

CHAPTER 6:
SAMUEL FRITZ, S.J. AND THE FOUNDING OF THE
PORTUGUESE CARMELITE MISSION TO THE SOLIMÕES

The Spanish reconnaissance of the upper Amazon valley (modern Peruvian Department of Loreto) began with the exploratory expeditions under Orellana and Ursúa/Aguirre which were recounted in Chapter One, and those of Alonso de Mercadillo and Juan de Salinas Loyola -- all of them carried out between 1542 and 1580. During the 16th century, no natural resources were found in the Amazon lowlands themselves which could justify the major expenditures that would have been required for the effective conquest and settlement of that region from the Andes. Eventually, however, permanent Spanish outposts began to appear on the eastern slopes of the cordillera where ambitious encomenderos established haciendas, and began to develop alluvial gold mines. When the highland Indians originally assigned to these enterprises succumbed to disease and the hardships of forced labor, or simply withdrew in disgust from the sphere of Spanish dominance, these entrepreneurs turned for a time to the Amazon rainforest as a potential source of manpower.

By 1619 there was a pioneer Spanish settlement at Borja, in the country of the Maina people on the upper Marañón (see Map 7), which was focussed on the work of rounding up Indian slaves. But the slave trade to the Andes proved short-lived. People from the lowland rainforests seldom adapted well in the cold highlands; transportation between the two regions was severely handicapped by the impassable falls and rapids on all the rivers, and by the near impossibility of overland travel up the slippery slopes of the rainy montaña. On the valley floor the Mainas themselves resisted enslavement; and in 1635 they rose against the Spaniards of Borja, killing some two dozen of them in reprisal for many

years of abuse. At this point the town was on the verge of being abandoned, when encomendero Pedro Vaca de Cadena hit upon the idea of inviting the Jesuits of Quito to come and help pacify the region. This was origin of the Jesuit mission Province of Maynas, established in 1638, which was have a large impact on the history of the Amazon valley and its peoples over the next hundred and thirty years.

The Jesuit pioneers Gaspar de Cugía and Lucas de la Cueva had first to overcome the resistance of the Spaniards settled at Borja to any interference in their administration of the Indians resident there. But two years later, having won permission to baptize the people already subject to Spanish rule and build chapels for them, Padre Cueva felt free to leave his companion at Borja and travel further down the Marañón or Amazon. Anxious to create some distance from the settler community, he established a new center of operations which he called Limpia Concepción de Jéveros on the Río Apena. Two additional priests arrived in 1641, and three more in the early 1650's; new missions were founded in succession on the lower reaches of the Huallaga, Ucayale, Pastaza, Tigre, and Napo rivers, as well as on the main stream of the Amazon. The visit of padre Cugía to the Omagua on the Rio Solimões in 1641 has been related in Chapter Four. By 1663, the Province was definitively established at its headquarters at Laguna near the mouth of the Rio Huallaga and claimed some sixty-five thousand neophytes, settled in sixteen mission stations. By the end of the 17th century, a larger number of padres and lay brothers were said to be attending to more than a hundred thousand mission Indians in several dozen locations. The comparatively well-documented history of these Spanish Jesuit missions of the Province of Maynas is an important chapter in the general histories of Peru, of the Jesuit order and of the Roman Catholic missions to the Americas; but for the most part it is beyond the scope of the present book.¹

¹Among Jesuit histories, see especially Francisco de Figueroa, Relación de las misiones de la Compañía de Jesús en el país de los Maynas (Madrid, 1904); José Chantre y Herrera, Historia de las misiones de la Compañía de Jesús en el Marañón español (Madrid, 1901); and José Jouanen, Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la antigua Provincia de Quito, 1570-1773 (2 vols.; Quito, 1941-43).

A Spanish Jesuit on the Solimões

Early in 1682, Jesuits of Maynas found themselves in a state of agitation over the plight and prospects of "Great Omagua," the little-known stretch of the river known to them as the Marañón, between the mouths of the Napo and Putumayo. The mission Superior at that time, Padre Juan Lorenzo Lucero, was only dimly aware of the earlier Spanish military and missionary incursions into that region; but on this occasion he was reliably informed that there were some five thousand people down there "in need of evangelization" -- people who were said to speak the same language as the still-pagan but better-known Cocama people of the nearby Rio Ucayali. Given the apparent vigor of Portuguese expansion westward from Pará, it was clear to Lucero that these Indians were in imminent danger of being carried off into slavery before they could hear the good news of the gospel of Christ.

The Spanish Jesuits had recently begun the work of missionizing the Cocama; and they were just then in the process of learning the Tupían Cocama-Omagua language, or at least preparing themselves to catechize and preach the gospel in it. A group of Cocama settled around the mission headquarters at Laguna had been obliged to withdraw from there during a smallpox epidemic in 1681; and they had travelled downstream to the Omagua territory for their own safety. Their distant cousins had received them very hospitably, and were now anxious to maintain their friendly contacts with the Cocama. On the Cocama's recommendation, the Omagua appeared to be open to the possibility of establishing relations with the Jesuits as well -- seeing them from the start as a potential source of iron tools and other trade goods, and of protection against their enemies.¹

¹P. Juan Lorenzo Lucero-P. Juan Martínez Rubio (Nueva Cartagena de Santiago de Xitipos y Santa María de Ucayale [Laguna], 20 feb 1682), ms. in APTSJ Col. Astrain 41 (copy from ASIR Nov. Regn. Quit. Hist. II, no. 80); P. Juan de Velasco, S.J., Historia del Reino de Quito en la América Meridional (3rd ed.; Quito, 1960), pp. 799-802; Fritz, Journal, p. 52, citing P. Manuel Rodríguez, S.J., El Marañón y Amazonas (Madrid, 1684), lib. 5, cap. 15. Rodríguez describes the Cocama expedition to Omaguas as a very large one, travelling in 70 canoes. These contacts were apparently of long standing. According to Captain Altamirano, the veteran of the Ursúa-Aguirre expedition, Ursúa had taken two Cocama interpreters with him from the Ucayali in 1560, men who were familiar with the "Cararo"

The traditional enemies of the Omagua were the same tribes of the forests to the north and south of their stretch of the Solimões with whom they had been found by Spanish visitors to be at war in the 1630's and 40's. More recently, however, they had been presented with an even more serious threat by the Portuguese slave-raiders from Pará, who had for some time been launching periodic armed attacks against the Omagua villages. The few Paraense slavers and forest product collectors who travelled up the Amazon as far as the Solimões and Marañón were especially interested in the Omagua (Port. "Cambeba") because of their comparatively great numbers, and their settled and reasonably "civilized" way of life. These expeditions had made free to capture as many people as they could find, on the specious pretext that like other Amazonian Indians the Omagua must be cannibals. It was also rumored (probably wrongly) in Maynas that the Paraense raiders would often kill or drive away the Omagua men, so as to make off with their women and children. This, it was thought, was because women and children were more easily kept under control during the long journey to Pará; and once landed there, they would be easier to assimilate into slave society than the proud and recalcitrant men.

The Jesuits were informed that the best hope so far discovered for the victims of these Paraense attacks (carried out with crashing firearms and terrible swift sword) had been for the entire Omagua community to take refuge in the forest. But on one recent occasion, the Omagua had managed to defend themselves after a fashion. The slavers, "having stabbed or slit the throats of many, had loaded many more into their canoes and set out with them on the return voyage to Pará." This time, however, the victims had managed to rally their forces, and set out in pursuit. They had succeeded in passing beyond the retreating Paraenses without being noticed, so that

just as the evil-doers reached their first settlements [that is, their westernmost outposts on the Solimões], confident that they had left the aggrieved Omagua far

(Omagua) country and predicted accurately how long it would take them to get there. Vázquez de Espinoza, p. 383.

behind, they were attacked by them from ambush. The Omagua killed several of these Dutchmen [sic!], rescued the captives, made prisoners of two small children, and returned to their own country loaded with booty.¹

The avenging Omaguas had attacked the Portuguese raiders by night with their bows and arrows; and by virtue of this surprise they had quickly been victorious. But the Paraense slavers had managed to slip away from them with most of their prisoners, leaving the avengers with only two small "domestic Indian" children from Pará, whom they had captured from the "white enemies." These they had treated kindly ("rather than eating them," observes a Jesuit chronicler, "as genuine cannibals would have done"); later they offered to send them along to Father Lucero at Laguna to be raised as Christians.²

The Omagua, severely battered by this series of encounters with the Portuguese, as well as by the series of epidemics which had assailed them during the previous nearly half century, were by no means over-confident after this small victory.³ The Solimões valley had been beset almost yearly by groups of cacao-collectors from Pará, beginning sometime in the 1650's or 1660's. These men were always only too happy to take a few Indian captives wherever they could, in an effort to supplement an always-meager income. Full-scale tropas

¹Lucero-Rubio (Laguna, 20 feb 1682) APTSJ Col. Astrain 41. In 1682, as several sources reveal, there was still a considerable confusion in Maynas about whether these attackers were in fact Portuguese or Dutch! By the end of the decade the identity of the enemy was only too clear, and there was no further mention of the Dutch.

²Lucero-Rubio (Laguna, 20 feb 1682) APTSJ Col. Astrain 41. The slavers in this story must have been members of a cacao-collecting expedition, who had taken to rounding up people in search of extra income. The children with them whom the Omagua captured were presumably the Indian or mameluco offspring of the women who were accompanying the collectors. In addition to these children, the Omagua sent along to Laguna a suit of elegant clothing ("muy buena hungarina") from their spoils, which Lucero thought peculiar and remitted to Lima for examination. The word came back that it was indeed of Dutch origin, which may either mean that it was merchandise that had been traded down the Rio Negro from the Essequibo, or that it had come into Portuguese hands through the legitimate trade of Lisbon with the low countries. Cf. Rodríguez, Marañón, p[. 395 & Velasco, Historia, p. 801.

³Velasco attributed the entire decline in Omagua population from Cujia's 15,000 in 1645 to Lucero's 5,000 in 1581 (Velasco gives 7,000, but the above-quoted Lucero letter appears to be the better source), to Portuguese slavers. But we know from Laureano de la Cruz' account, and from other more indirect evidence, that it was due in large measure to epidemic disease as well.

de resgate under Manoel Coelho in 1671 (with the Jesuits Joã o Maria Gorzoni and Manoel Pires as "chaplains") and under Francisco Lopes in 1673-74 appear also to have reached the Omagua country.¹ Following the Omaguas' surprise counter attack in 1681, they therefore fully expected the Portuguese to come back to take revenge; and it was at this point that they knew themselves to be badly in need of allies.

The Christian Cocama at this point invited some Omagua chiefs to return with them to Laguna for a parley with the mission superior, Padre Lucero. This they did quite willingly; and as a result the chiefs seem to have been persuaded that they too needed to have a Jesuit missionary in residence. Lucero could not spare a man for the purpose at that time (when there were only four missionary priests in all of Maynas); but he did encourage the Omaguas to relocate their settlements to sites a little closer to the Maynas mission, in order that the Jesuits might help to protect them against Portuguese harassment. Lucero was anxious to expand his mission territory; but he was also fearful that if the Omagua moved too close too soon, the Portuguese would use that as a pretext for carrying their attacks all the way to Maynas. During the next four years of periodic negotiations, the Omagua sent several more emissaries to trade and dicker at Laguna -- complaining each time of new difficulties with the slave-raiders, and renewing their pleas for help. Finally in 1686, the Jesuits were able to send them their first full-time missionary -- a newly-arrived European priest without previous experience of mission or of life in the tropics, Padre Samuel Fritz.²

Fritz was a man of extraordinary ability and tenacious temperament, whose single-handed undertakings over a period of two decades were to have a decisive impact on the history of the Solimões valley. Born to an aristocratic German family in Bohemia in 1654,

¹The second of these was the occasion of a letter of protest from the Viceroy Conde de Castelar of Peru to the King of Portugal, thirteen years before the establishment of any Spanish Jesuit missions in the area. Moraes, Chorographia III, p. 499; A.C. F. Reis, Os paulistas na Amazonia e outros ensaios (Rio, 1941), pp. 272-73.

²Fritz, Journal, p. 52; Lucero-Rubio (Laguna, 20 feb 1682) in APTSJ Col. Astrain 41.

he had studied humane letters and philosophy before being admitted to the Society of Jesus as a boy of nineteen. During Jesuit training, he had proved so brilliant a student of theology that he found himself being groomed for a responsible position in the order. But then he had discovered a vocation for service in "missions among the heathen" and had managed to get himself sent out to the Spanish Province of Quito.¹ The assignment of a Central European missionary to Iberian America was nothing out of the ordinary. There were many foreign priests in the Jesuit and Franciscan missions of both the Spanish and Portuguese empires. Not long after arriving in Quito, Fritz made the painful three-month journey across the cold altiplano and down the muddy rain-forest slopes to join his brethren in the remote jungle world of Amazonia --where he was to remain, except for brief journeys to Para, Lima and Quito in the service of the missions, for the remaining nearly forty years of his life.

Not long after his initiation into missionary work, Padre Samuel was described as a "tall man, ruddy, and spare in appearance, venerable, with a very curly beard. His dress was a short cassock reaching to the middle of his leg made of palm fiber, with hempen shoes on his feet, and a cross of palm-wood in his hand." He was an exemplary 17th-century Jesuit, a man of austere asceticism, unflagging energy, and a rigorous spiritual discipline. In Maynas he would maintain a lively mind and iron purpose through long periods of virtually no contact with other literate men. He accomplished some of the most remarkable evangelical feats in the history of the Christian missionary enterprise, and then lived to see his hard-wrought mission fall into ruins around him without turning his back on it. He was

¹The account of Fritz' career in the Journal, compiled in Quito in the 1730's with the help of Fritz' papers and the recollections of people who had known him, maintains that he arrived in Quito in 1686 and was shipped off almost immediately to the mission field. That would make his acclimatization and quick entry into action on the Amazon an almost miraculous achievement. Constantino Bayle writes, however, that Fritz went to Quito in 1683 and completed his theological studies there. "Descubridores Jesuitas de Amazonas," Revista de Indias 1, 1940, p. ?. This more credible version would give him plenty of time to have prepared for mission service by perfecting his Spanish, reading the reports of Jesuits who had been to Maynas, and familiarizing himself with the workings of the Spanish colonial system. [what happened to the story of the letter written in his own blood?]

also, despite his alien origins, an uncompromising defender of the secular interest of Spanish imperial expansion in the Amazon basin (largely unacknowledged by the officialdom of his day), and as such he would prove an exasperating and fearsome antagonist to the expansionist Portuguese of Pará).¹

The circumstances of Fritz' arrival to begin missionary work among the Omagua could not have been more propitious. The leaders of the tribe had been actively seeking to have a Jesuit missionary assigned to them, and they had very pressing material reasons for doing so. The chiefs were persuaded that a resident priest would on the one hand be able to guarantee them a steady supply of the by now all but indispensable European trade goods, and on the other somehow arrange for their defense against the Portuguese. When they learned that missionary was available to serve them at last, the Omaguas sent a party of canoemen up to Laguna (where Fritz had been studying mission lore and the Tupí language for just three months) to fetch him back to their settlements.² When these emissaries arrived with their guest at "Camadsuari," the first Omagua town, a joyous crowd was waiting: "not content that he should go up from the canoe on his feet, they insisted on carrying him in their arms, and, amidst dances and music of flutes, fifes and other instruments, brought him to the abode that they had provided for him." On that first day, Fritz dressed himself up in full priestly raiment, put up the "trophy of the Holy Cross," said

¹The most complete biographical sketch and "profile" of Fritz is the remarkably substantive essay in hagiography composed by P. Wenceslas Breyer, a fellow-German who worked alongside him in the Omagua mission for some years, which is to be found in section 8 of Fritz' Journal, pp. 131-38.

²There is a curious revelation about Jesuit missionary writings in the documents concerning Fritz' entry into "Great Omagua." The published account, compiled for public relations purposes in the 1730's, includes a description written by Fritz years after the fact, in which 30 canoeloads of Omaguas came to get him and take him back in joyous convoy. The letter he wrote to a fellow-Jesuit in 1686, however, reports that he had gone down to his new post with a group of eight Omaguas who had travelled up to Laguna to trade for iron tools! This letter also, however, describes a gala reception at the first Omagua town, with Fritz being conducted up a path lined with "arcos de palma real." As a general observation, Jesuit accounts of Amazon missions given an impression of artful hyperbole compounded with excellently detailed and factual observation--with the two being sometimes difficult to disentwine.

the Mass, baptized some children whose mothers had brought them to him, and contrived somehow to lead the villagers in prayer in their own Omagua language.¹

Fritz arrived among the Omagua "without hatchets, without knives, without needles; with nothing but his good faith in God." But it quickly became apparent to him that a good supply of iron tools was a

something very necessary in these parts in order to bring people under control and build churches, because without these valued objects these poor souls do not allow themselves to be tamed -- and they are asking for them importunately because they realize that they need them to cut large trees and prepare their garden plots.²

He sent an urgent request to Laguna for such supplies, always chronically scarce there as well; and from then on it was a matter of the greatest priority with him (as with every other missionary in the Amazon forests) to keep them coming in the largest possible quantities.

During his first weeks with the Omaguas, Fritz was accompanied by an aging Spanish bush-captain, who must have helped a good deal with his training in the ways of the river and forest. But after four months this companion died on his way up to Quito, where Fritz had sent him to see if there might be a market there for manatee meat, or any other of the paltry potential products of his mission -- or failing that, a generous soul who would be willing to give them alms in the form of iron tools. Thereafter, Fritz was obliged to work alone with two Omagua boys who had been trained at Laguna to serve and assist him. He had no weapons, nor more material equipment than a wooden cross; and the shipments of

¹Fritz-P. Juan Martinez Rubio (San Joaquin de Omaguas, 22 jun 1686), ms. APTSJ, Col. Astrain 41 (copy from ASIR Nov. Regn. Quit. Hist. I, no. ?); Fritz, Journal, p. 52. Preaching and teaching of the catechism in Omagua must have been made possible by a previous drawing-up of standard pious texts in the language with the help of Omagua or Cocama informants at Laguna--a standard Jesuit practice. Fritz is believed later to have composed full-fledged grammars and vocabularies of Omagua and other languages. Lucas Espinosa, Los tupi del oriente peruano. (Madrid, 1935), pp. 9-10.

²Fritz-Rubio (San Joaquin, 22 jun 1686), ms. APTSJ Col. Astrain 41. A decade later, Fritz noted that he had left the mission at a critical juncture to make an indispensable trip up to the Xeberos mission in Maynas, where the Jesuits had established a blacksmith shop, in order to manufacture some iron tools. Fritz-Altamirano (Xeberos, 20 aug 1696), in Journal, p. 98.

trade goods to back up his efforts were exceedingly scanty and few. His correspondence from that period was full of requests that someone able to make his way in a region "thick with mosquitos, toads, snakes and other pests" come down to join him. Without human and material assistance, he despaired at first of being able to accomplish very much.¹

Nevertheless, in retrospect, it seems likely that it was precisely to his poverty and solitude -- to the fact that he represented no military or economic power, nor any conceivable kind of a material threat to anyone -- that the remarkable initial successes of Padre Samuel could be attributed.

Fritz's first major undertaking was to travel down the river, visiting all the Omagua villages on its islands and covering about half of the tribe's territory, within a few weeks' time. He was accompanied on this journey by the chief and several other men from Camadsuari, who sent parties ahead to prepare the way. Everywhere they were warmly received, with people bringing their children out to be touched by the priest, and listening more or less attentively to his preliminary expositions of Christian doctrine -- as well as, with more interest, to his explanation that he had come as a friend to protect them from their natural and supernatural enemies. These villages were smaller than they had been in the 16th century, with between thirty and two hundred and twenty people in each; and where possible, Fritz was at pains to persuade people to gather into fewer and larger communities so that they might more conveniently be serviced by an itinerant preacher. In each place, he would have a large wooden cross erected and then do his best by preaching to establish the cross in people's minds as the principal symbol of the changes in their way of life which were heralded by his arrival.

This journey ended at a large settlement where Fritz was distressed at having to wait out two prolonged "drunken feasts which they held to dance around two heads of Ticunas they had killed, which they claimed to be doing in my honor." The hated Ticunas were

¹Fritz-Rubio (San Joaquin, 22 jun 1686), ms. APTSJ Col. Astrain 41.

traditional enemies who lived on the northern bank of the river; but some groups of them, he was surprised to learn, had recently entered into trade relations with Fritz' hosts, settling nearby and making bold to enlist the Omaguas as allies in their wars against other Ticunas! This changing relationship was presumably made possible by the fact that in recent years the Omaguas had become at least occasional purveyors of European iron goods to the nearby forest tribes. Fritz noted that in any event there was no friendship between the scattered Ticuna bands: "If they go to another village, they speak to each other from a distance; and then, either they make friends or they slaughter each other like wild beasts." The Ticuna men were naked except for penis-sheaths of bark; the women wore no more clothing than seed necklaces. These characteristics did not in the least endear the Ticunas to the austere Fritz; but whenever in his travels he would run into a stray Ticuna, he would do his best to befriend him so as to open the way to a later evangelization of that tribe, and a cessation of its hostilities with the Omaguas. At one point, a small group of Ticunas entertained Fritz's party with "singing and dancing after the fashion of their country."¹

Following his discouraging experience with the festivities over the dead Ticunas, Fritz decided to return to Camadsuari and begin his missionary work in earnest. He made that uppermost Omagua village his principal residence, and had the people there build a church in honor of San Joaquín (a saint to whom he was particularly devoted, and of whom a pious Spanish dutchess had given him a painting to be placed in the first church built at his mission). This town was known thereafter as San Joaquín de los Omaguas. While construction of the church was underway, Padre Samuel worked at the intensive indoctrination of a cadre of young Omaguas who could help him with his work among the

¹The letter to Ignacio Altamirano (Xeberos, 20 aug 1696) in Journal, p. 98, reveals Fritz trying to win over the Guareicus of the south bank of the Solimoes above the mouth of the Jutai, in like manner--giving gifts and urging them to come out of the forest and settle on the bank so as to be accessible to missionary visitation. With regard to the Ticuna, or at least those living nearest to the river, Berredo maintains that between the Jesuit and subsequent Carmelite efforts, by ca. 1720 they were "quasi todos domesticados." Annaes, Paragraph 715 (1905 ed., p. 286).

rest. The long-term strategy he devised was to visit each village with this team for a period of two months, in order to prepare a majority of the people in each place for baptism. During the first journey, a good many Omagua had insisted upon receiving this sacrament, having learned that it was the essential requirement for the salvation of which he spoke so persuasively. But Fritz was meticulous in his requirements for the rite; and he found most people to be insufficiently indoctrinated to receive it, as well as "reluctant to give up entirely certain heathen abuses." So for a long time he baptized only children, and (as a tactical concession to necessity) the especially cooperative chiefs of villages in which he was working.¹

After travelling tirelessly from village to village throughout the Omagua territory during a period of three years, instructing and exhorting, causing little chapels to be constructed, exorcising demons and laying out the essential requirements for life in Christian communities, Fritz was pleased to report that "without arms or military escort" he had been able to prepare the entire tribe for baptism. He claimed also actually to have performed the ceremony over most of the Omagua. Those were the halcyon days of his mission, when there appeared to be no problem incapable of solution. It is unfortunate that no documents have come to light which give us an inkling of how the work was carried out from day to day, and how the Omagua both influenced and adapted to it. Fritz spent his longest stretches of time at San Joaquín de Omaguas; but he must have visited each of the thirty-eight settlements of the tribe² frequently enough during the period so that he became

¹Fritz, Journal, pp. 53-54; Fritz-Rubio (San Joaquín, 22 jun 1686), ms. APTSJ Col. Astrain 41. An early report to his superiors maintained that in the first months, Fritz had received "ambassadors" from thirty Omagua settlements, some of whom brought children along to be baptized, but that in the first three months of his work he had baptized only forty children and five adults, "most of them of the families of chiefs." García de Seares, "Testimonio autentico del estado de las misiones del Marañon" (Nueva Cartagena de Santiago de Xitipos (Laguna), 30 may 1686), ms. APTSJ Col. Atrain 41 (copy from ASIR Nov. Regn. Quit. Hist. I, no. 29 & II, No. 96)

²Fritz is somewhat carelessly credited by the authors of Jesuit histories of Maynas with having established thirty or forty mission settlements among the Omagua. It is clear from the Journal and other documents, however, that with the possible exception of San Joaquín and of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves de Yurimaguas (see below), which may have been

a familiar and trusted figure to most of its members. This promising experience appears also to have been favored by the temporary lull in Paraense slaving expeditions to the upper Solimões which was occasioned by their diversion into the lower Rio Negro region by Hilário de Souza Azevedo and others in ca. 1685-95 (as we saw in Chapter Five). The respite may well have been attributed by the Omagua themselves, however, to Fritz' presence among them.

Padre Samuel was the second European (following Fray Laureano de la Cruz) to have the opportunity to make detailed notes on the society and culture of the Omagua; and he adds considerable detail to the picture we have been drawing from the 16th and 17th-century sources. The notably flattened foreheads were a symbol for them of superiority to other tribes. The Omaguas told him that they had been taught to beautify themselves in that fashion many years before by "the Devil" (presumably Fritz' term for a more reputable Omagua deity); and Omagua women would jeer at the women from other tribes, saying that their heads were "round like those of forest savages." Flat-foreheadedness had also assumed a practical political significance on the Solimões, once the Omaguas became aware that it was Portuguese policy to make allies of the relatively "civilized" Indians they found along the river, and slaves of the cannibal "savages." In the 18th century, the descendents of Fritz's catechumens were at great pains to point out to travellers that their flattened foreheads

considerably enlarged and transformed as a result of his work, Fritz established no communities at all. A letter written to the Spanish ambassador in Portugal while Fritz was in Para in 1691 (ms. in AGI Quito 4) states explicitly that there were 38 pre-existing Omagua villages, and several more of other tribes on other islands in the Solimoes, which had received thanks to his efforts, "con grande consuelo mio, el evangelio de Jesucristo sin alzamiento o contradiccion alguna." Velasco, *Historia* III, pp. 772-883, maintains that six of the aldeias were "pueblos principales" strung out at equal intervals with a residence for the travelling priest and several smaller villages annexed to it. Cf. Vicente Sierra, Los jesuitas germanos en la conquista espiritual de Hispano-America siglos xvii-xviii (Buenos Aires, 1944), pp. 151-54, citing a letter in which P. Lucero pointed out before Fritz' arrival that there were 31 Omagua villages, of which the missionary ought to be able to make "diez pueblos buenos."

were a sign of cultural superiority over their enslaveable neighbors; and for a long time they resisted abandoning this peculiar custom, even under missionary pressure.¹

Omagua men were unusually "talkative and proud" in comparison with other Amazonian Indians of the white men's experience. They were universally acknowledged to be the best canoemen on the river (which judgment it must be said, when made by the employers of canoemen, referred not only to technical proficiency, but also to their readiness to accept the hard work and the rigorous discipline of a canoe expedition). They continued to wear their beautiful multi-colored cotton clothing as a badge of honor. There is a suggestion of changing customs, however, in Fritz's note that by his day the men were wearing "breeches and shirts of cotton," while women were still content with "two pieces of the same kind, one of which serves them for a small apron, the other to form an indifferent covering for the breasts."² Both men and women painted great portions of their bodies, faces and even their hair with the "juice, darker than mulberry, of a forest fruit called jagua." The Omaguas affirmed to Fritz with remarkable candor that long before becoming Christians, they had enjoyed a

kind of polity and government; many of them living a sociable life, showing a satisfactory subjection and obedience to their principal caciques, and treating everyone, men and women alike, with a certain consideration.

¹Berredo, Annaes, paragraphs 716-18 (1905 ed., I, p. 287). This writer picks up Acuna's assertion that the Omagua had become "menos barbaros" as a result of their indirect contacts with the Spaniards of Quijos. Fritz thought it more likely that whatever they had learned from European society before his day had filtered through by way of the "Tupinambas and caboclos of Brazil, from whose neighborhood it seems that they had been little by little ascending to the upper Marañon." Journal, p. 48.

²Cf. Laureano de la Cruz on the "immodesty" of both sexes, in Chapter 4.

In those days, before being brought to their knees by epidemic disease and by the Paraense slavers, they remembered having also been sufficiently numerous to be feared by all of their neighbors.¹

When Omagua girls reached puberty, they would be hung up in hammocks "within an awning fixed to the top of the house," and kept there for a month with nothing but a little water and dry farinha for their sustenance and some cotton to keep themselves busy by spinning. At the end of that ordeal, they were taken down and carried to the river, washed from head to foot, painted from the face down to the middle of the body, and then sent home naked to be adorned with feathers and then celebrated in their new womanhood by the entire community with music and dancing. During these ceremonies, the other women would give them small quantities of manioc beer to drink; finally, the oldest man in the village would come up and strike them on the shoulders with a small stick, giving them at the same time the names they would bear for the rest of their lives. Without undergoing this ritual, the Omagua men maintained, women were "no good either to themselves or to their husbands"; after it was performed, the men were allowed to ask for them as wives.

The institution of what earlier observers had referred to as "slavery" among the Omaguas was beginning to show significant signs of change by Fritz's day. In each household there were one or two "servants" from the mainland tribes. These people had either been captured in war, as was customary in "heathen times" when they would make forays into the forest "to assault the houses with armed hand, to kill cruelly the old men and women, and to carry off as captives the young people for their service" -- or obtained by the new system of bartering people in exchange for iron implements or clothing. There is no

¹Fritz, Journal, pp. 47-51. This aristocratic pretension of the Omagua, perhaps exaggerated and misinterpreted out of context by European writers who found in it a heart-warmingly familiar trait, was particularly striking to P. Velasco: (The Omagua tribe) "se precia de la mas noble entre todas, a las cuales las ve como de baja esfera; su idioma es el mas copioso y dulce que se ha hallado en aquellos paises, y de el son dialectos varios otros [that is, the Brazilian lingua geral]; su noble proceder, sus operaciones menos barbaras, y varias otras propiedades que la caracterizan, muestran claramente ser parte de alguna gran Republica o Monarquia que formaban en tiempos mas antiguos . . ." Historia III, libro 5, pp. 730-31.

reference in Fritz to the great repugnance at the idea of selling these servants of which Acuña had made so much, although he does say that the serving-people were usually treated kindly by their "owners". The Omagua men would lie in their hammocks, he says, and order these servants to bring them food and drink. But apart from that, they would provide them with Omagua clothing, eat from the same dish with them, and sleep beneath the same mosquito-netting. Fritz or his part forbade forbade his followers to engage in any bartering of these "slaves" to the visiting Portuguese; and by this time there were rarely any secular Spaniards on the river with whom that kind of business might have been done even had there been a desire for it.

The Omaguas when Fritz knew them were particularly proud of the way of life which had been made possible by their adaptation to the island ecosystem of the Amazon. According to them, life on the higher banks and in the gloomy forests was for tapuyas (Tupí for "savages"), the people who lived in smaller and less stable communities, and were dependent on supplies of wild fruits and game, obliged as they were to depend on laboriously-prepared swiddens for their few cultivated crops. (This same word, taken from the lingua geral, was the common term in Paraense Portuguese for "undomesticated Indian," or in deprecatory contexts even for "Indian canoeman"). The Omaguas harvested their crops from the island mud-flats as well as from their swiddens; and they stored manioc underground in ingeniously covered pits, to be covered over by the flood and then eaten during the next planting season. They hung up maize and other fruits of the soil in the high parts of their houses for preservation. When the flood came, they were ready for it on elevated bark floors in their tall houses, and cheerfully repaired to their well-made canoes for all necessary movement from one place to another -- "nor (was) there anything strange in this, since their life was perpetually spent upon the rivers to fish, and to row, in which arts they were more skilled than any other nation." The tapuyas, they said, fought and hunted only with the lance, blowgun and boquetera (a sling discharging hard clay bullets); the Omaguas were expert with all of those weapons; but they used the more powerful dart-

launcher as well, and this enabled them to kill the manatee, the river turtle and the enormous pirarucú fish with extraordinary efficiency.

The Omaguas claimed, according to Fritz, that their ancestors had always lived in this way; but a comparison of the 16th-century with the 17th-century accounts of their customs suggests rather a process of chaotic social transformation which must have taken place during the intervening period. As the numbers of this notable people declined, they had been forced by increasingly bold enemies from the forests to evacuate their riverbank homes, and accordingly to adapt and perfect their technologies for living on the islands of the Amazon.¹

Fritz's Mission to the Yurimaguas, and his Voyages to Pará and Lima.

The Omaguas told Fritz about another tribe with whom they thought he might be able to make some headway -- the Yurimaguas, who occupied a short stretch of the river just below their own. These people were known to them as skilled artisans, who traded beautifully painted gourds with their neighbors and tattooed their women in very striking ways. They were also viewed by the Omaguas as much less "barbarous" than other tribes of the region. Like them they set their villages in permanent locations on comparatively high ground which was seldom flooded, and raised manioc to manufacture both farinha and beijú. Most important of all to Fritz or any other European colonial observer of the day, they were governed by política, living as they did "in subjection to the will of a principal Chief," rather than in undisciplined liberty like savages. Years before, the Yurimaguas had been said to be numerous and warlike, "masters of almost the whole river of the Amazons;" but by Fritz's time they had been "much intimidated and wasted" by the slave-raiders from Pará, as well as by epidemic disease. Many of them were thought to have withdrawn from the banks of the Solimões altogether; but the Omagua nevertheless persuaded Padre Samuel that the survivors were people who would likely be well-disposed to "submit

¹Fritz, Journal, p. 48-49.

themselves to the yoke of the Gospel." As it turned out, the Yurimaguas themselves had heard about Fritz and his mission before he got to them; and they had been favorably impressed by the Omaguas' descriptions of his ascetic and celibate way of life, and his kindly and paternalistic manner. When he first made an appearance at one of their villages in 1688, some people ran away to hide from him as from an other-worldly spirit; but most of the Yurimaguas were quickly disabused of that notion, and came back to give him a warm welcome.¹

Samuel Fritz was a firm believer in the power of the Devil, as his mighty antagonist on the mission's field of battle; and he reported that the Yurimaguas were at that time virtually writhing in Satan's grasp:

an evil spirit was exercising such despotic dominion over them, that from time to time he suddenly fell upon them and beat them cruelly; and when he went away, embarking himself in a canoe, he was lost to the sight of all by submerging himself in the depths of the Marañón.²

This curious passage, read by a skeptic of today, might appear to be a metaphoric reference to the Portuguese slavers (if not to European disease); yet Fritz, vitally concerned as he was with those particular earthly menaces to his flock, does not seem to be referring to them here. When he speaks of evil spirits, it is as of an unquestioned reality. In another passage, the missionary reflects on having been told by the Indians that there was a man looking like a Spaniard who kept watch over a gold mine located somewhere far in the interior:

"according to the signs (this man) can be no other than the Infernal Dragon that in that shape stands on guard over those golden apples."³

On this occasion, Fritz erected a cross in the Yurimagua village and announced that thereafter, with its assistance, the evil spirit would have less power over them. Then one

¹Fritz, Journal, pp. 55-57 & 60.

²Fritz, Journal, p. 55.

³Journal, p. 77.

night, he heard a terrifying flute being played during one of their incessant celebrations.

Upon inquiring about the source of that infernal sound, he was told that

they were playing in this manner to Guaricaya, that was the Devil, who from the time of their ancestors came in visible form, and took up his abode in their villages; and they always made him a house apart from the village within the forest, and there they brought him drink and the sick that he might cure them.

Padre Samuel wondered what the Devil might look like in this guise, and was told by his new friend Chief Mativa of the Yurimagua village,

Father, I could not describe it, only that it is horrible, and when he comes all the women with their little ones flee, only the grown-up men remain, and then the Devil takes a whip that for this purpose we keep provided with a leather lash made of the hide of a sea-cow (manatee), and he flogs us in the breast until much blood is drawn. In the absence of the Devil, the flogger is an old man, hence great scars are found upon our breasts. We do this, they say, to make us valiant. The forms that he took were those of a tiger-boar or of other beasts; at one time it was gigantic, at others dwarfish.

Fritz was at pains to find out whether this frightful creature had said anything to the Yurimagua about killing their newly arrived missionary, or driving him away. Mativa replied that the shaman's sounds were not articulate, but that since the padre had come and planted his cross, Guaricaya

no longer wishes to come to the village, nor any more to cure the sick that some bring to his house; because we now bring them to you that you may preach to them the Gospel and that they may not die.¹

¹Journal, pp. 55-57.

One striking thing about this story is the fact that the Jesuit missionary did not recognize a sort of God-forsaken colleague in the Yurimagua shaman -- seeing him perhaps as the "priest" of a different religion, or a mortal kind of spiritual antagonist practicing different rituals from his own. Padre Samuel appears really to have believed that he was facing down the Devil incarnate on this occasion; and he goes on to say that he has heard similar tales about Lucifer's work in other Indian communities, among the Aisuares and others on the middle and lower Solimões. The Carmelite Frei Vitoriano Pimentel, who visited the Yurimaguas in 1703, would observe in more down-to-earth fashion that "on one occasion an Indian witch-doctor tried to do his witchcraft on me, because I'd not given him the needles I had given out to the others."¹ Fritz for his part found that with this "evil spirit" driven away, at least temporarily, the Jesuit missionary and his apparently very powerful cross came to be very highly regarded among the Yurimaguas.

Father Samuel then preached "the news of the Redeemer, the law of the Gospel, and of Baptism being supremely necessary to attain salvation" to his new admirers. The Yurimaguas listened carefully, and were apparently not displeased at first with what he had to say; but on closer examination they found the sacrament of baptism to be a ridiculous, if not a downright dangerous practice. Fritz explained that it was the indispensable washing-away of original sin, and of the sins contracted by themselves in the time of heathenism, and that it made people clean by means of grace. But the Yurimaguas were so "materialistic" in their thinking that they were refusing to have anything to do with this exotic practice -- when quite conveniently it happened that an old woman who had been baptized on her deathbed returned in a dream, shortly after her burial, to an unbelieving son -- talking to him about Paradise, and about how baptism had saved her from the fires of Hell. The son spread the word about the desirability of baptism; and soon, according to Fritz, all of the Yurimaguas were clamoring for it. Fritz was of course unable to oblige them right away -- because the

¹"Relacao," in Wermers, "Estabelecimento ..." p. 548.

people were not sufficiently instructed in Christian doctrine, and because for the most part they "did not cease in secret to have relations with the demon, and other evil practices that were quite contrary to Divine Law." Failing that, the Yurimaguas insisted that he come back to visit them regularly so that he might teach them the new ways.¹

By this time, according to the missionary's memoir, the Aisuares and Ibanomas from further down-stream were also begging for Padre Samuel's attention. These peoples lived nearer to the richly endowed cacao-gathering forests of the lower Solimões; and they were even more subject than the Yurimaguas and Omaguas had been to Portuguese slaving-raids. Fritz was finding in the meantime that a whole year was scarcely enough for him to make even hurried visits to each of the settlements of would-be Christians in his-far-flung mission territory. So, having established a successful first contact with the Yurimaguas, he decided to return upriver to the Omaguas and devise a strategy for further evangelization.

Then in February, 1689, when the riverbank peoples were preparing for what looked like being an unusually severe flood, the itinerant Jesuit returned to Chief Mativa's village (now designated as Nuestra Señora de las Nieves de Yurimaguas) where he planned to wait out the season on dry land. That village, he had been told, was located on such high ground that it had never been flooded. But the effort to seek refuge was in vain; the flood that year was the highest in living memory, and before long Fritz found himself confined to a "shelter on a roof made of the bark of trees," in a village which was almost entirely under water. To make things worse, he fell sick with "most violent attacks of fever and of dropsy that began in the feet with other complaints principally caused by worms." For three months he was obliged to remain in his shelter, tossing at night in

unutterable burnings, as the river though it was passing but a handbreath from the bed was out of reach of my mouth, and in sleeplessness caused not only by

¹Journal, pp. 55-58.

my infirmities, but also from the gruntings of the crocodiles or lizards that all night long were roving round the village, beasts of horrible deformity. One night, one of them entered my canoe, whose prow stood within the house, so that if it had advanced, it would have made an end of my boy and of myself, as there was no possibility of escape.

A worse plague were the rats that infested the house, ate up their food supplies and even gnawed at their wooden utensils. At the peak of this disastrous flood, most of the Yurimaguas left their village in search of dry ground where they could forage for edible wild plants -- leaving Fritz and his companion to subsist on what few fish they could catch, and on gifts of bananas from a nearby village of the Aisuares people which he had visited not long before, to "teach, baptize, and marry" an elderly couple who were dying.¹

When Fritz had almost given up hope of surviving this misadventure, he was visited by some Ibanomas who had travelled up from their village below the mouth of the Japurá to invite him to come and pay them a visit. These people informed him that a party of Paraenses were collecting sarsaparilla below Lake Coarí (at "los Cuchivaras"), just a week's journey downstream. At this he decided that since it was impossible to make the two-month trip upriver to Laguna in his condition, he would travel down the river in search of the Portuguese, in hopes that they might provide some remedy for his sickness. As the river began to recede in July, therefore, he set out in that direction with Chief Mativa and a party of Yurimagua crewmen.

The party travelled for four days past Aisuare settlements to the Ibanoma village of Juaboni below the mouth of the Japurá (presumably near the modern town of Tefé). A chief Arimavani received them cordially there. His people listened to Fritz' teachings for a few days, gathered in some supplies for the next leg of their trip, and offered to escort the

¹Fritz, Journal, pp. 59-63. Later, Fritz wrote to the Spanish ambassador in Lisbon that what he had come down with were "tres achaques mortales dysenteria, y hidropesia la cual de tal suerte subio por todo el cuerpo, que era menester ser cargado en red o amaca." (Para, n.d. 1691), ms. AGI Quito 4.

Jesuit down as far as the Cuchivaras. Leaving Juaboni, they travelled quickly downstream past widely scattered Ibanoma villages to Lake Coarí, which as it turned out was still too badly flooded to make it worthwhile entering there. A few leagues further down, on a patch of high ground, they came to some crudely built huts which the Paraense collecting party had built, but appeared to have abandoned just a few days before. Fritz and his friends moved into these houses, and were joined there for a few days by several families of the Cuchivaras (Cuxiguaras) people, supplied them with plentiful food and asked as well that the missionary stay there with them. When Fritz said he could not do that because the attacks of his fever were growing more severe, the Cuchivaras agreed to carry him down beyond the mouth of the Rio Negro. Below the Negro, they ran into a party of Tupí-speaking Tupinambaranas who were accompanying the *tropa de resgate* on that river (commanded by Andrés Pinheiro of Pará, with the Jesuit João Maria Gorzoni); and these friendly Indians gave them directions to the base camp for that *tropa* at Frei Theodózio da Veiga's mission on Lake Saracá.

Frei Theodózio was at work elsewhere in the district during the time of Fritz's first visit; but he wrote that the Spanish visitor should make himself at home. Captain Pinheiro had the ailing missionary bled against his fevers, fumigated against the dropsy, and plied with the rest of the *sertanistas'* sparsely stocked chest of remedies for the more familiar tropical ailments; but all was to no avail. Having been at least able to stand up or to sit in his canoe up to this time, the patient was now being carried about in a hammock.

These reduced circumstances notwithstanding, the arrival of the wild-looking priestly visitor from the West caused a tremendous sensation among the Arawaks, as it was to do all the way down the Amazon to Pará. According to Fritz's own account, his appearance inspired messianic fantasies among the Indian slaves, and fear and wonder in all and sundry. Frei Theodózio could not imagine what to make of the stories he heard about this visitor; and Pinheiro himself confessed to having been afraid at first to talk to the sick man. During the first night, indeed, he had watched him through a small opening in the wall

of the house in which he was staying, to see whether he was really a man, or a creature from the other life. Afterwards, however, the two had become great friends. Seeing that Fritz was getting worse, the Captain decided to send him down with a soldier and canoe-crew to seek medical assistance in Pará.¹

Within a few months' time, Father Samuel had been nursed back to health by his brethren at the Jesuit Colégio in Belém. But when the time came for him to head back up the river to his mission, he found the way barred by the Governor of Pará, Arthur de Sá de Menezes. The governor pretended to believe that Fritz was no missionary at all, but a spy who had been sent by the Spaniards to maintain surveillance over the recent Portuguese advances up the Solimões. He placed the visitor under house arrest, until instructions about what to do with him could be received from Lisbon. The result was that Fritz was detained in Pará for nearly two years, during which time he occupied himself in drawing the first reasonably accurate map of the Amazon valley (see Map Eight), and writing a series of memorials on the priority of Spanish over Portuguese claims to Amazonian territory. The map was based on the careful observations he had been making in the course of all his travels; the memorials, on his own elaborate reinterpretation of the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1493 (by which an approximate border had been drawn between the Spanish and Portuguese realms in America), and guesses as to the location of Pedro Teixeira's celebrated marker of 1639. By the time Padre Samuel's case was finally resolved in Lisbon, a new governor had been installed in Pará; and his predecessor was being censured for having behaved so uncharitably towards a respectable Jesuit missionary visitor from a neighboring country. Relations between Portugal and Spain were comparatively cordial at that time; and the instructions from the Court were that Fritz should be released and given a military escort back to his missions. The escort would treat him with every courtesy; but while making the voyage upriver it was also expected to look for any signs it could find of the

¹Fritz, Journal, pp. 63-66.

damage to Portuguese sovereignty which had been done by this Spanish Jesuit's operations on the Solimões up to that time.¹

Fritz' account of his return trip to the Solimões tells us more in passing about the details of a canoe expedition up the Amazon (that is, about the exclusive means of communication between Pará and the central valley before the middle of the 19th century) than does any other 17th-century source. The missionary was escorted by cabo António de Miranda e Noronha with six soldiers and a barber-surgeon, and a crew of thirty-five Indian crewmen recruited from the different Jesuit aldeias near Belém.² There were three canoes: a large one carrying the soldiers and nearly four tons of provisions, including 200 paneiros (roughly, "bushels") of farinha; a medium-sized vessel some ten meters in length with a two-meter beam, bearing sail and a "cabin of boards in the stern" for the illustrious passenger; and finally, a somewhat smaller canoe bearing the captain. This expedition set forth early in July of 1691, and made its way slowly upstream -- stopping where possible at

¹Fritz, Journal, pp. 66-69. Any doubts that Fritz was in fact involved in a conscious effort to expand Spanish territory down the Marañon and Solimões are eliminated by a letter from the Superior of the Maynas missions who had given Fritz his first set of instructions. P. Francisco Viva wrote in 1687 that he had sent Fritz down the Marañon because he had learned for a certainty that the Portuguese of Brazil had conquered many Indian tribes there and were moving close to Maynas. Fritz' job was: "en una o dos naciones entremedias que hay entre nosotros y los portugueses (tomar) posesion dellas en nombre del Rey de Espana y de la Compania antes de que ellos suban y la tomen en nombre del Rey de Portugal." He was also to parley with other Amazon missionaries and especially with the Jesuits of Pará to collect information which might be useful in the Maynas Jesuits' effort to "conquistar de una vez todos los gentiles que hay en los rios que entran al Marañon, que cierto me da lastima ver tantos gentiles tan faciles para reducirse, y que solo por no haver quien ponga los medios para su reduccion, quedan en su gentilidad." Viva was at that time trying to get permission to go to Madrid "a negociar la conquista de todo este rio." Viva-Renteria (Xeberos, 15 sep 1687), ms. APTSJ Col. Astrain 41 (copy from ASIR Nov Regn Quit Hist II, p. 95). After the frustrating experience of his detention in Pará, Fritz' determination to stem the Portuguese advance was even greater than it had been at the outset.

²Fritz points out that of the soldiers, only one was "white." The remainder included one mulatto and four mamelucos. Portuguese sources seldom refer to racial origins of people (except occasionally, as an expression of contempt). But this brief note, taken together with the fact that there were never more than a few hundred European moradores in Pará during the 17th century, gives considerable support to the general impression that most or nearly all sertanistas reaching the central valley before the mid-18th century--not excluding soldiers from the garrisons of Pará--were Luso-Brazilian mestizos, the children of Indian mothers, rather than Portuguese. In this instance, Fritz' failure to mention such a "taint" suggests that Antonio Miranda de Noronha may have been a European.

a sugar plantation or a Jesuit aldeia for rest and provisions. Where there was no place to stay, rather than taking time to make camp the men would simply sleep in their canoes (commodious enough for Padre Samuel and the cabo, but considerably less so for the crew!). When the weather was stormy, great waves came up and it was dangerous travelling in the low-riding canoes, the crews would hug the shore or hover in the lee of an island. One night a storm fell upon them at two in the morning, blowing up waves so violent that they broke the rudder on the large canoe, and destroyed the oars on the small one. Then, after limping onward for a few days through the narrows of Pauxís above the mouth of the Rio Trombetas (modern Obidos), they were obliged to lay up for a week and half to repairs their canoes. Stopping for refreshment as often as they did during the first phase of the voyage, it had taken them more than a month to reach the mouth of the Tapajós. Beyond there, it seemed that they might travel for as long as a week without seeing any settlement; accordingly, the progress was more rapid.¹

Two months up from Pará the party reached the mouth of the Rio Urubú, where Frei Theodózio was waiting with a great number of Arawaks. The Indians there were especially anxious to see Fritz and learn that he was well, because it was during his absence in Pará (in June, 1690) that there had occurred the terrible earthquake, centered on the north bank just above the Rio Matarí, to which reference was made in Chapter Five. Padre Samuel visited the site of that tragedy, and reports that

ruins of large villages were visible, fallen rocks, huge plantations uprooted and thrown into the river, very high ground with the scrub on top fallen, and white, red and yellow earth, stones and trees hurled from the height and piled up above the river. In another part lagoons drained, woods destroyed and everything mixed together in disorder. Where the soil had been of sand or clay (that is, on terra firme), there had not been any havoc. Frei Theodózio

¹Journal, pp. 69-71.

said that at the same time there were terrible tides in the river and an immense quantity of fish died...¹

This description may suggest damage from a flood more than from an earthquake, which was in any event a very unusual occurrence in Amazonia. Nevertheless, Fritz goes on to say that the damage was even greater at points inland from a considerable stretch of the river, and that the Omagua later told him that they had felt their houses shaking some fifteen hundred kilometers away! However that may be, there was a rumor around Lake Saracá that the angry Padre Samuel had caused this quake, and that he was bound to destroy them all if he were not restored to his mission promptly. Another story in circulation had Fritz being cut to pieces in Pará, and then pulled back together by the power of his soul. Frei Theodózio was anxious to have his people touch see the Jesuit missionary, and touch his hands so that they would know that he was not a malevolent supernatural being but simply another man like themselves.

Padre Samuel's fearsome reputation had also reached the village of the Tarumã s on the lower Rio Negro (a "mission" which as we have seen had been visited only occasionally, by Jesuit slaving-chaplains with the tropas de resgate, since the late 1650's). A delegation of eighty Tarumãs warriors with their Chief Carabaina visited Fritz as his party was passing by the mouth of the Negro, and promised him that they would no longer make war (that is, conduct slaving raids to carry through on their previously contracted obligations to the Portuguese) against Padre Samuel's friends the Cuchivaras, Ibanomas and Yurimaguas on the Solimões. According to Fritz, the chief of this party asked him to come down and settle at Tarumã s, since he was weary of his dealings with the Portuguese and would prefer to go back to bartering for trade goods with the "Caripunas and other friends of the French of

¹Journal, pp. 72-73. The description is more suggestive of terrible flood damage than of an earthquake--which would in any even have been a very unusual event for Amazonia. Nevertheless, Fritz goes on to say that the damage was even greater inland along about a ten-mile stretch of the river, and that the Omagua later told him that they had felt their houses shaking some 7-800 miles away!

Cayenne (sic), from whom they have obtained a gun." As a sign of their good faith, the Tarumãs provided a dozen guides for the trip up the Solimões as far as Lake Coarí. From the mouth of the Negro to the village of Juaboni near Lake Tefé, the expedition then passed not a single inhabited place in two weeks of travel up the river. The only signs of habitation, in fact, were two burned-out village sites (one Cuchivara and the other Ibanoma), which appeared to be remnants of the "war which took place between them and the Indians of Urubú the previous year." Between the annual visits of the slave-catching Paraense cacao collectors, the occasional visits of tropas de resgate and perhaps most decisively the slaving activities of the various Arawak groups operating under "missionary" prodding and orientation, the once-populous lower Solimões had become a forbidding wasteland in the course perhaps of a single generation.¹

Fritz, the great diatribist against the Portuguese Indian slave trade, surprises a modern reader by expressing no particular outrage at this revelation. This was presumably due to the fact that the lower Solimões had already become an almost uninhabited region before Fritz made his first visit there in 1689. It must be kept in mind too that this process of depopulation was not a simple matter of the physical removal of people. On the river near the burnt-out "Cuxiguara" village, Fritz' escort Captain Noronha captured a single Cuxiguara who had the misfortune to be found alone in his canoe on the river, and put him in irons so that he might serve them as a guide to the place where the rest of the Cuxiguara survivors might be found -- people of whom he learned that they had recently withdrawn from the islands and banks of the Solimões, and were living at a spot a day's travel inland. Depopulation was a process of removal compounded with processes of liquidation and dispersal, in an atmosphere made heavy by the constant threat of death from terrible and inexplicable disease. On the lower Solimões, this deadly process seems to have run through almost to completion in the half-century between 1639, when Acuña still found the densely-

¹Fritz, Journal, p. 74.

settled and formidable "Yorimanes" there, and 1691 when Fritz saw not a single settlement below the mouth of the Japurá.

Returning to his mission after so long an absence, and accompanied by a party of the hated Portuguese, created difficult problems of trust for Samuel Fritz. At Juaboni, he asked the escort to stay behind and let him go in to the town alone so as to avoid giving alarm. Next morning at dawn, he entered the village with only a few Indian companions and had a great drum beaten to assemble the Ibanoma residents of the place. They appeared glad to see him, and agreed to provide manioc bread, bananas and turtles if his party would make its camp "on the other side of the village."¹ Anxious from this point on to get shut of Noronha and his men (who insisted on accompanying their prisoner all the way to the Omaguas), Fritz persuaded Chief Arimavani of the Ibanoma and a few of his men to accompany them up to the Aisuares the very next day. A day's journey above Juaboni, the party passed another village of Ibanoma who said that they had resettled there from somewhere further downstream, in an effort to escape the depredations of the feared Tarumãs and their Paraense allies.

Two days above Juaboni, they entered Aisuares territory and continued on for another five days, past mostly uninhabited villages, to the Rio Juruá. A day beyond there was the first Yurimagua settlement, also abandoned, where they caught up with two fleeing Yurimaguas who told Padre Samuel that their people had taken flight because "an Ibanoma called Manoto, a one-eyed cripple, had alarmed them by saying that the Father [Fritz] was coming no more, but only the Portuguese -- burning, slaving and killing." Finally the expedition came to Nuestra Señora de las Nieves de Yurimaguas, where they found that the people had also withdrawn to the nearby forests.² Camping nearby, they sent scouts out to

¹Presumably, across the Lake of Tefe from it (where in later years there was a substation of the Carmelite mission of Tefe).

²Fritz' mission church at N.S. de las Nieves had also been burned to the ground--not by Portuguese or their collaborators, but "through the carelessness of a lad, except the painting on canvas of Our Lady, which was miraculously preserved."

look for the dispersed inhabitants of the village. With the explorers went Fritz's cross as a sign that he had returned along with them. Before long, Chief Mativa appeared with some of his men, all greatly alarmed to find that the Jesuit missionary had returned in the company of their enemies.

At the lowermost Omagua village, which they found also to have been abandoned, Fritz finally persuaded António de Miranda e Noronha to turn back. At this point Noronha acknowledged to him that he had been ordered by his governor to go up as far as the Omaguas, so as to take possession of that province in the name of the King of Portugal and to see to it if possible that Fritz withdrew to someplace even farther upstream. Fritz replied a bit barefacedly that his "vocation was to die for the Faith, that is to say for the salvation and peace of these poor Indians, and not to argue about territories." The location of the border, he insisted rather disingenuously, was a matter that should be taken up with the higher authorities on both sides. This was in mid-October of 1691; Noronha and his men embarked, and "with firing of guns set off down the river," leaving Fritz to ponder about the hardships that lay ahead for his vaunted missionary enterprise. After leaving Fritz, Noronha and his men camped for ten days on the shore across from the Yurimagua town of Guapapate (apparently about a day's journey above the Juruá, near modern Fonteboa), gathering sarsaparilla. There they left a clearing marked by a large samona (sumaumeira?) tree, at which they planned to come back soon and establish a settlement of their own.¹

During the last weeks of 1691, Father Samuel worked to reestablish his damaged influence among the Yurimaguas and Omaguas. Having persuaded Mativa and his people to return for the time being to Nuestra Señora de las Nieves, he travelled up the river visiting the Omagua villages one by one. At the island towns people were friendly enough, and seemed glad to see him back.² But at San Joaquín, his mission headquarters, he found that

¹Fritz, Journal, pp. 75-77.

²The welcome may have had something to do with the fact that Fritz had been sent back with a stock of iron tools for gift-giving, a present from the Jesuits of Para. Betendorf, Chronica, p. 417.

a great number of his most trusted followers had withdrawn during the two years of his absence, and that these people had backslid so badly that they had to be gathered in and catechized all over again. Once that situation seemed to be in order, Fritz made the month-long journey up to Laguna to report to his Superior, who had not surprisingly supposed, after so long a silence, that his colleague must have been drowned in the river if not killed and eaten by his catechumens.

From Laguna, Fritz then made the laborious journey upriver and overland to Lima, where he hoped to persuade the colonial government to intervene decisively in defense of the Spanish territorial interest on the Solimões. In a memorial to Viceroy Monclova, he claimed to have won for Spain all the territory along the river from the Napo to the Negro, within which he had

already subjected to the Gospel of Christ thirty-eight villages of the Omagua Province, the mission station of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves of the tribe of the Yurimaguas, and two villages of the Aisuares tribe. In the eight first mission-stations of the Omaguas, both the children and the adults were baptized; in the rest, only the innocents.

The names of all the baptized were, he said, listed in his mission registry-books. In addition to these people, he claimed to have made friends with the Pebas (living north of the Amazon just below the Rio Napo), the Guareicús (to the south between the Javarí and Juruá), "Canvisanas" (Cayuvicenas of the Portuguese sources, living in the terra firme on the north bank between the Içá and Tonantins), the Ibanomas, a people on the Rio Arnavate (presumably somewhere below the Japurá on the north bank, in the general vicinity of Cruz' "Jaguanais"), and the Cuchivaras (Cuxiguaras, of the south bank between Lake Coarí and the Rio Purús) and Tarumãs.

All of this had been a most laborious effort, said Fritz, because of the great barbarity of these Indians -- especially those living back from the river on both banks, many of whom were engaged in constant warfare and were said to eat the flesh of their enemies. In

undertaking his mission up to that time he had, moreover, enjoyed almost no support from the royal authorities in Quito,

in iron implements and trinkets for gaining the good will of those barbarians, and still less, for the sake of decency and esteem among them, requisites for the Churches. Except a portable altar with an ornament now become ragged, and a little bell, I have nothing; nothing is given from the Royal Treasury of Quito to the Missions; nor has it been possible to get any men that might have assisted as well for the protection of life, as for better conduct of the affairs of the Catholic Faith and the extirpation of barbarous customs.

With a little more help there could have been and still could be, the earnest missionary averred, a "much larger harvest of souls."

The Viceroy was asked on this occasion to order the Audiencia of Quito to contribute financial support, and to pay a dozen men of Fritz's choice to help him with his work. Monclova's response was to order the disbursement of a thousand silver pesos from the Treasury, and a like amount from his own fortune, to be used to purchase "bells, ornaments and other costly articles conducive to the adornment and decent furnishing of his new churches." People along the Jesuit's return route to Amazonia were instructed to assist Fritz in every way. The Viceroy was greatly interested in the story of Father Samuel's adventures, and more than respectful of his person and his services. But as for the rest, he doubted seriously that the production potential of the Amazon forests was such as to justify doing battle with the Portuguese to gain control of it, or even making a minimal effort to defend any particular location or outpost. There was plenty of land in the Indies, he thought, for both Crowns to share. For the rest he encouraged the Jesuits to carry on with their most admirable missionary labors, and assured them that he was certain that God would not allow them to suffer failure!¹

¹Fritz, Journal, pp. 80-90.

Encounters with the Portuguese

Between 1693 and 1696, Fritz was again at work among the Omagua, having returned from Lima with considerable church equipment and with trade goods for the indispensable gift-giving. He had, however, neither a companion to assist him nor a promise of any further support from the government. His main concern by this time was to remove the settlements from their traditional, annually flooded island sites, and to concentrate the people in a few choice locations on high land along the river's banks.³⁹ There he hoped to erect churches and more substantial dwellings, provide convenient bases for the missionaries he hoped would follow in his footsteps, and prepare for the defense of the mission stations against enemies arriving from downstream.

The Omaguas were, however, very reluctant to cooperate with this Iberian-style program of urbanization. They were attached to their small settlements near easily-farmed summer mudflats, from which it was easy to go and come in their canoes. Moreover, they were fearful of taking up residence on the mainland

because both banks are ploughed, as it were, by various roads by which the heathen tribes, who live in the interior of the forest, descend to the river desirous of killing Omaguas, for many (people of the forest tribes) have been treacherously slain and captured by these lords and corsairs of the river.

Fritz nevertheless managed, by means of gifts and stubborn argumentation (and perhaps of threats as well), to resettle the people of San Joaquín in a fine elevated location on the north bank, hard by the territory of their fearsome enemies, the Camuris. Some Pebas from the Rio Chiquito moved there as well, seeking protection against the Camuris; and these helped make new San Joaquín the most populous town of the entire mission area. Other Omaguas

³⁹Cf. Fr. Laureano de la Cruz' conclusion in 1650 that this kind of resettlement was the Omaguas' "only hope." Fritz was almost certainly not familiar with Cruz' experience (unless he learned of it from the Omagua), and makes no reference to it in his Journal or correspondence.

were moved from their islands to a spot on the south shore which was sometimes frequented by the universally feared Mayorunas. Further down, Father Samuel had churches built in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe (the Mexican patron saint of the Indian Americas) and San Pablo, each on an imposing headland with a village gathered around it on the beaches below. Little by little, he was able to report, the island-dwellers were moving to these new "reductions" and learning to live in the style to which he hoped they would become accustomed.⁴⁰

While this major project was underway early in 1695, Fritz learned that a party of Portuguese had come up to Nuestra Señora de las Nieves de Yurimaguas, and beyond there to one of the lowermost Omagua villages, this time proclaiming their intention not to attack and enslave, but "to trade, and ransom captives." It seemed that the Paraense cacao collectors must have begun making regular trips to the middle Solimões (Yurimaguas was above the mouth of the Juruá) just as soon as they had learned that the way was clear from the returning Antônio de Miranda e Noronha in 1691. The collectors' procedure was to arrive at an Indian village, leave a quantity of the much-valued trade goods with the people as a kind of advance deposit, and let them know that they were expected to go forth and make war on some enemy tribe, in order to capture enough slaves to pay for the goods they had received. This work was to be completed before the traders returned to collect those captives during the next cacao-gathering season.⁴¹

Alarmed, Fritz made his way down to Yurimaguas post-haste in an effort to prevent any such transaction -- only to find that the despised Portuguese had left there four days before, laden with cacao and some slaves. Chief Mativa reported to him, however, that the

⁴⁰Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 90-91.

⁴¹Cf. Carib procedure described in Chapter Four. This was clearly the kind of relationship which the Pará Jesuits and *tropas de resgate* must have established with the Tarumãs on the lower Negro and with the Arawaks of Lake Saracá after 1657, and which had contributed so much to the depopulation of the lower Solimões. On occasion, the tribes thus coerced might launch attacks on their neighbors with disastrous consequences for themselves -- losing the battle and perhaps themselves being enslaved. Fritz, *Journal*, p. 102.

Paraenses had left in anger, threatening both the Yurimaguas and the Aisuares that they intended to return as soon as possible to carry them all off into captivity, because they had proved insufficiently energetic in the work of collecting slaves for bartering and were then "refusing to give them their sons to carry away with them to Pará." Mativa said that he had informed these slavers that the Yurimagua had been forbidden to sell their children by Padre Samuel (!); and that since the missionary had forbidden them to make war on the inland tribes, they had no more enemies from whom to take captives. The Portuguese captain had responded angrily that the river did not belong to their Padre, but to the moravisaba (governor) of Pará -- and that soon he would send his troops back to capture and enslave every Indian on the river. The Yurimagua now hoped that by means of some strategy, or of some white man's magic unknown to them, Fritz would be able to prevent the Paraenses from carrying out this threat.⁴²

The Portuguese cabo in question was António de Miranda e Noronha, the same who had escorted Fritz back from Pará four years before. Noronha was described by contemporaries as an "old soldier of long experience in the sertão, and greatly loved by the heathen." This may be taken as a suggestion that he was slightly less rapacious or more diplomatic in his dealings with the Indians than some other sertanistas of the day; and it may help explain the relatively peaceful nature of the expedition of 1694-95. This Paraense undertaking, as we will see, was to contribute substantially to the establishment of a mission of the Portuguese Carmelite friars in what Fritz considered to be Spanish Jesuit territory -- and in the long run to the incorporation of the Solimões valley into Brazil.⁴³ Noronha had

⁴²Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 91-92

⁴³Conselho Ultramarino, Parecer (Lx, 20 dec 1695), in Nabuco, Limites I Mem Bres Ann I, pp. 12-13. On the other hand, cf. Betendorf, Crônica, p. 417, who asserts that when Noronha was sent up with Fritz in 1691 he was asked not to take any slaves during the trip, but that he nevertheless returned from the Solimões with "muita gente." Betendorf himself had "examined" these people in the company of the Governor and Ouvidor in São Luis, and had found them to be illegitimately enslaved and therefore free ("forros") because of having been captured in "unjust war." The Junta das Missões had then proposed that the "free men" be divided among the soldiers of the expedition (that is, in principal, obliged to work

returned to the Negro and Solimões on this occasion ostensibly to collect cacao, but with instructions from Governor Carvalho of Pará that in passing he was to reconnoiter the Spanish missions, and if possible discover the exact location of Pedro Teixeira's famous border marker. In addition, he had been ordered to find out whether any Portuguese collecting expeditions in that sector of the sertão had been breaking their King's instructions and "scandalizing the savages."

The party had stopped first at the "aldeias dos Cuxiguaras" on Lake Coarí, where they had found the people hiding in the forest out of fear of their enemies (presumably the Tarumãs of the Negro, the Arawaks of the Urubú, or even the Ibanoma or Aisuares from further up the Solimões, searching now for slaves with whom to pay their "bills" to the Portuguese). Noronha's men had stayed at Coarí for two months collecting cacao, during which time the cabo had managed to persuade the Cuxiguaras to return to their villages. When he left, they had pled with him to leave some white men behind to help with their defense against the Indian marauders. This Noronha would not do -- but he had promised to send them a missionary as soon as possible.⁴⁴

A week's journey further up the Rio Solimões, Noronha had been well-received by the "Solimões" (Ibanoma?) people under Chief Ayraparú. Fully cognizant of the history of Portuguese relations with the Indians of the region, he had taken the precaution of sending word upstream from there to let people know that they need "not be alarmed at my approach, as I was coming peacefully to visit them by command of the Governor," as he had promised to do in 1691. The Ibanomas claimed that they had heard nothing from their up-river "compadres" of any Spanish incursions, and they too asked if Noronha could provide them with a missionary of their own. (In this observation Noronha confirms Fritz' impression that despite language differences the Ibanomas, Aisuares and Yurimaguas of the

for them, but for the standard wages) -- which Betendorf says he has always regretted "porque agora entendo ter sido em prejuizo da sua liberdade."

⁴⁴Noronha-Gov. Carvalho (Belém, 25 may 1695), in Nabuco, *Limites, I Mem Bres Ann I*, pp. 8-11. Partial English trans. in Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 153-54, with a slightly different text.

middle Solimões maintained cordial relations between themselves. It is clear that Fritz had given missionaries a good reputation along the river, and in particular that he had left behind him the notion that in some mysterious way a resident priest might serve as a guarantee against the annihilation of any community by his fellow-white men! Noronha was unable to provide them with a missionary, but was nevertheless pleased to note that at every stopping-place along his way, people "awaited me with presents of food for my journey, which was very necessary for me, since I had almost consumed on my way the provisions I had brought."

This "voluntary" provisioning of a passing canoe expedition was a standard feature of life on the Portuguese Amazon. On the one hand, it may be attributed to the fact that it was usually within the power (and in the 18th century came to be the established right) of a canoe captain simply to requisition such supplies as were needed from any village of "vassals of the King" that he might visit. That procedure had been initiated by Francisco de Orellana and his men (if indeed it was not an earlier custom, as with the Carib rovers on the Orinoco). On the other hand, however, the offerings of gifts in food (putavas, in lingua geral) were generally reciprocated by gifts of iron tools, clothing or other trade goods. So they amounted to a formalized kind of trade -- one which, in the absence of regional supply centers for either food or trade goods, was indispensable to both parties. Noronha would report to the Governor upon his return from the Solimões that the forests there were exceptionally rich in cacao and sarsaparilla. The most efficient way to obtain regular shipments of those commodities to Pará was, he thought, to send missionaries there on a permanent basis -- and through them to increase the trade in European goods for forest products, by which means the Indians could be supplied regularly with the goods they so badly needed, and thereby made and kept loyal to the Portuguese.

From Ayraparú's village it was a week's journey up to the Yurimaguas, passing by five other villages on the way. Noronha had supposed that the Spaniards were building a fort at Chief Mativa's village (Nuestra Señora de las Nieves in Fritz' gazetteer); but he found

that this was not so.⁴⁵ According to Mativa, Fritz had done no more than send a Christian Indian down from San Joaquín to try to persuade him to resettle his people further upstream. The Chief had set off with the messenger on the return journey, with the intention of discussing that possibility with Fritz; but he had turned back when that envoy had died along the way. Noronha shared Fritz' view that Mativa's Yurimagua subjects were "índios de boa condição" (docile folk, available for peaceful trade and exploitation). In 1695 it appeared to him that they were still "uncontaminated" by any regular dealings with the Spaniards -- this despite the fact that when Noronha reached Yurimaguas, the news had travelled up to San Joaquín with great speed, and that a letter from Fritz had been carried back downriver and had followed the Portuguese captain until it caught up with him on the Rio Negro! There was a man at Nuestra Señora de las Nieves who was able to tell Noronha that he had heard as a young man that the much-sought Teixeira border market was located another week's journey up the Amazon at a village of pagan Indians named Canaria⁴⁶ near the Cambeba (Omagua) island of Guacurayby. The marker had long since been washed away by the river, but the place would be easy to find because of a stream which came out there "above some layers of stone, that will not disappear."

Noronha's expedition was unable to proceed farther than the village of Chief Mativa on this occasion, because of a terrible epidemic which broke out there that year. Three of his domestic Indian canoemen died within a few days' time; and the others escaped only "miraculously." We may suppose that this same epidemic caused havoc among the remaining Yurimaguas (and perhaps the rest of the peoples of the Solimões as well) and that it was a contributing factor in their increased willingness to accept the blandishments of Samuel Fritz. It is not clear from the sources what may have happened during this visit to

⁴⁵The rumor that the Spaniards were building "fortresses" on the Solimões had been one of Governor Carvalho's pretexts for sending Noronha on this mission. Conselho Ultramarino, Parecer (Lx, 20 dec 1695), in Nabuco, Limites, I Mem Bres Ann I, pp. 12-13; also King-Carvalho (Lx, 6 feb 1696) in Annais BAPP I (1903), p. 107 (No. 60).

⁴⁶According to Fritz, "Canaria" was the name given by the Portuguese to the Cayuvicenas shore on the north bank between the Içá and the Tonantins.

turn Noronha and his men against the accommodating Yurimagua; but following the epidemic at Mativa's village, the relations do seem to have soured. On their way back to Pará, the tropa stopped for a time with some people they called the "Jagunaizes" (Cruz' "Jaguanais"), who lived in eight villages on the north shore just below the Japurá, and who were so friendly that once they had heard the terms and potential benefits of cooperation in the Portuguese slave trade, "they at once offered their sons to do service for any white men who should visit these parts."⁴⁷ The principal victims of the collaboration thus hatched would presumably have been the neighboring Yurimaguas, now marked for predation.

On their way to the Jagunaizes, Noronha's men also made a junket up the lower reaches of the Rio Japurá, during which they shot and killed the son of a Yurimagua chief who was fishing there, and made captives of the women in his party.⁴⁸ Later on they raided another Yurimagua settlement, where they took many slaves. They also attacked an Ibanoma village, where they met such resistance that they were forced to withdraw empty-handed; and then at the Rio Coarí they raided a settlement where, although unopposed, they killed many people and captured the rest. This news put the Yurimaguas into a great state of agitation; and it led to serious discussions with Padre Fritz about the possibility of a mass resettlement of the "evangelized" Yurimaguas, Aisuares and Ibanomas along the upper Solimões or Marañón.⁴⁹

Fritz was much concerned at the prospect of an armed Portuguese attack on mission stations already established, and on tribes with whom he had begun to build relations. At the same time he saw in this development an opportunity to consolidate his influence among the peoples of the middle Solimões. So he got together with the chiefs of the Aisuares and

⁴⁷Noronha-Carvalho (Belém, 25 may 1695), in Nabuco, *Limites I Mem Bres Ann I*, pp. 8-11.

⁴⁸The dead man was from a village called Macuaya, somewhere below Mativa's Nuestra Señora de las Nieves. One of his companions had escaped from Noronha's men, and returned to Macuaya to tell the story. The chief later told Fritz what had happened, and prevailed on him to write a letter to the Governor of Pará asking that such raids be stopped. Fritz wrote, but his letter had no effect.

⁴⁹Fritz, *Journal*, p. 94.

Ibanomas for a parley at Nuestra Señora de las Nieves in April or May of 1695. There, he says, he preached to them in their own languages and explained that he had come to them from far away only because he loved them and hoped to save them from going to Hell. As things had developed he was unable to do much for them, however, so long as they persisted in living so far away from his mission headquarters, and "on islands so ill-favored, where one cannot build a fixed church." What he proposed was that they move the remnants of their tribes upriver, to settle either in one of the existing Omagua villages, or in a new village of their own to be located somewhere near San Joaquín. The chiefs were all sufficiently alarmed by their recent experiences with the Noronha expedition and the accompanying epidemic to take this proposition quite seriously; but at the same time they expressed compelling reasons for not abandoning their territories:

and the chief one is, that living down there they provide themselves with ease and at small cost with English (sic) iron implements from the river Orinoco, because they buy them in exchange for certain beads that they make from spiral-shells more esteemed among those people than those of glass. With these beads the traders, that they call Cavauri in April or May of 1695, travel to the lands of other heathens, and redeem some captives. These they afterwards convey to the Rio Negro to the Guaranaguas, as far as where the English arrive, since, as they tell me, a few days from these Guaranaguas travelling by land one arrives at the Pajonales and the River Orinoco.⁵⁰

Obtaining the requisite iron tools from Maynas, on the other hand, was going to be quite difficult -- since there were many surviving Aisuares and Ibanomas, and it was well known by this time that kindly though Father Fritz might be, his missions were poor. The upshot of this discussion was an agreement that if the Portuguese really became intolerable, the chiefs would all move their people upriver. Meanwhile, they would attempt to hold on in

⁵⁰Journal, p. 93.

their home islands; and Fritz would send full-time missionaries to work with them there as soon as such men could be found.

Back at San Joaquín in June of 1695, Fritz was obliged to devote his main efforts for a time simply to defending the place against attacks by the warlike Camurís. The Camurís had been keeping a close watch on that town, waiting until the times when most of its men were off fishing before they would sally forth to do battle. On the first such occasion, Fritz boasted that he had run out with his cross to die "with or for my neophytes," and had the church bells rung while he did so. At this the Camurís had fled, unaccustomed to sound of bells or anything like them, leaving only two of the Omaguas wounded with poisoned lances. The Omaguas' fear of the Camurís, and their confidence in the spiritual powers of their missionary must both have been very considerable; because "that night all the people slept partly within and partly around my house, especially the children, which much stirred my feelings." On another occasion, the Camurís had been discouraged from a raid by the tolling of the bells on the Day of the Dead; and once they had been seen by an Omagua hunting-party while sneaking up on the village, and stopped in their tracks. Fritz made a couple of forays in search of the Camurís in their forest homes, to see if he might be able to bring them to terms. Finding no one, he left small presents of beads, knives and necklaces in their houses -- so they would know that he was not there to do them any harm.⁵¹ As things turned out, however, the Camurís remained stubborn in resisting all approaches from the Spaniards until the time a few years later when their territory was invaded by an armed escort. That experience recruited them to the Christian cause at last, by means of terror and destruction.⁵²

⁵¹Cf. the methods employed by Curt Nimuendajú in the pacification of the Parintintins of the Rio Madeira, standard among the secular missionaries of the Brazilian Indian Protection Service during the second quarter of the 20th century, which are graphically described in Ferreira de Castro's novel, *O instinto supremo*.

⁵²Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 94-95 & 99.

In February of 1696, Fritz learned from emissaries sent by Chief Mativa that the Portuguese were back on the river in search of cacao and slaves. Mativa was afraid that this time they would simply round up the remaining Yurimaguas and carry them off to Pará, because at Fritz' behest he had made bold to return to the slavers some iron goods they had left him as an advance, rather than providing them with any slaves. Fritz now hurried to Yurimaguas and beyond, until somewhere below the Japurá he ran into a peaceable Portuguese cacao collector named Francisco Souza who assured him that he would do the Indians no harm, and later proved faithful to his promise. This sertanista also informed Padre Samuel of the official partition of the valley into mission territories which had been determined by the government of Pará in 1693, and of the fact that under the terms of that decree the religious of the Carmelite convent in Belém had been made responsible for all the missions of the Negro and Solimões valleys. He reported too that royal pressure was then being put on the Paraenses to prevent any further "unjust" enslavements of the Indians, and to replenish their labor force as quickly as possible with African slaves brought from Angola. Souza travelled upstream with Fritz to an Aysuares village located across from the mouth of the Juruá, without giving the Indians any cause for complaint; and he was impressed there by the Aysuares' affectionate treatment of their missionary, confessing that before Fritz arrived they had been unwilling to provide him with supplies of any kind -- whereupon, in anger, he too had threatened to carry them off as slaves. The missionary thanked this kindly Paraense for his good conduct, and "exhorted him to continue as a Christian should, without allowing greed to blind him."⁵³

Fritz had some speculations of his own about the Indians' friendly attitude toward him in this period, which although tending to hyperbole are revealing. He describes all of the surviving peoples (or remnants of peoples) of the Solimões valley -- the Omaguas, Yurimaguas, Aisuares and Ibanomas -- as having been extraordinarily affectionate, loyal and

⁵³Journal, p. 96.

even possessive toward him, to the extent that they would bicker jealously between themselves over the amount of attention he was paying to each community. The Yurimagua especially were attentive when he conducted his classes in Christian doctrine,"much to the reverse of the Omaguas, who while they are being catechized amuse themselves and talk." As Fritz understood it, the Indians' view of him was that he was clearly a different kind of man from the other Europeans -- more kindly and patient, less self-serving, and not unduly exploitative in addition to being very possibly immortal. Once, when talking about the nature of the afterlife, he claimed to have been interrupted by an Aisuares chief who said that Fritz could surely never die, because in that case there would be no one to serve as their "Father, Lover and Protector." During Fritz' years of service on the Solimões, that region was to experience at least three major natural anomalies: an earthquake, an eclipse and the appearance one year of unprecedented amounts of mud in the river. All of these portentous happenings were attributed to him, he tells us, and gave a great boost to his prestige. At one point when he was in San Joaquín, in fact, a gift of several baskets of farinha arrived from a chief residing some two hundred leagues downstream, along with a request that he cause no more eclipses of the sun!⁵⁴

When António de Miranda e Noronha returned to Pará in 1695, Governor Carvalho wrote to Lisbon enclosing Noronha's report along with the letter from Fritz concerning the inadequacies of Portugal's claim to the Solimões valley. His informed the King that he planned to send Noronha back to the Solimões as soon as possible, with a Carmelite missionary who would be instructed to take formal possession of the region, and orders to find Teixeira's marker if at all possible, and establish his border post there. This report caused quite a flurry in Portugal. The Conselho Ultramarino consulted ex-Governor Gomes Freire de Andrade, and agreed with him that the evidence of Spanish (not to mention Dutch, French and English) interest in the Amazon valley was by this time so great that, "it could be

⁵⁴Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 96-97. The great access of mud is a mystery. Fritz attributes it to a volcanic eruption; but there are no active volcanoes anywhere near the Amazon headwaters!

fatal if we failed to populate and defend it." The King's advisors agreed that it was indispensable that

the Indians there be visited by the Portuguese missionaries they have all requested, understanding that they are vassals of the Portuguese king, since the Indians are the fortress wall of those wild wastes.

They recommended as well that soldiers, artillery and armaments be sent to supply the new fortress at the mouth of the Rio Negro (whose construction, as we saw in Chapter Five, had begun in 1693). The King instructed Governor Carvalho to act accordingly;⁵⁵ and on this basis plans were laid to install the Portuguese Carmelites in their new missions along the rivers Solimões and Negro.

Carmelite Backgrounds

Between the parcelling-out of mission territories in 1693 and the secularization of the Amazon missions under Governor Francisco Xavier Mendonça Furtado in 1755, the responsibility for transforming the Indians of the Negro and Solimões valleys into Christians and loyal vassals of the Portuguese King was entrusted to religious of the Carmelite Vice-Province of Maranhão and Grão Pará. These friars were to play a key role in the development of a remarkable society without government in the Amazonian trans-frontier, during the first half of the 18th century. They established or administered some two dozen mission stations -- of which about half survive today as towns in the Brazilian State of Amazonas. Theirs was the only missionary endeavor of the (Calced) Carmelite Order in colonial South America; and like the Mercedarian mission at Lake Saracá, it was carried out in a substantially different fashion from its Jesuit and Franciscan counterparts. The social, economic and religious history of that enterprise can therefore be of great value to the comparative history of the frontier missions in colonial America, and to the history of

⁵⁵Conselho Ultramarino, Parecer (Lx, 20 dec 1695) in Nabuco, Limites I Mem Bres Ann I, pp. 12-13; King-Carvalho (Lx, 6 feb 1696), in Ibid., p. 12.

human efforts to tame the Amazonian environment; but it has so far been studied almost not at all.⁵⁶

The Order of (Calced) Carmelites of the Ancient Observance had its origin in 12th-century Crusader Palestine, among monks settled in caves around the Fountain of Elijah on Mount Carmel near Haifa. In striking contrast to the Jesuits and Franciscans, followers of dynamic and exemplary founders whose Rules were intended to govern religious lives devoted to work in the world, the Carmelites drew their inspiration from anonymous cenobites who had been devoted entirely to worship and contemplation. Their Rule was no visionary formula for a spiritual conquest; it was a modest set of strictures which had been handed down at the early monks' request by the nearest hierarch of the Church. It enjoined them simply to abstinence, poverty, solitude and work as the conditions for "living in the service of Jesus, meditating day and night ... and occupying themselves in prayer." The Carmelite monks lived in community, under the supervision of a Prior who handled all of their communications with the outside world. They attended daily Mass together, but shunned other forms of liturgical worship. They spoke as little as possible, and observed strict silence between vespers and matins. They ate no meat, and fasted during half of the year. For the most part, when not engaged in tending their crops and animals, they remained in isolated cells where they took frugal meals and conducted their principal spiritual exercises -- assiduous prayer and reading of the Psalms -- in private.⁵⁷

⁵⁶The only book which treats of the Carmelite missions in any detail is A. Prat, O. Carm., Notas históricas sobre as missões carmelitanas no extremo norte do Brasil (2 vols.; Recife, 1941-42), an exasperating hodgepodge of miscellaneous and usually ill-documented facts. Manuel Wermers, O. Carm., has written very knowledgeably and coherently about the founding of the mission in "Estabelecimento," and summarily about its history in a chapter of his O Carmo em Portugal (Lisboa, 1963). For the rest, the secondary sources are limited to occasional notes in Jesuit chronicles and the standard remarks in modern histories, most conveniently drawn together in A.C.F. Reis, História do Amazonas (Manaus, 1931), pp. 54-56. Modern towns which were established as Carmelite missions before 1750 include São Paulo de Olivença, Fonteboa, Tefé and Coarí on the Rio Solimões and Moura, Thomar, Barcellos, Moreira and Ayrão on the Rio Negro.

⁵⁷Wermers, Carmo, pp. 19-23, 35-37 & 48. The author of the Rule of the Carmelites was Saint Albert Avogadro, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who handed it down and thereby established the Order under canonical law in 1209. Saint Albert joined the prophet Elijah as a principal

During the second quarter of the 13th century, the European monks in Palestine were obliged by Saracen pressure to return to their home countries; those who remained on Mount Carmel were massacred in 1291. In Europe, it proved impossible to reconstitute their pattern of life in isolated caves. The Carmelites' adaptation was at first made difficult by a papal prohibition on their establishing convents and owning common property, and by the refusal of bishops to allow them either to beg or to serve in churches. At length they appealed to the Pope for assistance in finding a place in the world; and as a result their Rule was altered so as to require them to study for the priesthood, send some of their members to pursue advanced studies in philosophy and theology at the scholastic universities, reside in urban monasteries, and take some time away from their habitual prayer and meditation so as to engage in apostolic work in the society at large.

Reconstituted thus as a Mendicant Order, the Carmelites seem to have retained a characteristic longing for the solitude and contemplation which they deemed essential to the religious life, and saw as the source of the spiritual strength which needed for engagement in any worldly activity. They were, in the words of a historian of the Order, "mystics by vocation and activists by imposition." The existential tension between these callings was a perennial problem, especially in periods such as that of their Amazon mission -- in which an "excess of external activity" was apt to cause the friars to lose sight of their ideal of contemplation. This in turn led to periodic reforms of the Order, aimed at reaffirming the original commitment. One of these, led by Theresa of Avila and John of the Cross in 16th-century Spain, resulted in the establishment of the Discalced (Barefoot) Carmelite monks and nuns as separate orders, with a greater and more disciplined commitment to the cloistered life.⁵⁸

object of Carmelite devotions. See also Efren de la Madre de Dios & O. Steggink, "Carmelite Spirituality" in the New Catholic Encyclopedia (Washington, 1967)

⁵⁸Wermers, Carmo, pp. 38-42 & 47-79.

The contemplative ideal of all Carmelites involved an obligation to live as "perfectly" as possible (that is, as nearly as possible without sin), preparing oneself to receive the divine gift of the mystical union of the soul with God. This was a gift which need not await the afterlife, but might be granted to a fortunate and meritorious few while they still lived on this earth. Among the conditions for the gift were purity of heart -- that is chastity, and a rising above affection for any living creature to allow the concentration of one's love exclusively on God. This required leaving behind the ties to family and country, and mastering all passions by means of self-mortification. Original sin, thought the practitioners of this discipline, had left human beings with an unnatural attachment to possessions and to the self which served only to diminish their spiritual faculties. To follow Jesus to the fullness of God's grace, it was necessary to renounce and repress this self with its vices. The practice of silence and solitude were held to contribute to the achievement of this high ideal; and Carmelites were encouraged to apply the principle of withdrawal within themselves -- silencing thereby the power of the heart, of the intelligence and of the imagination, concentrating them all exclusively on God. Worries drive us away; passions upset us; fantasies distract us; the intelligence attaches itself to the things of this world.⁵⁹

Central to the religious life of Carmelites, at least from the time of their reestablishment in late medieval Europe, was an especially fervent devotion to the Virgin Mary. The friars sought explicitly to imitate the love of Jesus for his mother, and held the Immaculate Conception as the principal symbol of that life free of sin to which they aspired. They called themselves the "Brothers of Mary," and adopted a white mantle to symbolize their virginal purity. Their extreme Marianism, developed through theological study, pastoral exhortation and devotional tract-writing, found material expression in the use and dissemination of the brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This talisman was

⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 49-53. Cf. Madre de Dios & Stegink.

designed to remind people of the prayers, principles and practices which would be rewarded by the protection of the Blessed Virgin in this life and the next. According to Carmelite belief, the scapular devotion had been prescribed by Mary herself when she appeared to the Order's first General⁶⁰ and later to the Pope, saying that those who died wearing her talisman would be spared Purgatory and would not suffer the flames of Hell.

In the 16th century, this scapular cult received the sanction of a Papal Bull, and was institutionalized in the lay Confraternity of the Holy Scapular with a chapter in every Carmelite church. To qualify for the protection of Mary in this way, each of the faithful was to receive the scapular from a priest authorized to bestow it. Wearers of the scapular were to carry it with them always and especially at the hour of death, observe the rules of chastity appropriate to the marital state, repeat certain Marian prayers daily and refrain from eating meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays. By the 17th century, these brethren included not only the friars of the First Order, but numbers of cloistered nuns of the Second Order and pious sodalities of married men and women in the Third Order of Carmelites -- all pledged to living by the Rule as adapted to their particular circumstances of life.⁶¹

The first Carmelite house in Portugal was established at Moura in the mid-13th century; another was functioning in Lisbon before the end of the 14th. Early in the 15th, thanks to donations of property from wealthy devotees of the Virgin (including the eminent soldier-statesman Nun' Alvares Pereira, who ended his life as a Carmelite friar), the Portuguese Carmelites became a full-fledged religious brotherhood. They established their own Province separate from that of Castile, attracted growing numbers of novices, and set up monasteries in other parts of the country. But the gradual growth of the Order in Portugal was due more to pious contributions and official patronage than to any internal dynamic. Its historian laments the absence of detailed documentation for this early period, but admits that the general image is one of "great and insipid mediocrity." Various

⁶⁰St. Simon Stock, at Aylesford Abbey in England, in 1251.

⁶¹Wermers, Carmo, pp. 57-72.

"abuses" proliferated in the monasteries, which appear to have included the accumulation of private wealth by some monks, continuous intramural squabbling, inadequate attention to the spiritual and intellectual training of novices, and a general relaxation of the Rule.

During the 16th century, an energetic Provincial carried out reforms which eliminated some of these short-comings and revitalized the internal life of the Order. This was the period in which St. Theresa and John of the Cross infused the mysticism of the Carmelites with new life and intellectual rigor, and in which the Order died out in much of northern Europe as a result of the Protestant Reformation. A series of new establishments in Portugal included the Carmelite colégio at the University of Coimbra, which would provide the Province with its theologians and doctors of canon law until the period of its decadence in the late 18th century. A list of distinguished Portuguese Carmelites for the long period between the birth of the nation and the final achievement of independence from Spain in 1640 -- including the era of Portuguese imperial expansion in Africa, Asia and Brazil as well as the Amazon valley -- includes many men of notable spiritual and intellectual attainments, and a number of bishops and other public servants. It does not include any missionaries.⁶²

Four Calced Carmelite friars were sent to Brasil in 1580, as chaplains for the projected conquest of Paraíba in the Northeast. When that expedition came to naught, they found themselves stranded in Pernambuco. A wealthy patron enabled them to establish a small convent at Olinda; and within a decade they had inherited various properties and succeeded in opening houses in Bahia, Santos and Rio de Janeiro as well. By the end of the 16th century, there was a flourishing Carmelite Vice-Province of Brazil.

The regulations established for these convents in Brazil must be assumed to have applied also to their offshoots in 17th-century Pará and Maranhão. Friars were normally

⁶²Ibid., pp. 127-41, 161-63m 172-74 & 180-84. The Spanish and Italian Discalced Friars, despite their great commitment to the contemplative life, began missionary labors in the Congo, Persia and elsewhere early in the 17th century -- within a decade of their establishment as a separate Order. J. Smet, "Carmelites," in the New Catholic Encyclopedia

sent out from Portugal to staff each residence, for periods of not more than three years. Too much exposure to the violence, the lasciviousness and the blatant materialism of colonial society was deemed hazardous to the spiritual development of the Brothers of Mary. If the friars sent were novices who went in hopes of taking advantage of the relaxed colonial requirements for admission to the priesthood, they might be kept in Brazil for a period of seven years. The elected Prior of each residence was empowered as well to recruit novices locally, on the approval of his fellow friars and provided that they could demonstrate with legal documents that they were free of any taint of Jewish, Moorish, African or Amerindian blood. This concern for limpeza de sangue naturally imposed some severe limitations on the potential for the growth of the Order in Brazil.⁶³ Furthermore, no Carmelite friar was allowed to own individual property; all earthly possessions were to be delivered to the treasurer of the convent upon admission, and administered thereafter as the Prior alone saw fit.

By 1606, there were a hundred Carmelite friars resident in the six monasteries in Brazil; by 1635, some two hundred in eleven establishments (including by then the new houses in Belém do Pará and São Luis do Maranhão). Shortly thereafter, the Brazilian branch felt strong enough to press for recognition as a Carmelite Province separate from that of Lisbon, and responsible only to the Prior General in Rome. This early push for autonomy, launched in the heat of the colonists' struggle to expel the heretical Dutch from Pernambuco, was met with stiff resistance from the recently-restored Portuguese monarchy after 1640. Its only immediate result was the creation of a separate Carmelite Vice-Province for Maranhão and Grão Pará (which thereafter had no more dealings with Bahia, but was staffed and supervised as was the royal government of those colonies, directly from

⁶³For a vivid picture of the social and religious environment in which the Carmelites of Bahia operated, including miscellaneous notes on the laymen of the Third Order there, see A.J.R.Russell-Wood, Fidalgos and Philanthropists: The Santa Casa da Misericórdia at Bahia, 1550-1755 (Berkeley, 1967).

Lisbon).⁶⁴ By 1715, there were four hundred Carmelite friars in Brazil; by 1744, more than five hundred. The Carmelites there had been the beneficiaries of much pious donation by the wealthy men of the colony; and by the 18th century they were the possessors of extensive estates and many well-appointed convents. To whatever spiritual vocation might motivate a prospective Brazilian novice, there was added the guarantee of a comfortable living for anyone who might complete the modest course of theological training and gain admission to the Order. For many of the less prosperous and successful among the European settlers and their sons, that must have been an attractive prospect indeed.

The Calced Order of Carmelites of the Ancient Observance was therefore an important and relatively opulent institution in the ecclesiastical structure of colonial Brazil; but it had no role at all in the frontier missions there. The "external" undertakings of the friars were limited to the instruction of prospective novices, the administration of estates, and pastoral work in the churches and confrarias associated with their numerous convents. Missionary work was considered the special competence of Jesuits and to a lesser extent the Franciscans in Brazil; and the colonial government was quite content to leave the Carmelites to their churches and to the agitation of mass piety in urban areas.⁶⁵

Two Carmelite friars from Brazil accompanied the Portuguese expedition which drove the French out of Maranhão in 1615. The victorious captain gave them land and encouragement to establish a convent in São Luis, and more friars were soon sent from Brazil to join them. By 1627, there was a second Carmelite establishment in Belém under the patronage of the Captain-Major of Pará (and first great Amazonian slave-raider), Bento Maciel Parente. In time, Belém grew to be the larger of the two and the headquarters of the

⁶⁴The Brazilian pressure for autonomy led eventually to the establishment of not one but three separate Carmelite Provinces -- in Rio, Bahia and Pernambuco -- by the middle of the 18th century.

⁶⁵Wermers, Carmo, pp. 213-23. Smet observes that the Calced Carmelites were never established in the Spanish Empire (except for such isolated individuals as the indefatigable traveller, Antonio Vázquez de Espinosa), due to restrictions imposed by the Habsburg Government. The French Province of Touraine maintained a few friars in the West Indies between 1646 and 1789.

Vice-Province of Maranhão. There was a modest seminary there (moved from São Luis in 1698) which for many years prepared locally recruited novices to be sent on to Lisbon for their last years of training and admission to the Order; it was not until 1727 that the full course of study and ordination was made available in Pará. An additional convent went up at Tapuitapera in the 1650's; the one established at Gurupá in 1639 was wiped out by disease in 1674. To these and a half-dozen smaller establishments around Belém and São Luis were added a series of landed estates and urban properties inherited, or sometimes purchased, by the Order through the years -- all of which taken together provided for the support of at least sixty "conventual" friars by 1675. Four Carmelite fazendas were in operation in 1706, on which Indian and African slaves worked fields of sugarcane, rice, manioc, beans, cotton, and various miscellaneous food crops in addition to manufacturing agoardente. By the 1730's, there were at least eleven such income-generating Carmelite estates between Pará and Maranhão -- whose combined production was worth something in the neighborhood of twelve thousand milreis (12,000\$000, or 30,000 cruzados) a year.⁶⁶

The gradual proliferation of properties gives a misleading picture, however, of the progress of the Carmelite Order in Pará. The number of friars in residence tended rather to decline than increase during the century before 1750. In 1704, it was reported that there were only twenty-four of them in the three convents -- not nearly enough to attend both to their downriver churches and estates, and to their newly-established missions on the Rio Negro and Rio Solimões. This decrease was due partly to a high death-rate from disease, and especially to the fact that most of the friars in residence at any given moment were peninsular Portuguese who were busy moving whatever influences they had in order to get themselves sent back to Portugal at the earliest possible date. The Vice-Provincials themselves were appointed only for three-year terms; and they too were generally anxious to

⁶⁶Wermers, "Estabelecimento," pp. 531-33, 536-37. Figures from the estimates of the earnings of religious orders drawn up for Alexandre de Souza Freire and Paulo Nunes da Silva (AHU Pará Cx 3 and Evora Cod. CSV/2-13, ff. 224-237 & 270-79), to which more extensive reference is made below.

get home as soon as they had finished a tour of duty. This tendency was exacerbated by the necessity of sending even the native-born Paraense friars to Lisbon to complete their Carmelite training; once ordained, these men would also contrive to remain in the capital city as long as they could. Vice-Provincial Victoriano Pimentel once proposed to his superiors that as a minimum measure all the Carmelites in Portugal who were natives of Maranhão and Grão Pará should be sent back there, and thereafter refused permission to return to Europe. Pimentel himself was a notable exception to the above generalizations; he was a peninsular Portuguese who chose to remain in Pará from the turn of the century until at least 1734, served three terms as Vice-Provincial, and was widely esteemed in the colony as a judicious prelate and member of the Junta das Missões.⁶⁷ But generally speaking it does not appear that the community was palpitating with vocations for the hard life of the upper Amazon missions.⁶⁸

There are occasional suggestions in the colonial documents of moral laxity on the part of the Carmelites of Pará. A governor asks the Vice-Provincial to discipline a friar who has been carrying on scandalously with a widow, to the great consternation of her relatives and the community at large. He wants the friar exiled, or at least confined to his convent, so as to set a stern example to the other Carmelites (and to the Mercedarians as well), "because both are in need of thorough reform, as regards both what they do in the towns and what they do in the sertões."⁶⁹ Another official complains to the King that a mulata whore has been found in the cell of a novice at the Mercedarian convent of São Luis. The novice has been expelled from that order, but admitted straightaway to the Carmelites!⁷⁰ There is

⁶⁷Boaventura-Serra (Pará, 10 aug 1734), ms. AHU Para 2nd ser Cx 1.

⁶⁸An anonymous Jesuit writer put it this way in 1663: "Os religiosos do Carmo terão muita religião e virtude, mas não tem por instituto serem missionários." Parecer sobre as missões do Maranhão (n.d.) ms. Ajuda 50-V-35, ff. 371-7sv. Wermers found a copy of the same document in AHU Maranhão in the Caixa series, and attributes it to the Jesuit Procurador das Missões for 1663.

⁶⁹Conselho Ultramarino, Consulta (Lx, 19 oct 1718), ms. AHU Cod. 274, f. 265.

⁷⁰King-Gov. Serra (Lx, 24 feb 1734), anexo, in *Anais BAPP* 6 (1907), p. 235. The most striking thing about these charges is perhaps the fact that they found their way to the Court in Lisbon -- which may mean that they were exceptional, or may mean that they were

presently no basis for drawing general conclusions from such fragments of information as these, but they do contribute to filling out the impression of a human group that was far removed by its circumstances from the rigorous spiritual discipline of an ideal Carmelite community.

The general attitude of the Carmelites toward the settlers and the secular interest in colonial Pará seems, in striking contrast to that of the Jesuits, to have been both favorable and cooperative. During most of the 17th century, the friars were excluded from missionary activity as they had been in Brazil; and by that same token they were denied any participation in the administration of the downriver aldeias of "free" Christian or domestic Indians. The Carmelites were therefore never in bitter conflict with the moradores over control of the labor force; as the operators of small estates worked by slave labor, they were in fact participants in the settlers' perennial demand for unrestricted access to Indian manpower. On the other hand, they were the parish priests, confessors and friends of many moradores, who by and large allied with them in resistance against the political and economic dominance of the Jesuits.⁷¹

In 1670, the Conselho Ultramarino circulated a questionnaire to government and ecclesiastical functionaries in the colony, to poll their opinion about the present state of the administration of the Indian population. The Carmelites on this occasion took a decidedly moderate position. It was their view that the Orders should be asked to take turns visiting the sertão, to preach and to bring down any Indians who were disposed to do so by means of peaceful descimentos. Each new group of these laborers should be administered for spiritual purposes by the Order which had brought them in, but in temporal affairs by a

trumped up as part of some larger undertaking. It is worth pointing out that such charges seem never to have been levelled at the Jesuits during the century of assiduous struggles and systematic character assassinations against them, which culminated in their final expulsion from the colony in 1757.

⁷¹The Jesuit Procurador das Missões suggested in 1663 that the Carmelites had been behind the 1661 revolt which drove the Jesuits out of Pará. Anon., Parecer ... (n.d.) ms. Ajuda 50-V-35, ff. 371-72v.

secular tribunal. (The Jesuits, it will be remembered, were at that time lobbying for and ultimately were granted, complete temporal and spiritual jurisdiction over the Indian settlements of Pará, and over all aspects of their recruitment and transportation as well). In the Carmelite view, at least by this period and in Pará, Indian slavery was a necessary and unquestioned fact of life; without slave labor, the productive activity of the colony would come to a halt. In the future the enslavement of Indians might perhaps be reduced or prevented altogether, if another source of suitable labor were found; but in the meantime, the institution must be encouraged and protected.

On the matter of the conduct of slaving expeditions, the Carmelites at that time took a position which was similarly favorable to the secular interest. It was just, they believed, for the Portuguese to enslave those Indians who refused to accept the Faith, and those who attacked the missionaries who were attempting to carry the Faith out to them. The captives taken in a just war waged against such people rightfully belonged to the victors; and they could legitimately be kept or sold by them into perpetual slavery. Legitimately enslaved Indians should be distinguished from other enslaved Indians by an outward sign (presumably a brand!). Those turned over to the religious orders should be treated just as the slaves owned by laymen were treated. Free Indians (that is, those who had resettled voluntarily in Pará and Maranhão) should be administered by their priests, paid reasonable wages, and protected by the secular tribunal. The secular authority in their aldeias should be wielded by secular officials -- a white man (lay captain) appointed by the tribunal, and Indian principais chosen by the tribe.⁷²

The Repartição das Missões of 1693

In 1693, the long-latent interest of the Pará government in exploiting the upper reaches of the Amazon valley was rekindled. The visit of Samuel Fritz to Pará had raised there the alarming specter of Spanish expansion in the hinterland. The increasing

⁷²Kiemen, Indian Policy, pp. 129-30.

depopulation of the lower valley, reported each year by the cacao-collecting crews, made it seem necessary to press ever further afield in the search for Indian slaves. The Câmara of Pará was clamoring for more missionaries (preferably not Jesuits), to help with their recruitment of labor.⁷³ The prosperous Jesuits, up to that time officially responsible for all missionary work in the colony, had pushed their string of settlements as far westward as the mouth of the Rio Xingú. The Crown, extremely supportive of their efforts during the decade of the 1680's, now urged them to expand their work into the Madeira, Negro and Solimões valleys.

The Jesuits of Pará, unlike most missionaries of the Spanish or Portuguese empires in any era, had been receiving their government maintenance allowance (*ordinária*) on a regular basis during those years; and they had even managed to have these subsidies doubled in 1687. After the Regimento das Missões confirmed their temporal as well as spiritual authority over all the aldeias of Pará, they earned moreover very substantial sums from the productive endeavors of the Indian communities under their administration. But the Jesuits were chronically short of personnel in Pará (among other things because their standards for admission were high; their order had responsibilities all over the Portuguese-speaking world; and they did very little if any of their recruitment locally); and they were perhaps also anxious to avoid the embarrassment of an open confrontation with their Spanish brethren on the Solimões.⁷⁴ The Governor (an ex-Captain-Major of Pará and the son of a previous governor, whose family was closely allied to the settler interests there), had revealed himself to be openly hostile to any expansion of the Jesuits' power and influence.⁷⁵ The Jesuit Superior of Pará therefore refused this additional assignment.

⁷³Wermers, "Estabelecimento," pp. 537-41; Kiemen, *Indian Policy*, p. 121.

⁷⁴Kiemen maintains that there were only five Jesuits in Pará and three in Maranhão in 1692 -- figures which must refer to men in the Jesuit residences or available for missionary service, since a good many more were on assignment to the aldeias and estates of the province at any given time. *Indian Policy*, pp. 169-70 & 173; Cf. Wermers, *Carmo*, p. 230.

⁷⁵Anon., "Informatio. . ." cited in Wermers, "Estabelecimento," pp. 528-30. Gov. Carvalho is accused by the author of this Latin letter on the state of the missions of Pará, of having

The result was a royal decree, the Repartição of 1695, which determined a rather arbitrary division of the Amazon Valley into mission fields, assigned to each of the religious orders then operating in Pará in accordance with their estimated capacity to administer. The Franciscans of the Province of Santo António were assigned to the Cabo do Norte and the north bank of the river up to Urubuquara, as well as to the settlements around Gurupá. The Mercedarians, as we saw in Chapter Five, were to remain in their missions around Lake Saracá. The Jesuits were to carry on and expand through the entire area south of the Amazon, and west to the Rio Madeira. The Carmelites, with the greatest possible reservations, agreed to be asked by a reluctant King to try and establish some mission stations in the most remote and least promising area available: the little-known valleys of the Rio Negro and Rio Solimões.⁷⁶

The Carmelites of Pará were thus launched quite inauspiciously, upon their career as founders of missions and savers of souls. They had no experience to draw upon for this purpose, other than that of the Jesuits themselves, which was familiar at least in rough outline to all Paraenses. One of their number had in fact served as a missionary to the Indians of the Serra do Ibiapaba in Ceará not long before, substituting for the Jesuit who was normally assigned there; and he was said to have done well. But aside from that, there was nothing in their training or traditions which would dispose them to the hard work and

used the aldeia Indians for his own economic purposes and having allowed the moradores to take people from the aldeias at will, despite the missionaries' protests.

⁷⁶The King had little confidence indeed in the ability of the Carmelites to handle this assignment. The first version of the Repartição left them out entirely, instructing the Jesuits to range as far west as they were able on the south bank, and if possible to take over the missions of the Urubú and Negro. Barring this, the Urubú and Negro might be left to the Mercedarians; and if the Mercedarians had no suitable men to send, the King avowed that he would rather have no missions there at all! King-Gov. Carvalho (Lx, 19 mar 1693), in Livro Grosso 66, pp. 142-44. But when the Jesuits refused to extend their work beyond the Rio Madeira, and the Mercedarians proved to be hard put even to maintain their missions around Lake Saracá, the King informed the Governor that as a last resort he had decided to ask the new Carmelite Vice-Provincial, Fr. Manoel da Esperança, to see if he could find at least a few friars who were suitable for missionary work on the Negro. King-Gov. Carvalho (Lx, 26 nov 1694), in Regimento e Leys (Lisboa, 1724), pp. 79-82, sewn into Evora Cod. CIV 2-12, ff. 159-60v.

sacrifice which would be required by the effort to convert pagan peoples in remote places to Christianity. They did not enjoy the confidence (nor, as it developed, could they count on the financial and military support) of the Royal Government. The Carmelites were few in number; their morale was generally low; and insofar as they were men guided by religious vocation, they were committed to an ideal rather of withdrawal from the affairs of the world than of plunging headlong into them. Not least, they were "soft" men accustomed to lives of relative comfort. Few of them had acquired much experience in the rough ways of the Amazonian sertão.

On the other hand, the Carmelites were a group of men who had been obliged by institutional poverty to maintain themselves by their own efforts in Pará; and they had managed quite successfully to build up their temporal holdings to the degree that was necessary to guarantee their survival in that difficult environment. The Carmelites' estates were in constant need of Indian manpower, as were all others in Pará; and their owners shared with most other inhabitants of the colony an envy of the prosperity which the Jesuits had derived over the preceding quarter-century from their missionary enterprises. There were, as it turned out, always a few Carmelites in Pará who were willing and able to accept the challenges of missionary labor on the remote Amazonian frontier.

Establishment of the Carmelite Mission on the Solimões.

In view of the official importance suddenly accorded to the Solimões valley, and of the possibilities for the exploitation of the Negro valley which had opened with the recent building of a fort and garrison at its mouth, Governor António de Albuquerque Coelho de Carvalho decided in 1697 to travel up and inspect the central Amazon valley for himself. This Governor, unlike any of his successors in that post until late in the 18th century, was an old Amazon hand rather than a member of the imperial career bureaucracy. He had been Captain-Major of Pará before his appointment; and he was no friend of the Jesuits. One of his great concerns in travelling to the frontier was, in fact, to see to the successful establishment of the Carmelites in their new mission field on the Negro and Solimões, as an

alternative to the Jesuits' control of practically everything in the colony. Another was to bring down a number Indian slaves to replace those who had been killed in the devastating recent epidemic of smallpox in Pará.⁷⁷ Carvalho's journey was the first ever by a governor of Pará to the middle Amazon; and it was not to be repeated until the time of Francisco Xavier de Mendonça Furtado in the 1750's. This was a large expedition consisting of soldiers and civil officials, accompanied by the Vice-Provincial of the Carmelites with the several priests who were to be installed in the missions newly granted them by the Repartição of 1695.

The governor's party travelled without incident and established its base camp at the abandoned Jesuit mission of Abacaxis, across from the mouth of the Rio Madeira. Carvalho then sent messages ahead to the Solimões, instructing the several principais of the lower valley presumed to be friendly to the Portuguese, that they were to visit him at Abacaxis so that they might receive gifts and be informed of their obligations as vassals of the Portuguese King. From the chiefs who came, he learned that Padre Samuel Fritz was still in the habit of visiting their aldeias from time to time, as part of his unceasing effort to persuade them to resettle further upstream; and that the Spanish Jesuit continued to press his claim that the river as far down as the mouth of the Negro belonged to the King of Spain. Just the year before, these chiefs reported, Fritz had actually come down the river with with a party of Spanish soldiers and threatened to take them back to Maynas with him by force.⁷⁸

The Governor discussed these alarming developments with his travelling companion the Vice-Provincial, Frei Manoel da Esperança; and they agreed that the situation required drastic action. The Carmelite offered not only to send some of his men to take over the existing missions on the Solimões right away, but to journey there himself so as to survey

⁷⁷Carvalho-King (Belém, 26 July 1697), in Nabuco, Limites, I Mem Bres Ann I, pp. 15-17.

⁷⁸Carvalho-King (? , 20 Jul 1697), ms. in AHU Pará Cx 1. Fritz himself makes no mention of any such soldiers. But he was not averse to using them, as will be seen below, and may have done so in 1696.

the situation and make sure that the installation of his missionaries was properly done and might have lasting results. Soon afterward, Frei Manoel set out with his colleague Frei Sebastião da Purificação, some soldiers, and a notary whose job it was to prepare the necessary legal documents for the formal occupation of each locality. Cabo José Antunes da Fonseca was charged with protecting these missionaries, and with instructing the chief of each village on the nature of his duties to the Portuguese government. In addition, he was to try once more to find Pedro Teixeira's marker, and to inquire along the way as to the names of any settlers from Pará who had been guilty of taking slaves illegally on the Solimões. If any such men were actually found there he was to arrest them, confiscate their property, and send them back to Belém for judgment. Frei Manoel and his party then made their way to an unnamed aldeia on the lower Solimões (presumably that of the Cuxiguaras near Lake Coarí), of which Fr. Manoel took possession in the name of the Portuguese Crown, and where right away he put the people to work cutting timbers with which to build a chapel.⁷⁹

While the Portuguese Carmelites were on their way up the Solimões on this occasion, Samuel Fritz was heading down from Omaguas to visit his Yurimagua friends and see why he had heard no news from them in several months' time.⁸⁰ Upon reaching Chief Mativa's village, he learned that the Portuguese under Fonseca had reached the nearby settlement of "San Ignacio de Aisuares"⁸¹ and hastened there to meet with them. Frei Manoel informed his Spanish Jesuit colleague that they had come to take possession of the place on orders from their Governor, and "on petition of the Indians themselves." Father Samuel expressed great surprise at the last affirmation, since it had been his impression for years that these Indians "loathed nothing more than being subject to the Portuguese, from

⁷⁹Carvalho-Fonseca (Abacaxis, 6 mar? 1697), ms. AHU Para Cx 2.

⁸⁰Carvalho was informed that Fritz had come down to "avistarse com alguns moradores desta Capitania que ali andavão na colheita do cacao. Carvalho-King (?, 20 jul 1697), ms. AHU Para Cx 2.

⁸¹The name of this village, though it does not appear elsewhere, suggests that Fritz had indeed at least made a formal beginning at establishing missions below the Yurimaguas' territory.

whom they had received, and receive, every day very great injuries." The Carmelite explained that the basis for their claim was that when Governor Carvalho had offered the services of a missionary to the Ibanoma and Aisuar chiefs at Abacaxis, they had replied that they already had one in Samuel Fritz but that he was seldom in attendance. Whereupon the governor had remarked that a missionary who really cared for them would reside permanently among them, as the Carmelites were offering to do; and this argument had impressed the chiefs greatly.

Fritz then expounded to the Portuguese his views concerning Spanish sovereignty on the Solimões, observing in addition that for eight years he had been visiting these downriver missions on a regular basis without damage to any Portuguese interests in the area; and that during this time he had persuaded many pagan Indians to settle in the villages of the várzea

when some were wandering as fugitives through the woods and others were living in concealment near the lagoons, because of the murders and enslavements which they had formerly endured from those of Pará, where I myself, when I was in that city, saw many slaves from those tribes.

He claimed, moreover, to have learned in Pará that it was not the intention of the King of Portugal to deprive him of his missions. This had been demonstrated by the Governor's having sent him back to them with an official military escort in 1691.

The Carmelite friars and their companions were unimpressed by Father Samuel's lucubrations; and as Fritz recalled the incident, Frei Manoel went so far as to seek authoritatively and with threats of force to hinder me from praying with the people, even from celebrating Mass in the chapel that I myself had built.

Padre Samuel protested this treatment so vigorously that at last Esperança was obliged to apologize and allow him to celebrate. But a similar scene was repeated when the two parties

then travelled together up to Fritz's mission of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves.⁸² The Portuguese carried out a legal ceremony by which they claimed to be taking possession of that place and of all of the remaining the Solimões missions as far upriver as the first village of the Cambebas (Omaguas) people.

Fritz then delivered to them a letter protesting the fact that they were taking over his long-established missions by force. Acknowledging that since 1691 he had himself entertained doubts about the ultimate disposition of the territorial question on the Solimões, he claimed to have been reporting on the progress of his missions to the Governor of Pará as well as to the Viceroy of Peru; and he urged the Paraenses now to make no changes in the status quo, until the border question could be resolved by diplomatic negotiations between the Kings of Spain and Portugal.

José Antunes da Fonseca responded that he had been sent by his governor to the Solimões to

investigate crimes of violence, carried out by certain Portuguese who frequent the Solimões valley, against chiefs who are long-time friends of ours, and to arrest the guilty parties to transport them back to Pará for punishment.

He had brought with him the Carmelite missionaries who had recently been assigned by his King to take charge of the Portuguese missions on the Solimões; and he maintained that it was only by accident that he and his men had run into Fritz. This was a territory which never had belonged to the Spaniards, and which had in fact been frequented for many years by the Portuguese and Paraenses.⁸³ Fonseca's men in the meantime, uninhibited by the performance of their official functions, were hard at work distributing trade goods to the Indians. Along with these goods went the threat that if the King of Portugal's new subjects did not go out immediately, and capture some slaves to exchange for those goods before

⁸²Fritz, *Journal*, p. 100.

⁸³Fritz-Fonseca (N.S. de las Nieves de los Yurimaguas, 20 apr 1697); Fonseca-Fritz (Aldea de Mativa [the same place!] 22 abr 1697); Carvalho-King (Belém, 20 jul 1697), all ms. in AHU Para Cx 2.

Fonseca's party left the Solimões, they would themselves all be rounded up and carried off to Pará to be sold.⁸⁴

Fonseca and his men had intended to accompany Fritz back up the river until they found Teixeira's marker, which they now professed to believe was located on the "Cayuvicenas shore" between the Tonantins and the Içá, inside Omagua territory.⁸⁵ They were prevented from doing so, however, by a sudden new outbreak of disease "in both whites and Indians, which obliged them to withdraw after several people had died." Frei Sebastião da Purificação became too ill to remain on the Solimões; and after a brief consultation, the parties agreed to leave Yurimaguas simultaneously and travel in opposite directions -- which they did late in April of 1697. At this point, Chief Mativa's village of Nuestra Señora de las Nieves seemed likely to function as the de facto frontier between the two mission areas, until such time as the Iberian Kings could resolve the conflict for once and for all. But as soon as the descending Portuguese receded from sight, Fritz turned around and returned to Yurimaguas, where he stayed to for an additional week to preach and cajole the people.⁸⁶

Although the Carmelite mission on the Solimões was thus formally established by the visit of Esperança and Fonseca, it is not at all clear when the first missionary actually established himself in permanent residence there.⁸⁷ Following their return to Pará in July of 1697, Governor Carvalho arranged with Frei Manoel to send Frei Sebastião da Purificação back to take up his duties just as soon as he was able to travel. From that time onward, it would remain a matter of high priority from the colonial government's point of view, that the

⁸⁴Fritz, *Journal*, p. 102.

⁸⁵Fritz, *Journal*, p. 103.

⁸⁶Carvalho-King (Belém, 20 jul 1697), ms. AHU Pará Cx 2. Fritz, *Journal*, pp. 100-102.

⁸⁷Some sort of contact had been established with the Cuxiguara of the Lake Coarí area several years before this time, presumably by cacao collectors or by a Jesuit slaving-chaplain from Pará. An anonymous list of mission aldeias in Amazonia (n.d. 1692?), ms. AHU Para Cx 2 contains, however, only the following note for the Solimões valley: "as aldeias dos Cuxibarazes que são de paz duas ou tres citas junto ao Rio das Amazonas não tem missionários."

Solimões missions be fully staffed. When the first resident missionary did go there to stay, he was to search the river (much as Fritz had done) for healthy spots on which to organize permanent settlements -- "since most locations are disease-ridden with an intolerable plague of mosquitos." Ideally, each missionary was to be accompanied by a military official of his own choosing, whose job it would be to protect the missionary against Indian attacks, as well as punishing any white sertanistas who continued to abuse the Indians in that sector of the sertão.⁸⁸

These initial regulations indicate a long-overdue expression of concern on the part of the government of Pará, that the population of the middle and lower Solimões be stabilized rather than physically removed. This was deemed necessary in order to guarantee the supply of provisions and manpower there, as a means of furthering the collection of cacao and other forest products, and supplying any expeditions that might be sent to defend the frontier against the Spaniards. An additional goal, over the longer term, was to establish bases for the expansion of the Indian slave trade up the Rio Japurá and other tributaries. The Governor of Pará, for his part, was at pains to report to the King that Frei Manoel da Esperança had done a great service to the Crown by carrying out his visit to the Solimões; and that since that time he had been doing an excellent job as mission administrator, despite the fact that he was receiving no financial support for this work from the colonial government.⁸⁹

But Esperança had returned "mortally ill" from the Solimões; he appears in fact to have been incapacitated for further action of any kind, and for the moment there was no one available to replace him.⁹⁰ Fr. Sebastião da Purificação and the two other Carmelites then

⁸⁸Carvalho-King (Belém, 26 jul 1697), in Nabuco, *Limites I Mem Bres I*, pp. 15-17; King-Carvalho (Lx, 12 dec 1697), in *Livro Grosso* 66, pp. 174-76.

⁸⁹Carvalho-King (Belém, 20 jul 1697). The Conselho Ultramarino, reviewing the correspondence on this case, concluded that if Fritz were found in the Carmelite mission area again, he should be captured and sent as a prisoner to Pará. Consulta (Lx, 12 nov 1697), ms. AHU Para Cx 2.

⁹⁰Wermers, "Estabelecimento," pp. 452-53. In a curious note on Esperança's career, a modern Carmelite history credits him with having been the first European to report on the

available for mission duty, were by this time busy on the Rio Negro -- as will be seen in Chapter Seven. It was therefore not perhaps until Frei Manoel's successor as Vice-Provincial was able to send Frei João Guilherme and Frei Francisco de Santo Anastácio to the Solimões in about 1700, that the new missions were actually staffed on even a temporary basis.

Frei Francisco's stay on the Solimões was a signal disaster. Shortly after his arrival, the inexperienced evangelist was killed by the Cuxiguaras at a place known as Manutá -- the same community which had provided Noronha with so warm a welcome only five years before, and which had pled with him to provide them with a missionary! Unfortunately, we know nothing today about the inappropriate behavior that must have provoked this response, or the events that led up to it. Frei João Guilherme was determined enough to remain on the Solimões alone for a time, trying to patch up the damage that had been done to the relations between the Paraenses and the Indians around Lake Coarí; but in 1703, he was transferred to the reconstituted mission of Tarumãs on the Rio Negro. According to the confusing reports that reached Pará during this period, it was only a short time after Santo Anastácio's death that the ever-vigilant Samuel Fritz arrived once more among the Cuxiguaras -- this time to warn them of the inevitable Portuguese reprisals. His suggestion was that they withdraw as soon as possible to his new village of Santa María Mayor, on the Rio Marañón above the Omaguas. The Carmelite Vice-Provincial was obliged in the meantime to inform Lisbon that their mission on the Solimões was indeed getting off to a slow start.⁹¹

Omagua technique for extracting and utilizing rubber. No further hint of this appears in the sources, and in fact Fr. Manoel seems never to have visited the Omaguas' territory. This "discovery" (from which can be dated the history of the European utilization of natural rubber, the demand for which culminated in the Amazon "rubber boom" of the late 19th c.) is usually attributed to the French scientific traveller Charles Marie de la Condamine, who visited the Solimões nearly half a century later and, unlike any Carmelite missionary, later published a book on his experiences. Prat, *Notas* I, 290 & II, p. 47.

⁹¹Wermers, "Estabelecimento," pp. 543 and 55; Azevedo, *Contas* (Belém, 20 jul 1704), ms. AHU Para Cx 3; Fritz, *Journal*, p. 124. So great was the scarcity of Carmelites to send to the missions that in 1701, Vice-Provincial Fr. José de Lima set out to visit them himself. He fell ill on the way, however, and was obliged to return to Pará without having reached the Solimões.

The news of this delay occasioned great concern at the Court; and in 1701 the King once again instructed the Junta das Missões in Pará to see to it that all of the outlying mission stations were properly staffed. The situation on the Solimões, Negro and Urubú was viewed as especially critical; and the Carmelites in particular were admonished not to abandon that field just because one of them had lost his life there. On the contrary, they should return and give a good example -- by treating the guilty Indians with unfailing gentleness, and exercising great restraint in the administration of any punishments. This so that "fear and harshness do not oblige them to abandon these villages, or discourage others from settling in them." Mission superiors were to make regular visits of inspection to those far-flung stations, and remove or transfer personnel as they found it necessary so as to avoid any abuses. Missionaries were reminded by this instruction that under no circumstances were they to engage in private business of any kind; and at the same time that it was their obligation to collaborate in every way possible with the government's ongoing effort to resettle Indian laborers in Pará, whether by means of peaceful resgates or of voluntary descimentos.⁹²

In that same year another newly arrived Carmelite missionary, Frei Francisco Xavier, was also killed by the Cuxiguaras on the islands of the lower Solimões. The circumstances of this second "martyrdom" also fail to emerge from our sources; what is certain is that it was the occasion for great consternation in Pará. The Junta das Missões ordered a formal inquiry into the matter -- the first step towards authorizing a "just war" against a tribe which appeared bent on resisting the peaceful preaching of the Gospel; but the findings of that inquiry have not come down to us, and the war seems never to have been either authorized or waged.

Frei Victoriano Pimentel, the energetic new Vice-Provincial of the Carmelites of Pará, took office sometime in 1701. Not long afterwards, when a new manifesto was

⁹²King-Junta (Salvaterra, 3 feb 1701), in Regimento e leis, Evora Cod. CXV/2-12, ff. 154-56.

received from Samuel Fritz protesting against the recent Carmelite intrusions into his mission field, Pimentel was quick to respond. Obtaining permission from the Governor and Junta das Missões, he travelled to the Solimões in late 1702 and early 1703 to see what could be done to consolidate the position of the Portuguese there. His plan was to meet face to face with the obstreperous Spanish Jesuit, and attempt to dissuade him from pursuing any further his campaign against the expansion of Carmelite and Paraense influence in that region. This journey provides us with the first Carmelite document which offers any sort of detailed information about the operation of the Order's new missions on the Negro and Solimões.⁹³

Pimentel was well aware from the start that gifts were indispensable as a means both of recruiting and "quieting" the native peoples of the sertão. Poor as they were, the Carmelites of Pará therefore managed to provide him with a considerable store of trade goods (mostly articles of clothing, and strangely not including the iron tools generally viewed as indispensable for this purpose -- perhaps because of the scarcity and high cost of such goods in Pará).⁹⁴ These he gave out liberally during his trip, as long as the stocks lasted. The gifts in question usually included a full suit of clothes for the chief of any village he happened to visit, and varying amounts of the items of less value for the other people he met -- calculated always in proportion to the difficulty he sensed he was having in his effort to woo these people to the Portuguese and Carmelite cause.

⁹³Pimentel, "Relacam que faz . . . da jornada que fez ao Certam a empedir ao P. Samuel Fritz . . . as descidas que fazia pelo Rio das Amazonas abaixo; e de como praticou e sossegou todo aquele gentio" (Carmo de Lisboa, 7 sep 1705), reproduced in part in Wermers, "Estabelecimento," from a document in the AHU Maranhão Caixas which I have not seen. Cited hereafter as Pimentel, "Relação." Cf. also King-Pimentel (Lx, 15 jun 1706), in Livro Grosso 66, p. 283.

⁹⁴The economic base for Pimentel's activities appears to have been slender indeed. In the absence of any regular royal subsidy (the standard, but seldom the normal means of missionary support under the Padroado Real), he had no more "tença" (regular income) than the "alms from his sermons," and in fact he was obliged to borrow part of the 600\$000 needed to outfit this expedition to the Solimões. "Relação," p. 549.

At the fateful village of Manutá (Coari?) he found that the killers of Frei Francisco de Santo Anastácio had withdrawn to the forest for a time, but that they had been persuaded to return to their village by dint of the patient efforts of Frei João Guilherme. There,

in order to tame these savages once more, I provided suits of clothing to the chief and his son, and gave smaller gifts to all the rest, so as to oblige them to receive and give better treatment to another missionary -- as in fact they later did.

Confident by then in the future of their mission in that town, the Vice-Provincial formally endowed it the name of Santo Alberto, beloved of the Carmelites.

Continuing up the Solimões, Pimentel waxed eloquent in his descriptions of the physical hardships which awaited any missionaries who went to serve in that region. He had himself been

so afflicted by some small mosquitos known as pium, that not only was my face swollen but my hands were so badly bitten that they gave off pus for a month and wouldn't let me sleep at night unless I soaked them first in scalding salt water which left them raw. The itching they produced was so bad that I'd have preferred pain. [Then, within a week of my arrival], a terrible fever began which lasted more than eleven months -- changing and getting worse many times during that period.

At Santa Thereza de Tefé (as the Carmelites were now calling the important town across from the mouth of the Japurá), he grew so weak that he was obliged to spend three weeks in bed, "bled and purged, and gravely ill." As if that were not enough, the very business of travelling from one place to another on the river was fraught with dreadful hazards:

on ten or twelve occasions I was on the verge of capsizing on the river in furious storms. I often underwent hunger and even thirst because the river's water evidently did me harm.

Tefé was an Aisuar village; and it was here that Pimentel found Padre Samuel's work to have done most damage to the Portuguese cause. As a result, he found it necessary to clothe not only the Chief, but one of his leading followers as well -- and to give generously

to the remainder of the people, "among whom I noted an even greater inclination toward the persuasive arguments of the Spanish missionary." In this observation we may perhaps detect a difference in attitude between "ruler" and "ruled" among the Aisuares. The majority of the people there were presumably concerned only with survival -- that is, with avoiding enslavement and transportation. The chiefs, on the other hand, seem to have been somewhat more interested in exploring the possibilities of doing profitable business with the Portuguese. Two or three days upriver, beyond the mouth of the Japurá, Pimentel reached another Aisuar village which he consecrated as the new Carmelite mission of São José dos Aisuares. There he left a missionary friar, whom the Aisuares had requested because he was someone with whom they were already acquainted -- presumably the lay brother António de Andrade of whom we will have more to say in Chapter Seven. Then, not far above São José, Pimentel's party visited the village known as "Peranamsasi" of unspecified tribe, and christened it Santa María Magdalena de Pazzis. There he left the remainder of his trade goods so that the people might "accept a [Carmelite] missionary more willingly, and ignore the arguments of Fritz, who was making such extraordinary efforts to carry all these people away and up to his missions."

Two days later, Frei Victoriano and his companions had the hair-raising experience of coming upon an island settlement which had recently been the victim of an attack by the widely feared Juma warriors, residents of the forests on the north bank above the Japurá. This was at the last of the "Solimões" (or perhaps "non-Omagua") villages, where jumping ashore I found nothing but fresh corpses, brains, blood and intestines on the ground. The forest-dwelling, nomadic Juma raiders had attacked this small community a few days before and had it not been for a white man who was there with a musket which he fired, not one of them would have been left alive. They carried the dead to the other side of the river and roasted and ate them midst dancing and festivity. I saw their bonfires, but did not get close enough to see the people.

Later, in Fritz's old mission of San Pablo which he rechristened São Paulo dos Cambebas, Frei Victoriano saw a Juma warrior up close. He was "painted in red and white, with five holes in each lip and spines inserted in the holes to look like wild boars' teeth;" and he left an idelible impression on the Carmelite traveller: "I've never seen more horrible and frightening, ugly-looking savages."

On the following day they reached another island, where Pimentel found the few people who had escaped death in the Juma raid, together with the unnamed sertanista who had helped to defend them. He was able without much difficulty to persuade this group of terrified survivors to promise to settle downriver at his new mission of Santa Maria Magdalena de Pazzis; but soon he found that their erstwhile defender was working against the Carmelite's cause

because it is not in the interest of those who go into the back country for profit, that the savages be under the protection of a missionary. They prefer to have them subject to their own violence, so as to exploit them as they see fit.

This led Pimentel to conclude that establishing these missions was a service not only to God, but to the State as well -- since of all the Europeans to be found in the sertão, only the missionaries appeared to be interested in establishing stable and productive communities.

The peoples of the Solimões -- Pimentel was referring now to the relatively settled and "civilized" island and várzea peoples of Samuel Fritz's missions -- appeared to him to have been little influenced so far by Western ways:

they have many wives. All of them perforate their lips; and the women also make huge holes, little by little, in their ear-lobes, large enough to accomodate a small child's ball. They use the same clothing [that is, little or none] as the Indians on the Rio Negro; and in some villages I saw them with no more covering than Adam and Eve in Eden, when they were still in the state of grace.

Like Fritz, Pimentel was disturbed by the fact that nearly all of the "Solimões" villages were situated on ground that was flooded each year. Only Santa Thereza de Tefé was built

higher on the shore; the inhabitants of the other villages clung stubbornly to their islands in mid-river, among other reasons to avoid the frequent attacks from the Jumas and others to which they were now subjected. Because of this, he concluded that any new mission churches should be built of palm-fronds rather than the stable materials that were customary elsewhere.

The peoples of the Solimões, observed Pimentel, were obliged to move from house to house in their canoes during long periods of the year; and any missionaries living among them in this watery world were certain, he thought, to suffer greatly from chronic disease. It was indeed a chastening experience in general for the Carmelite visitor to contemplate the hardships that were involved in carrying the Gospel to "a population of savages as animal-like as those, as undecisive and pusillanimous, as barbarous in their customs and as irrational in their religious rituals."

Finally, late in January, 1703, the Frei Victoriano reached the country of the Omaguas, where he was impressed as others had been by the people's practice of monogamy and their custom of going about fully clothed -- characteristics which he thought were conducive to their being readily "reduced" to mission life. The mosquitos there were so bad, however, that "these poor people looked as if they were covered with leprosy." If the Indians themselves suffered so greatly from such pests, how much worse was it sure to be for any missionaries who went out to serve them? Pimentel later claimed to have visited all of the settlements of the Omagua (of which he counted thirty), and to have found in each place a collection of

cutlasses, knives, beads, lengths of cloth and clothing from the Portuguese, which had been traded hand to hand to reach that region. I saw nothing of Spanish origin except a snare drum in the thirteenth Omagua town, which Fritz had given to the chief -- who, though a pagan, received me with the greeting, "Praised be the Holy Sacrament."

Fritz had, it appeared, done a good job of preparing these natives for entering upon their status as "vassals" of an Iberian King. But he had been unable either to provide them with the European trade goods they required, or to prevent their maintaining a lively trade in these goods -- whether directly with the Portuguese of Pará, or with their Indian trading-partners on the lower Solimões. Pimentel was of course at pains to take advantage of this situation of deprivation, letting it be known among the Cambeba [Omagua] that once they had taken the step of acknowledging Portuguese sovereignty, they could be assured of a steady supply of everything they needed. He reinforced these arguments by distributing in the villages a quantity of "hatchets, sickles, knives, fishhooks, pins, needles, ribbons, mirrors, reliquaries, rings and pieces of wire for their earrings;" and by the time he returned to Pará he had convinced himself that there would be no difficulty at all in getting the Cambeba to accept the protection, the spiritual and commercial direction and the governance of their Portuguese missionaries.⁹⁶

Despite the initial difficulties which the Carmelites faced in staffing their missions on the Solimões and making peace with the Indians there, the friars appear to have made considerable progress in that region during the five years prior to Pimentel's journey. The mission visitor reported having been well-received everywhere he went. He visited several communities which had already been designated as missions and assigned their Christian names by his colleagues (including two on the lower reaches of the Rio Japurá, which Fritz had for the most part ignored). Padre Samuel's old friends the Aisuaires had developed a degree of confidence in at least one Carmelite; and other tribes now seemed amenable to having Frei Victoriano send them missionaries. It is not yet clear how all of this had been accomplished -- whether by bringing new groups of people down from the tributaries to settle on the main stream, or by laying claim to existing pagan villages and establishing peaceable trading relationships with them, or by simply moving in on the villages in which

⁹⁶Pimentel, "Relação," pp. 545-49.

Fritz's missionary endeavors had softened the people's resistance to outside influences years before. But the Carmelite mission on the Rio Solimões was certainly already in existence by 1702; and as things developed it was there to stay.