THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION OF CHIEFDOM LEVEL SOCIETIES ON THE SOUTHEASTERN ATLANTIC SLOPE: AN EXAMINATION OF ETHNOHISTORIC SOURCES

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INTRODUCTION

This paper examines historic sources containing information about late prehistoric and early historic aboriginal political organization on the Southeastern Atlantic Slope. The focus for these investigations are the complex, chiefly societies reported in early (sixteenth century) accounts from the area centered on South Carolina and including portions of Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Given a greater awareness of the extant source materials, research on the early contact era societies in the region should be greatly facilitated. The descriptions of aboriginal life found in these documents, furthermore, can be used to construct ethnographic and theoretical frameworks from which local late prehistoric and protohistoric archaeological materials may be examined. Through a combination of archaeological and historical analysis, a clearer picture of the nature and operation of these aboriginal societies should emerge.

Comparatively large quantities of written information are available in the accounts of explorers, colonial administrators, missionaries, and other sources describing aboriginal societies in the lower southeastern United States during the initial centuries of European contact and settlement. Excellent regionally oriented descriptive syntheses of these documentary materials have been prepared, notably by Swanton (1911, 1922, 1928, 1946), Hudson (1976), and DePratter (1983) and, for the South Carolina area, by Baker (1974, 1975) and Waddell (1980). Ethnohistorical studies such as these have been widely adopted as summaries of Indian history and culture, sources for analogies, and aids to site or locality identification. These accounts have been somewhat less frequently used to interpret the archaeological record of the societies they describe, although innovative work along these lines has appeared in some areas (e.g., Crook 1978; Whallon 1980). Developing explicit linkages between ethnohistoric and archaeological data, however, should be a primary consideration when archaeologists examine documentary sources. Specifically, it is argued that early contact era accounts contain valuable information about the location, size, operation, and evolutionary behavior of southeastern chiefly societies, and that archaeologists can and should be more aware of these information sources.

Major studies from the southeast that have appeared which combine ethnohistoric and archaeological data include Phillips' identification and equation of lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley archaeological sites with aboriginal centers visited by contact era explorers

(Phillips et al. 1951: 347-421); Brain's (1979) work reconstructing Tunica society; Neitzel's work on Natchez social organization, using materials recovered at the Fatherland site, the Grand Village of the Natchez (Neitzel 1965, 1984); and several recent reconstructions of the extent of aboriginal policies based on observations from the DeSoto entrada (e.g., Swanton 1939; Brain 1975, 1985; Morse 1981; Morse and Morse 1983; Hudson et al. 1984, 1985). These examples remain the exception rather than the rule, however. Many past and present investigations at southeastern archaeological sites, if they employ documentary sources at all, follow a taxonomic perspective. That is, they use historic accounts to provide labels--group identifications, village or site names, or functional analogues--to sites or assemblages. While a useful and appropriate initial step, ethnohistoric accounts can offer considerably more to the understanding of these societies.

The Nature of the Data Base

Sixteenth century materials form the primary ethnohistorical data base in the present study, althougn a few later sources are included when these contain specific details lacking in earlier documents. Almost all of the sources from this period are in Spanish, Frsnch, or English, with most in Spanish, reflecting the extent of exploration and settlement in the area by these three nations at this time. The focus on the early sixteenth century is due to a research bias towards understanding the operation of "pristine" chiefly societies, that is, societies comparatively unaffected by European contact. The earliest accounts, in fact, describe chiefly societies that had probably never come into contact with appreciably higher cultures; nence these accounts describe socio-political organizations that were essentially extinct when the field of anthropology itself arose in the nineteenth century. The choice of sixteenth century sources was also delimited, to a moderate extent, by the occurrence of the documentary resources themselves. For the initial one and half centuries of European exploration and sattlement on the southeastern Atlantic slope, tne most extensive sources are, interestingly, from the earlier half of this range (ca. A.D. 1500-1575). This corresponds to the greatest period of Spanish interest in tna area, encompassing the explorations of Narvaez, De Soto, De Luna, Pardo and others, and the afforts to colonize "La Florida" st St. Augustine, Santa Elena, and elsewhere.

With the collapse of Spanish interest in the exploration and sattlement of the interior southeast in the late sixteenth century, it is not until almost a century later, with the English exploration and settlement of the Carolinas, that fairly extansive documentation of local aboriginal groups reappears. By this time--tne late seventeentn century--however, the documentary evidence indicates that clearly different, less complex societies ware present in the region than those described during the previous century. The effects of disease and depopulation, exposure to European trade goods, missionization efforts, and slave and deerskin trade, directly or indirectly, had brought about the collapse and reorganization of native political systems oy the late seventaenth century (e.g., Dobyns 1966, 1983; damenofsky 1982; Smith 1984).

This study, however, deals with the original contact era societies observed in the region. Of primary concern is the description and evaluation of accounts of aboriginal social structure and political organization. Early sources were examined for specific references to local political, genealogical, and settlement hierarchies; social stratification; tributary and/or alliance relationships; fortification and warfare; labor mobilization; decision making; sumptuary ritual and mortuary behavior; and individual or chiefly wealth. Such references can be used to provide insight about, and help construct and evaluate archaeological models of, the aboriginal cultures present in the study area in the early sixteenth century. Both general and site/locality specific data are presented. The observations noted here are meant, to be evaluated and tested with archaeological data from late prehistoric and early historic Indian sites in the general South Carolina area. They are also, however, meant to be used to help interpret this same archaeological data. The overview presented here thus provides some basic expectations about the archaeological record itself--namely how the aboriginal societies that produced it may have operated.

Finally, while the focus of this paper is on early sixteenth century societies, the observations are thought to have utility for the interpretation of earlier materials, notably those from throughout the Mississippian period (ca. A.D. 1000-1540) in the general region, when similar kinds of societies were in operation.

THE HISTORICAL DATA BASE: A SYNOPTIC OVERVIEW

Initial Contact (ca. A.D. 1500-1539)

The first European exploration of the interior southeast is traditionally assumed to begin in 1513 with Ponce de Léon's "discovery" and exploration of Florida. From 1500 onward, however, Spanish ships were at least occasionally touching the southeastern Gulf and Atlantic coasts of what later became the United States, and were sometimes wrecked there. Juan Ponce de Léon's encounters appear, in retrospect, to have been with the Calusa (Lewis 1978), a southern Florida group. The extent of European contact even at this early date, the time of tne "official" discovery of Florida, is indicated by the fact that one of the Indian groups Ponce de Léon set knew about the Spanish. Following initial settlement in the West Indies, the Spanish nad quickly mounted search and discovery ventures throughout the Caribbean, looking for land, slaves, and other potential sources of wealth.

The earliest well-documented Spanish venture along the South Atlantic coast in the vicinity of the Carolinas took place in 1520-1521. In late 1520, under the direction of Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón, one of the Auditors of Santo Domingo, a caravel under the direction of Francisco Gordillo was sent out to explore the northern coast of La Florida, as the North American, continent was then described. Vasquez de Ayllón, who was interested in establishing a settlement in the region, was at this point conducting advance exploration. On June 24, 1521, Gordillo, and a second captain, Pedro de Quexó, made landfall at the mouth of a large river they named the St. Johns; the location, 33°30' north latitude, corresponds

to that of Winyah Bay, where the Pee Dee and several lesser drainages enter the Atlantic. After brief explorations, they seized some 70 of the local native Indians, and carried them back to Santo Domingo for sale as slaves. From this rather sordid record of initial contact emerged what Swanton has called "the longest description of any tribe in North America which can claim such an early date of record" (Swanton 1946: 36). This account, recorded firsthand by the Spanish historian Petar Martyr (Pietro Martiere d'Anghiera), was obtained from one of the captured natives, known as Francisco of Chicora, and consisted of a lengthy description of what were purported to be the history and customs of his country.

Francisco, who was apparently a quite noteworthy individual, had quickly learned Spanish and was attached to Vásquez de Ayllón's household in Santo Domingo. Peter Martyr, who was a chronicler for the Royal Council of the Indies, met and talked with Franciso on several occasions, and summarized the stories he heard in the next to last of his Decades (MacNutt 1912: II: 259-259). Although including some rather fanciful details, such as the herding and milking of deer and the (former) existence of men with tails like crocodiles, Francisco's account contains numerous details about southeastern aboriginal life that in retrospect appear accurate. Interestingly, Peter Martyr himself had trouble believing much of what he heard, for at one point in his narrative he interjects the comment, "these fables and other similar nonsense have been handed down to the natives by their parents," (MacNutt 1912: II: 261) and in fact concludes his narrative by stating:

> Such is the story told to me, and I repeat it for what it is worth. Your excellency may believe it or not (MacNutt 1912: II: 268).

It is perhaps because of this skepticism that Francisco's account is of particular interest, for Peter Martyr's wording implies an effort to give a faithful rendition. There is undeniably editorializing in the account, such as that noted above, together with somewhat improbable heaven/hell imagery tnat may have been added by either Peter Martyr or Francisco (to please either the listener or intended readers). In spita of this, the account is of great value.

Francisco's account, in brief, provides the first detailed description of southeastsrn chiefly societies, focusing on groups then (in the early sixteenth century) living along the coast and in the interior of the general South Carolina area. A ranked, hierarchical sociaty is clearly described, with settlements over wide areas owing allegiance and tribute to specific communities and leaders. These chiefly rulers (described as Kings) received deferential treatment from the commoners; dressed, lived, and ate better than their subjects; were carried about on litters; and resided in combination temple/dwelling areas. Substantial ritual activity associated with the planting and harvesting of crops was described, and burial/mortuary ceremonialism, and a passionate interest in ball games was noted. Specific details included mention of feather mantle cloaks, stone idols in temples, cathartic fluids (the black drink?), and the weaving of fiber clothes and nats. Swanton, while curiously discounting "tales of subjection and tribute,"

was so impressed with Francisco's account that he began an exegesis of it with the comment "in this narrative there appears to be very little not based on fact" (Swanton 1946: 47). Be that as it may, the account stands as an initial, baseline document for the study of aboriginal culture and political organization on the South Atlantic Slope.

During the period from roughly 1521 to 1539, only minimal references exist describing aboriginal groups in the vicinity of Georgia and the Carolinas. In 1524, Giovanni da Verazzano, in the service of France, sailed along the east coast of the United States. At his initial landfall (about 34° north latitude, possibly at or near the Cape Fear River in southern coastal North Carolina), Verrazzano met some natives, whose animal skins and bird feather robes he briefly described in a subsequent letter to Francis I (Verrazzano 1881: 82–91). In July of 1526, Vasquez de Ayllon, with 600 settlers, attempted to establish a settlement on the South Carolina coast, probably at or near Winyah Bay. Although a massive effort, shipwreck, disease, and the subsequent factionalization of the survivors brought the colony to a disastrous end. Barely one quarter of the initial complement which left Santo Domingo in July survived to return the following winter, in early 1527. Descriptions of local natives by members of Vásquez de Ayllón's party are minimal. His interpreters (including Francisco) deserted almost immediately upon landfall and the surviving records are absorbed with the magnitude of the tragedy that had occurred, as recounted in Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdes Historia General y Natural de las Indias, Islas, y Tierra-firme del mar Océano (1851-1855: III: 626-630). This account, written in Santo Domingo in the first half of the sixteenth century, was first published in Spanish in 1851; no complete English language translation has appeared. Portions of the narrative describing the Vasquez de Ayllon colonization effort are presented in Quattlebaum (1956: 7-28).

Large, communal housas were reported in use among the native groups living in the vicinity of the Vásquez de Ayllón colony, as well as temples with "Walls of stone and mortar (which mortar they make uith oyster shells)" and pine wood. The bodies of isportant individuals ware maintained in these temples, while ordinary people were buried, "the elders apart from...the young people or children" (Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés 1851–1855: 111: 630; quotad in Quattlebaum 1956: 23-24). Aside from these brief references, tna Vásquez de Ayllón colony is noteworthy for the study of local nativs polities because remains from it, such as axes, beads, and rosaries, were found in the main temple at Cofitachequi, a chiefly center located almost 200 km inland from the coast, during the Soto entrada in 1540:

> in the town were found a dirk and beads that had belonged to Christians, who, the Indians said, had many years bafore been in the port, distant two days journey (Elvas 1904: I: 67).
>
> That same day the Governor [Soto] and Ranjel entered tne sosque and oratory of tnis heathen people, and . . . found . . . many beads of glass and rosaries with their crosses. 'They also found

> Biscayan axes of iron from which they recognized that they were in the government or territory where the lawyer Lucas Vasquez. de Ayllon came to his ruin (Ranjel 1904: I: 100).

Minimally, the occurrence of these remains in a chiefly center located at a considerable distance from their source illustrates the extent of coercive, tributary, or trading networks operating in the region.

Between 1526, the year of the ill-fated Vásquez de Ayllón colony, and 1539, when the Soto entrada began, the South Atlantic Slope saw little European activity. Spanish attention during this interval was focused almost exclusively on Central and South America, and the plundering of the almost unimaginable riches of the Aztec and Inca empires. The single attempt at exploration during this period, by Pánfilo de Narváez, ended disastrously. In 1528, Narváez landed near Tampa with a force of 300 men, and proceeded to march inland and to the north. Thoroughly antagonizing the local natives (the Apalachee), they were forced to retreat to the sea somewhere near Pensacola Bay, where they built a number of vessels. Attempting to skirt the Gulf coast and sail down to Mexico, the fleet was wrecked along the north Texas coast. Only four members of the expedition, after incredible hardship, eventually reached Mexico. The narrative of this expedition, first published in Zamora, Spain in 1592, by Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (Núñez 1972), one of the four survivors, is of more value for its discussion of the native groups of Texas than as a source of information on the natives on the Florida area. Cabeza de Vaca's exploits were well known to Soto; Cabeza 'de Vaca, in fact, in an attempt to recoup his personal fortunes, "gave them to understand that it [Florida] was the richest country in the world" (Elvas 1904: I: 6). Cabeza de Vaca and Soto quarreled, however, and only the latter ultimately returned to Florida, in 1538.

Records from the Soto Entrada: A.D. 1539-1543

The Soto expedition (1539-1543) has been justly described by Swanton (1946: 38) as "the most impressive of all Spanish attempts to conquer and settle the territory" of tne southeastern United States. Soto, who had been second in command to the Pizarros in the conquest of tne Inca Empire, sought to find new riches in the northern continent, in part fueled by the tales of Cabeza de Vaca. The magnitude of this expedition was immense: 000 men, over 200 horses, 100 or more servants and camp followers, and a large quantity of supplies and equipment, including trade goods, hogs, mules, and dogs. Landing near Tampa Bay in *day* of 1538, the expedition proceeded into the interior. Over the next four years and two months the expedition traveled throughout the region, visiting among others the aboriginal provinces or chiefdoms of Apalachee, Ocute, Cofitachequi, Chelaque, Chiaha, Coosa, Mabilla, and the Chicaca, and on across the dissisippi. Soto himself died in Arkansas day 21, 1542, and it was not until September of 1543 that all survivors of the expedition reached Mexico, after traveling by boat Prom the moutn of the Mississippi.

The members of the entrsda spent over four years in the interior of

the southeast. The surviving accounts of the expedition form the earliest detailed record of what can be considered pristine or near-pristine southeastern chiefdoms. These accounts are doubly valuable, because in many cases they form the only record of these societies prior to their collapse from the effects of disease, depopulation, and warfare (e.g., Ramenofsky 1982; Smith 1984). As Swanton has accurately, if somewhat romantically, noted:

> much of the territory penetrated by De Soto was practically unvisited for a hundred and fifty years afterward, and to Englishmen and Frenchmen the country and its people had sunk into obscurity and the story of the enterprise itself had become semi-legendary (Swanton 1932: 570).

In the vicinity of Georgia and the Carolinas, the tribes and confederacies documented in the later historic period, after English settlement in 1670, and even those groups contacted by the Spanish themselves later in the sixteenth century, appear to be but pale reflections of the complex chiefdoms encountered by Soto. Native societies throughout the region appear to have markedly changed in the years following initial contact (Smith 1984), and the earliest accounts are thus invaluable sources of information on the organization and operation of local aboriginal polities.

Four major documentary accounts of the Soto entrada have survived to the present day. These are, in order of publication or appearance, the narratives of Ranjel (1904) written in final form sometime before 1546; Hernandez de Biedma (1904) written in 1544; the Gentleman of Elvas (1904) first publisned in 1557; and Garcilaso de la Vega (1881) first publisned in 1601. These accounts will be briefly discussed in turn, but first it snould be noted that one letter oy Soto himself survived from the expedition. This document, written July 3, 1539, is instructive, for it gives Soto's own opinion on the accuracy of native sources: "for what these Indians say I believe nothing but what I see" (Letter to the Justics and Board of Magistrates in Santiago de Cuba; English translation oy Buckingham Smith 1854, also in Bourne 1904: I: 162). Modern scholars should perhaps exsrcise a similar caution in the acceptance and interpretation of primary sources.

The first of the four accounts to have been produced, at least in large measure, was that by Rodrigo Kanjel, Soto's private secretary. Ranjel's account is an actual diary of the events of the entrsda, recorded either daily or at orief intervals. This account, covering the period from May 1539 through September 1541, was transcribed oy Fernández de Oviedo in Santo Domingo some time after Ranjel's return to the island, and prior to August 1546, when Fernández de Oviedo left for Spain (Bourne 1904: II: 48). The transcription, in Fernández ds Oviedo (1851-1855), has been considered by many scholars to be perhaps "the most reliable and important of all the accounts of the famous undertaking" (Swanton 1352: 571; similar commentary appears in Bourne 1904: I: xv, and in Hudson et al. 1984: 65). Although interjected with pious moralizing, for example, on the greed and vanity of Soto

(Bourne 1904: II: 82), or his cruelty and treachery to the natives (Bourne 1904: II: 77, 105), Fernández de Oviedo's transcription appears to be a fairly accurate and faithful rendition, particularly in the light of subsequent research (e.g., Hudson et al. 1984). So detailed, in fact, was Ranjel's account that Fernandez de Oviedo felt compelled to offer some prefatory explanation:

> [l]et not the reader marvel that the historian goes over, in exact detail, the days marches and rivers and crossings that this Commander encountered ... because among those gentlemen who were with the army all the time there was one named Rodrigo Ranjel ... who ... wrote down day by day at the end of his labors, every thing which happened (Bourne 1904: II: 47).

In addition to presenting valuable detail on the native societies of the region, the Ranjel account offers an instructive example of a particularly insidious kind of bias that can occur in historic accounts: deliberate falsification or distortion. In his last communication with Cuba, for example, Soto ordered that "even though he had found no good land, that he should write good news to encourage the men" (Bourne 1904: II: 62). Merrins (1969) has provided a lengthy review of propagandizing in early accounts. Descriptions of the South Atlantic by seventeenth century colonial promoters, for example, were so salubrious (and hence unbelievable) that they prompted the counter-proverb "they who want to die, go to Carolina" (Merrins 1969: 535).

The second account of the Soto entrada to be prepared was that by Luis Hernández de Biedma, in 1544, shortly after the surviving members of the expedition reached Mexico. Hernández de Biedma was the Ling's factor, and the narrative tnat he prepared was an official account of the expedition submitted to tne Spanish crown. The shortest of all the Soto accounts, the original manuscript was found in the Archivos General de Indias in Sevelle in the mid-nineteenth century (English translation from the original manuscript by Smitn 1904: 1-43). digniy compressed, the narrative offers little in the way of detail about native populations that is not found in the other accounts. Altnough in agreement with the other sources in broad outline, because it is an obvious summary of events prepared up to several years after tne facts in question, it is generally unreliable as a source of specific: information about the chronology of the entrada, or the terrain that it passed over.

The first of the Soto accounts actually published appeared in 15'77, in Evora, Portugal, and was entitled a "True Relation of the Vicissitudes that attended the Governor Don Hernando de Soto and some Nobles of Portugal in the Discovery of the Province of Florida now just given by a Fidalgo of Elvas" (English translation by Smith 1904: 1-223). This account, written in Portuguese by an unidentified "Gentlemen from Elvas" who accompanied Soto, provides a wealth of detail about the exgedition and the peoples that it encountared. Althougn long considered less reliable than Garcilaso's account, the discovery of the Ranjel and Hernández de Biedma accounts in the nineteenth century provided, in Swanton's (1932:571) words, "trium-

phant support for the accuracy of the Elvas account. The Elvas narrative was also highly praised by Bourne,

> from its sobriety of tone, its nearness in time to the events which its author relates as an eye-witness, and the numerous indications that in its preparation, he utilized memoranda made at the time, [this narrative] has generally been recognized by historians as the most trustworthy detailed account of DeSoto's expedition that we have (Bourne 1904: I: viii).

In spite of this commentary, portions of the Elvas account have tended to be undervalued, particularly the numerous purported verbatim speeches of the native rulers to Soto, such as those by Achese, Patofa, the Lady of Cofitachequi, Chiaha, Tali, Coosa, and Tastaluca. Although unquestionable literary devices intended to show the respect (or lack thereof) in which the natives held Soto, the speeches include important references to customs such as tributary and power relationships, and the apparent matrilineal succession of chiefly leaders (Elvas 1904: I: 58, 64, 73-74), that suggest they are authentic in general content, if not in specific terminology.

The fourth and final account of the Soto entrada, and actually the second published, is Garcilaso de la Veqa's La Florida del Inca. Written sometime around 1537 to 1591, this account, the longest of the four, was first printed in Lisbon in 1601 (Bourne 1904: I: viii). Garcilaso, who was born in 1537, was the product of a marriage between a Spanish officer and the sister of the last Inca, hence the derivation of his pen name. As a boy in Peru, Garcilaso knew many of the survivors of the Soto expedition, and upon moving to Spain in 1560, he met several additional members of the entrada. His account, La Florida del Inca, incorporates the memories of at least three of these survivors, ons of whom, the cavalier Gonzalo Silvestre, is assumed to have been nis principal informant (Bourne 1904: I: viii-ix). Garcilaso's account, wnile extensive, is also highly romantic, and the least dependable of the four sources (Hudson et al. 1984: 655; Swanton 1932: 571), having perhaps greater value as a work of literature than of history. As Swanton has noted, though, this is a reflection of Garcilaso's sources:

> [t]he tales which his aged soldier informants related to him were inexact, often exaggerated, but tney ware not the results of a deliberate intention to decaive. They represent the attempts of old men, unassisted by diaries, letters, notes, or other aids to the memory to recall the events in which they had participated so many years before. In so far as I have been aole to check this material it appears to me that the quantitative and associational elements have suffared, while the qualitative elements have survived (Swanton 1932: 751).

La Florida thus diverges wildly from the other three accounts in specific detail, notably in matters of chronology, distance, travel time, and personnel/casualty figuras. While Elvas (1557/in Bourne 1904: I: 50),

for example, records that 700 bearers accompanied Soto from Ocute to Cofitachequi, Garcilaso de la Vega puts the figure at 8000 (1881: 345). At the battle of Mauvila both Ranjel and Elvas put the Indian's casualties at between 2500 and 3000 (Bourne 1904: I: 37; II: 128), while Garcilaso's account puts the figures at around 11,000 (Vega 1881: 388). The Inca, to his very real credit, explicitly- acknowledges these kinds of problems in his introduction:

> [i]t is true that in their preceedings they have no regard for chronology unless it be at the beginning, nor for order in the events which they recount, because they put some too soon and others too late, nor do they name provinces, except for a few scattered ones. They simply tell the most important things that they saw as they happened to remember them (Garcilaso de la Vega [1601]; cited in Swanton 1939: 5).

Although all four of the primary sources for the Soto entrada thus have their problems, through a careful comparison and critical apprais-al of their contents, much of value can be learned about the aboriginal societies that were encountered.

Later Sixteenth Century Accounts

Following the Soto entrada, Spanish exploration in the southeast again paused for nearly a generation, as it did in the interval after the Vásquez de Ayllón and Narváez' attempts at colonization in the mid-1520s. Interest in the area continued, however, particularly as Spanish vessels were occasionally shipwrecked along the Atlantic or Gulf coasts, often with considerable loss of life and treasure (Barcia 1723: cited in translation in Priestley 1928: xxi). The memoirs of one survivor, Hernando d' Escalante Fontaneda (Smitn 1859; Shipp 1881: 584-589), who was urecked on the Atlantic coast of Florida in 1551 and lived among the Indians there for 17 years, is a valuable, if brief, source of information about the coastal groups from central Florida to lower South Carolina (undated, written about 1575; English translation by Smith 1854, also in Shipp 1881: 584-588). Fontaneda, who learned four Indian languages during his captivity, later accompanied Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés as an interpreter in his colonizing and military ventures along the South Atlantic coast in the 1560s.

In the late 1550s the Spanish crown decided to establish colonies on both the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the southeastern United States, to further Spanish expansion in North America, and to protect their shipping. On June 11, 1559, under the direction of Tristrán de Luna y Arellano, an expedition of approximately 1000 colonists, accompanied by 500 soldiers and 240 norses sailed from Mexico, arriving in tne area of Mobile Bay in mid-July (primary sources summarized in Priestley 1928: xxx-xxxvii). The area between Mobile and Pensacola bays was explored, and a settlement established in the latter area. A hurricane wrecked several ships and most of the food supplies in August, and by early 1560 tneir food supplies were exhausted. Throughout 1560 the expedition was in great distress, in spite of efforts to live off the countryside. The hardships prompted numerous letters and petitions for

relief and, in the face of a virtual mutiny by the starving soldiers and colonists, the settlement was abandoned in early 1561.

An extensive documentary record exists from the Luna expedition, and has been compiled in both Spanish and English by Priestley (1928). Most of the surviving documents are letters written at the time, in the form of official reports by exploring parties in the interior, and to Santo Domingo and Spain. One other account, by the Dominican priest Fray Domingo de la Anunciación, was a msmoir prepared in the early 1590s (first published in Fray Augustín Davila Padilla's Historia, in 1596 [1625: 183-229]; described in Priestloy 1928). Recounted some 30 years after the events, this account is fairly general, omitting detail found in the expedition letters, including some prepared by Fray Domingo himself. The firsthand accounts provide a wealth of detail on the events of the expedition, although many are close or direct copies of one another that had been sent to different authorities. The documents focus primarily on the Spanish settlers, but contain a number of valuable refarences to the natives, in large measure since it was from them that the expedition hoped to obtain food.

Foraging and exploration parties sent into the interior described the Indian settlements there, including a town called Nanipacana, that contained many ruined houses and that the remaining inhabitants said had been largely destroyed by Spaniards a number of years before. This appears to have been the location where Soto fought at Mavila, in 1540; the various accounts of the village and of the natives in the general area indicate that these groups were no where near as powerful, or populous as when Soto met them. This impression was also reinforced by a major expedition sent into the interior in the spring of 1560 expressly to find Coosa, one of the richest provinces that Soto had encountered twenty years before. After nearly three months of searching, probably in what is now eastern Alabama and western Georgia, tne Spanish party, consisting of 200 men and some 50 horses, reached Coosa, which was apparantly much reduced in size and power compared to 1540. While at Coosa, in fact, the Spanish helped the local leader mount an attack against a rival village that ceased paying tribute, a clear indication of the extent to which the polity had declined (summarized in Priestley 1928; see also Swanton I946: 60-61).

A description of the town of Coosa by Fray Domingo de la Anunciación, written in that town on August 1, 1560, gives some indication of the ethnographic detail that can be found in these early sources:

> three months after we had left Nanipacana we arrived at the town of Coosa, where the lord of the country resides.... The people in this country... all live together in little towns, for so far we have seen none which contain as many as one hundred and fifty houses, and very few which number above forty or fifty. They have winter and summer houses ["tienen casas de ynbiarno y de berano" in original]. The winter houses are all covered with earth, and they sow whatever they like over them. All

> the towns have a good-sized plaza outside the town, in which there is a pole like the rollo of Spain; they are very tall, and they have them for their sports. There are some towns enclosed by a pair of walls as high as a man's stature, and although they must be something between them yet it is of no value [for defense]. There are temples in some of the towns, but they are as rudely constructed and as little frequented as is uncouth the religion which they practice in them. All the towns that are in this country are on the banks of the rivers, for the rest is so densely uooded that it can by no means be inhabited (Fray Domingo in Priestley 1928: 238-241).

Recent archaeological and ethnohistoric research (Hudson et al. 1985: 726-727) indicates that the town of Coosa was located in northwest Georgia, at the Little Egypt Site in Murray County, along the Coosawattee River (Hally 1980). The descriptions provided by the Soto and Luna accounts, therefore, illustrate that what was a powerful native chiefdom in 1540 was in rapid decline only 20 years later, after only one (albeit traumatic). episode of direct contact. The example of Coosa suggests that it is to the very earliest accounts that scholars must address themselves if they wish to reconstruct southeastern chiefdoms as they were at the time of European contact (see also Smith 1984).

Although abandoning their colonial venture on the Gulf coast, the Spanish continued plans for settlements on the Atlantic coast in the early 1560s. Under the direction of Angel de Villafañe, a Spanish flotilla briefly explored the coastline in the vicinity of South Carolina in 1561, entering the area later settled as Santa Elena (Port Royal Sound) in May. Before settlements could be established, thougn, a series of three French expeditions along the South Atlantic coast occurred, directly challenging Spanish claim to the area. These expeditions, respectively, ware by Ribault in 1562, by Laudonnière in 1564/65, and again by Ribault in 1565 (Bennett 1975; see also Swanton 1946: 51-62). Several separate accounts document these French exgeditions, the most famous of which from an ethnohistorical perspective are the narratives of Rene Laudonnière (1975), first published in 1586, and the illustrations of Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues (1875), puolished in 1531 by Theodore de Bry. A description and critical evaluation of all of the surviving accounts of tne three French expeditions, focusing on their order of appearance, accuracy, and historical contaxt (i.e., how they came to be written and published) has been provided by Bennett (1975: xiii-xxii).

The accounts from these French expeditions include a wealth of detail about the Indians of the Florida, Georgia, and the lower South Carolina coast, and their relations with groups in the interior. Swanton was so impressed with the quality of this material that he stated:

> [t]o the Laudonnière expedition, however, we own more of our knowledge of the ancient inhabitants of Florida than to the sum total of Spanish sources (Swanton

1946: 62).

This statement is overdrawn, particularly in light of the ethnographic material (briefly noted previously) contained in the Soto, Luna, and other Spanish accounts, even when reference is restricted solely to groups found within the geographic confines of the modern state of Florida. What it does suggest, however, is that care must be taken to avoid placing too much faith in some accounts, and too little in others.

The initial French expedition, under Jean Ribault, touched along the Florida to South Carolina coast from April through June, 1562. In Port Royal Sound, somewhere near the modern town of Beaufort, South Carolina, Ribault left a "colony" of 28 men in a fortification christened Charlesfort, prior to departing for France. Due to religious conflicts in France he was unable to return immediately to relieve the colony. After almost a year of waiting, the men at Charlesfort, with native help, built a small boat and attempted to sail back to France, with tragic results — many starved to death en route. The primary accounts of this first expedition are by Laudonnière (1975) and Ribault (1927). Ribault's account, written in England sfter fleeing the religious struggles he encountered immediately upon the return from his first voyage, appeared in English in London in 1563. This account, "The Whole and True Discovery of Terra Florida" (Ribault 1927), contains a number of descriptions of the coastal Indians. Comparable detail is also contained in Laudonnière's account, including a reference to the ruler of "Chiquola [Chicora, probably Cofitachequi], the great lord of that territory" (Bennett 1975: 28).

Laudonnière himself commanded the second French expedition, sent out in 1564 to reestablish a French colony in the southeastern region. Landing along the Florida coast, they established a settlement, Fort Caroline, near the mouth of the St. John's River. This settlement was occupied until late September 1565, when it was attacked and destroyed by the Spanish under Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. Prior to this, however, on August 28, 1565, Ribault had arrived with a third expedition and relieved Laudonnière. In the attack by the Spanish, Ribault and most of his men, who had attempted to meet the Spanish at sea, were killed (after surrendering) when their ships were wrecked in a storm. Laudonnière and a number of the colonists escaped in one of the surviving vessels, following the attack on Fort Caroline by Menéndez de Avilés on September 20, 1565.

It is predominantly from the accounts of survivors of this 1564-1565 French colony that some of the only information from non-Spanish sources on native groups in the lower southeast dating to the sixteenth century derives. Only minimal detail on these groups is found in two of the accounts, those by Nicholas La Challeux, first published in 1566 (Lorant 1946), and John Sparke, first published in 1587 (Hakluyt, 1809–1812: 3: 615). The Sparke account is a description of the July 15–28, 1505 visit to Fort Caroline by the English sailor John Hawkins. Laudonnière, who was a participant in the events of all three expeditions, in contrast, prepared extended descriptions on the coastal Indians, that Bennett (1975: xix) has called "exceedingly well-recorded geography and anthropology." The final principal account by Jacques le Moyne de Morgues (1875),

first published in Latin in 1591 by Theodore De Bry, is noteworthy because of its accompanying detailed drawings of coastal Florida Indian life. The only comparable illustrations of southeastern Indians dating from this time level are those by John White, which appeared in 1590, detailing the coastal North Carolina and Virginia Algonkian groups encountered by the English expedition led by Sir Richard Grenville in 1585 (Bry 1972; Hulton 1972).

With the destruction of the French colony the Spanish under Pedro Menéndez de Avilés established two principal settlements along the Atlantic Coast, at St. Augustine in 1565 and at Santa Elena in 1566. The official records of these colonies, including correspondence by Menéndez de Avilés, have been collected and translated into English by Conner (1923, 1925, 1930). Although the documents contain numerous references to local Indians, they are mostly about administrative matters, and rarely provide much of anthropological interest. Waddell (1980) has thoroughly reviewed these (and other) manuscripts, abstracting all references to coastal South Carolina Indians, including place names. The colony at Santa Elena was maintained from 1566 to 1576, when the local Indians rose up and destroyed it, and from 1577, when it was reestablished, to 1587, when it was finally abandoned. Detailed accounts of the history and historic archaeology of this colony, including its relations with the Indians, have been recently prepared by South (1979, 1980, 1982, 1983, 1984) and Lyon (1984). Comparable syntheses of historic Indian life, from the Florida/Georgia coastal area, have been presented by Milanich and Proctor (1978), Jones (1979) and, at the early St. Augustine colony, by Deagan (1974, 1978, 1980).

The most detailed Spanish records of Indian life from the South Atlantic Slope during the latter half of the sixteenth century come from the Santa Elena colony. Two major expeditions were sent into the interior from Santa Elena in 1566 and 1567, under the direction of Captain Juan Pardo, that went north through South Carolina, into central and western North Carolina and eastern 'Tennessee (both expeditions followed essentially the same route). The surviving accounts from these expeditions, until recently only minimally examined, have proven invaluable for the location and description of contact period native groups throughout the South Atlantic Slope and beyond. This is because the areas visited by Pardo can be accurately determined from his records, and can be correlated with towns and provinces previously visited during tne Soto and Luna expeditions (DePratter at al. 1983; Hudson et al. 1984, 1985). This has led to major revisions in the traditional route of tne Soto expedition (Swanton 1939), with the additional result that the locations of aany of the towns and provinces first visited by Soto in 1543 can finally be identified with a fsir degree of precision.

As detailed by DePratter at al. (1983), there are four primary accounts of the Pardo expeditions. Three of these, aach fairly brief, by Pardo, Francisco Martinez, and Juan de la Vandera (or Bandera), have previously been translatad into English (Ketcham 1954); the fourth, a much longer account by Vandera, remains unpublished, although there are currently plans to rectify this (Chester DePratter, personal communication 1385). This second Vandera account, referred to as Vandera II

by DePratter et al. (1983: 128), runs 71 typescript pages in a translation presumably accomplished by Ketcham (1954: 67), and is far longer than the other three accounts put together. It is this account, with its detailed figures on the direction and distance Pardo traveled each day, which has made it possible to determine the location of a number of Indian towns in the general regions.

Pardo's account, s summary of both expeditions, was prepared around late 1567 as an official report for Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. Ketcham has described both the soldier and the account in the following terms:

> Pardo . . . appears to have [been] a bluff and occasionally tough-minded soldier. His story is severely factual, and will remind some readers of Caesar, others of the battle accounts of Xenophon. He admits that he forgets names and he may well oversimplify the diplomatic and religious results of his mission (Ketcham 1954: 68).

Pardo's account (first published in Spanish by Rudíaz 1893-1894: 465-473; English translation by Ketcham 1954: 68-74), although brief, contains place names and brief descriptive information for a number of Indian towns, including the approximate numbers of chiefs met in each, and in some cases their relations with other towns.

The second account, by Francisco Martinez, a soldier accompanying Pardo, covers only the second expedition, and was prepared in Santa Elena, at the request of Menéndez de Avilés on July 11, 1567 (first published in Spanish in Rudíaz, 1893-1894: 477-480; English translation by Ketcham 1954: 74-78). This statement, much briefer than 'Pardo's, is also more suspect, focusing as it does on the seemingly overwhelming bounty of the land, and on the incredible military exploits of a Sergeant Boyano that Pardo, during his first expedition, nad left st the Indian town of Juada with 30 men. According to Martinez, Boyano had killed some 2500 Indians in two towns by the time Pardo arrived witn his second expedition, 1000 at Chisca with only 15 men, and 1530 st the unnamed town of a mountain cnief with 20 men. Swanton (1946: 655) charitably calls this "a patent exaggeration." Pardo's account, in contrast, notes only how this same Sergeant Boyano nad manayed to get himself surrounded and cut off oy the local Indians (in Ketcham 1954: 72).

The third document, by Juan de la Vanders (Vandera I) is described by its translator, Ketcham (1954: 78), as "a vary brief abstract of the extensive Banderas Document" (i.e., Vandera II). The Vandera I account was prepared at Santa Elena on January 23, 1563 (first puolisned in Rudiaz 1893-1894: 481-486; English translation by Ketcham 1354: 78-82) and is a markedly compressed account of the second expedition, skipping numerous events mentioned in the Psrdo account. The manuscript is of value for its attention to Indian life, containing a number of details not found in the other two short accounts. In particular, the manuscript refers to the discovsry of aboriginal quartz crystal mines, and to the fact that a soldier from tne expedition pushed on to the town of Coosa, well beyond the farthest extent of the main body under Pardo. The fourth manuscript, Vandera II,

while providing considerably greater detail on the route of the expedition, does not add appreciably to the description of Indian life reported in the shorter accounts.

Another important source of information on coastal Indian life that came from the settlement at Santa Elena is a letter written by Padre Juan Rogel to Pedro Menéndez de Avilés from Havana on December 9, 1570 (first published in Spanish by Rudiaz 1893-1894; English translation by Brinton 1861: 327-330; annotated version in Waddell 1980: 147-151). In this account Rogel described what he learned during 14 months of iaissionary effort among the South Carolina coastal peoples, primarily among the Orista, or Edisto, a group located to the north along the coast from Santa Elena. Rogel was well educated, with degrees in Arts and Medicine, and later became a Jesuit (Brinton 1861: 327-328). As part of his missionary effort he learned the native language and traveled extensively among the various native communities. Rogel's account is particularly noteworthy because it describes an annual round for the Orista, including the observation that:

> [a]t this season [summer] they were congregated together, but when the acorns ripened they left me quite alone, all going to the forests, each one to his own quarter, and only met together for certain festivals, which occurred every two months, and this is not always in the same spot, but now in one place, now in another . . . the inhabitants of these twenty houses [at the main village of Orista] scattered themselves in twelve or thirteen different villages, some twenty leagues, some ten, some six, and some four. Only two families remained. . . for nine out of the twelve months they wander without any fixed abode . . . they have been accustomed to this kind of life for thousands of years, and it would almost kill tnem to tear them rudely from it (Brinton1861: 328-330).

Rogel's statement provides clear documentary evidence for seasonal movement in at least one southeastern coastal group. The fact that the Orista also grew corn, which they were periodically called upon to supply to nearby European settlers, suggests that agriculture need not imply settled/sedentary community life in the southeastern Atlantic araa. Rogel appears to have been a sensitive and careful observer; Waddell has suggested that he "had an understanding of primitive peoples possibly unique for the sixteenth century" (Waddell 1980: 446).

Following the abandonmant of Santa Elena in 1587 Spanish activity north of Florida was restricted to missions established along the coast. Larson (1978: 138) nas summarized the effects of tnis activity on native life, noting that it was in many ways minimal. He concludes his summary by noting that further archaeological and archival work could "provide some of the answers" to unresolved questions of Spanisn/native interaction (Larson 1978: 133). Principal Spanish accounts written shortly after the withdrswal from Santa Elena which describe native life in the vicinity of Georgia and the Carolinas are those by Garcia de la Vera, on Governor Pedro de Ibarra's visit to coastal Georgia in 1604 (Spanish edition in Serrano

y Sanz 1912) and the accounts of two voyages by Francisco Fernandez de Ecija along the South Carolina coast, in 1605 and 1609 (original Spanish manuscript by Ecija translated into English by Day Wardlaw, in Waddell 1980: 222–232). These narratives represent the last substantial accounts currently known describing aboriginal life along the South Carolina coast prior to those prepared by the English during the exploration and settlement of the South Carolina colony after 1660.

Extra–Areal Comparisons and Later Sources

To the north of the area of Spanish settlement substantial English narratives exist from the 1580s and after, describing the Indians of northern coastal North Carolina and Virginia. The earliest substantial accounts, dating from the 1580s and 1590s, derive from the Raleigh (1584), Grenville (1585), and White (1587 and 1591) expeditions, and the failed attempt to plant a colony at Roanoke (Bry 1591). In 1607 Jamestown was founded, and the records of this colony detail Indian/European interaction in Virginia after this time. The English accounts, which are detailed, describe complex, ranked societies similar in many respects to those encountered by the Spanish to the south (see Binford 1964, Turner 1976, Potter 1982). Analyses of extant ethnohistoric descriptions of these northern Algonkian or Siouan–speaking groups, although beyond the scope of this paper, should provide a valuable comparative base from which to explore the more southern, Mississippian/Muskogean societies.

The final sources providing information on the chiefly societies of the South Atlantic Slope come from the time of the English settlement of South Carolina, after 1660. Beginning with initial exploratory voyages along the coast, through the records of the rapidly expanding colony established at Charles Town in 1670, an increasing amount of information appears on tne native groups of the region. Unfortunately, by this time these groups were either rapidly disappearing, or else had been markedly effected by over a century and a half of direct and indirect contact (see Milling 1940). Ethnographic information in these later accounts should be carefully evaluatad, if they are to be used in efforts at reconstructing aboriginal/initial contact era societies, as they were around roughly A.D. 1500–1540. In reconstructive analyses like those presented below, later accounts should be used only if earlier, sixteenth century records covering the same topics are unavailaole.

In the vicinity of South Carolina the record of the later contact ara (ca. A.D. 1600–1750), as they pertain to native groups, have been synthesized by Milling (1940) and, for the coastal area, by Waddell (1980). Particularly important primary sources, recounting coastal Indian lifeways, are those by Hilton (1953) written in 1663, and Sanford (1953) written in lob; important primary accounts of Indian groups found in the interior include those by Woodward (1953) and Lawson (1709). The observations tnat follow, which focus on the social and political organization of late prehistoric and contact era chiefly societies on the South Atlantic Slope, derive from the sources reviewed here.

CHIEFLY SOCIETIES ON THE SOUTH ATLANTIC SLOPE: THE EVIDENCE FROM THE SOURCES

The Recognition of Political Entities in the Region

Three geographically extensive chiefdom level societies appear to have dominated the eastern part of the lower southeast (north of Florida) in the early sixteenth century. These polities were described by the Spanish as the provinces of Coosa, extending from central Alabama through northwest Georgia and into Tennessee; Ocute in east/central Georgia; and Cofitachequi, occupying much of the area of South Carolina and extending into western North Carolina (Figure 1; Hudson et al. 1984, 1985). Complex chiefdoms ruled from central towns, these polities held sway over appreciable areas--often tens of thousands of square kilometars--by force, and through alliance networks with subsidiary towns and polities in their area of influence.

The Soto entrada provides a direct record of the extent and power of these chiefdoms, and the degree to which their leaders were obeyed, facts the expedition was quick to exploit. Upon leaving both Cofitachequi and Coosa, for example, Soto forced the principal chiefs to accompany him. The Gentleman of Elvas, for example, noted that taking the Lady of Cofitachequi:

> brought us service in all the places that were passed, she ordering the Indians to come and take the loads from town to town. We traveled through her territories a hundred leagues, in which, according to whatever we saw, she was greatly obeyed, whatsoever she ordered being performed with diligence and efficacy . . . . . Guaxule [was] the farthest limit of her territories (Bourne 1904: 1: 70; see Figure 1 for the location of Guaxule/Xuala).

A coaparable description is provided of the extent and power of the chief and territories of Coosa (Coca), where the same strategy was employed. Upon leaving Chiaha, a town subject to Coosa, Elvas notes:

> they travaled for six days, passing by many towns subject to the Cacique of Coca until they arrived at Coca, on Friday, the sixteenth of July [1540]. The Cocique came out to receive nim at the distance of two crossbow shot from the town, borne in a litter on the shoulders of his principal men, seated on a cushion, and covered with a mantle of martenskins of the size and snape of a woman's shawl: on nis head he wore a diadem of plumes, and he was surrounded' by many attendants playing upon flutes and singing. . . . The Indians [gave] up their habitations by order of their Cacique, and in whicn the Governor and his men took lodging. In the barbacoas was a great quantity of maize and beans; the country, thickly settled in numerous and large towns, with fields between, extending from one to another, was pleasant. . . . It was the practice to keep watch ovar the Caciques that none should absent themselves,

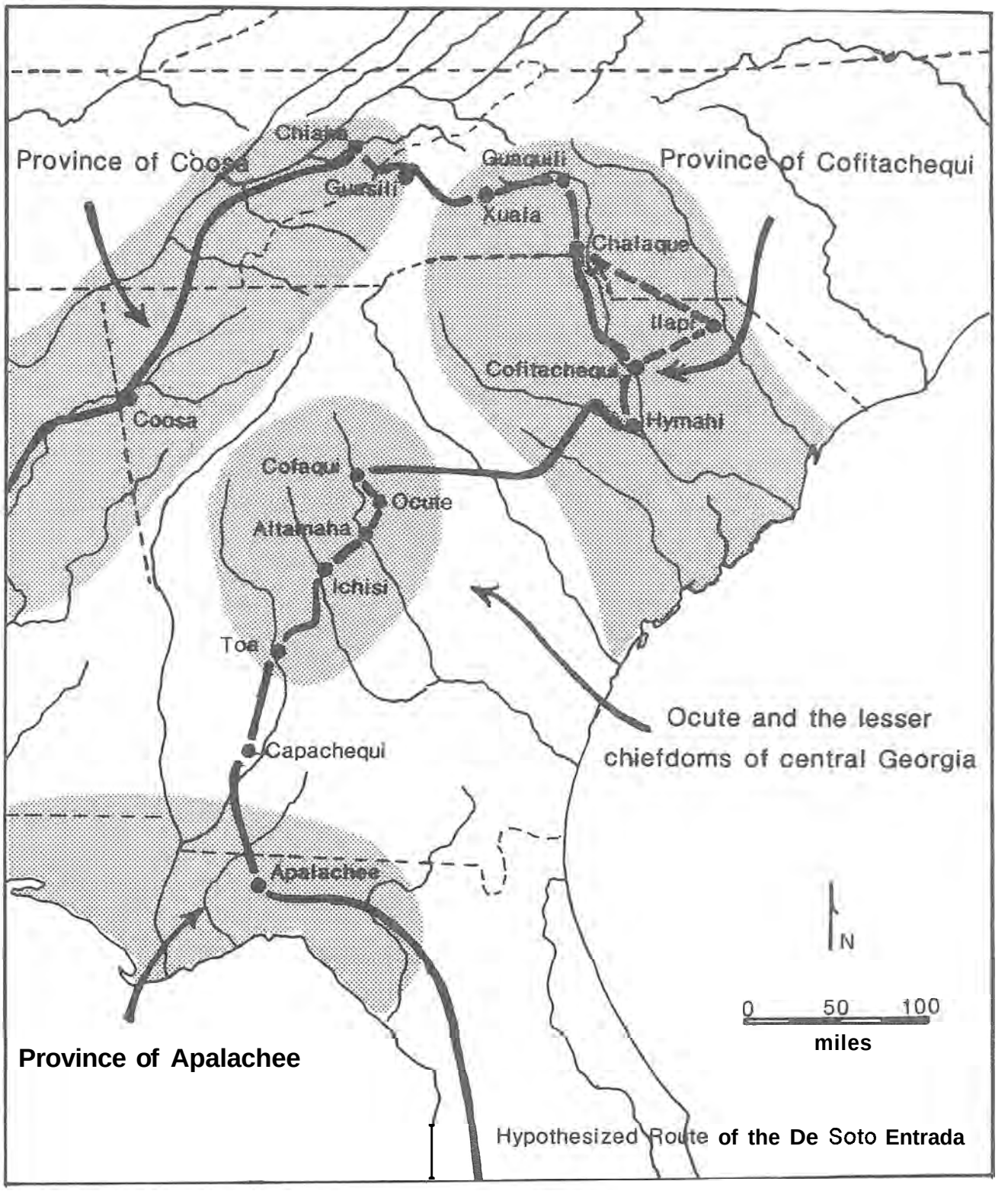

Figure 1. Late Prehistoric and early Historic period chiefdoms on the South Atlantic Slope, with the Soto route. Province boundaries are only rough approximations at the present. Redrawn from Hudson et al. 1984: 69.

> they being taken along by the Governor until coming out of their territories; for by thus having them the inhabitants would await their arrival in the towns, give a guide, and men to carry the loads (Bourne 1904: I: 81-83).

A similar summary is provided by Ranjel,

> [t]his chief [of Coosa] is a powerful one and a ruler of a wide territory, one of the beat and most abundant that they found in Florida. And the chief came out to receive the Governor in a litter covered with the white mantles of the country, and the litter was borne on the shoulders of sixty or seventy of his principal subjects, with no plebian or common Indian among them. . . . In order that the land should not rise in revolt nor refuse them supplies they took him with them (Bourne 1904: I: 112-113).

The third principal chiefdom in the region, Ocute, appears to have been one of several polities occupying the central Georgia area, that appear to have been less complex than either Coosa or Cofitachequi. Although Ocute appears to have been the most powerful polity in the central Georgia area, other "provinces" were reported nearby, including Cofaqui and Patofa. These are described as "being at peace with the chief of Ocute" (Elvas 1904: I: 57), although the precise nature of the relationship between these centers is not clear. Henry T. Wright (personal communication 1985) has suggested that the central Georgia chiefdoms, given their small areal extent and relative autonomy from one another, may reflect the "collapse" or nonintegrated phase of a regional chiefly cycle, while Cofitachequi and Coosa appear to represent the much more extensive and complex "integrated" phase of such a cycle. That is, the organization of chiefly societies in the region may have fluctuated between less complex and more complex systems, as paramount centers emerged and declined.

Interprovincial Relations and Warfare

Interprovincial relations between Coosa, Cofitachequi, and Ocute appear to have been fairly minimal. Substantial distances separated the principal centers, creating extensive buffer zones that were either unoccupied, or occupied by outlying villages. In Patofa, one of the lesser chiefdoms in or near Ocute, the chief knew that to tne northwest "there was a province called Coca, a plentiful country with very large towns" (Elvas 1904: I: 60), and he offered Soto guides and bearers if the latter wished to go there. The tenor of the Patofa chief's description of Coosa, however, suggests that regular, direct contact between the two polities probably occurred only infrequently. Relations between the central Georgia cniefdoms and Cofitachequi were described as hostile:

> [the caciques of] Ocuti and Cafaqui. . . . said that if we were going to make war on the Lady of Cofitachique, they would give us all we should desire for the way;

> but we should understand that there was no road over which to pass; that they had no intercourse, because of their emnity, except when they made war on each other, which was carried on through obscure and intricate parts, out of which no one would be expected to issue (Biedma 1904: I: 11);
>
> the chief of Camuno [of Altamaha] . . . always ate and slept and went about armed; that he never laid aside his arms because he was on the borders of another chief named Cofitachequi, his enemy (Ranjel 1904: II: 89).

Although hostile relations probably did exist between the chiefdoms of central Georgia and Cofitachequi, the Altamaha chief's statement may well reflect as much concern about Soto as it does about his putative enemies. Between Ocute snd Cofitachequi, however, the Spanish passed "through a desert country some nine or ten days march" (Ranjel 1540 in Bourne 1904: II: 91); this "desert of Ocute" appears to have been an unoccupied buffer zone stretching from the Oconee to the Congaree and Santee rivers in central South Carolina (see also Hally 1982; Anderson 1983; Anderson and Schuldenrein 1983: 115; Hudson et al. 1984). The minimal intercourse between Ocute and Cofitchequi uas highlighted by the fact that the Soto party, including seferal hundred bearers from Ocute and Patofa, proceeded to get thoroughly lost attempting to find Cofitachequi, to the point of near starvation (Elvas 1904: I: 59-64). Soto's anger at being lost led to a description by Patofa of the nature of the "warfare" between the two provinces:

> [Soto observed] that it was not credible. that among 8000 Indians [?; see previous commentary on Garcilaso] whom he commanded, there was not one who knew the road, considering that tney nad always been at war with the people of Cofaciqui, and made incursions on each other. Patofa replied that he had never been so far, and not one of those uho accompanied him; that they could not call war, the skirmishes which had taken place between them and their enemies; that in the desert they had fought only in the divers encounters in hunting and fishing, where they had killed and made prisoners on both sides; that as the inhabitants of Cofaciqui nad always gained the advantage, they fear them, and had not dared to enter their country... (Garcilaso de la Vega 1881: 348).

This buffer thus also appears to have served as something of a hunting preserve, in which skirmishes between parties from the two chiefdoms occurred (see also Turner 1976): Warfare may not have been as extreme in the araaa occupied by Ocute and Cofitachequi as it was in provinces encountered later in tne entrada. It was not until they arrived at Chiaha, in the Coosa province, for example, that "tne Spaniards first found fanced villages" (Ranjel 1904: II: 108; see also Biedma 1904: II: 14). The absence of obvious fortifications in tne territories encountered prior to this may well indicate a reduced level of hostilities. The existence

of extensive buffer zones, and the absence of comparable Mississippian societies to the east or northeast (along the Atlantic coast) may have lessened the need for major fortifications; the native societies in these directions may not have been perceived as threats.

Tribute Flow, Alliance Formation, and Status Reinforcement

Within the major Mississippian polities of the South Atlantic Slope lesser towns, leaders, and individuals submitted tribute to those higher in the 'hierarchy. Tribute appears to have included both foodstuffs and luxury goods:

> [m]aize is kept in [a] barbacoa, which is a house with wooden sides, like a room, raised aloft on four posts, and has a floor of cane. The difference between the houses of the masters, or principal men, and those of the common people is, besides being larger than the others, they have balconies on the front side, with cane seats, like benches; and about are many barbacoas, in which they bring together the tribute their people give them of maize, skins of deer, and blankets of the country. These are like shawls, some of them made from the inner bark of trees, and others of a grass resembling nettle, which, by treading out, becomes like flax (Elvas 1904: I: 53).

Tribute appears to have been paid either voluntarily or by force; withholding tribute was considered rebellion, while seizing tribute was, at least in Cofitachequi, a capital offense (Elvas 1904: 1: 70, 101, 154). Chiefs maintained barbacoas in outlying settlements, and could call on these stores whenever they wished. Thus, when Soto's army arrived st Ilapi, a town some three days to the northeast of Cofitachequi, they found "seven barbacoas of corn, that they said were tnere stored for the woman chief" (Ranjel 1904: II: 100). Numerous other examples exist in the Soto accounts, and in many other sources from tne sixteenth century, of the chiaf's ability to call upon stores located in other towns; Soto's strategy of capturing and carrying along leaders whenever possible was prsdicated upon this fact.

Among elites tne exchange of valuable or luxury goods appears to have been a way of sealing or maintaining alliances and of acknowledging the powsr or position of another elite. Throughout the entrada, for example, Soto was welcomed by native chiefs offering gifts of blankets, deer and marten skins, and other valuables, in addition to food and housing (e.g., Elvas 1904: I: 65, 91, 129; Ranjel 1904: 11: 86, 99). These were precisely the items accounted as tribute among the natives by the Soto chroniclers (see above), and it is apparent that the gifts were an attempt to placate a potentially dangerous enemy, while simultaneously entering into a reciprocal alliance relationship with nim. Tribute probably served a similar function in the native system. The act of presenting tribute was therefore, among other things, an acknowledgement of power and a statement of relationship. The giving of gifts was also a method of demonstrating a chief's own power and prestige; thus the chiefs of Pacaha

and Casqui in northeast Arkansas were "each striving to outdo the other in the magnitude of [their] gifts" to Soto (Elvas 1904: I: 129). The distribution of luxury goods to followers was also a method of maintaining supporters among those lower in rank; both tribute and prizes in war could be divided by the chief among his followers (Laudonniere 1975: 15).

Settlement Hierarchies and the Recruitment and Maintenance of Chiefly Elites

Large numbers of towns and other settlements were tied together in the more complex, areally extensive polities. A settlement hierarchy containing scattered small hamlets or villages, larger villages, and major villages or chiefly centers appears to have characterized the three major provinces observed in the South Atlantic area during the early to mid-sixteenth century. "Cabins" are reported scattered along the streams in the vicinity of Ocute, for example (Ranjel 1904: II: 89-90), while in the vicinity of Coosa "many small villages" were located around the principal town (Vandera I/quoted in Ketcham 1954: 80). Villages acknowledging the suzerainity of the chiefly center were found throughout all three provinces; the Pardo documents are particularly interesting on this matter because they note that the number of "chiefs" (i.e., nobles or principals) in these subsidiary villages varied considerably. From his travel within the confines of the province of Cofitachequi, it appears that the number of chiefs present in a village was closely related to its size and importance:

> at the said Canos [Cofitachequi]. . . I found a great number of chiefs and Indians . . . From there I left for Tagaya, where I brought together the Indians and chiefs. . . . I went to Tagaya the Lesser and had all the Indians and the chief brought togetner. . . . From there I went to Ysa, who is a great chief; there I found many chiefs and a great quantity of Indians. . . . From there I went to an outlying district of the said Ysa, and brought together the Indians (Pardo 1567 in Ketchem 1954: 70-72).

The existence of a noble elite, probably distinguished from commoners in dress (something indicated in many of the accounts), and hence readily recognizable to Pardo, is clearly suggested by this passage.

The elite supported and reinforced the status of the primary chief. They ruled in his stead in outlying communities, and served as something of a privy council as necessary; decisions were frequently reported as made by the chief, in conference with his principal men (Elvas 1904: I: 75; Laudonniere in Bennett 1975: 14). By serving as litter, awning, or fan bearers, as for example at Coosa, Cofitachequi, and Tastaluca (Elvas 1904: I: 65, 81, 101), the elite demonstrate both the chief's position (over them), and their own position (close to him). From this same elite could come possible successors to the position of paramount, through legitimate succession, or through conquest or rebellion. Membership in this elite appears at least partially due to ascribed, or inherited social position. The system was not

totally inflexible--genealogical ranking was unquestionably important, but so too was raw power, as illustrated by an exchange recorded between the rival chiefs of Pacaha and Casqui:

> there was much contention, as to which of them would sit on the right hand of the Governor. Pacaha said to Casqui: "You know well that I am a greater lord than you, and of more honourable parents and grandparents, and that to me belongs a higher place." Casqui replied as follows: "True it is that you are a greater lord than I, and that your forbears were greater than mine. . . But you know well that I am older and mightier than you, and that I confine you in your walls whenever I wish (Ranjel 1904: II: 143-144).

Chiefly succession may have been reckoned matrilineally (i.e., from mother's brother to sister's son), as matrilineal descent is a characteristic of many southeastern Indian groups (e.g., Swanton, 1928, 1946; Hudson 1976). At Chiaha, for example, the young cacique noted that "an uncle of mine governs this country, in my place, til I be of mature age" (Elvas 1904: I: 76), while at Cofaqui, where the chief was an old man, "his nephew governed for him" (Ranjel 1904: II: 91).

The wealth and power of the chief was tied to the religious and ideological system. Laudonniere, (1975: 41, 110), although referring to Florida Indians, may be echoing a general theme:

> the king was held in great reverence by his subjects . . . . [H]e made them believe that his sorceries and spells were the reason why the earth brought forth her fruit. . . . [P]riests or executioners of the Indian law . . . . were given faith and confidence in part because of an inherited right to order sacrificial ceremonies (Laudonnière 1975: 41, 110).

The chief's residence was often set apart and sometimes served as a combination house, elite council room, and temple. The dwelling of Tastaluca was described as "on a 'nigh place" by Elvas (1904: I: 87), while Biedma noted that "it is the custom of the Caciques to have near their house a high hill, made by hand, some having the house placed thereon" (Biedma 1904: II: 28). The temple of Talimeco at Cofitacnequi is described as a "house of worship . . . on a high mound and much revered (Ranjel 1904: II: 101).

The chief was also set apart in death. Extensive mortuary rituals accompanied the death of a chief, including (at least among coastal groups) the burning of his house (Laudonniere 1975: 13-15). The bodies of the chiefly desd were maintained in elaborate mortuary structures, as illustrated at Cofitachequi, which was tnus s center for both the living and the dead:

> he [Soto] opened a mosque, in which were interred the bodies of the chief personages of that country. We took from it a quantity of pearls.. . (Biedma 1544 in Bourne 1904: II: 14);

The Cacica, observing that

> the Christians valued pearls, told the Governor that, if he should order some sepulchres that were in the town to be searched, he would find many; and if he chose to send to those that were in the uninhabited towns, he might load all his horses with them. They examined those in the town, and found three hundred and fifty pounds' weight of pearls, and figures of babies and birds made from them (Elvas 1904: 66).

Retainer sacrifice may have been practiced in conjunction with the interment of chiefs, as recorded much later in time among the Natchez (Dumont 1753). In the Soto accounts evidence for this form of behavior comes from Goachoya, along the Mississippi River:

> it was the usage of the country, that when any lord died, to kill some persons, who should accompany and serve him on the way (Elvas 1904: I: 162).

No documentary evidence has been found describing this practice in the South Atlantic region, in the three provinces forming the focus for this investigation. Additional archival and archaeological research should indicate whether it was practiced in this area.

CONCLUSIONS: THE NATURE OF LATE PREHISTORIC AND EARLY CONTACT ERA CHIEFLY SOCIETIES OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC SLOPE

From this brief review of primary documentary sources, a number of generalizations can be made about the nature of the chiefly societies that were in existence on the South Atlantic Slope during the early sixteenth century, and possibly for a few centuries before this time. First, it is immediately evident that these societies were characterized by a "pervasive inequality of persons and groups" (Service 1971: 145). An institutionalized level of leadership existed, consisting of the chief and his associates (Peebles and Kus 1977: 422). The power of this elite was derived from sanctified authority; that is, from genealogical proximity to chiefly lineages, and from a concomitant public acceptance of the sacred position and abilities of the elite.

The ruling elite in these provinces was socially differentiated, or set apart, from the great mass of people, by distinctive modes of dress, and compulsory sumptuary and ritualistic behavior. A physical separation was also enforced, with the elite occupying special (or minimally, larger and better quality) residential areas. This separation was maintained in death as well as in life: "the noble dead will be isolated in death, as they were in life, close to areas of major ritual display" (Wright 1984: 44). This separation should be evident at all levels of the province settlement hierarchy where chiefly elites were maintained. Minimally, members of the ruling elite should be present and recognizable in all major and secondary ceremonial centers characterized by mound architecture; at least one or more members should also be found in larger agricultural villages, where they may serve to administer tribute collection and public granaries.

The chiefly elite was probably a province-wide group linked through marriage and other, predominantly kin-based, alliances. This elite had the responsibility for coordinating collective ritual behavior, as well as directing the probable extensive, province-wide tributary economy, in which goods inevitably flowed upward from lower to higher levels in the status and settlement hierarchy. This tributary economy appears to have operated on two levels; one concerned with subsistence items and the other with luxury goods. Foodstuffs would have been stored (primarily) at or near where they were produced, Communal or provincial storage facilities should thus have been widely scattered through the domain. Luxury items, in contrast, some of which may have been produced locally (i..., blankets, skins, river pearls), would have tended to gravitate to the secondary or paramount centers, into the hands of the chief and his associates. Production of these luxury goods is likely to have been encouraged (or even coerced) at the local level, for movement upward within the system.

Secondary centers with their own ceremonial and social elites occurred in sub-areas throughout these major provinces, where they served as intermediaries between the producing populace and the elite in the paramount center. These secondary centers may have had considerable political and economic/subsistence autonomy, but an ultimate allegiance to the paramount center existed, and was undoubtedly reinforced through periodic submission of tribute, most probably in the form of luxury goods. Food may or may not have also been periodically submitted to the paramount center. The paramount chief would, however, have been able to call on the resources of the secondary center at any time.

The attention of the provincial elite appears .to have been largely directed inward, to the operation of the intra-provincial political, social, and ceremonial systems. Warfare was probably rigorously controlled and directed outward, against groups outside the province. Conflict, at least in the Ocute and Cofitachequi area, appears to nave taken the form of isolated skirmishes and sneak attacks on small parties or settlements. Because captives were periodically taken in these kinds of episodes, rigid stylistic boundaries between major polities is unlikely. Given their relative isolation, tnougn, stylistic variation within major provinces is likely to have been less pronounced than between them. The formation of marriage alliance networks was also probably directed inward, to maintain or reinforce existing provincial political structures, rather than build axtra-provincial relations.

All of these observations, and more, may be inferred from the early historic accounts. The contact era Mississippian societies on the South Atlantic coast, it should oe empnasized, were highly complex, geographically extensive polities exerting sway over tens of thousands of square kilometers. It is only through the careful mixture of ethnohistory and archaeology that their extent and operation is ever likely to be understood.

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