

II. THE QUESTION OF OTHER SPANISH SETTLEMENTS

There is no conclusive evidence of the existence before 1648 of any other Spanish settlement besides Santo Thomé in the region between the Orinoco and the Essequibo, nor of any more than a temporary occupation of any position in that region.

I am aware of no authority for the statement made by Señor Fortique (Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 226, 50th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 29) that "in 1591 the enemies of Spain found towns to ruin" in Guiana. The evidence regarding Spanish occupation in Guiana after that date can be summarized as follows:

An appendix to Raleigh's "Discoverie" contains abstracts of certain Spanish letters from the New World, which were taken at sea by Capt. George Popham in 1593 or 1594 and were delivered to the Privy Council. Among these is an account purporting to have been sent to the King of Spain to inform him of the formal act by which Domingo de Vera, maestro de campo to Antonio de Berrio, had taken possession for Spain of lands south of the Orinoco. The document is found on pages 123-128 in Schomburgk's edition of Raleigh and is summarized on page 383 of the "Calendars of State Papers, Domestic," 1591-1594. It is dated from the river Orinoco, "in the principal part thereof called Warismero, the 23rd of April 1593," and relates, with the signatures of Domingo de Vera and Rodrigo de Caranca, register of the forces, how Vera had taken formal possession of the land in the name of the King and of Berrio, the governor, at Warismero; then, under successive dates extending to the 4th of May, how the same was done at three points inland from the river—first two leagues inland, then at Carapana's town, and finally at Topiawari's town (apparently all these lay near the mouth of the Caroni), with crosses being erected and the consent of the chieftains being understood to be given. The march is then traced for a week more, 10 leagues (40 miles) inland from Topiawari's town, but there is no statement of taking possession beyond that place. The document is undoubtedly substantially authentic but indicates possession only as a formal act performed upon the line of march.

In 1595, Raleigh, in his "Discoverie" (Schomburgk's ed., p. 39), states that Berrio "always appointed 10 Spaniards to reside in Carapanas town" (see also p. 56), while Keymis in 1596 mentions him going to Carapana with 15 men and also notes 10 Spaniards abiding in Winicapora (pp. 10, 18). However, Carapana was likely very near Santo Thomé, and Winicapora is probably the Caño José, an affluent of the Orinoco only a few miles long. These phrases, therefore, do not indicate any occupation of portions of the territory now disputed. On the same page with the passage just mentioned, Raleigh states that the Spaniards "used canoes to pass to the rivers of Barema, Pawroma, and

Dissequebe, which are on the south side of the mouth of Orinoco, and there buy women and children from the Canibals," but he does not provide evidence to support Señor Fortique's claim that Raleigh wrote that the Spaniards "occupied the rivers Barima, Moroco, and Pumaron" or that "their domination extended to the Essequibo" (Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 226, 50th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 29).

Simon (pp. 606, 607) represents the Spaniards of Santo Thomé, soon after the arrival of the reinforcements under Domingo de Vera, as making excursions in the vicinity, trading with the natives, but not establishing any other settlements. He also narrates at length (pp. 608-610) the fortunes of a group of 300 who set out for Manoa, but all but about 30 were soon destroyed by the Indians, and the expedition achieved nothing. Keymis, against a marginal date of September (1595), mentions another Spanish expedition, which should be cited textually due to the inferences drawn from distorted versions of it. He states (pp. 8, 9): "In Moruga it was that they (the Spaniards) hunted Wareo and his people, about half a year since. They were not of Antonio de Berrio's company, but were the Spaniards of Margarita and Caracas." This is insufficient evidence of Spanish occupation of the Moruca.

In April 1597, Leonard Berrie, who conducted a third voyage for Raleigh, was in the Corentyn. Thomas Masham, who accompanied him and wrote the account of the voyage in Hakluyt (edition of 1811, Vol. IV), reports that he learned from an Indian that in the Essequibo "there were some 300 Spaniards, most of whom are now destroyed and dead" (p. 193). On May 4, he adds (p. 194): "It was reported that the Spaniards had left Desekebe, which was not the case. The next night we received news that there were ten canoes of Spaniards in the mouth of Coritine who went along the coast to buy bread and other victuals for them in Orinoco, Marowgo, and Desekebe." This phrase must probably be interpreted as meaning "for those who were in the Orinoco, the Moruca, and the Essequibo." Under this interpretation, the passages cited from Masham seem to imply a temporary occupation in the Essequibo.

Professor Burr points out that Keymis, when speaking of the Essequibo, also says: "Farther to the eastward than Dessekebe no Spaniard ever travelled. In this river, which we now call Devoritia, the Spaniards intend to build a town." The sentence is somewhat confused, but its meaning is clear.

This may explain the emblem carved in stone over the gate of the fort at Kykoveral, which Hartsinck ("Beschrijvinge van Guiana," p. 262) declared to be the Portuguese arms and evidence of previous Portuguese occupation. Netscher (p. 337), who has seen it, declares it to be simply a cross and probably of Spanish origin, as the Portuguese likely

did not travel so far west. If there was a distinct occupation, it was temporary. De Laet, in his "Beschryvinghe van West Indien," edition of 1625, says (p. 474): "The Spaniards had here (i.e., in the Essequibo) some people in the year 1591 (he means 1597) according to the account of Thomas Masham, but they seem to have come to nothing again." In his edition of 1630, he states more definitively that the settlement had come to naught (p. 577).

However, A. Cabeliau's observations in 1598 are of greater importance. His narrative is detailed, clear, and businesslike. In company with two other ships that he found on the Guiana coast, he visited all the rivers between the Wiapoco and the Orinoco; he names, among others, the Essequibo, the Pomeroon, and the Moruca. They did not sail into these rivers, partly "because there was not much to get there, as the Indians informed us" ("datter nyet veel te halen en was, zoe ons d'indianen wys maecten"); so they only coasted along the land in this part to gain knowledge of it. As Cabeliau traded freely and eagerly with the Spaniards of Santo Thomé, and was guided by the governor's miner in searching for Raleigh's mines, it is extremely unlikely that when he coasted past the Essequibo, there were any Spaniards there. Remarks he makes about the soldiers at Santo Thomé, as already mentioned, have an important bearing on the question of other settlements. He states that these soldiers "daily seek to conquer the gold-rich Guiana but cannot do so by means of the forts yet built there, nor by any means of friendship, because the nation called Caribs violently opposes them every day, and the Spaniards, seeing that they cannot win anything there, have begun to make a road, about six days' journey south of the river Orinoco, in the mountain range of Guiana, through the rocks and hills, about 1,600 stadia long, and think by these means to conquer it" ("dagelix vervolgen om het goudryk Weyana te con questeren, dan connen 'tzelfde doer de fortsen alsnoch daeroj gedaen zynde of met geene middelen van vriendschap con questeren, deurdien de natie genaemt Charibus hen dagelye geweldichlicken wederstaen * * *, ende de Spaegnaerde siende dat zy aldaer nyet en konnen winnen, hebben omtre 6 daegreyzens, by suydens de riviere Worinoque, aen 't ge berchte van de Weyane eenen wech beginnen te maeken de die rotsen ende geberchten, omtrent 1600 stadien lanck, ende meenen by dese middel alsoe, tselfde te conquasteren" (The passage is in De Jonge, "Opkomst," etc., Vol. I, p. 156-159). If a road 200 miles long and 40 miles wide in a straight line could be built, it would be only a path through tropical jungle. This idea that the Spaniards had begun to penetrate towards the gold-bearing regions by constructing a road is evidently of the nature of a temporary occupation. Cabeliau's mention of the soldiers at Santo Thomé is also confirmatory. Cabeliau himself made no attempt to enter the Essequibo or any other river. The comment of De Laet, that the Spanish settlement in the Essequibo had come to naught, is confirmed by these reports.

Finally, De Laet, in his description of the Essequibo, clearly summarizes the situation in 1625 (p. 571): "On the Essekibbo River, the Spanish had also been, but for

the most part they had abandoned it; only a few had remained in the neighboring river of Dserra, by the name of Cosenza, and these are chiefly merchants from Margarita and the vicinity."

The description of the Spanish settlements in the Essequibo by De Laet is clearly corroborated by the evidence presented, and there is no valid proof of any continued occupation by the Spanish after their initial expeditions and temporary settlements.