many of them fell sick and died there, while others took refuge at lake-settlements deep in the forests and as remote as possible from any further contact with the Europeans.¹³³

Once back in Maynas, the Jesuits reoccupied their three main Omagua mission stations of San Pablo, San Joaquin and Santa Maria. Iturbide returned in somewhat tarnished triumph to Quito, having reclaimed "more than 400 leagues and 5,000 Indians" from the Portuguese as he later claimed, though he had lost nearly half of his men (levies

¹³²The Portuguese believed that Iturbide's men had been responsible for destroying these villages. King-Freire (Lx, 13 aug 1710), in Livro Grosso 67, pp. 84-85; Moraes, HCJ, pp. 539-40. At least one Spanish source allows that they "sacked" the mission at Papate. Castañeda-Escalera (Madrid?, 18 mar 1714), ms. AGI Quito 189.

¹³³Maroni-Pres. Quito (Quito, 15 jun 1733), ms. AGI Quito 158; Fritz, Journal, pp. 125-26. "May God free us from such a set of rascals," complained Fritz, though he seems to have done nothing to try and right the wrong--perhaps because at about that time he fell seriously ill.

from the altiplano, unused to the Amazon climate) to disease in the process, without having fired a shot or encountered any enemies. The conqueror took with him his five Portuguese soldier-prisoners. Fr. Joao da Luz was deemed too infirm to make the hard trip to Quito, and was impounded instead at San Joaquin. No provision was made for the permanent defense of Maynas, nor did any seem at that point to be required.¹³⁴

The Portuguese had no less difficulty than the Spaniards in rising to meet this new challenge on the frontier. The Fortress of the Rio Negro had been erected and garrisoned in the 1690's, precisely in anticipation of such a threat as that presented by Iturbide and his men. But when the "invasion" actually came the Commander there, Captain Angélico de Barros, had been on sick leave in Belem for two years. Ordered to return and organize the defense of the King's domains, he chose instead to resign his post in favor of the interim commander, Corporal Baltazar Alzate Pestana, who happened himself at the time to be in Belém on business. Galvanized into action, Pestana returned immediately to his post. Finding the Fortress both short-handed and poorly stocked with weapons, he sent an urgent request for men and munitions from the fort at the mouth of the Tapajos. But these reinforcements never reached him, because when the commander at the Tapajos sent out to a nearby settlement for crewmen to transport them up to the Negro, the Capuchin missionary there refused to allow it. The short-sighted friar was said at the time to have insisted with "injurious words" that since this war was taking place in the area of the Carmelite missions area, the Carmelites and not the Capuchins should provide the necessary support services! Fortunately for Baltazar Pestana and his men (and for the honor of Portugal!), the emergency was only an imaginary one. Iturbide's force had neglected their golden

¹³⁴Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 125-26; Consejo de Indias, Consulta (Madrid, 3 oct 1715), ms. AGI Quito 103. The Consejo was considering here Iturbide's petition that he be appointed to the governorship of Maynas for life, with whatever salary the King deemed appropriate, "siendo el único oficial que desde el descubrimiento de aquel dominio ha entrado en el" and therefore the man best suited to see to its "conservación y adelantamiento." This petition, astonishingly enough, was granted. Maroni-Pres. Quito (Quito, 15 jun 1733), ms. AGI Quito 158.

opportunity to press on and attack the Rio Negro fort, and were already on their way back to Quito. Had they been bolder or more determined in their enterprise, they might well have added the entire modern Brazilian state of Amazonas to the Spanish Empire.¹³⁵

The energetic and ambitious Governor Freire of Pará responded more decisively. He lost no time in fitting out a large military force, with a hundred and fifty soldiers and three hundred Indian levies in twenty-one well-equipped war canoes under the experienced cabo, José Antunes da Fonseca. This armada set out from Belem in October, 1709, with instructions to capture Fritz and Sanna and any other Jesuits they happened to find in the Cambeba country, to restore all the Solimões missions to the Carmelites, and to leave there a small garrison to protect the river and its mission settlements against any further Spanish incursions. This effort made such an enormous dent in the defense establishment of Pará, that the Governor soon felt obliged to ask the King to send him an additional three hundred soldiers as replacements and reinforcements -- to prepare for whatever reprisal might be launched by the Viceroy of Peru.¹³⁶

Governor Freire's initiative was the most substantial effort to influence the course of events in the Solimões valley made by the Portuguese colonial government between the Pedro Teixeira's expedition of 1638 and the Pombaline consolidation of the 1750's. Lisbon's response to it was characteristic, and richly indicative of the degree to which government intervention in that remote region was even possible in the early 18th century. The King was horrified at Freire's decision; and though he could not bring himself to chastise the zealous governor for over-stepping his authority (which indeed he had done by sending soldiers off to war without prior consultation), he was at pains to recommend exceeding caution from that time forward. The Governor was not to neglect the coastal defenses of the colony, and under no circumstances was he to provoke a serious conflict

¹³⁵Freire-King (22 & 23 dec, 1709), ms. in AHU Pará Cx 3.

¹³⁶Baena, Compêndio, p. 138; King-Freire (Lx, 13 aug 1710) in Anais BAPP 1 (1902), pp. 132-33 (also in Livro Grosso 67, pp. 84-85).

with the Spaniards, one which might result in a loss of territory or an attempt to attack Pará from the sea. Rather than indulge in military adventures of any kind, he should concentrate his efforts on the settlement of the middle Amazon valley, and on increasing its production and trade. His Majesty promised to do what he could with regard to the reinforcements the governor had requested; but he could promise nothing, and in the end did not deliver.

This was a timid and short-sighted policy indeed, coming from the monarch of an opulent empire including for example the richest gold and diamond mine of that day. With a small permanent garrison on the Solimões (perhaps fifty well-equipped men in a single strategically located fort), the Portuguese might have located the international border anywhere they liked, right up to the foothills of the Andes early in the 18th century, without any fear of effective Spanish resistance. But the will for such an endeavor was lacking at Court, if not for that matter in Pará itself. The royal priorities were focussed at the time on projects such as the construction of the fabulous palaces at Queluz and Mafra. The chief men of Pará were concerned with short-term profits and often enough with mere survival, and could sustain no long-term plans for the future of Amazonia. Most of all, it is clear that the Portuguese government still knew next to nothing about the Central Amazon valley, and saw no pressing reason to lay claim to it. That task was left to the missionaries and to the few hundreds of seasoned transfrontiersmen of Pará and Maranhão, the men who made their lonely ways to the central valley and did what they could to survive there--men who were as little concerned with the needs and norms of Empire, and as free of its disciplines, as they were unable count on effective support for their enterprises from the imperial administration.

José Antunes da Fonseca's squadron reached the Omagua missions in April or May of 1710. Sanna had written to Fritz shortly before that he knew the Paraenses were coming in full force at last, and that he was moving the people from his three remaining mission villages to safety at Lake Jarapa. That hasty relocation was still underway, having been detained on the Marañón for lack of canoes in which to transport the people, when the

refugees were overtaken by ten canoe-loads of Paraenses led by Sanna's old enemy, Frei António de Andrade, with two other Carmelites in tow. The Jesuit's camp was surrounded at night and attacked next day, and could offer little resistance. Then,

when the Portuguese were seeking to place the Omaguas in fetters, these killed a server, and so they slew many of them by shots of the swivel-guns [small cannon mounted in the war-canoes]; others they carried away prisoners, and with them the Father [Sanna] and eight rowers of his company.

Sanna, for his part, had attempted to hide away in the forest; but he had been searched out, caught and brought back slung in a hammock by the attackers with great rejoicing. Andrade let it be known that they intended to carry on until they had captured Fritz himself, and that they were turning back only temporarily at this point, for lack of farinha. Later, a small party returned to take away the doors, bells and ornaments of the church at San Joaquín. Fritz did what he could to gather the remaining Omaguas and Yurimaguas from Jarapa and other places into the mission village of Laguna, and sent to Moyobamba for men who could help him in setting up defense works there. The news at that time was that the entire Omagua nation had either been dispersed or taken up residence at the Carmelite missions to the Aisuares. A number of refugees were looking for village sites on the Ucayale (where they could live near their old friends the Cocamas), but these people said that they would rather serve the Portuguese, than settle among the "uncivilized" people from a number of forest tribes whom the Jesuits had gathered into their missions on the Rio Huallaga. Father Juan Baptista Sanna, in the meantime, was taken as a prisoner to Pará.¹³⁷

Mission Superior Samuel Fritz's desperate representations to Quito that "if God sends no remedy the whole mission will very shortly be destroyed" were met with a cool response. The Audiencia there, having been badly burned by Luis de Iturbide's expensive adventure, alleged now that "the Royal Treasury could not bear the cost; and that it is very

¹³⁷Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 126-27; Castañeda-Escalera (Madrid? 18 mar 1714), ms. AGI Quito 189.

difficult to send men to traverse such great distances and to a climate of such opposite character to that of this mountain country." The best they could do for the time being was to order the Governor of Quijos on the upper Napo, to mobilize his Indians for the defense at least of Puerto Napo "if possible." They were indeed ready to abandon the whole of Maynas to the Portuguese rather than fund any further efforts to defend it.¹³⁸

Jose Antunes da Fonseca returned to Pará with Sanna and fifteen or twenty more "Spaniards" (presumably Peruvian mestizo retainers of the Jesuit missions); and Sanna with four of his erstwhile companions were languishing in Lisbon jails by late 1711. The Portuguese government offered to release their prisoners as soon as the Spaniards would release theirs; and lengthy negotiation was gotten underway. In the end the Italian Jesuit, an eight-year veteran of Amazonian service, was refused permission to return to South America; so he joined a party of Portuguese Jesuits on their way to the Far East!¹³⁹ The King, having waited some time for news of a Spanish reaction to the Fonseca expedition, sent instructions for the disposition of the newly-acquired territory: The Governor of Pará was to have a fort built on the far Solimões frontier, taking advantage of settler José da Cunha d'Eça's offer to carry out that project at his own expense. He was then to try and persuade the Jesuits of Pará to send of their men out to the Solimões, as a means of facilitating the transition from one mission regime to the other. Failing that, he was to send the "most apt" Carmelites he could find, and do everything in his power this time to support them and keep them from abandoning their posts.¹⁴⁰

The final official move in this feeble show-down occurred after the Peace of Utrecht had ended the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713. Early in the following year Governor Freire dispatched a smaller expedition under Sergeant-Major Paschoal de Lima to the Solimões, with the object of returning the Spanish prisoners to Maynas and restoring

¹³⁸Fritz, *Journal*, p. 127.

¹³⁹Wermers, "Estabelecimento," pp. 551-53; Baena, *Compêndio*, p. 139.

¹⁴⁰King-Freire (Lx, 13 jan 1711), in *Anais BAPP* 1 (1902), pp. 135-36; and (Lx, 19 jan 1711), in *Livro Grosso* 67, pp. 87-88.

the peace. On the way up the river, Lima reminded the Carmelite missionaries of their duty to stay put in the Solimões missions and thereby discourage any new Spanish efforts that might be made to recruit Portuguese subjects for their settlements.¹⁴¹ Samuel Fritz was in semi-retirement by this time, living at the well-established Spanish Jesuit mission of Xeberos above Laguna. But when he learned that the Portuguese were on the way, he persuaded the new mission Superior to allow him to travel down to São Paulo dos Cambebas (Fritz's old San Pablo, which was at that time the uppermost settlement for which the Portuguese had actually provided a Carmelite missionary) to meet them. There he intended to do what he could to keep them from travelling any further in the direction of Maynas.

At São Paulo, however, Lima insisted upon continuing his journey until he and his party reached Laguna in accordance with his orders. There at the Jesuit headquarters he delivered his prisoners, along with a friendly and diplomatic letter from Governor Freire and a portion of the paintings and ornaments which had been removed from the Jesuits' Omagua mission churches four years before. He asked in return that the Spaniards in turn hand over the prisoners they had taken to Quito, at which point both sides should acknowledge having received satisfaction. This news was forwarded to the capital; and not long afterward, the Audiencia of Quito authorized the return of the Portuguese prisoners. One of these had already made his way home from the Spanish outpost of Archidona on the Rio Napo; two more were escorted down to the Solimões by a Spanish bush-captain, and delivered at the Carmelite Cambeba mission of Pocotapaxiró; yet another had married and settled in Quito. The imprisoned Portuguese Captain Ignacio Correia de Oliveira, for his part, had settled down and formed a household of his own in Lima.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹Lima, Requerimento a Frei José de Paiva Real (São Mateos, 7 may 1714), ms. AHU Pará Cx 6.

¹⁴²Fritz, *Journal*, p. 129-30. Pascual de Lima's expedition is the subject of the longest and most curious document consulted in my research, one which is unfortunately very difficult to use for historical purposes. This is an epic poem of abominable literary quality, penned in 1746 to celebrate the journey by the Carmelite Frei Pedro de Santo Elizeu, who may have

As a matter of practical politics, the Portuguese claim to the Amazon valley up as far as the Napo or Aguarico had been made in vain. The Governments in Lisbon and Belém were both unable and unwilling to back up that claim with military force, or with any regular commitment of resources. The Carmelites of Pará were hard enough put to staff missions as far west as São Paulo, though they had been successful in persuading a portion of the Omaguas and Aisuares to settle with them in mission villages located below that point. The Spanish Jesuits, for their part, soon returned to their forward positions on the lower Rio Marañón and reoccupied both Santa Maria and San Joaquín--now settling in those places small groups of the Indians (mostly residents of the forests along the north bank) with whom they subsequently made contact. Between these frontier mission outposts, both of them still quite remote from the seats of government to which they were accountable, there came to exist an all but entirely unpopulated stretch of the Amazon extending for a considerable distance in each direction from the mouth of the Rio Javará. From São Paulo dos Cambebas to the restored San Joaquín it was a journey of many days travelling upriver; and for several decades neither the missionaries nor the transfrontiersmen residing on either side of that de facto border would have many occasions to make the trip.

Now, with the Spanish Jesuits driven beyond the Javará, and with the once-dense native population of the Solimões várzeas reduced to a very few thousand hangers-on at the Carmelite missions, this badly scarred region entered upon a period of comparative order or "normalcy." By the 1720's, the center of conflict and adaptation in the middle Amazon valley had shifted away from the "pacified" Solimões, and into the little-known, unsubdued and still relatively populous country along the neighboring Rio Negro and its tributaries. It is to that region that we must now direct our attention.

been a participant. The manuscript is to be found in BNL Fundo Geral 942, ff. 61-141v. It is difficult to read and more difficult to interpret, and so has been of only limited use as a source for present purposes. Not the least interesting thing about it is the possibility that it is the earliest work of poetry, or perhaps of creative writing of any kind, ever written in Amazonia on an Amazonian theme.