

MURDER AND MARTYRDOM IN SPANISH FLORIDA

Don Juan and the Guale Uprising of 1597



J. Michael Francis

Kathleen M. Kole

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**MURDER AND MARTYRDOM
IN SPANISH FLORIDA:
DON JUAN AND THE GUALE
UPRISING OF 1597**

J. MICHAEL FRANCIS

*Research Associate, Division of Anthropology
American Museum of Natural History
Professor of History, University of North Florida*

KATHLEEN M. KOLE

*Department of History
University of Notre Dame*

WITH A CONTRIBUTION BY

DAVID HURST THOMAS

*Curator, Division of Anthropology
American Museum of Natural History*

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ABSTRACT

In the late fall of 1597, Guale Indians murdered five Franciscan friars stationed in their territory and razed their missions to the ground. The 1597 Guale Uprising, or Juanillo's Revolt as it is often called, brought the missionization of Guale to an abrupt end and threatened Florida's new governor with the most significant crisis of his term. To date, interpretations of the uprising emphasize the primacy of a young Indian from Tolomato named Juanillo, the heir to Guale's paramount chieftaincy. According to most versions of the uprising story, Tolomato's resident friar publicly reprimanded Juanillo for practicing polygamy. In his anger, Juanillo gathered his forces and launched a series of violent assaults on all five of Guale territory's Franciscan missions, leaving all but one of the province's friars dead.

Through a series of newly translated primary sources, many of which have never appeared in print, this volume presents the most comprehensive examination of the 1597 uprising and its aftermath. It seeks to move beyond the two central questions that have dominated the historiography of the uprising, namely who killed the five friars and why, neither of which can be answered with any certainty. Instead, this work aims to use the episode as the background for a detailed examination of Spanish Florida at the turn of the 17th century. Viewed collectively, these sources not only challenge current representations of the uprising, they also shed light on the complex nature of Spanish-Indian relations in early colonial Florida.

TIMELINE

November 24, 1595

Florida's Governor Domingo Martínez de Avendaño dies, just days after establishing five Franciscan missions in Guale territory.

June 2, 1597

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo arrives in St. Augustine to begin his tenure as Florida's new governor.

October 4, 1597

Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas sends an urgent letter to St. Augustine's Governor Méndez to report rumors that six Franciscan friars had been murdered in Guale territory.

October 7, 1597

Governor Méndez receives Chozas's letter, and immediately sends Sergeant Juan de Santiago and six soldiers to defend San Pedro and to investigate Fray Fernández's claims.

October 10, 1597

Juan de Santiago and his men arrive in San Pedro.

October 17, 1597

Governor Méndez and Fray Blas de Montes arrive at San Pedro.

October 18, 1597

Governor Méndez begins investigation of Guale revolt.

October 19, 1597

Unable to determine exactly what happened, Governor Méndez orders Captain Vicente González north to Tolomato to investigate the matter further. Captain González departs that day.

October 22, 1597

Captain González returns to San Pedro with an Indian captive. Under interrogation, the captive testifies to have heard rumors that all the friars are dead.

October 27, 1597

Méndez arrives at the village of Ospó. Some Indians shoot arrows at his party. He burns the village and its storehouses. At Ospó, he discovers a friar's scalp.

November 2, 1597

Méndez burns the village of Sapala and its storehouses. He then travels to Tolomato and finds the church, the principal *bohíos*, and the friars' residences burned. Méndez remains at Tolomato for two days.

November 4, 1597

Méndez orders all the houses at Tolomato burned; he then dispatches Alonso Díaz to the village of Guale. Díaz discovers the church and the friars' residences burned. Díaz returns that night and reports finding the bodies of Fray Miguel de Auñón and Fray Antonio Badajoz.

November 5, 1597

Alonso Díaz then sails to Tupiqui and finds several buildings burned and what appears to be Fray Blas Rodríguez's remains.

November 6, 1597

Méndez orders Díaz to the towns of Asao and Talaje. There, Díaz burns and destroys all of the *bohíos* and storehouses.

November 11, 1597

For their own protection against the Guale, Méndez advises San Pedro's *cacique* don Juan and his subjects to move to Socochuno and San Juan del Puerto. As a reward for their services, he reduces their tribute. Méndez orders the friars on San Pedro to return to St. Augustine.

November 16, 1597

One month after his arrival in Guale territory, Governor Méndez returns to St. Augustine. The investigation remains open.

January 16, 1598

As a reward for his military services against the Guale, San Pedro's *cacique* don Juan

petitions King Philip II to appoint him *mico mayor* (paramount chief) of Guale territory. The request eventually is rejected.

February 23, 1598

In a letter to King Philip II, Governor Méndez reports that 22 *caciques* had come to St. Augustine to pledge loyalty to His Majesty. Among the 22 were the *mico mayor* of Tolomato, as well as the *caciques* of Tupiqui, Asao, and Guale.

March 28, 1598

In an effort to further punish the Guale and to gather intelligence, Governor Méndez reaches an accord with the *cacique* of Escamacu. In exchange for gifts and Spanish favor, Escamacu's chief vows to launch military expeditions into Guale territory and also attempt to gather intelligence. The governor agrees to return within 60 days.

May 23, 1598

Governor Méndez departs from St. Augustine to meet once again with the *cacique* of Escamacu. His arrival is delayed by several days when a violent storm forces Méndez to abandon his ship at San Mateo. However, he continues to Escamacu where he learns that Fray Francisco de Ávila is still alive.

July 20, 1598

After lengthy negotiations with the Guale at Tolomato, Governor Méndez returns to St. Augustine with Fray Ávila and seven Indian captives. Governor Méndez interrogates the Indian captives, recording testimonies from Lucas, Francisco, Bartolomé, Buenaventura, Pedro, and an unnamed Indian. Fray Ávila refuses to testify.

July 27, 1598

The Indian Lucas is interrogated again, this time under threat of torture. Lucas confesses to being present at the murder of Fray Blas Rodríguez.

July 28, 1598

Lucas is sentenced to death. The other six Indian witnesses are distributed as personal servants among Spanish officials.

July 29, 1598

Lucas is hanged for his alleged participation in the murder of Fray Rodríguez.

February 28, 1600

In a letter to King Philip III, Governor Méndez reports that don Juanillo is most responsible for the 1597 Guale Uprising. Méndez reports that friars Pedro de Corpa and Blas Rodríguez had removed don Juanillo from the office of *mico mayor* and had appointed instead another Indian, don Francisco.

May 18, 1600

In a letter to King Philip III, Governor Méndez reports that several *caciques* came and pledged obedience and loyalty to the Spanish crown. They included the *caciques* from Asao, Guale, Tupiqui, Ospo, and Tulufina. Guale territory's *mico mayor* don Francisco and his heir don Juanillo were not present.

October 1601?

Governor Méndez orders Diego de Cárdenas and an Indian *atequi* [interpreter], Sebastián de Ynclán, to the village of La Tamufa, where they meet with the *mico* of Asao. Over the next eight days, Asao's *mico* assembles a war party of 500 Indians, who then travel to Yfusinique, where don Juanillo and don Francisco were in hiding. A fierce battle follows, and don Juanillo, don Francisco, and two dozen others are killed and then scalped.

November 27, 1601

Diego de Cárdenas and Sebastián de Ynclán return to St. Augustine and present Governor Méndez with don Juanillo's scalp. The governor declares the uprising over and peace restored. Don Domingo remains the *mico mayor* of Guale.

March, 1606

Almost a decade after the uprising, the Franciscans return to Guale territory. Four new Franciscan missions are established in the region. At Asao, the newly christened mission is

named Santo Domingo de Asao.

1614

Fray Juan de Vivanco, Commissary General of the Indies, orders Fray Luís Gerónimo de Oré to Florida. Oré arrives in Florida, where he conducts an ecclesiastical inspection before returning to Cuba.

November 6, 1616

Oré arrives a second time in St. Augustine to inspect Franciscan missions. Over the next few months he visits missions, records baptisms, and confirms newly converted Indians.

January 14, 1617

Oré sends a report to King Philip III, offering a brief history of Florida's Franciscan missions.

1619? in Madrid, Spain

Oré publishes his chronicle, *The Martyrs of Florida*.

FOREWORD

DAVID HURST THOMAS

Archaeologists from the American Museum of Natural History began looking for Mission Santa Catalina in 1977.¹ For two years, we conducted an islandwide, 20% systematic randomized sample of St. Catherines Island, discovering and testing approximately 135 archaeological sites. The regional archaeological survey of St. Catherines Island had two primary objectives in mind: (1) to obtain a relatively unbiased sample of archaeological sites from all time periods drawn from all parts of the island (Thomas, 2008) and (2) to pinpoint the exact location of Mission Santa Catalina de Guale. The successful search for Mission Santa Catalina has been described elsewhere (Thomas, 1987, 1988a).

We then spent 15 years excavating the ruins of the 16th- and 17th-century Franciscan missions at Santa Catalina de Guale (Thomas, 1988a, 1988b, 1991, 1992). Between 1981 and 1990, the research and excavations focused almost exclusively on the mission compound on St. Catherines Island. After that, we expanded our scope to include the Native American pueblo (village) at Santa Catalina.

Including this volume, we have now published seven monographs and one book addressing the archaeology of Mission Santa Catalina de Guale:

- *The Archaeology of Mission Santa Catalina de Guale: 1. Search and Discovery* (Thomas, 1987).
- *St. Catherines: An Island in Time* (Thomas, 1988b).
- *The Archaeology of Mission Santa Catalina de Guale: 2. Biocultural Interpretations of a Population in Transition* (Larsen, 1990).
- *Situado and Sabana: Spain's Support System of the Presidio and Mission Provinces of Florida* (Bushnell, 1994).
- *The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An Eighteenth-century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocamo* (Worth, 1995;

see also Worth, 2007).

- *The Beads of St. Catherines Island* (Blair, Pendleton, and Francis, 2009).
- *Mission and Pueblo of Santa Catalina de Guale, St. Catherines Island, Georgia: A Comparative Zooarchaeological Analysis* (Reitz et al., 2010).
- *Murder and Martyrdom in Spanish Florida: Don Juan and the Guale Uprising of 1597* (Francis and Kole, 2011).

Additional volumes addressing the archaeology of Mission Santa Catalina de Guale are currently in preparation.

CHANGING PERSPECTIVES OF ECONOMICS, POLITICS, AND WARFARE IN SPANISH FLORIDA

Spanish colonists typically characterized La Florida as a place of poverty, neglect, and ruin. But the combined results of recent ethnohistoric and archaeological investigations demonstrate that this self-evaluation is only partially valid.

It is true that Spanish Florida lacked the gold, silver, and other valuables found in many colonies located in Mesoamerica and South America. The value of St. Augustine was strategic—to guard the Fleet of the Indies through the Bahama Channel as the treasure-laden ships sailed back to Spain (Bushnell, 1981: 4; 1994: 20; Fitzhugh, 1985: 174–175). External supply was difficult during the 17th century, leaving the citizenry of St. Augustine “in the precarious position of having too many poor military families and not enough colonial farmers”; as a poorly supplied garrison-town, St. Augustine quickly developed a reputation as a “wretched frontier town to which few colonists would relocate willingly” (Worth, 2002: 54–55).

This is why the Spanish were forced to rely so heavily on the human and natural riches of La Florida. The economics of Spanish Florida were grounded in an exchange network through which native populations channeled their surplus food (primarily maize) and labor into colonial St. Augustine (Bushnell, 1994: 15). To facilitate this, Spanish authorities found it most effective to deal

¹ We have discussed the overall history of archaeological research on St. Catherines Island at some length elsewhere (esp. Thomas et al., 1987: chap. 4; Thomas, 2008, chap. 1; see also Deagan and Thomas, 2009).

directly with the traditional indigenous chiefs—cementing the alliances with diplomatic gifts—as a mechanism for “achieving the voluntary assimilation of such societies into the expanding colonial system” (Worth, 2009: 10).

Willingly or not, the indigenous people of the Georgia coast became involved in the global political and economic power struggles that characterized the Spanish colonial system. Analysis of food remains from Spanish towns and Franciscan missions—especially Mission Santa Catalina de Guale—likewise highlights the dynamic interchange between natives and immigrants, resulting in new, hybrid subsistence patterns (Reitz et al., 2010). Perhaps the most striking new finding is the degree to which Spanish dietary patterns changed when compared to the overall continuities evident in the indigenous diets of those living in the Guale pueblo at Mission Santa Catalina. Without a doubt, the Guale supplied foods to Spaniards in great quantities, effectively augmenting and expanding the Spanish menu to look more like traditional, precontact Guale diets. In fact, it would seem that the residents of Mission Santa Catalina de Guale enjoyed a much higher standard of living than that of either Spanish citizens living in contemporary St. Augustine or Franciscan friars dining in the Convento de San Francisco. As Reitz et al. (2010) suggest, “Instead of a single, inept, transient Spanish government dominating an invisible or resistant native population, we must now think of Spanish Florida as a place where resilient Native Americans developed new patterns of animal use while influencing the diet and exploitation strategies of immigrants from Europe, Asia, and Africa.”

The bead assemblage from Mission Santa Catalina similarly reflects the ability of Guale province to produce surplus maize crops, the mission’s status as a provincial capital and administrative center, and the mission’s immediate access to the trade routes along the coast. Mission Santa Catalina de Guale, long considered the “breadbasket” of St. Augustine, provided the bulk of the corn used to supply that *presidio* (Thomas, 1990: 379; Bushnell, 1994: 147; Worth, 2002: 55). Blair, Pendleton, and Francis (2009) argue that maize was the most significant export that likely accounted for the extensive array of trade goods recovered from the Mission Santa Catalina cemetery. The mission period chiefdoms of the interior Georgia Bight engaged in an extensive

and lucrative exchange system throughout the reach of legitimate Spanish interests and likely far beyond (Worth, 1998: 173–184; Blair, Pendleton, and Francis, 2009).

The bead assemblage from Mission Santa Catalina also demonstrates, in a clear-cut and material way, that St. Catherines islanders had access to beads from Spain, Venice, the Netherlands, France, Bohemia, China and India. As the late Peter Francis stated, “Who would have imagined that a small, isolated mission on the edge of a great empire would yield so much information about the rest of the globe? Moreover, until recently, who would have imagined that it would be the study of beads from this tiny settlement that would facilitate the extraction of that information?” (Blair, Pendleton, and Francis, 2009: 182).

Borderlands historians have long emphasized the unique Hispanic agenda—not seeking unoccupied land for immigrants, but in the Spanish colonial enterprise, local native groups were sought out to create (from scratch) new multiethnic communities—to be sure, military and political forces backed up this strategy, but the basic idea was to foster communities that were more native than Spanish (Bannon, 1964; Weber, 1992: 7–11; Worth, 2009). Ethnohistoric and archaeological evidence clearly demonstrates that Spanish Florida of the 16th and 17th centuries was a complex, multiethnic community in which the indigenous chiefdoms of La Florida were subjected to global issues of climate change, epidemic disease, warfare, and food shortages.

And the reverse is also true: Europeans living in 17th-century Spanish Florida had become participants—again, willingly or not—in the local political dynamics of indigenous chiefdoms, bolstering and reinforcing the political power of traditional Indian leaders (Matter, 1972; Bushnell, 1994: 104). Hereditary chiefs retained considerable internal autonomy over secular matters and ruled using traditional lines of authority (Weber, 1990: 439). “While the Christian Indians in the Southeast played an important part in supporting the Spanish friars, soldiers, and settlers, they did so with comparatively little change in their own material culture and political organization” (Bushnell, 1994: 28).

By pledging allegiance and obedience to Spanish officials, indigenous Timucua, Mocamo, and Guale chiefs annexed a powerful military ally in the Spanish garrison at St. Augustine. In

the process, the paramount chiefs of Spanish Florida not only created a new market for their agricultural surplus, but they also gained access to new tools and technologies to improve their yield. The *caciques* also readily converted their surpluses into Spanish goods (such as cloth, tools, beads, and such) and they received tribute from both the Spanish and their own people. The paramount chiefs thus continued to employ ostentatious displays of wealth and status items as a way to reinforce their hereditary status. “It seems no surprise that most aboriginal chiefs struggled to gain entry into the mission system, and remained there for so long” (Worth, 1998: 126–214; 2002: 58; 2009: 12).

Because Franciscan missionaries had authority only over religious matters, they functioned “as subordinate religious practitioners within and beneath chiefly authority, just as indigenous religious practitioners had done before contact” (Worth, 2009: 12).

In converting to Christianity and accepting resident Franciscan friars within their local jurisdiction, chiefs gained not only the largesse of the Catholic church and the Spanish crown, but also a resident cultural broker and advocate to act on their behalf with respect to the Spanish military government. All things being equal, the establishment of a tributary labor arrangement with the governor of St. Augustine must have seemed a small price to pay in return for the anticipated benefits of assimilation through missionization (Worth, 2002: 57).

The primary personal motivation for these native chiefs for establishing relationships with the Spanish at St. Augustine was to maintain and enhance their internal political power within their own chiefdoms and communities.

A NEW LIGHT ON THE GUALE UPRISING OF 1597

In this volume, J. Michael Francis and Kathleen M. Kole present new documentary research that radically changes our thinking about the nature and implications of the so-called “Juanillo Revolt” of 1597, much of which played out on St. Catherines Island. Francis and Kole convincingly demonstrate that the nature of mission period Guale sociopolitical structure has been se-

riously underestimated. They also question any simplistic juxtaposition of supposed indigenous and Hispanic interests. This fresh perspective also underscores the serious limitations and sometimes tenuous footing of Spanish rule in Florida. In this volume, Francis and Kole further this thesis by arguing that the Guale Uprising of 1597 was not a wholesale indigenous rebellion against Spanish authority.

In his classic *The Martyrs of Florida* (originally published in 1619), Franciscan Fray Luis Gerónimo de Oré vividly recounted a chilling tale of the deadly Guale Uprising, which took place not long after Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo began his tenure as La Florida’s new governor (Oré, 1937). Although Oré was not in La Florida when the uprising occurred, his account of this bloody indigenous revolt against Spanish rule has survived as the authoritative voice describing the 1597 uprising. Virtually all modern treatments of this episode emphasize Franciscan interference in Guale affairs, and missionary opposition to the practice of polygamy. This historiography is virtually unanimous in identifying don Juan as the principal leader, so much so that in several recent accounts the episode is simply referred to as “Juanillo’s revolt” (e.g., Lanning, 1935; Gannon, 1965; Hoffman, 2001).

In *Murder and Martyrdom in Spanish Florida*, Francis and Kole set out a story quite different from that framed by Oré’s early account and reiterated in the secondary literature. After a three-year, exhaustive review of the relevant primary documents—exploring what they term “a 400-year-old murder mystery”—they offer a fresh glimpse into the complex nature of Guale political and social structure within colonial Spanish Florida.

Francis and Kole document a shifting nexus of native alliances and competition, with previous power relationships breaking down and new relationships emerging. The new evidence makes it clear that the uprising of 1597 largely reflected the tensions between indigenous chiefdoms. As Worth (2002: 55) has put it, “Florida was not so much an independent Spanish outpost interacting with neighboring and autonomous Indian societies ... but was instead a broader community of interdependent Spanish and Indian populations woven into a functioning, though inherently flawed, colonial system.” To maintain hegemony, the paramount Guale chief depended upon maintaining alliances and tribute relationships with both

lesser Guale chiefdoms and the Spanish government. Francis and Kole stress the extent to which native people struggled to adapt, resist, and conform to the challenges of Spanish colonial rule. Even within the span of a few years, these brittle alliances seem to have been repeatedly forged, broken, and reestablished.

Francis and Kole shed a bright light on the

importance of Indian allies to Spain's Florida ambitions, as well as the bitter disputes between Spanish officials themselves, both secular and religious. But perhaps most importantly, this volume provides unique insight into the rich and complex nature of Indian society in the colonial southeast during the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

PROLOGUE

In 1619, a Franciscan friar named Luis Gerónimo de Oré published a remarkable chronicle entitled *The Martyrs of Florida*. In this brief history, Oré recounts the early history of Spanish Florida, beginning with Juan Ponce de León's 1513 voyage and concluding with Oré's own 1616–1617 ecclesiastical visitation of Florida. As the title implies, Oré's chronicle highlights a series of martyrdom tales, celebrating the commitment, conviction, and sacrifices of the earliest friars in Spanish Florida.

Perhaps the most dramatic episode he records is the story of the 1597 Guale Uprising. In late September or early October of 1597, Guale Indians murdered five of the six Franciscan friars stationed in their territory. The lone survivor, Francisco de Ávila, was taken captive and held for 10 months until July of 1598, when St. Augustine's governor secured his safe release. Shortly after his rescue, Fray Ávila left Florida for Havana, where he allegedly wrote a captivity narrative, chronicling the sufferings, abuses, and temptations of his 10-month ordeal. Fray Ávila's original captivity narrative has never been located. All that remains is Oré's transcription (translated in chap. 3), which he claimed to have copied faithfully from Fray Ávila's original text.

Oré was not present in Florida when the uprising occurred, but his dramatic rendering of the details surrounding the friars' deaths remains the single most influential source of the uprising story. Since its publication, Oré's chronicle has enjoyed a privileged status in the historiography of the 1597 Guale Uprising and few accounts, even modern interpretations, have departed from it.

According to Oré, the 1597 assault on the Franciscan missions began at the Guale village of Tolomato, home to the paramount chief of Guale territory, an Indian named don Francisco. The uprising started when Tolomato's resident friar, Pedro de Corpa, reprimanded a young Indian man for practicing polygamy. The Indian's name was don Juan, or Juanillo as he is often called, and he happened to be the heir to the paramount chieftaincy. Furious at Fray Corpa's interference in his affairs, don Juanillo quietly retreated into the interior, where he gathered a large military force before returning to Tolomato to murder the friar. Don Juanillo then sent orders throughout

Guale, instructing his subjects to kill the remaining friars. Within days, four more Franciscans were dead, another taken captive, and all of their churches and residences burned to the ground.

Considering Oré's rendering of these events, it is hardly surprising that don Juanillo is uniformly blamed for inciting the uprising, so much so that some scholars have preferred to label the 1597 Guale Uprising as don Juan's Revolt, or Juanillo's Uprising.¹ Unfortunately, the emphasis on the primacy of don Juanillo has effectively silenced many of the most important protagonists in the story. This volume seeks to remedy those silences, giving voice to the many participants overlooked in Oré's influential chronicle. Collectively, these voices provide new insights into one of the most dramatic and tragic episodes in 16th-century Florida history. A closer examination of the uprising and the lengthy investigations that followed reveals a far richer and more complex tale than simply a story of a disgruntled ruler, angered by Franciscan interference in Guale affairs.

Most modern interpretations of the 1597 uprising agree that Franciscan interference in Guale political and religious affairs, most notably their efforts to abolish the Guale practice of polygamy, provided the incendiary spark for the 1597 uprising. This volume does not aim to dispute such claims. Instead, it seeks to move beyond the two central questions that have dominated the historiography of the uprising, namely, who killed the friars and why?

Based on the evidence available, it is unlikely that we will ever know with certainty the specific reasons for the murders, who committed them, or the precise circumstances that surrounded the five friars' deaths. But perhaps these are not the most important questions. Our inability to answer them should not lead us to abandon the topic altogether and move on to more fertile ground. The uprising and its aftermath produced a remarkably rich corpus of documentary evidence, material that offers important insights into the nature of Guale society, as well as Spanish governance in 16th-century Florida.

Through a series of firsthand, newly translated primary documents, many of which have

¹ For example, see Hoffman (2002: 82–84).

never appeared in print, this volume provides the most detailed and comprehensive account of the 1597 Guale Uprising and its aftermath. It chronicles a remarkable five-year period, from the earliest investigations of 1597 and 1598, to the 1601 capture and execution of don Juanillo, the Guale ruler ultimately held responsible for the uprising. The fascinating tale that unfolds the serious limitations and at times precarious nature of Spanish colonial rule in Florida. It sheds light on the importance of Indian allies to Spain's Florida ambitions, as well as the bitter disputes between Spanish officials themselves, both secular and religious. But perhaps most importantly, this volume provides unique insight into the rich and complex nature of Guale Indian society during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. What emerges is a complex web of shifting alliances, political competition, and violence, as the Guale and other southeastern Indian peoples struggled to adapt, resist, and conform to the challenges of Spanish colonial rule.

Each time we read through these wonderfully rich documents, we saw something different, something that raised new questions and challenged previous assumptions, including our own. We hope that readers will find the same.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

From its most unexpected inception, this project has been a collaborative endeavor. During the early spring of 2006, I received an e-mail request from two of my students at the University of North Florida. At the time, I was living in Seville, conducting research on Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada's 16th-century conquest expedition into the Colombian interior. Looking back, I had no idea that a simple e-mail request would alter the course of my professional career and lead me along a four-year path to reconstruct a 16th-century murder mystery.

In the e-mail, Kathleen Kole and Erin Woodruff asked if I would be willing to offer a directed studies course on 16th-century Spanish paleography. They explained that they hoped to pursue doctoral degrees in colonial Latin American history and they wanted to learn how to read original manuscripts. I had never considered teaching a Spanish paleography course, but I was intrigued by the idea so I agreed. Soon, more e-mail requests arrived, and when the fall semester began, a total of 11 students, mostly undergraduates, had

enrolled in an experimental course to learn how to read 400-year-old Spanish handwriting.

Initially, the coursework focused on 16th-century *probanza de mérito* (proof-of-merit) petitions from New Granada (modern Colombia). However, for the first exam I decided to have the students transcribe a document from early colonial Florida. As I searched the PARES (Portal de Archivos Españoles: <http://pares.mcu.es>) digital database, a remarkable online database that contains digital images of thousands of original documents from Spanish archives, I came across an account from July of 1598, entitled "Information concerning an Indian uprising in Florida." At first glance, the document seemed perfectly appropriate for the exam. The handwriting was clear and the script quite easily legible; moreover, I thought the students would appreciate working through a document that focused on Spanish Florida.

The 21-page account opens with a brief statement about the murder of five Franciscan friars killed by Guale Indians 10 months earlier. The document then records the actions taken by Florida's governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, as he sought to investigate the murders and punish those responsible. It recounts the governor's successful rescue of the lone Franciscan friar to survive the uprising, as well as Governor Méndez's capture of seven young Guale Indian boys, all of whom were taken to St. Augustine for questioning. Most of the document chronicles the interrogations of these seven boys, one of whom was questioned under torture and then executed in St. Augustine for his alleged participation in the friars' deaths.

When the exam ended, Kathleen Kole asked me what else I knew about the episode. I confessed that I knew very little, apart from what was recorded in Luís Gerónimo de Oré's 17th-century chronicle, *The Martyrs of Florida*. "Why don't we find out?" Kathleen suggested. Over the next eight months, Kathleen and I assembled a detailed bibliography and we searched the databases from Spanish archives for more original material. Soon, we had a detailed manuscript proposal of more than 100 pages. Following some encouraging discussions with Kathleen Deagan and Jane Landers, we decided to forward the proposal to David Hurst Thomas, Curator in the Division of Anthropology at the American Museum of Natural History. Within two hours, Dave had read the entire proposal and e-mailed his response. Thus began a wonderful collaboration

and friendship for which I will remain forever grateful. Throughout every stage of this project, Dave has offered his unconditional support, encouragement, and patience. Twice he has hosted us on St. Catherines Island, one of the most magical places we have ever visited.

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The Cushwa Center at the University of Notre Dame helped to fund a research trip to South Bend to digitize the original publication of Luís Gerónimo de Oré's *Relación de los mártires que a avido en las provincias de la Florida* (*The Martyrs of Florida*), part of the José Durand Collection at the University of Notre Dame. I am grateful to Jay I. Kislak for donating his remarkable collection of manuscripts, maps, rare books, and artifacts to the Library of Congress, and with them, a resident fellowship program to provide scholars with the opportunity to work with this material. The eight-month Kislak Fellowship not only gave me access to the Library of Congress's outstanding holdings, but it also provided the time necessary to complete the manuscript. I cannot think of a better place to work than in the Kluge Center at the Library of Congress. I would like to extend my thanks to Carolyn Brown, Mary Lou Reker, Robert Saladini, and the entire staff at the Kluge Center. My only regret is that I cannot stay longer. My time in Washington, D.C., has been greatly enriched by the wonderful cohort of international scholars, whose work I greatly admire and whose friendships I will value in the years ahead. Thanks to Christopher Chekuri, Jennifer Foray, Markus Faltermeier, Julia Farley, Martina Schlogel, Daniel Brook, Hernán Araúz, Theresa Ventura, Eleanor Capper, Benjamin Fordham, Rebecca Brien, and Naomi Wood.

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I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for my wife, Annie. Throughout our many years together, Annie has been my greatest companion and collaborator. Finally, I would like to thank the dozens of University of North Florida students who have participated in my Spanish paleography program since its inception in 2006. Their enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity serve as a constant reminder of why I love this discipline so much.

J. Michael Francis
Kluge Center, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
February, 2011



INTRODUCTION

SPANISH FLORIDA ON THE EVE OF UPRISING

“I hereby offer true and faithful testimony that on this Friday morning, November 24, 1595, at 8:00 A.M., Domingo Martínez de Avendaño departed from this present life.”¹

THE FLORIDA ENTERPRISE REVISITED

On mornings like this, St. Augustine’s new governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, found it difficult to believe the reports that Florida’s bitter winters could be as harsh as January in Madrid. Since early June, when Governor Méndez first arrived to assume his post, St. Augustine’s veteran soldiers had all warned him to prepare for dramatically colder temperatures before year’s end. But it was already the first week of October, and Méndez had seen no indication of a cooling trend. There had been little respite from the oppressive heat, the humidity, and the intense rainfall. Even the ocean breeze brought little relief from the sweltering conditions. As he sat at his desk in quiet discomfort to resume his work, small beads of sweat already forming on his forehead, Méndez paused briefly to reflect on his first three months as St. Augustine’s governor and captain general.

On his arrival to Florida on June 2, 1597, Governor Méndez was unsure what to expect from his new post. He had never been to St. Augustine, having spent most of his time in the Indies stationed in Puerto Rico.² Before his new ap-

pointment, Méndez had enjoyed a distinguished career as an infantry captain and later, a Spanish admiral.³ He was in his early 40s and Florida represented his first governorship, a reward for almost three decades of loyal service and, in particular, for his valiant role in the defense of San Juan during the November 1595 Francis Drake and John Hawkins’s attack of the island.⁴ Like those who had governed Florida before him, Méndez relished the new opportunity, in spite of the rumors. He was aware that his predecessors had met with mixed fortunes and that Florida had a reputation as a harsh, impoverished, and isolated post. Admittedly, the tales of misfortune and failures had caused him some trepidation when he first learned of his appointment in the summer of 1596, but after four months in Florida, Méndez was already considering asking the king to extend his tenure.

Méndez was Florida’s sixth royally appointed governor, replacing Domingo Martínez de Avendaño, who had died suddenly in late November of 1595 during just his second year in office.⁵ Following Governor Avendaño’s death, Florida’s governorship became a shared venture, with the province ruled jointly by St. Augustine’s three

³ “Letter from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo to the Crown,” AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.5 (February 28, 1600), fol. 228v.

⁴ Arnade (1959: 5–7).

⁵ Of course, during much of its early history, St. Augustine was governed ad interim. By the time Méndez arrived to begin his governorship, no fewer than 15 different individuals served in that post, in addition to the five royally appointed governors. See Bushnell (1994: 212).

¹ “Letter from Alonso García de la Vera,” AGI Santo Domingo 231, fol. 702r (November 25, 1595).

² Méndez had run away from home at the young age of 14 to join the fleet of St. Augustine’s founder, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.

royal officials, Alonso de Las Alas, Bartolomé de Argüelles, and Juan Menéndez Marqués. Over the next 18 months, between November 1595 and Méndez's arrival in June 1597, Las Alas, Argüelles, and Menéndez Marqués governed La Florida. And after a year and a half in power, not all of them welcomed the arrival of a new governor. In particular, Florida's royal accountant, Bartolomé de Argüelles, resented Governor Méndez's appointment. It would not be long before the two men became bitter enemies.

By the time of Méndez's arrival in 1597, Argüelles had already spent almost two decades in Florida, first as a soldier and later as a royal official. In May of 1591 he was appointed to serve as St. Augustine's royal accountant. But Argüelles had loftier ambitions. He wanted to be named Florida's permanent governor, an office for which he had petitioned the Crown in January of 1596, less than two months after Domingo Martínez de Avendaño's death. His petition failed and King Philip II decided to award the office to Méndez. Bitterly disappointed, Argüelles stood at the boat launch on the morning of June 2, 1597, waiting to receive Florida's new governor. It is unclear whether the two men had ever met before that day, but Argüelles already disliked Méndez and he was determined not to relinquish his authority to a newcomer, especially one who had never served in Florida. Over the next four years, Argüelles's hatred toward Méndez would only intensify, and both men would use the 1597 Guale Uprising as an opportunity to challenge and undermine one another's authority before the Crown.

When he reached St. Augustine that June morning, Governor Méndez quickly realized the challenges he would face in his new post. More than four decades had passed since St. Augustine had been founded, and despite some new construction that had followed Francis Drake's 1586 attack, the city was beginning to show its age. On his arrival, Méndez recognized immediately that the garrison's wooden fortress was in desperate need of repair. The same could be said of the town's principal church,⁶ as well as the Francis-

can friary. While a new munitions house had been built a few years earlier, the garrison still lacked an adequate hospital for the town's burgeoning population. Most of St. Augustine's dwellings were modeled after local indigenous structures: handsome wattle and daub constructions with finely crafted thatch roofs. These buildings provided welcome relief from the summer heat and shelter from the afternoon storms. Méndez had been told that the thick walls also offered welcome insulation from the cold winter winds. However efficient in Florida's climate, these buildings also had their risks. Under the right conditions, Méndez thought, a small fire could easily spread and engulf the entire settlement.

Though pleased with his new appointment and the opportunities that went with it, Méndez was also acutely aware that Florida did not boast the rich mineral wealth found in other parts of the Indies. The high, and at times inflated, expectations of Florida's early governors, soldiers, and missionaries had remained largely unrealized. Indeed, St. Augustine's founder, the *Adelantado* Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, carried lofty ambitions for his Florida enterprise when he signed his royal contract, or *asiento*, with Spanish King Philip II in March of 1565. For his part, the Spanish king had hoped to convince Menéndez to establish a permanent foothold on Florida's Atlantic coast to protect Spanish treasure fleet as it sailed north through the Bahama Channel and the Florida Straits. The Crown feared that if the French or the British were to establish a settlement in the region, the base could be used to assault the Spanish fleet as it sailed home, laden with silver, gold, and other valuables. King Philip II did not want to risk such a grave threat to his treasure fleet.

But privateers represented just one problem. The king also wanted permanent bases in Florida to shelter shipwrecked mariners and to salvage the goods from the many vessels that sank near Florida shores. In the absence of Spanish garrisons on the peninsula, shipwreck survivors were often taken captive with little hope of rescue or ransom. Finally, a permanent base in Florida could be used to launch further explorations into North America's vast interior. At the time, many contemporaries were convinced that one of the

⁶ On February 10, 1598, Havana's Bishop don Antonio Díaz Calcedo appointed the Irishman Ricardo Arturo (Richard Arthur) as the priest of St. Augustine's main church (even though Father Ricardo had effectively served in that position since the summer of 1597). Among the responsibilities outlined in Bishop

Calcedo's appointment was the instruction to rebuild the church, which was said to be in terrible condition. AGI Santo Domingo 231, fols. 911v-912r.

many eastern river systems connected northeast Florida to the Gulf of Mexico or, better yet, to the Pacific Ocean. And perhaps North America's vast interior boasted other sources of wealth, yet undiscovered. For the Crown, Florida represented both real concerns and alluring possibilities, if only it could convince one of its subjects to carry out the venture.

Before 1565, at least a dozen separate Spanish expeditions had attempted to explore and/or colonize La Florida. All had failed. For Juan Ponce de León, Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón, Pánfilo de Narváez, Hernando de Soto, Father Luis Cáncer, and scores of other conquistadors, settlers, and clergy, Florida brought only misery and death. By the middle of the 1560s, it was clear to anyone familiar with the Indies that Florida was not another Mexico or Peru, and the peninsula did not boast rich gold, silver, or emerald mines. Moreover, its relatively small and dispersed Indian populations would not generate a wealthy bounty in tribute payments. It was, though, a strategic location, one that King Philip II did not want to lose. The Spanish Crown was thus faced with the challenge of trying to convince one of its subjects to risk life and fortune on an enterprise with a five-decade history of failure. To persuade Menéndez to accept the Florida governorship and the inherent risks that went with it, the Crown would have to offer some remarkable concessions and incentives. It did.

In addition to the many titles and honors granted to Menéndez, the Crown promised him an annual salary of 2000 ducats as well as a series of lucrative trade concessions and tax exemptions. The contract also granted Menéndez 25 square leagues of land (more than 5500 square miles), his to choose anywhere in Florida's vast territories.⁷ As further compensation, Menéndez was to receive a 1/15th share of all future royal profits from Florida, two fisheries (one of pearls and one of fish), and exclusive licenses to transport and sell 500 slaves in Florida. Finally, to facilitate the recruitment of settlers to join this ambitious new enterprise, the Crown authorized a one-time pay-

ment of 15,000 ducats and gave Menéndez the exclusive right to issue lands and estates to the men and women who joined him.⁸

In exchange for these concessions, Menéndez was required to comply with a series of Crown demands, including the promise to build two or three Spanish towns in Florida, each with at least 100 residents. Among its guidelines, the contract specified that Menéndez recruit no fewer than 500 men for his Florida enterprise, 200 of whom had to be married (and take their wives with them). At least 100 of his recruits had to be farmers, with the remaining settlers to include skilled sailors and soldiers, as well as stonecutters, carpenters, farriers, blacksmiths, clerics, and surgeons. To ensure a vibrant and healthy colony, the Crown ordered Menéndez to transport 100 horses and mares, 200 calves, 400 sheep, 400 hogs, and any other livestock that seemed fitting for Florida's climate. After so many failed Florida ventures, King Philip II wanted to ensure that Menéndez had the personnel and the supplies necessary for a successful and permanent colony.

Of course, Menéndez had his own expectations for his Florida enterprise, both personal and professional. On a personal level, Menéndez hoped that a return to Florida would help him find his missing son, Juan, whose ship had been lost in inclement weather as it sailed somewhere close to Florida's shores.⁹ Almost two years had passed since Juan's vessel had gone missing in a fierce summer storm in 1563, but the *adelantado* remained hopeful that his only son had survived the shipwreck and was living as a captive among Florida's indigenous peoples.

In addition to the search for his missing son, Menéndez was also convinced that his Florida enterprise would be a profitable venture, even if previous expeditions had proved otherwise. Like many of his contemporaries, Menéndez believed that one of the region's many rivers connected Florida to the Gulf of Mexico or to the Pacific Ocean. The discovery of such a passage would connect Florida to a global market and perhaps provide an alternative route for Spain's returning treasure fleets. For Menéndez,

⁷ La Florida's 16th-century boundaries extended far beyond modern state limits. When Menéndez signed his contract, La Florida's geographical limits, while still poorly understood, encompassed most of what are now the modern U.S. states of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, as well as parts of Tennessee and Alabama (see Hoffman, 2002: 2).

⁸ For a complete English translation of Menéndez's contract, see Eugene Lyon's masterful study, *The Enterprise of Florida: Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the Spanish Conquest of 1565–1568* (1976: 213–219).

⁹ Lyon (1976: 29–30).

the success of his Florida enterprise would not come from gold or silver mines, but from ship-building, trade, and possibly the export of sugar, pearls, fish, and hides.¹⁰

Ten days after signing his initial contract with the Crown, news reached the Spanish court that the French had established a permanent garrison in Florida and that reinforcements under the command of Captain Jean Ribault had already left France.¹¹ Furious at what he perceived as French encroachment on Spanish territory, King Philip II altered the terms of Menéndez's initial contract. Menéndez's planned settlement of Florida would continue, but only after the French had been removed from the peninsula. To accomplish this aim, the Crown authorized the expenditure for more ships and 500 soldiers to join Menéndez, all to be paid from the royal coffers. Additional men, munitions, and artillery were to be gathered in Cuba and Santo Domingo before Menéndez was to sail north to launch his assault on the French fort. Finally, to maintain the advantage of surprise, Philip II instructed Menéndez to expedite his departure and to keep his final destination a secret.¹²

The *adelantado* welcomed the Crown's increased financial and military support for his venture. For Menéndez, the French garrison at Fort Caroline (at modern Jacksonville) represented much more than simply a danger to the Spanish treasure fleet; if realized, French claims to the region threatened to undermine his entire enterprise. He therefore moved quickly to assemble his forces and try to reach Florida before Ribault's reinforcements arrived. On June 29, 1565, Menéndez's fleet departed from Cádiz, carrying more than 1000 people to ensure a Spanish victory over the French.¹³ Two months later, after an eventful Atlantic crossing in which several ships were lost in fierce storms, Menéndez's diminished force finally reached Florida. Ribault had beaten him there, thus setting the stage for the

military clash over control of the peninsula.

Much has been written about the Spanish capture of Fort Caroline and the subsequent massacre of French officers and soldiers at Matanzas Inlet several weeks later, the details of which will not be repeated here.¹⁴ Suffice it to say that perhaps 300 of a total of 1000 Frenchmen were killed in the conflict, not including those who drowned when Ribault's ships sank in stormy weather. Of the remaining French men, women, and children, some escaped from Fort Caroline and sailed back to France, while others were captured and sent to Cuba before they were permitted to return home. As many as 100 Frenchmen, perhaps more, elected not to surrender at Matanzas and instead disappeared into the Florida interior, seeking more merciful treatment from the region's Indian population. Some of the French survivors ventured south, near Cape Canaveral, where they erected a small and crude garrison. But when Menéndez and 150 Spanish soldiers arrived to seize the fort, the French soldiers all fled. After destroying the fort, Menéndez sent a French prisoner, a trumpeter, to negotiate the surrender of the remaining Frenchmen, who likely numbered close to 100 men. In exchange for their guaranteed safety, roughly 75 Frenchmen submitted to Menéndez. The others, mainly officers, refused to surrender and instead fled deeper into the forest; their fate remains unknown.¹⁵ Thus, by early November 1565, the French threat to Menéndez's ambitions had ended.

Almost immediately, Menéndez turned his attention to his new enterprise. He explored much of the peninsula and moved quickly to establish a supply line and a series of small garrisons that stretched from South Florida to South Carolina. His search for his missing son proved fruitless and the two men were never reunited. The disappointment at being unable to find his son did not seem to hinder the early stages of his enterprise. In 1566–1567 and again in 1567–1568, Menéndez dispatched Captain Juan Pardo to lead expeditions from Santa Elena (on modern Parris Island, South Carolina), into the vast interior. Florida's governor hoped that these preliminary expeditions might map an overland route to New Spain, and thus establish a viable land

¹⁰ Lyon (1977: 23).

¹¹ An English translation of René Laudonnière's wonderful account of the Spanish capture of Fort Caroline can be found in René Laudonnière, *Three Voyages* (Bennett, 2001: 149–170). For additional details regarding French experiences in Florida, see McGrath (2000) and Hoffman (1990: 205–230).

¹² For a detailed overview of the preparations, see Lyon (1976: 38–99).

¹³ Weber (2009: 53).

¹⁴ The two most detailed overviews can be found in Lyon (1976: 111–130) and McGrath (2000: 138–155).

¹⁵ Lyon (1976: 126–130).

link to northern Mexico's great silver mines at Zacatecas.¹⁶ The prospect of a direct supply line that connected Zacatecas to Florida must have delighted the *adelantado*.

Between 1566 and 1568, Pardo and his men crossed the Carolinas and reached as far west as the Tennessee Valley. They built six small garrisons in the interior, but despite their efforts, Pardo's forces failed to find an overland route to Mexico. By August of 1568, all six of Pardo's inland garrisons had been abandoned or destroyed. Other Spanish garrisons along Florida's east coast also came under threat.

In April of 1568, rumors of an imminent French retaliatory strike on Fort San Mateo (previously the French Fort Caroline) had Spanish soldiers on high alert. After hearing the sound of artillery fire at the mouth of the St. Johns River, the Spanish soldiers decided not to await the attacking forces. Few soldiers were willing to risk their lives to protect the small fortress. Instead, they gathered their belongings and fled overland to St. Augustine, leaving Fort San Mateo completely abandoned.¹⁷ The French and their Indian allies then burned the empty garrison and it was never rebuilt.

Soon, Florida's central and southern fortresses met with similar fates. By 1569, Menéndez's forces had withdrawn from the garrisons of Ais, Santa Lucía, Tocobaga, Tequesta, and Carlos, leaving St. Augustine as the southernmost Spanish settlement in the entire province.¹⁸ More than two centuries would pass before Europeans would once again endeavor to colonize south Florida.

For Florida's *adelantado*, what began in 1565 with such lofty expectations soon appeared destined for failure and financial ruin. By 1570, just five years into his Florida enterprise, only three of Menéndez's 15 original garrisons still remained.¹⁹ The two largest settlements, Santa Elena and St. Augustine, supported thin European populations

and both settlements were vulnerable to attack. Even more troubling was the colony's economic outlook. Sugarcane did not grow well in Florida's soils, and despite extensive exploration into the interior, Menéndez and his men had failed to find a river passage that connected Florida to the Gulf of Mexico, or to the Pacific Ocean. Nor had they discovered other sources of potential wealth to generate income and attract additional settlers. Plagued by a lack of adequate resources, growing soldier unrest, Indian assaults, and the ongoing threat of French reprisals, Menéndez decided it was time to limit his losses. In order to save his venture and pressure the Spanish Crown to increase its financial support, Menéndez decided to remove more than 100 soldiers from Florida, arguing that he could no longer afford to maintain them. The withdrawal left only 150 soldiers to defend Florida's three remaining garrisons.

Furious with the withdrawal of almost half of Florida's military force, the Crown launched an official inquiry to identify and punish all those responsible for removing the soldiers.²⁰ But the investigations soon stalled, and the Crown realized that its already tenuous hold on this strategic location was at risk of collapse. To maintain its permanent presence in Florida and restore stability in its remaining garrisons, King Philip II would have to provide more direct financial assistance. Menéndez's gamble worked.

Unwilling to relinquish Spain's hold on La Florida, in 1570 King Philip II authorized the payment of an annual subsidy, the *situado*, which granted a yearly payment to Florida of more than 8 million *maravedíes*. These funds were to be used to support a permanent force of 150 soldiers, as well as cover additional costs of maintaining Florida's garrisons. Over the next few decades, Crown investment in Florida would only increase. Following the 1576 Gualie Indian capture and destruction of the Spanish garrison at Santa Elena, and after hearing news that French corsairs had reappeared in the region, in 1578, King Philip II doubled the number of soldiers funded by the *situado*. Just two years later, in 1580, he raised the annual subsidy again, this time to almost 18 million *maravedíes*, where it remained through the mid-17th century. Clearly, the Crown had no interest in relinquishing its hold on Florida, even if it represented a strain on the royal treasury.²¹

¹⁶ Weber (2009: 54).

¹⁷ For a detailed account of the Spanish abandonment of San Mateo and its subsequent destruction, see AGI Escríbanía 1066B, N.19 (1), fols. 1r–90r.

¹⁸ For a complete list of garrisons, foundation dates, and abandonments, see Hoffman (2002: 55).

¹⁹ The remaining garrisons were St. Augustine, Santa Elena, and a small fort on Cumberland Island called San Pedro. However, San Pedro's garrison appears to have survived for less than a year and was likely abandoned by the end of 1570.

²⁰ Paar (1999: 62–63).

²¹ Paar (1999: 237–238).

By the time Pedro Menéndez de Avilés passed away in 1574, only two Spanish garrisons remained in Florida: one at Santa Elena and the other at St. Augustine. Thirteen years later, following Francis Drake's attack on St. Augustine, the Spanish dismantled the Santa Elena settlement, leaving St. Augustine as Florida's only remaining garrison. After Drake's assault in early June of 1586, Governor Pedro Menéndez Marqués decided that Spanish forces were too thinly spread, thereby making both garrisons vulnerable to attack.²² One well-fortified garrison, he rationalized, would be far more effective than two poorly resourced and dispersed fortresses. Menéndez Marqués sent a report to Spain, recommending that the Crown authorize the dismantlement of Santa Elena's fortress and the transfer of its soldiers and residents to St. Augustine. Initially, Spain's Council of the Indies mandated that both garrisons be dismantled and that a new, smaller fortress be built somewhere in south Florida, much closer to Havana. However, St. Augustine's authorities resisted. After reading Menéndez Marqués's persuasive recommendations, as well as those of several of St. Augustine's veteran soldiers, on October 24, 1586, the council members agreed to consolidate Florida's men and resources at St. Augustine.²³

Thus, by 1587, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés's ambitious Florida enterprise had been reduced to just one small Spanish garrison, with a military force of fewer than 300 soldiers. Far removed from other Spanish settlements in the Caribbean and in Mexico, St. Augustine still found itself in

a precarious position, vulnerable to attacks from French or British enemies, as well as internal assaults from the region's superior Indian populations. That St. Augustine's garrison survived the early decades of its existence had less to do with the effectiveness of its soldiers or the invulnerability of its defenses than it did with the Indians' willingness to allow it to remain. Throughout the 16th century, St. Augustine's military presence rarely exceeded 300 armed soldiers, a force vastly outnumbered by the garrison's surrounding Indian population.²⁴ Yet despite their numerical superiority, not once during the 16th century did Florida's Indians attempt to capture St. Augustine's garrison or expel the Spanish from the peninsula, even if sporadic incidents of violence and looting did occur.

Of course, this is not to suggest that the conquest was absent of violent encounters. Even without direct military confrontation, Florida's indigenous peoples certainly recognized the very real threat of violence from well-armed Spanish soldiers. Shortly after the 1565 foundation of St. Augustine, sporadic clashes erupted between Spanish soldiers and the Timucua *cacique* Saturiwa and his allies. Yet the nature of these early conflicts and the numbers of casualties on both sides remain poorly understood. For the most part, 16th-century Spanish-Timucua relations were remarkably amicable. In fact, most studies of early colonial Florida stress the relatively peaceful relationship between Spaniards and neighboring Timucua, especially the close alliances that Spaniards maintained with the Indians at Nombre de Dios, San Sebastián, and San Pedro. Spanish sources often contrast these "loyal" Timucua with their more belligerent neighbors to the north, the Guale. However, a careful examination of the documentary evidence suggests that violent encounters between the Spanish and the Guale Indians were in fact rare occurrences in 16th-century Florida. In the three-decade period bound by the 1565 foundation of St. Augustine and the 1597 Guale Uprising, Spanish sources record just a few violent incidents involving the Guale and other Indian groups to the north.

The first recorded clash between the Spanish and the Guale occurred on Sapelo Island in late 1574 (or perhaps in early 1575); the violent encounter resulted in the deaths of several of Florida's Crown officials, including St. Augustine's

²² Drake's attack began on June 7, 1586. Vastly outnumbered, the Spanish forces managed to defend the garrison for more than a day, after which most of St. Augustine's inhabitants fled into the interior. Drake and his men remained in St. Augustine for six days, before they burned its fields and buildings and then departed north (see Paar, 1999: 273–274). Some evidence suggests that local Indians looted the city and at least one Spanish soldier claimed that royal officials, not Drake, stole most of the Crown's money and then blamed Drake for the theft. See "License in Favor of Pablo Juan, soldier and resident of St. Augustine," AGI Indiferente General 2064, N.122 (1588–1589), sf.

²³ In particular, the account sent by Captain Vicente González, whose knowledge of Florida's geography deeply impressed council members, proved particularly influential in the process (Paar, 1999: 282–283).

²⁴ Bushnell (2006: 138).

acting governor. Exactly what happened on Sapelo is poorly documented and is often erroneously characterized as the opening salvo in the 1576 Guale Uprising, despite the fact that it occurred much earlier. Still, the specific date of the murders remains unclear, as do the reasons for the violent outbreak. According to several Spanish witnesses who later testified about the episode, St. Augustine's royal *factor* Diego de Otálora²⁵ and a number of other royal officials, soldiers, and Indian allies were on their way north to Santa Elena to issue payments to the soldiers stationed there.²⁶ St. Augustine's acting governor, the one-eyed Pedro Menéndez (nephew of St. Augustine's founder, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés), had also joined the Spanish party. When they reached the village of Sapala, Otálora and his men allegedly were ambushed.²⁷ None of the Spanish accounts offered a reason for the surprise attack, but they concurred on its outcome. After a brief and valiant resistance, the witnesses stated, the vastly outnumbered Spanish forces fell to their attackers, who slaughtered them all, including Otálora and Menéndez.²⁸ Sapala's Indians then stole the Spanish vessel and all the goods it carried, including the payments designated for Santa Elena's soldiers.

Less than two years later, more violence erupted in the area, in what was likely the 16th-century's bloodiest clash between Florida's Spanish population and the region's Indians, the 1576 Guale-Orista uprising. Dozens of people on both sides were killed during this episode, including more than 30 Spaniards. In the end, the Spanish were forced to abandon their garrison at Santa El-

ena, which had fallen under siege from Indian attackers. Once again, Sapelo Island's residents appear to have played a central role in the unrest.

Most accounts of the 1576 uprising argue that widespread Spanish abuses and excessive tribute demands led to the Indian assault on Santa Elena. However, what is typically characterized as a united revolt against Spanish rule instead appears to be two separate and perhaps unrelated episodes. In fact, the second incident occurred north of Guale territory and may not have even involved the Guale.

The first episode centered around a series of events that unfolded in 1576 on the island of Guale (St. Catherines Island). Captain Alonso de Solís, who was killed during the uprising,²⁹ is often blamed for instigating the unrest, which began shortly after Solís had ordered two Guale *principales* (elites) hanged and had sentenced others to receive beatings or have their ears severed.³⁰ According to several Spanish witnesses, Solís's harsh punishments provoked widespread anger between the Guale and their northern neighbors at Escamacu and Orista. In response to Solís's actions, they claimed, the Guale and their allies launched an attack on Spain's northern garrison at Santa Elena. Unable to defend against the assailants, the Spanish abandoned the fort and retreated to St. Augustine, leaving the Indian forces to loot and burn the garrison.

Accounts differ as to the reasons behind the attack. Some Spanish witnesses questioned in the aftermath of the assault suggested that Captain Solís was not to blame and that the root of the violence could be traced to certain abuses committed by Santa Elena's acting governor, Diego

²⁵ Diego de Otálora was married to *Adelantado* Pedro Menéndez de Avilés's niece, Catalina Menéndez.

²⁶ The precise date of this expedition is unclear. In her 1593 proof-of-merit petition, Diego Otálora's widow, along with several witnesses, claimed that it occurred in 1574. In her study *The King's Coffers*, Amy Bushnell suggests that it took place in 1575. See "Petition of doña Catalina Menéndez, widow," AGI Santo Domingo 231 (1593), fols. 663r-678v and Bushnell (1981: 122-123).

²⁷ "Petition of doña Catalina Menéndez, widow," AGI Santo Domingo 231 (1593), fols. 663r-678v.

²⁸ In their testimonies on behalf of Diego de Otálora's widow, recorded in St. Augustine in early 1593, a number of Spanish witnesses testified that the attack occurred at Sapala (Çapala) and that Otálora fell under a flurry of arrows.

²⁹ Santa Elena's governor, Hernando de Miranda, had ordered Captain Solís to take seven war dogs, eight or nine soldiers, and an undisclosed number of Indian allies to conduct reconnaissance around the garrison. Shortly after their departure, Solís and the other soldiers were all killed. See "Testimony of Francisco Dominguez Castellanos," AGI Escribanía 154A, (February 27, 1577), fols. 343v-344r. Yet another witness, a carpenter named Pedro Garcia de Salas, claimed that the Spanish learned of Solís's death from an Indian ally who had survived the attack and returned to the fortress. See "Testimony of Alonso de Olmos," AGI Escribanía 154A (June, 1577), fol. 1067r.

³⁰ See AGI Escribanía 154A, Ramo 1 (December, 1576-April, 1577), fol. 32v.

de Velasco.³¹ According to several witnesses who testified during Baltasar Castillo's 1576–1577 official visitation of Florida, Velasco had stolen a string of pearls that had belonged to Guale's *cacique*. The witnesses explained that Guale's *cacique* had journeyed north to Santa Elena to seek medical attention for a certain ailment. Fearful that Santa Elena's governor would attempt to steal the string of pearls he carried, Guale's chief swallowed the entire string. Several young Indian boys later recovered most of the pearls, after the unpleasant task of rummaging through Santa Elena's dung heap. On learning of their discovery, Governor Velasco demanded that the pearls be turned over to him, promising that he would return them to Guale's *cacique*. When Velasco refused, Guale's angry ruler gathered his forces and attacked Santa Elena, destroying the fort and killing a number of Spanish residents.³² Of course, Governor Velasco vehemently denied the charges that he had taken the pearls, instead claiming that they had been a gift from Guale's *cacique*, who gave the pearls as a gesture of gratitude for the governor's help in curing him from a recent illness.

But even if Velasco had stolen the pearls, the theft could not have been the cause of the 1576 uprising. In fact, when the attack on Santa Elena began in June of 1576, Guale's *cacique* was already dead, allegedly murdered by his own brother, the *cacique* of Sapala. We do not know why Sapala's *cacique* murdered his brother. Spanish sources simply state that Sapala's *cacique* was angered because his brother had become a Christian, and had allied himself with the Spanish at Santa Elena. Whatever the reason for the dispute between Guale's chief and the *cacique* from Sapala (which undoubtedly was more complex than Spanish observers claimed), it does appear that before his death, Guale's ruler had been a close Spanish ally. When news of his murder reached Santa Elena, Captain Alonso de Solís immediately gathered some of his men and set out for the island. On arrival, Solís stabbed Guale's newly installed *cacique* to death and ordered another Indian *principal* hanged. He then demanded that the Indians surrender Sapala's *cacique*, which they

did. On his return to Santa Elena, Solís ordered the chief hanged. The Sapala *cacique*'s son, Perico, had his ears cut off and another Indian, identified as Guale's *médico* (doctor) was beaten for his alleged participation in the chief's murder.³³ These punishments likely instigated the attack on Santa Elena's garrison later that year.

The second episode that formed part of the 1576 Guale Uprising occurred outside of Guale territory, north of Santa Elena in the village of Uscama [Escamacu]. It remains unclear if this incident had any connection to the events on Guale, or the subsequent punishment of Sapala's *cacique*. Shortly after the *cacique*'s execution, Captain Solís dispatched his lieutenant, Hernando Moyano, north to Escamacu to retrieve some Indian laborers who had fled from Santa Elena after stealing some Spanish clothing.³⁴ According to later Spanish testimonies, when Moyano and his men reached Escamacu, the Indians refused to feed them, as they had done in the past. In response, Moyano seized several pots filled with *gacha* (a type of gruel made from maize and/or acorn flour), and the Spaniards satiated their hunger. Early the next morning, Escamacu's warriors attacked the Spanish forces while they slept, killing Moyano and 24 of his men. Only one Spaniard, Andrés Calderón, survived the slaughter. Calderón returned to Santa Elena to convey the news.³⁵

The unrest of 1576 culminated in June of that year, when a large number of Indian warriors (at least some of whom were presumably Guale) attacked Santa Elena. Early one morning, Santa Elena's governor, Gutierre de Miranda, ordered Captain Solís to gather eight or nine Spanish

³³ See AGI Escibanía 154A (April 24, 1577).

³⁴ Hoffman (2002: 66).

³⁵ For more testimonies regarding the 1576 uprising, see AGI Escibanía 154A, fols. 931r–1067r. Considering the high number of Spanish casualties, it seems rather odd that Florida's governor waited almost three years before retaliating. It was not until 1579 that Governor Pedro Menéndez Márquez allegedly burned 19 Guale villages and destroyed their crops and storehouses. According to Worth (2004: 243) and Thomas (1990: 373–374), Guale resistance to the Spanish had intensified after 1576, sparking the governor's violent reprisal. Only after 1580 did several Guale chiefs once again "render their obedience" to the Crown. Yet despite these claims, more research needs to be done on the events that unfolded in Guale territory between 1576 and 1582.

³¹ Velasco was married to doña María Menéndez de Avilés, the daughter of St. Augustine's founder, the *Adelantado* Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.

³² See AGI Escibanía 154A, Ramo 1 (December, 1576–April, 1577), fols. 2v–3r.

soldiers, some Indian allies, and some war dogs and carry out a reconnaissance of the island to determine whether an attack on the garrison was imminent. Spanish witnesses later testified that shortly after Captain Solís departed, they heard harquebus fire nearby. When the fighting ended, just two of the seven war dogs returned to the garrison, one of them covered in arrows. Captain Solís was never seen again and of his men, only one Indian ally returned to Santa Elena, where he reported that all the others had been killed.³⁶

The 1574 and 1576 events at Sapala, Guale, Santa Elena, and Escamacu surely taught the Spanish a valuable, if painful, lesson about the limitations of their authority in the region. Guale loyalty and friendship was not unconditional and on occasion the Guale and other Indian groups were certainly willing to risk the consequences of a Spanish military reprisal. Excessive abuses or unwelcome interference in Guale internal matters would not be tolerated. Unfortunately for five Franciscan friars stationed in Guale territory in the fall of 1597, this was a lesson they would learn too late.

The events of 1574 and 1576 certainly merit more careful scrutiny, as do the Spanish responses, or lack thereof, to the attacks. In the immediate aftermath of all three incidents, the Spanish do not appear to have launched any kind of punitive campaign. Instead, they retreated south to St. Augustine for a brief period before returning to Santa Elena in 1577 to reoccupy the island and rebuild its garrison. Tensions must have been high, but in the first two years of their return, the Spanish did not confront the Guale or Escamacu militarily. Likewise, neither Escamacu nor the Guale chiefs attempted to resist the Spanish return to Santa Elena, even though the garrison was poorly manned and equipped. It was not until 1579 that Florida's governor, Pedro Menéndez Marqués sought to reestablish Spanish hegemony in the region and punish the Guale for the violence from three years earlier. Perhaps, as at least one scholar has suggested, the arrival of an additional 150 Spanish soldiers emboldened the governor to act.³⁷

But the curious timing of Menéndez Marqués's punitive campaign may have had less to do with retaliation for 1576 than it did with concern

for the reappearance of French corsairs, whose ship, *Le Prince*, had run aground near Santa Elena. The French castaways included Nicholas Strozzi, a cousin of France's Queen Mother Catherine de' Medici. As the shipwrecked survivors awaited attack from Spanish forces, Escamacu's *cacique* struck first, capturing at least 100 Frenchmen, whom he distributed as slaves to his allies.³⁸ When the Spanish demanded their release, Escamacu and the other chiefs refused to relinquish their prizes.

In response, in the early spring of 1579, Governor Menéndez Marqués ordered 19 northern villages burned to the ground, and their crops and storehouses destroyed. Menéndez Marqués justified these acts as necessary retribution for the 1576 uprising, but the action also seems to have been a response to the new French threat and the Indians' refusal to surrender their European captives.³⁹ Following his campaign, Santa Elena maintained uneasy relations with both Escamacu and Guale leaders. By July of 1580, some of the French captives had been turned over to Spanish officials and at least 15 different Guale *caciques*, including the paramount chief from Tolomato, negotiated new peace accords with Santa Elena's governor. By 1582, perhaps even earlier, peaceful Spanish-Indian relations in Florida's northern frontier were restored, a peace that remained unbroken until the fall of 1597.

Despite later Spanish claims that the Guale were a belligerent and deceitful people who often rebelled against them, violent episodes such as the 1576 assault on Santa Elena, the murders of Spanish soldiers and royal officials at Sapala and Escamacu, and the 1597 murders of Franciscan friars were surprisingly rare occurrences in 16th-century Spanish Florida. In fact, what is remarkable about the first four decades of Spanish occupation is not the incessant violence, but rather the long periods of relative peace and accommodation. Deadly clashes between Europeans and Florida's indigenous peoples were exceptional events, not habitual realities of daily life.

In the aftermath of the 1597 uprising, Spanish witnesses would look back to the episodes of 1574 and 1576 as evidence of perpetual Guale resistance to Spanish authority. But such testimonies

³⁶ "Services of Alonso Solís," AGI Patronato 75, N.1, R.4 (1577), sf.

³⁷ Hoffman (2002: 67–68).

³⁸ Bushnell (1994: 62–63).

³⁹ See "Letter from Pedro Menéndez Marqués," AGI Santo Domingo 224, R2, 13 BIS (April 2, 1579), fols. 69r–69v.

should be viewed with caution and skepticism. In 1595, when Governor Domingo Martínez de Avendaño authorized the establishment of five Franciscan missions in Guale territory, neither he nor any of the friars expressed the slightest concern for the safety of the missionaries assigned there. For almost two years, the six friars sent to Guale lived alone on the missions, without the presence or protection of any Spanish soldiers. Over that same period, there is no record that any of the friars feared or anticipated an attack against them. Thus, when news of the uprising reached St. Augustine in early October of 1597, it must have come as a terrible and unexpected shock to everyone, not just Florida's new governor.

The events of the 1570s suggest that when violence did erupt, it was often spontaneous and isolated, instigated by specific abuses, and targeted against specific individuals. Violent clashes were intense and bloody, but they were also short-lived. Sustained periods of military campaigns did not characterize Florida's first four decades of colonial rule. Unfortunately, at present, our descriptions of these bloody clashes are far richer than our understanding of them.

Unraveling Indian motivations for warfare is a difficult task, especially since their voices are rarely heard in Spanish sources. Yet despite the intensity of some of these conflicts, it does not appear that the Guale, or any of the Indian groups to the north, ever aimed to expel the Spanish altogether. It should be noted that the Guale and their allies were certainly capable of raising a significant military force, one that could have threatened St. Augustine's very survival. And even when St. Augustine was at its most vulnerable, namely after Francis Drake's 1586 assault on the city, Florida's Indians never attempted to capture the garrison. Fear against Spanish military reprisal alone does not provide a satisfactory explanation, especially when one considers the relative ease with which Indian forces defeated the Spanish at Santa Elena. At the very least, Spanish presence in Florida was tolerated, perhaps even welcomed. With that in mind, it is worth exploring the nature of 16th-century Spanish-Guale relations in more detail.

GAULE SOCIETY, SPANISH TRADE GOODS, AND THE "RENDERING OF OBEDIENCE"

The paucity of early colonial documentation has rendered the task of reconstructing Guale sociopolitical organization a daunting endeavor.

Nevertheless, as archaeological work yields new findings and additional historical records are uncovered, our understanding of early colonial Guale society surely will continue to advance. The Guale Indians inhabited the coastal Atlantic estuaries bound by the Ogeechee and Altamaha rivers in the modern American state of Georgia. Guale territory was divided into at least 30 or 40 different named villages, each, it seems, ruled by a governing hereditary chief, or *cacique*.

Spanish documents suggest that the inhabitants of Guale territory all spoke the same language, probably Muskogean. In fact, 16th-century Spanish accounts uniformly refer to the region as the *lengua de Guale*, literally the "tongue of Guale." Spaniards also observed that the Guale spoke a different language from the Mocama-Timucua inhabitants to the south, with modern Jekyll Island likely serving as the frontier between the two.⁴⁰ Despite their geographic proximity, Guale and Mocama-Timucua languages do not appear to have been mutually intelligible. In fact, the linguistic distinctions between Guale and Timucua are confirmed by the fact that different Spanish translators were required, depending on the language. One late 16th-century interpreter, Gaspar de Salas, was particularly useful because, in addition to Spanish, he spoke both Guale and Timucua.

Before the arrival of Europeans, the Guale enjoyed a rich and varied diet. In addition to maize, beans, and squash, Guale men hunted deer, rabbits, bears, raccoons, and a wide variety of birds, including wild turkey. Women prepared at least two varieties of tortillas, one from acorn flour and the other from maize, and they cooked a type of gruel that the Spanish documents refer to as *gacha*. The Guale also consumed tobacco and they produced a strong caffeinated beverage called *casina*, the black drink.⁴¹ But perhaps the most important part of the Guale diet came from the rich riverine and maritime resources that surrounded Guale villages. Shellfish, especially oysters, along with a rich variety of local fish and wading birds, provided the most abundant food sources for Guale communities.⁴² With such a diverse diet, it is hardly surprising that

⁴⁰ Jones (1978: 186).

⁴¹ For a contemporary description of the Guale diet, see "Testimony of Bartolomé de Argüelles," AGI Santo Domingo 2533 (September, 1602), fol. 76r.

⁴² Hoffman (2002: 13).

16th-century Spanish records make no mention of famine episodes in Guale territory, despite periods of drought.

The Guale certainly produced enough food to sustain their population, as well as a surplus for trade and tribute. However, at present, population estimates for 16th-century Guale remain at best, educated guesses. Calculating Guale's overall population during the 16th century has represented a great challenge for scholars. Unlike other regions of the Americas, Spanish officials never conducted an official census for any of Florida's Indian populations. Only a handful of 16th-century baptism and marriage records have survived, but none from Guale territory. Even the precise number and locations of most early colonial Guale villages remains a speculative matter, to be remedied only by increased archaeological and ethnohistorical research.

At present, population estimates for 16th-century Guale territory remain modest. In the most recent survey of the region, John Worth concluded that when Europeans first explored Guale territory in the 1520s, the overall population numbered no more than about 3000 individuals. According to Worth, by the end of the 16th century, the combined ravages of epidemic disease and Spanish colonial abuses had reduced Guale's population by more than 50%. In 1596, he concluded, just one year before the uprising, Guale's population had fallen to roughly 1300.⁴³

Worth's 1596 estimates likely reflect an absolute minimum population estimate for Guale. In fact, the calculation was based on Guale's annual maize tribute for that year, which required each married adult male to contribute one *arroba* of maize. The 360 *arrobos* collected from Guale are probably based on the number of adult males who resided in the region's five Franciscan missions,

not the number of men who lived in the entire province. Until scholars have a better sense of the overall number and size of Guale communities, it remains premature to attempt an accurate population estimate for late 16th-century Guale. However, based on the available evidence, it was perhaps two or three times larger than the 1300 figure cited by Worth.

Likewise, the scale of 16th-century population decline is a subject that merits far greater scholarly attention. Unlike many regions in the New World, which were devastated by epidemic disease and warfare, Guale's population appears to have been quite stable over the course of the 16th century. It is worth noting that at present there is no archaeological or bioarchaeological evidence to suggest catastrophic population loss in the Southeast during the 16th century. Major disease episodes did not go unreported in Spanish colonial records. Secular and religious officials alike wrote alarming reports of major outbreaks and there is no reason to think that Florida's officials would have behaved any differently. At present, documentary evidence for major disease episodes in 16th-century Guale territory are completely absent. While this alone does not prove that epidemics did not strike Guale, the absence of such references should encourage scholars to proceed with caution.

If reconstructing Guale's population history has proven to be a difficult task, piecing together Guale social and political organization has represented an equal challenge. As in other southeastern Indian groups, chiefly office among the Guale passed along matrilineal lines, through the chief's sister. On the death of the ruler, the chiefdom transferred to the son or daughter of the chief's eldest sister. Sixteenth-century Spanish records confirm this widespread practice, which continued unchanged well into the colonial period. On rare occasions, likely in situations where there was no legitimate heir, the office passed to the *cacique's* eldest brother. Guale and Timucua *caciques*, and perhaps other Guale elites as well, practiced polygamy and in some instances married their own sisters.⁴⁴

In addition to hereditary chiefs, Guale communities appear to have included other members of high rank. Primary documents from the 16th century refer to other Indian elites, whom the Spaniards simply designated as *principales*.

⁴³ The historical demography of the American Southeast merits far more scholarly attention, both in terms of archaeological focus and ethnohistorical research. In the meantime, scholars should exercise caution in their treatment of the subject. In a recent survey of epidemics and slavery in the Southeast, Paul Kelton (2007) challenged most of the current scholarship on epidemic disease in early colonial Florida, concluding that at present there is little indication of widespread demographic decline in the Southeast during the 16th century. Kelton's controversial claims are widely disputed and it is hoped that the controversy will generate more scholarly work on the topic (see also Worth, 2004: 244).

⁴⁴ Thomas (1990b: 364).

Another high-ranking office, the *mandador*, was apparently akin to a war captain. Spanish sources also refer to Guale medical specialists, or healers. While the precise nature of these offices remains vague, it is clear that Guale chiefdoms were highly stratified communities, so much so that the Guale had their own term for commoner. One of the few Guale terms recorded in Spanish documents is the word *anepecuato*, which colonial Spanish scribes defined as “people of low status,” or “commoners.”

Regional political power appears to have been further stratified, with control divided among a small group of principal leaders. In his influential study of colonial Guale society, ethnohistorian Grant Jones suggested that some Guale chiefdoms developed a unique system of shared rule, with political power distributed equally between three sets of principal towns. To the north, Jones suggested that the Guale-Tolomato chiefdom was governed by its two coequal chiefs. Additional coequal chiefdoms existed for Asao-Talaje and Espogache-Tupiqui.⁴⁵ These three chiefdoms each ruled over a dozen or more subordinate villages, whose inhabitants paid tribute and performed labor and military duties on their behalf.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, based on the limited evidence available, it is still premature to draw meaningful conclusions about the nature of these dual chiefdoms, if in fact such a system of shared rule existed. To date, the 16th-century documentary evidence seems to suggest otherwise. Guale political power appears to have been far more decentralized and more volatile than Jones’s portrayal suggests. Ambitious leaders competed for authority in an atmosphere often characterized by intense competition and status rivalry between local rulers. At times, this competition turned deadly.

Over the course of the 16th century, some regional chiefdoms, not all of them Guale,⁴⁷ appear to have exercised significant influence over Guale affairs. Southeastern chiefdoms were inherently unstable and power centers tended to rise and fall, sometimes over a short period.⁴⁸ Alliances

shifted as conditions changed and if chiefdoms developed systems of shared rule, and coequal status relationships, those arrangements were not necessarily permanent and did not necessarily last. Even Guale’s paramount chief, or *mico mayor*, appears to have possessed less authority over the region than the Spanish documents sometimes suggest. Sixteenth-century Spaniards may have equated the office of *mico mayor* with that of a king, but the available evidence hints that the position was far more tenuous, and the *mico*’s authority far less ubiquitous than previously considered.

Guale chiefdoms were highly stratified, and local *caciques* as well as other elites enjoyed a privileged status within their communities. Chiefs received labor services from their subjects as well as tribute payments in maize and other foodstuffs, animal skins, and luxury items such as copper or exotic shells.⁴⁹ Guale commoners crafted and paddled canoes; they built elite residences and other community structures. They foraged, planted, harvested, and processed the foods that local leaders consumed, and when summoned, they served as warriors in their ruler’s army. Southeastern chiefdoms, including the Guale, had no standing armies.

The source of chiefly authority among the Guale remains a subject of some debate. In the absence of sophisticated bureaucratic institutions or standing armies, chiefs relied on other strategies to exercise power over their subjects. For the Guale, political power likely rested in a combination of chiefly activities. On one level, chiefly power was based on belief, namely the general acceptance that rulers were divine beings who possessed the ability to maintain cosmological order through their unique access to the supernatural. Through their mediation with the divine, chiefs provided protection and security for their subjects, ensuring bountiful harvests, health, and safety from foes. This spiritual authority was inherited from one’s ancestors and subsequently passed through matrilineal lines to one’s legitimate heirs. It was continually reinforced through public ritual and the chiefly monopoly of the exotic goods that represented sacred power. These rare luxury items, such as fine shells, feathers,

scholars have acknowledged the unstable nature of Mississippian chiefdoms and how centers of power fluctuated. For example, see Paar (1999: 136–137).

⁴⁵ Jones (1978: 178–210).

⁴⁶ Worth (2007: 12).

⁴⁷ Here I refer to Indian chiefdoms such as Tulu-fina, Aluste, and Escamacu, as well as other Guale centers such as Sapala and Yoa. To date, we still know little about their relationships with Guale’s paramount chief, or with the other important Guale villages.

⁴⁸ This is not a new argument. Most contemporary

⁴⁹ Hall (2000: 125–126).

precious stones, tailored skins, and other clothing, were more than just symbols of chiefly power. They gave power. Access and control over such items, therefore, were a central concern for Guale leaders.

Spanish colonial documents offer some additional clues about the nature of Guale political authority and how it might have been perceived. According to one Spanish observer, the Guale referred to St. Augustine's founder, the *Adelantado* Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, as the *mico* Santa María.⁵⁰ The witness added that in their language, the word *mico* meant "principal chief." But what exactly did those who bestowed the name on Florida's new governor mean by it? It is worth noting that the title does not imply territorial sovereignty; in other words, Menéndez was not identified as the *mico* of St. Augustine or the *mico* of La Florida. Rather, his title is associated with a religious figure, the Virgin Mary. Menéndez's designation may in fact shed some light on how the Guale perceived the nature of chiefly authority as well. Perhaps Guale political authority had less to do with territorial control than it did with a ruler's perceived power over the supernatural.

Of course, power likely did not rest exclusively in the spiritual realm. Some scholars have suggested that the *mico*'s ability to redistribute goods, both foodstuffs and luxury items, also played a central role in determining the extent of his authority.⁵¹ From the earliest expeditions into Florida, gift-giving was a central part of Spanish diplomacy, a practice that European conquistadors pursued throughout the Americas. In Florida, gift exchange became such a central aspect of governance that in 1593 Spanish King Philip II authorized the creation of a special fund, to be used by Florida's governors to provide "gifts" to local chiefs. These items included glass beads, wool, linen, silk cloth, shirts, hats, small quantities of metal tools, such as axes and hoes, and in some instances, horses.⁵² Such exotic goods quickly found their way into the rich inventory of elite status items, fine complements to the copper ornaments, elaborate skins, and shell beads

that previously symbolized religious and political authority.⁵³ Even indigenous mortuary practices began to incorporate the rare items introduced by Europeans. In time, according to Joseph Hall, Indian "leaders not only recognized the power of these objects; they needed it."⁵⁴

But while control over the distribution of European luxury goods likely reinforced or even enhanced chiefly power, accepting these gifts also represented a potential risk to the independence of Guale chiefdoms. By incorporating Spanish luxury items into their daily political and religious practices, indigenous leaders began to forge new and binding ties to secular officials in St. Augustine. Another way to gain access to Spanish luxury goods was through the mission system; but while a permanent mission in one's village assured the continuous flow of the status items that reinforced chiefly authority, the long-term presence of Franciscan friars also challenged the independence of Guale communities.⁵⁵

The decision of many Guale rulers to beg forgiveness for their participation in the 1597 uprising had less to do with their fear of Spanish military reprisals than it did with their desire to regain regular access to the luxury items that came with "rendering obedience" to the Crown. Still, this process of transformation, from a Mississippian world to a Spanish colony, was a protracted affair, far from complete at the end of the 16th century.

It has been suggested that Timucua, Mocama, and Guale chiefs actively sought alliances with the Spanish in order to secure a powerful new military ally, one that might assist them in conflicts with troublesome neighbors. While this might be partly accurate, access to Spanish military power does not appear to have been a central concern for the Guale. Only on rare occurrences did Guale or Timucua leaders seek St. Augustine's military assistance in regional conflicts. When it happened, internecine warfare remained predominantly an Indian affair with limited or no Spanish involvement. Ultimately, it was not Spanish military might that encouraged chiefs from around Florida to journey to St. Augustine to "render their obedience" to the Crown and to request missions for their villages. Rather, it was the access to rare and prestigious luxury items

⁵⁰ See "Testimony of Pedro García Salas," AGI Escribanía 154A (April 1577), fol. 1067v.

⁵¹ Paar (1999: 144).

⁵² Hall (2007: 80). As readers will see in chapter 4 of this volume, San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, possessed at least one horse. It is likely that other *caciques* did as well.

⁵³ Hall (2009: 43–44).

⁵⁴ Hall (2007: 76).

⁵⁵ Thomas (2010: 111).

that provided the primary incentive for local leaders to seek alliances with Spanish officials.

If the Spanish understood the Indians' acceptance of exotic gifts as an act of "rendering obedience" to the Crown, most Spaniards also understood that "obedience" had its limitations. In 1593, Florida's royal accountant Bartolomé de Argüelles and the city's treasurer, Pedro Menéndez Marqués, both petitioned the Council of the Indies in Spain to issue a decree mandating that Christianized Indians follow Spanish laws of inheritance and that all titles, property, and offices pass from father to eldest son. In his letter, Argüelles explained that it was customary among Florida's Indians that when a chief (or any other Indian male) died, his estate passed directly to his sister's eldest son. According to Argüelles, this practice caused great suffering among the legitimate sons, whom he claimed received nothing. The council's response was brief and unequivocal. It read simply, "For the time being, honor their laws."⁵⁶ The council members understood that any attempt to undermine Guale inheritance patterns would disrupt indigenous power relations, a risk it judged not worth taking.⁵⁷

THE SPIRITUAL CONQUEST: JESUITS, FRANCISCANS, AND SECULAR PRIESTS IN EARLY SPANISH FLORIDA

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés's 1565 contract with the Spanish Crown included specific instructions for how Florida's new governor was to carry out the spiritual responsibilities of his enterprise. Among the obligations outlined in the contract, Menéndez was required to take 10 or 12 friars, from whichever religious order he chose, to begin the process of converting Florida's Indian population to Christianity. He was also required to take with him four members from a newly formed religious community, the Society of Jesus, or Jesuit Order. For the Jesuits, Florida represented their first missionary endeavor in Spanish America. Their stay would be brief.⁵⁸

In September of 1566, one year after Mené-

ndez founded the town of St. Augustine, the first three Jesuits arrived in Florida.⁵⁹ They were joined in 1568 by a second group of Jesuits, led by their superior Juan Baptista de Segura. Of the Guale Indians, Father Juan Rogel wrote: "In that Province of Guale the soldiers go two by two without a hand being laid on them by the Indians. They even feed them all the time ... and I do not doubt that of the Indians' natural inclination and disposition, a missionary could reap great fruit if placed among them."⁶⁰ Rogel added that he felt "very secure among them" and that their only vice was "a little gambling."⁶¹

It was not long before Jesuit reports from Florida took on a far more discouraging tone. In a letter to Francisco Borja, the Jesuit General in Rome, one Jesuit priest characterized Florida as "the most miserable land ever discovered by man."⁶² That same year, Florida's Jesuit superior, Juan Baptista de Segura described the region as nothing more than a "long pile of sand ... full of swamps and rivers. Florida," he wrote, "is not for the Society of Jesus."⁶³ For Segura, the more fertile and temperate lands to the north would undoubtedly bring greater success. Instead, they brought martyrdom.

In their final effort to establish a permanent mission in La Florida, eight Jesuits moved north from Santa Elena, eventually building a mission on the York River, not far from the spot where the English would later discover Powhatan's village.⁶⁴ Within months, relations between the Jesuits and the region's Indian population turned violent. In February 1571, the Jesuits' Algonquin guide and trusted ally, Luís de Velasco, turned against the eight missionaries. Velasco and a group of Algonquin warriors murdered all of the Jesuits, an act that effectively ended Jesuit missionary endeavors in Florida.⁶⁵ In a 1571 letter to Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the Jesuit General Francisco de Borja informed the *adelantado* that he was withdrawing the Jesuits from Florida,

⁵⁹ The first three Jesuits assigned to Florida were Pedro Martínez, Juan Rogel, and Francisco Villareal.

⁶⁰ Cited in Cushner (2006: 44).

⁶¹ Cited in Cushner (2006: 45).

⁶² Cited in Cushner (2006: 31).

⁶³ Cited in Cushner (2006: 47).

⁶⁴ Weber (2009: 54).

⁶⁵ Weber (2009: 54). See also Oberg (2008: 33–35)

⁵⁶ See "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles," AGI Patronato 260, N.1, R.25 (1593), sf and "Letter of Pedro Menéndez Marqués," AGI Patronato 260, N.1, R.25 (1593) sf.

⁵⁷ Bushnell (2006: 200–201).

⁵⁸ For a complete English translation of Menéndez's 1565 contract, see Lyon (1976: 213–219).

claiming that “one can count on the fingers of the hand the number of converts made.”⁶⁶ A year later, the Jesuits abandoned Florida.

With the Jesuits gone, Menéndez turned to the Franciscan Order to continue the missionary work in Florida. Yet throughout the 1570s, Florida always seemed to suffer from an acute shortage of clergymen, including friars. During Baltasar de Castillo’s 1576–1577 secret audit of Florida’s royal officials, one of the 18 official charges leveled against Florida’s deceased governor, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, was that when Menéndez returned to Spain in 1572, he left the garrison without a church or a single clergyman. Between 1572 and 1574, the allegation contended St. Augustine’s residents did not hear a single Mass, and the garrison had no priest to administer the sacraments. According to Sergeant Francisco Hernández de Ecija, it was not until 1574 that St. Augustine once again had its own parish priest, who, in the absence of a church, was forced to celebrate Mass in the city’s fortress.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Cushner (2006: 47–48).

⁶⁷ Ecija added that in 1574 Florida’s Governor Diego de Velasco, ordered that a church be built in St. Augustine. It is unclear when the church was completed, but it was certainly in use before Baltasar Castillo’s 1576 visitation. See “Testimony of Sergeant Francisco Hernández de Ecija,” AGI Escribanía 154A (December 05, 1577), fol. 141v. Eleven days after Ecija testified, Baltasar Castillo met with St. Augustine’s parish priest, Fray Francisco del Castillo. In the priest’s presence, Baltasar Castillo conducted a thorough visitation of St. Augustine’s church, recording a detailed inventory of everything in it. Among the church’s dozens of modest ornaments and belongings, the inventory also recorded dozens of items had belonged to the Spanish church at Santa Elena. These items had been brought to St. Augustine after the Guale attack earlier that year, which led to the brief abandonment of Santa Elena. They included a statue of Santa Clara, a small church bell (at the time, St. Augustine’s church did not appear to have its own bell), and a large altarpiece, decorated with a painted image of the crucified Christ and other figures. That Santa Elena’s residents were able to escape with all of the items in the midst of a Guale attack on the garrison certainly raises some questions about the nature of the assault and the retreat. If the garrison had been under siege, as some Spanish witnesses later claimed, it is unlikely that Santa Elena’s residents would have been able to escape with all of their possessions, as well as the entire inventory of ornaments that had decorated the church. For the complete inventories of both churches, as well as the confraternity of The

The situation in Santa Elena does not appear to have been much different. Martín de Iztueta, a Spanish soldier stationed at the northern garrison, testified that for most of the year 1570, Santa Elena was left without a priest. For that reason, Iztueta had to wait more than eight months before he could baptize his young daughter.⁶⁸ In testimony from 1576, Florida’s chief navigator Antonio Martín de Carvajal recalled that earlier that year, Santa Elena’s resident priest, Juan del Valle, had celebrated Lent two weeks early.⁶⁹ Martín added that one of Florida’s aging friars, Francisco de Herrera, left out many things when he administered baptisms and at times the friar forgot certain parts of the Mass, omissions that Martín attributed to the friar’s advanced age.⁷⁰

Despite the challenges of securing a permanent priest for St. Augustine, missionary work did in fact extend into several Guale villages long before the formal establishment of Franciscan missions in 1595, with the earliest missions among the Guale beginning about 1566. In testimony recorded in 1572, a secular priest named Francisco Enrique de Fromonte claimed that *Adelantado* Pedro Menéndez de Avilés had dispatched him to Guale Island, where he was assigned to preach to the Indians who resided there. Father Fromonte was joined by several other Spaniards, most likely soldiers who had been assigned to protect the priest. However, his “mission” at Guale did not endure for long. Fromonte was soon recalled from the island and ordered to the Spanish gar-

Most Holy Vera Cruz, see AGI Escribanía 154A (December 16, 1576), fols. 370v–378r.

⁶⁸ According to Iztueta, a Theatine priest named Father Rosel had refused to perform the baptism, claiming that he did not have the authority to perform the sacrament. See “Testimony of Martín de Iztueta,” AGI Escribanía 154A (December 19, 1576), fols. 234v–235r.

⁶⁹ When informed of his error, Valle acknowledged the mistake and two weeks later the priest said the Lent Mass once again. See “Testimony of Antonio Martín de Carvajal,” AGI Escribanía 154A (December 4, 1576), fols. 124v–125r.

⁷⁰ See “Testimony of Antonio Martín de Carvajal,” AGI Escribanía 154A (December 4, 1576), fols. 124v–125r. Three days after Martín testified, another Spanish witness, Antonio Ruíz, added that Fray Francisco de Herrera committed many careless errors during Mass and when the friar presided over baptisms. “Testimony of Antonio Ruíz,” AGI Escribanía 154A (December 7, 1576), fol. 157v.

rison at Santa Elena in order to serve the Spanish soldiers stationed there.⁷¹ But Fromonte was not the only priest to serve in Guale territory before 1595. In the early 1570s, for example, a small number of Theatine friars had built their own residences in the villages of Orista and at Guale (St. Catherines Island).⁷² There was also a (Franciscan?) friar's residence at the village of Tupiqui.⁷³ Unfortunately, no detailed records of their missionary work in Guale territory have been uncovered and little is known of their early interactions with the Guale.

If the first two decades of Spanish rule in Florida saw only limited missionary activity, the late 1580s brought an intensification of Franciscan efforts to convert the region's native population to Christianity. In 1587, Fray Alonso de Reynoso recruited nine fellow Franciscans to lead the spiritual conquest of Florida (see table 1). Among the new recruits was Fray Pedro de Corpa, the future resident friar of Tolomato and alleged catalyst of the 1597 uprising. The arrival of Fray Reynoso and his fellow Franciscans served to reinvigorate missionary activity in Florida. That same year, the first formal Franciscan missions were established, one at Nombre de Dios and the other at San Juan del Puerto (Fort George Island). The following year, a third mission was built at San Pedro, on modern Cumberland Island.

Three years after the first wave of Franciscans arrived, Fray Juan de Silva brought another group of friars (see table 2). However, of the dozen Franciscans recruited for the Florida missions in 1590, reportedly only six friars reached St. Augustine. Moreover, two of the six friars were said to be lay brothers.⁷⁴ Fray Blas Rodríguez, who later served the mission of Tupiqui, arrived with the 1590 group. He too would lose his life in the 1597 uprising.

The final wave of Franciscans to arrive in Florida in the 16th century left Spain on June 10, 1595 (see table 3). Before the end of the year, all 11 friars had reached St. Augustine, almost tripling the total number of friars in the province, from 6 to 17.⁷⁵ With the arrival of so many new missionaries, the Franciscans could now consider expanding their missionary activities to the north. Under the governorship of Domingo Martínez de Avendaño, in 1595 the Franciscans decided to send six missionaries into Guale territory.

Together with Fray Francisco Marrón and several of his fellow Franciscan friars, Avendaño journeyed to San Pedro Island and then north to Guale to negotiate the establishment of the new missions. When Avendaño concluded his visitation, five Franciscan friars and a lay brother had been assigned to five new missions, placed in the Guale villages of Tolomato, Tupiqui, Asao, Talapo (or possibly Tulufina), and on the island of Guale (See map 1). Together, these six Franciscans were entrusted with the spiritual conquest of Guale territory. Only one of them, Fray Francisco de Ávila, would survive the 1597 uprising.

For the Guale, the missions might have provided guaranteed access to Spanish goods, but they also came at a price. As part of his negotiation with the Guale, Governor Avendaño imposed a maize tribute on the Indians from Guale, as had been done earlier at San Pedro and Nombre de Dios. In 1595 the Indians from Guale and San Pedro provided a combined tribute of 447 *arrobos* of maize, the sales from which yielded a profit of 60,692 *maravedíes*. The following year the tribute from Guale, San Pedro, and Nombre de Dios increased to 530 *arrobos* of maize, worth 72,080

⁷¹ "Petition of Francisco Enrique de Fromonte, vicar of Havana," AGI Santo Domingo 235 (July, 1572), fols. 1r–16v.

⁷² The identities of these Theatines remain obscure. To date, we have only been able to locate one, whose name is simply recorded as Father Rosel. However, no records have been located to shed light on Rosel's background and the nature of his missionary work in Florida.

⁷³ See "Testimony of Pedro Garcia de Salas," AGI Escribanía 154A (February 25, 1577), fol. 270r.

⁷⁴ See "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (May 12, 1591), fol. 85r.

⁷⁵ On December 13, 1595, St. Augustine's acting governors, the royal officials Juan Menéndez Marqués and Alonso de Las Alas confirmed that 11 friars had recently arrived in Florida. See "Letter from Juan Menéndez Marqués and Alonso de Las Alas," AGI Santo Domingo 231 (December 13, 1595), fol. 695r. Florida's third royal official, Bartolomé de Argüelles, was in Mexico at the time, collecting the annual *situado*. When the 11 new friars arrived, it appears there were only six other Franciscans in the province. In a letter written in the year 1600, three years after he began his governorship, Méndez claimed that when he arrived in St. Augustine in 1597 there were 17 Franciscan friars in total. See "Letter from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo," AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.5 (May 28, 1600), fol. 221v.

TABLE 1
Franciscan Friars Sent to Florida, July 21, 1587

Name	Spanish convent
Alonso de Reynoso	Unknown
Antonio Mela	Cambados, Galicia
Antonio de Villanueva	León
Antonio Pérez Torquemada	Villafranca
Francisco Gómez	Villafranca
Baltasar López	Salamanca
Diego Vidal	Las Garrovillas
Alonso de Santa Marina	Las Garrovillas
Juan Manzano	Cáceres
Pedro de Corpa	Astorga

Source: AGI Contratación 5538, L.2 (1587) fol. 30r.

TABLE 2
Franciscan Friars Sent to Florida, May, 1590

Name	Spanish convent
Juan de Silva	Santa Olalla
Juan de Castillo	Santa Olalla
Blas Rodríguez	Santa Olalla
Diego Valverde	Santa Olalla
Francisco de Toledo	Placencia
Juan de Maya	Placencia
Antonio de Xerez	Placencia
Agustín de Valladolid	Placencia
Agustín de Valladolid	San Francisco de las Brozas
Bartolomé de Esperanza	San Francisco de las Brozas
Lorenzo de Zúñiga	San Francisco de las Brozas
Antonio Xara	San Francisco de las Brozas

Source: AGI Contratación 5538, L.2 (May 17, 1590), fol. 37v.

TABLE 3
Franciscan Friars Sent to Florida, June 10, 1595

Name	Spanish convent
Miguel de Aunon	Vitoria
Pedro Fernández	Vitoria
Pedro de Auñón	Vitoria
Blas de Montes	Vitoria
Pedro Villegas	Vitoria
Francisco Vermejo	Vitoria
Francisco Pareja	Valladolid
Francisco de Berascola	Valladolid
Francisco de Vila [Ávila]	Valladolid
Pedro Ruíz	Valladolid
Francisco Bonilla	Valladolid

Source: AGI Contratación 5538, L.2 (June 19, 1595), fol. 51r.

maravedíes.⁷⁶ In the fall of 1597 no maize tribute would reach St. Augustine's storehouses, and the Guale missions would be in ruins.

A NEW GOVERNOR AND THE UPRISING BEGINS

For Domingo Martínez de Avendaño, the establishment of new missions in Guale territory would prove to be his final act as governor. On his return from Guale, Florida's governor suddenly fell ill, struck by what some observers diagnosed as "some kind of flu."⁷⁷ Within hours of his return, Avendaño was dead. According to several witnesses, the governor's death was so sudden that he did not even have time to dictate his final testament.⁷⁸ Months later, the Spanish Crown appointed Florida's next governor, Gon-

zalo Méndez de Canzo.

On June 2, 1597 Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo arrived in St. Augustine to begin his tenure as La Florida's governor.⁷⁹ With him, Méndez brought 10 additional soldiers to reinforce St. Augustine's garrison, as well as a new parish priest, an Irishman named Ricardo Arturo (Richard Arthur).⁸⁰ Before he entered the priesthood, Ricardo Arturo

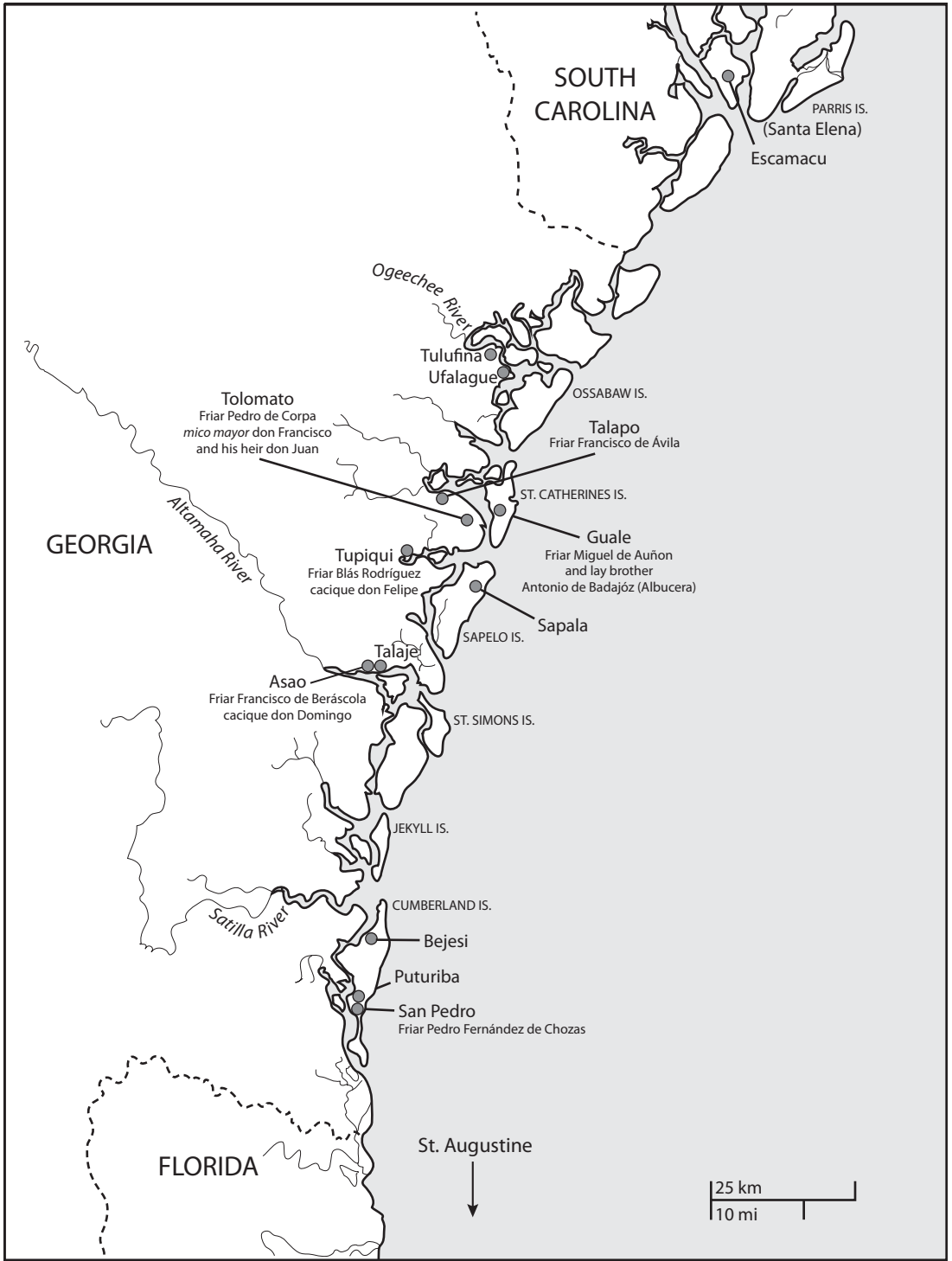
⁷⁹ Méndez had departed from Spain more than eight months earlier, on September 23, 1596. He reached Cuba in late November that same year. On December 9, 1596, Méndez departed on the first of three attempted voyages to St. Augustine. A terrible storm forced Méndez to return to Havana shortly after his first departure. There, Florida's newly appointed governor proceeded to obtain larger ships for the voyage, on which he attempted a second voyage in early May 1597. Again, storms delayed his journey and it was not until early June that Méndez finally reached his new post.

⁸⁰ In accordance with his appointment as Florida's new governor and captain general, Méndez was ordered to take 24 soldiers with him as well as a new priest. However, it appears that only 10 soldiers reached St. Augustine with the new governor. The original royal decree was issued from Toledo on May 25, 1596. See "Petition from Father Ricardo [Arturo]" AGI Santo Domingo 231 (August 23, 1597), fol. 908r.

⁷⁶ See AGI Santo Domingo 229, fols. 324r–327v. A more detailed account can also be found in AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.41, fols. 379r–380r.

⁷⁷ "Letter from Alonso de Las Alas," AGI Santo Domingo 231 (January 2, 1596), fol. 719r.

⁷⁸ "Letter from Alonso Saez de Mercado," AGI Santo Domingo 231 (January 4, 1596), fols. 706r–706v.



Map 1. Approximate locations of the Franciscan missions and important villages between San Pedro (modern Cumberland Island) and the Salchiche village of Tulfina (northwest of modern Ossabaw Island, Georgia). The six Franciscan friars and one lay brother stationed in the region are listed below their respective missions.

enjoyed a distinguished career as a soldier in the Spanish military, serving in numerous campaigns in Italy, Malta, and Flanders. On becoming a priest, Father Ricardo was appointed chaplain of the Castillo of San Juan and later served as chaplain to the artillerymen stationed in Lisbon.⁸¹ How and when Father Ricardo and Governor Méndez first met is unclear, but it is likely that their first encounter occurred in Puerto Rico. And when Méndez received his appointment as Florida's new governor, he recruited the Irishman to serve as St. Augustine's parish priest, promising to pay Father Ricardo's passage from Spain and to provide him with an annual salary. At the time, Méndez could not have anticipated that his appointment would be the first of many bitter conflicts he would have with Florida's royal accountant, Bartolomé de Argüelles.

In accordance with imperial policy, Méndez's first task as Florida's new governor was to conduct a *residencia*, or official audit, of all the royal officials stationed in Florida, including his deceased predecessor, Domingo Martínez de Avendaño. With his investigations barely started, Governor Méndez already encountered resistance from two of the garrison's royal officials. Shortly after the governor's arrival, St. Augustine's royal accountant, Bartolomé de Argüelles, refused to authorize any payments to the garrison's new Irish priest, arguing that the Crown had not specifically mandated that Father Ricardo's salary be paid from the royal treasury. Argüelles's associate, the royal *factor* Alonso de Las Alas, agreed. Only the town's treasurer, Juan Menéndez Marqués, sided with the governor and Father Ricardo. Furious that Argüelles and Las Alas still declined to pay the new parish priest, Méndez issued a direct order that the Irishman be paid, vowing to take up the matter directly with the Crown.⁸²

Perhaps, then, it is not a surprise that less than three weeks later, Governor Méndez leveled formal charges against Alonso de Las Alas, accusing

St. Augustine's *factor* with using royal funds to purchase clothing, food, and other goods. Following his investigation, Méndez concluded that Las Alas had not replaced the funds he had taken from the royal coffers, leaving insufficient funds to pay the Spanish soldiers in St. Augustine. As punishment, Méndez suspended Las Alas from office for a four-year period, a sentence later confirmed by Spain's Council of the Indies.⁸³

In the aftermath of the 1597 uprising, Governor Méndez's relationship with Bartolomé de Argüelles only worsened and their bitter enmity played an important role in the Spanish responses to the friars' deaths. Not only that, but their personal struggles influenced how both men represented the events of 1597 in their correspondence with the Crown.

If his *residencia* had strained his early relations with some of St. Augustine's royal officials, Méndez appears to have enjoyed a far more amicable start to his relations with Florida's indigenous peoples. On June 9, 1597, just one week after Méndez arrived in Florida to assume the governorship, an Indian *cacique* from the island of Guale (St. Catherines Island) arrived to meet with Florida's new governor and to "render his obedience" to the Crown. That Guale's chief reached St. Augustine so soon after the new governor's arrival is a testament to the garrison's growing influence in southeastern politics, and the importance of Spanish luxury goods.

In return for Guale's promised loyalty and friendship, Méndez provided the chief with six pounds of wheat to eat during his stay, and he gave the *cacique* two axes from the royal treasury. Guale's *cacique* remained in St. Augustine for a couple of days before returning home. Less than a month later the same *cacique* was back

⁸¹ A royal decree from 1593 granted Arturo a monthly salary of 6½ *escudos* as a reward for his services to the Crown. See AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.36 (February 7, 1593), fol. 253v.

⁸² It is evident that Méndez reported the matter to the Council of the Indies in Spain. On November 9, 1598, the Spanish Crown issued a decree authorizing royal payments to Father Ricardo. See "Petition from Father Ricardo [Arturo]" AGI Santo Domingo 231 (August 23, 1597), fol. 909v.

⁸³ Las Alas's suspension began on the day Méndez issued the sentence, September 12, 1597. See "Residencia conducted by Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo," AGI Escribanía 154B, Ramo 1, fol. 5v. Of course, Las Alas insisted that he had done nothing wrong and that Governor Méndez and St. Augustine's treasurer, Juan Menéndez Marqués had both conspired against him to remove him from office. See "Letter from Alonso de Las Alas," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (February 23, 1600), fols. 143r–144v. Four months later, Las Alas further protested the sentence, adding that in addition to losing his office, Méndez had dispossessed him of his home and of all his belongings. "Letter from Alonso de Las Alas," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (June 27, 1600), fols. 159r–160r.

TABLE 4
Summary of Goods Issued to Florida's Indians from the Royal Treasury
 (June 10, 1597–July 27, 1597)

Item	Quantity
Flour	1302 lbs.
Maize	528 lbs.
Axes	9
Hoes	13
Paño (woolen cloth)	26 1/6 <i>varas</i> (ca. 21.71 m)
Fine wool for friars' clothing ¹	20 <i>varas</i> (ca. 16.7 m)
Blankets	19
<i>Lampote</i> (cloth from the Philippines)	4 <i>varas</i> (ca. 3.34 m)
<i>Bocací</i> (linen buckram) ²	29 <i>varas y tercia</i> (ca. 24.22 m)
<i>Sinabafa</i> (braid-case made from white silk) ³	6 <i>varas</i> (ca. 5.01 m)
Handmade thread	1 lb. 2 oz.
Cotton shirts ⁴	3
Cotton shirt from Ruan, France ⁵	1
Doublet ⁶ from Holland ⁷	1
<i>Punto de lone de Bruseles</i> (socks from Brussels) ⁸	Some
Silk buttons	8 dozen
Hats	7
Silk	1/2 oz.
Silk ribbons	1/2 oz.
Taffeta from China	1 1/6 <i>varas</i> (ca. 97 m)
Pair of shoes with two soles from Córdoba	1

Source: AGI Santo Domingo 231 (July 27, 1597), fols. 854r–856v.

¹ In the document this term appears as *sayal basto*, which was a fine wool cloth used to make friars' habits. See Mary Money Alvarez, *Los Obrajes, El Traje y El Comercio de Ropa en la Audiencia de Charcas* (La Paz: Escuela de Artes Gráficas del Colegio don Bosco, 1983: 221).

² *Bocací* or buckram is a heavy, stiff fabric used for lining garments such as skirts. Normally these were worn by noble women, but more inexpensive versions cut from *pañó* (woolen cloth) were also used to line the dresses and skirts of servants and slaves (Anderson, 1979: 200).

³ Often worn by female royalty in Spain and Portugal, *sinabafas* were special fabrics imported from East India and used as a braid-casing for long hair (Anderson, 1979: 165).

⁴ Cotton shirts made from *crea* (undyed; de la Fuente, 2008: 15).

⁵ The reference to Ruan refers to a specific type of cloth fabricated in Ruan, France (Alvarez, 1983: 221).

⁶ Taken from the Arabic word *yubba*, the doublet is "a neck-to-waist garment linked to the hose;" it later evolved into the waistcoat. Doublets could be made from silk, wool, linen, fustian, and other materials. *Jubertos* (those who made doublets and jerkins for a living) crafted doublets in a variety of fashions and styles influenced by different regions across Europe (Alvarez, 1983: 53, 55).

⁷ The majority of linens produced in Holland were fabricated in Haarlem by Flemish migrants, who established a flourishing linen industry there. However, the reference "*de Holanda*," also could refer to imported cloths that were bleached in Haarlem by Dutch artisans (de la Fuente, 2008: 26).

⁸ An embroidered sock (de la Fuente, 2008: 187).

at the Spanish garrison, this time with a party of 25 Guale Indians, including Guale territory's paramount chief from Tolomato, don Francisco. Governor Méndez provided the men with more than 320 pounds of flour to sustain them during their eight-day stay and he issued them gifts of blankets and steel hoes; to don Francisco and two other *caciques* the governor provided the material necessary to tailor new suits, including shirts, hats, and silk buttons. Dressed in finely tailored outfits, don Francisco and the two other *caciques* (who were not specifically identified) returned home to Guale.

Around that same time, Governor Méndez convinced don Juanillo, the young heir to the office of *mico mayor*, to lead a small expedition into the interior, to the village of La Tama.⁸⁴ Two Franciscan friars, Pedro Fernández de Chozas and Francisco de Beráscola, joined the expedition, hoping to build on the successes of the Guale missions and perhaps begin the process of establishing new missions in the interior. Don Juanillo's last recorded visit to St. Augustine occurred on August 2, 1597. On that day, Juanillo and three unnamed companions arrived in St. Augustine, where they met briefly with Governor Méndez. The governor ordered that don Juanillo and the three men with him be given enough flour to sustain them over their 10-day stay in St. Augustine. And as further compen-

sation for having led Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas and the other Spaniards on the expedition to La Tama, Governor Méndez gave don Juanillo a cotton shirt from Ruan, with a Dutch collar, as well as a new leather-colored hat.⁸⁵ This would be the last time that Governor Méndez would see don Juanillo alive.

For St. Augustine's new governor, the arrival of so many regional chiefs must have seemed an ideal beginning. In the first month of his governorship, more than a dozen regional *caciques* had come to St. Augustine to "render their obedience" to the Spanish Crown and to Governor Méndez as its representative. From Guale territory alone, the *mico mayor* from Tolomato, his heir don Juanillo, and several other important regional *caciques* had all traveled to St. Augustine to establish their alliances with Méndez. Florida's governor, therefore, would not have anticipated the events that were about to unfold in Guale.

Early Tuesday morning, October 7, 1597, a Spanish brigantine sailed into the harbor of St. Augustine, Florida. The vessel had just returned from delivering its regular food shipment and other supplies to the Franciscan mission of San Pedro. When the brigantine reached St. Augustine, one of its crew, Martin Gudines, rushed a bundle of letters to the residence of St. Augustine's governor. Mixed with the correspondence were several messages from Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas, a Franciscan friar stationed on the island. Governor Méndez unsealed the letter and read the opening line: "By Whose virtue all hell falls to its knees: Grant us the strength to endure these imminent tribulations." With those words, Méndez realized that the peaceful relations he had enjoyed with the Guale during his first four months of rule had come to an abrupt end. When he finished reading the letter, Méndez sat back in his chair in disbelief. Five Franciscan friars were dead, another had been taken captive, and the Guale missions lay in ruins.

⁸⁴ In testimony recorded a few years after the expedition, the soldier Gaspar de Salas testified that the journey to La Tama took eight days, all through unpopulated lands. When they reached La Tama they found a village with impressive food stores. According to Salas, La Tama had a rich supply of maize, beans, and venison meat. Salas added that the village also possessed large quantities of wild turkeys and other birds, fish, large grapes that grew in thick clusters, white cherries (which he claimed were similar to the Spanish *ciruelas de monje*), watermelon, and other fruits. The region also boasted large amounts of *Dictamo Real*, a plant highly valued for its medicinal properties. For Salas's complete account, see "Testimony of Gaspar de Salas," AGI 224, R.5, N.36, fols. 258v–259v.

⁸⁵ AGI Santo Domingo 231, fol. 856r.



CHAPTER 1

JUANILLO'S REVOLT? A BRIEF (HI)STORY

It was still dark when Fray Pedro de Corpa awoke to the sounds of faint whispers and shuffling feet outside his residence. With his eyes still closed, the friar reached for his habit, which he had folded on a chair beside his bed. He knew that soon he would hear the crackling of firewood, followed by the delightful smell of thin maize tortillas, acorn cakes, and roasted fish cooking over open flames. Breakfast always came early in Tolomato. At least one hour before sunrise, Fray Corpa and the Indians of his mission would have settled down to eat their first meal of the day. The friar had grown accustomed to this early morning routine, and it was not long before candlelight filled his room and Fray Corpa kneeled to the floor in quiet solitude to begin his morning prayers.

For almost two years, since early November of 1595, Fray Corpa had been stationed in the Guale village of Tolomato, home to the *mico mayor* of Guale territory, don Francisco, and his young heir, don Juan, or Juanillo (Little John) as he was often called. Fray Corpa was one of only five Franciscan friars and a lay brother assigned to the region. Together, these six men had been entrusted with the conversion of several thousand Guale Indians, who resided in dozens of dispersed settlements along the Atlantic coastal estuaries of the modern American state of Georgia (see map 2).¹

¹ In the late 16th century, Guale territory was bound roughly by the mouths of the Ogeechee River to the north and the Satilla River to the south. Grant Jones suggests that Guale territory stretched even farther north, up to the North Edisto River, in the modern American state of South Carolina. However,

As the most experienced of the five friars assigned to Guale territory, having arrived in Florida in 1587, Fray Corpa was entrusted with perhaps the most important village in Guale territory. After all, 16th-century documents consistently report that Tolomato was the home of Guale's paramount chief. The remaining four Franciscan missions had been established at the Guale villages of Asao, Tupiqui, Talapo, and on the island of Guale (modern St. Catherines Island).² From these permanent missions,

that region appears to have been under the rule of the *cacique* of Escamacu, who at times allied with various Guale rulers, but does not seem to have been Guale (see Jones, 1978).

² Over the past several decades, there has been much debate and speculation concerning the exact location of these missions. To date, the only mission positively identified in the archaeological record is the Mission Santa Catalina de Guale, on St. Catherines Island. None of the other missions have been positively identified. Based on our examination of the documentary evidence, we suggest the following locations. First, we propose that the Guale village of Asao is located at the Fort King George site. The Pine Harbor site is where we would place Tupiqui. We contend that the Harris Neck site was the location of Talapo, and that Tolomato was located on or near Southerland Bluff. It is a matter of further archaeological investigation to confirm or suggest other alternative sites. In addition to the mission locations, we also believe (again, based on our reading of the colonial documents), that the Guale village of Sapala was located at the Bourbon Field site on Sapelo Island and that the Tivoli site ruins are from the chiefdom of Yoa. Finally, we think the village of Tulufina, where Fray Francisco de Ávila was held captive, was located on or near Sevenmile Bend, or possibly Redbird Creek.



Map 2. Names and approximate locations of La Florida's Franciscan missions at the end of the 16th century. Although there are documentary references to the missions of Tocoy and Antonico (along the St. Johns River), it does not appear that either site had a permanent friar when the 1597 rebellion began. It is also unclear whether more than one mission existed on San Pedro Island (modern Cumberland). In Guale territory, Franciscan missions were established in 1595 at Asao, Tupiqui, Talapo, Tolomato, and Guale Island (St. Catherines Island).

Fray Corpa and his fellow Franciscans traveled throughout Guale territory in their effort to convert the inhabitants to Christianity. For almost two years, the friars appeared to have enjoyed some success among the Guale and they boasted about their missionary endeavors in the region. It is therefore unlikely that Fray Corpa or any of the friars in Guale territory could have anticipated the events that were about to unfold that morning in Tolomato.

As he continued in prayer, Fray Corpa suddenly became aware of the silence. He heard no sound of crackling fires, no shouts or cries from hungry children waiting to be fed, and no scent of maize tortillas or roasted fish. Moreover, the whispers and the sound of shuffling feet that had awoken him just moments earlier had subsided. Unaware that the war party had gathered directly outside his residence, Fray Corpa returned to his prayers.

The war cries began just moments before the door to the friar's residence burst open and dozens of armed Guale warriors raced inside, surrounding the friar. Fray Corpa remained kneeling on the ground, his eyes focused on the familiar face of the young Guale man who had led the charge into his cell. Fray Corpa looked in disbelief as don Juanillo, the heir to the paramount chieftaincy, issued the order. With that, a young Indian warrior, adorned in military regalia, his face, arms, and legs covered in red paint, rushed toward the friar. Corpa remained frozen on his knees. As the warrior raised his *macana* (stone hatchet) high in the air, the friar closed his eyes. With one fierce blow, Corpa's lifeless body crumpled to the floor, blood spilling from the open wound in his skull. The 1597 Guale Uprising had begun.

On confirming that Corpa was dead, don Juanillo ordered his warriors to decapitate the friar and place his disembodied head on a pole directly in front of Tolomato's boat launch. The friar's headless body, don Juanillo instructed, was to be buried deep in the forest where the Spaniards could never find it. Don Juanillo then dispatched messengers to summon the Guale chiefs of Asao, Talapo, Utine, Ufulo, Tupiqui, Aluste, and Posache [Espogache] to join him at Tolomato. In a matter of days, all the chiefs had assembled. According to an 18th-century chronicle, written more than a century after the events it describes, don Juanillo allegedly stood triumphantly before the gathered *caciques* and delivered the following speech:

Now the friar is dead. This would not have happened if he had allowed us to live according to our pre-Christian manner. Let us return to our ancient customs. Let us provide for our defense against the punishment which the governor of Florida will mete out; if he succeeds in punishing us, he will be as rigorous in avenging the death of this single friar, as for the death of all.

Consequently, since the punishment for killing one friar must be equally severe as for killing all, let us restore our [ancient] liberty of which these friars deprive us. They give us promises of good things which they themselves have not seen but for which they hold out hope. We who are called Christians experience only hindrances and vexations. They take away from us our women, allowing us but one, and that, in perpetuity, forbidding us to exchange them for others.

They prohibit us from having our dances, banquets, feasts, celebrations, games, and wars, and in order that, being deprived of these, we might lose our ancient valor and skill, which we have inherited from our ancestors. They persecute our old men, calling them wizards. They are not satisfied with our labor for they hinder us from performing it on certain days. Even when we are willing to do all they tell us, they remain unsatisfied.

All they do is to reprimand us, treat us in an injurious manner, oppress us, preach to us and call us bad Christians. They deprive us of every vestige of happiness which our ancestors obtained for us, in exchange for which they hold out the hope of the joys of Heaven.

In this deceitful manner they subject us, holding us bound to their wills. What have we to hope for except to become slaves? If we kill them all now, we will throw off this intolerable yoke without delay. The governor will perceive our valor and will be forced to treat us well, in the event that he should get the better of us.³

³ Andrés González de Barcía Carballido y Zúñiga, *Ensayo cronológico para la historia general de la Florida* (Madrid: Nicolas Rodriguez Franco, 1723). The translation above is from Geiger (1936: 90).

Of course, most scholars acknowledge the fictitious nature of don Juanillo's alleged speech, an imaginative invention of an 18th-century chronicler. No 16th- or early 17th-century source makes any reference to don Juanillo issuing such a speech; in fact, there are no eyewitness accounts of Fray Pedro de Corpa's murder, and the precise circumstances of his death remain a mystery, despite what some secondary sources claim. Even the date of Fray Corpa's death is unknown and his corpse was never recovered. Moreover, no contemporary witness ever testified to the later claim that Corpa had been decapitated and it is worth noting that the friar's disembodied head was never discovered at Tolomato's boat launch.

Yet despite the fact that most scholars accept that don Juanillo's speech was an 18th-century invention, the general tenor of its message remains widely accepted. For example, in his pioneering work on the "spiritual conquest" of Florida, Maynard Geiger maintained that while the precise language conveyed in the speech should be regarded as invention, its content should be viewed as "poetically true," an accurate reflection of Guale anger at Franciscans' interference in their affairs and a convincing explanation for the 1597 uprising. Few scholars have disagreed.

Even if the tale of don Juanillo's invented speech is viewed with rightful skepticism, most scholars agree with the basic story line that follows Fray Corpa's death. In accordance with don Juanillo's orders, the other Guale chiefs assembled their warriors, prepared their weapons, and plotted the assaults on the remaining Franciscan missions. Within days, four more Franciscan friars had been killed, their missions and residences burned to the ground. A sixth friar stationed in Guale territory, Fray Francisco de Ávila, was wounded in the initial assault on his mission; however, he managed to survive the attack and was taken captive to the Salchiche village of Tulufina, where he remained enslaved for almost 10 months until St. Augustine's Spanish governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, secured his safe release.

With the missions destroyed and all but one of the resident friars killed, the Guale plotted their next move. They decided to venture south into Mocama Indian territory, targeting the Franciscan missions located on the island of San Pedro (modern Cumberland Island).

San Pedro's *cacique*, also named don Juan,

had long been a close Spanish ally. In fact, his fierce loyalty to the Spanish monarch and his devout Christianity had convinced the Council of the Indies in Spain to award don Juan with an annual salary, equivalent to that of a Spanish soldier. In their 1596 recommendation to reward don Juan for his loyal services, the council members applauded the Indian chief for allegedly banishing all non-Christian Indians from the villages under his authority.⁴ Perhaps don Juan's intimate association with the Spanish, and the favors he received from them, encouraged the Guale to attack his village. Or perhaps the target was the missions themselves, and the two Franciscan friars stationed there, Francisco de Pareja and Pedro Fernández de Chozas.

Whatever the motivations, on October 4, 1597, the Feast Day of St. Francis, a war party of 400 warriors paddled south from Guale and launched a surprise predawn attack on San Pedro. However, when the assailants reached the island, they discovered a Spanish brigantine anchored off shore. The unexpected presence of Spanish soldiers, whom the Guale believed would be heavily armed, was enough to convince most of the attackers to turn back in retreat, leaving the assault on San Pedro to just a handful of Guale warriors.

Before sunrise, the attacking force crept unnoticed into the village and surrounded the residence of an Indian *principal* named Antonio López. But their presence was soon discovered and they were forced to flee. San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, and his followers immediately set after them, managing to capture and scalp several of the attackers.

As the remaining Guale war party retreated north, San Pedro's Indians recognized one of the assailants. Don Domingo, the *cacique* from the Guale village of Asao, stood defiantly at the front of his canoe, wearing the hat that had belonged to Asao's resident friar and carrying the friar's harquebus. He turned toward the Indians on shore and shouted, "What you see here is all that remains of that priest. Come forward and feed him maize cakes (*tortas*)." More taunts and threats followed before don Domingo and his men disappeared from sight as they continued their retreat north to Guale.

Curiously, neither of the two Franciscan friars stationed at San Pedro was harmed during the St.

⁴ AGI Santo Domingo 6, fol. 17r (June 20, 1596).

Francis Day assault; in fact, Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas and Fray Francisco de Pareja do not even appear to have been targeted. Nevertheless, both friars feared another attack would soon follow. Therefore, that same afternoon, Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas dispatched an urgent message to St. Augustine, begging the Spanish governor to send immediate assistance. Three days later, Florida's new governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, received the friar's letter, which not only described the attack on San Pedro, but it also contained the alarming news that the Guale had destroyed the Franciscan missions in their territory and murdered their resident friars.

Méndez's response was both swift and violent. Within an hour of reading Fray Fernández's letter, the governor dispatched a small squadron of Spanish soldiers to San Pedro, with orders to protect its Indian inhabitants and the two friars stationed there. He then assembled an even larger force of Spanish soldiers and Indian allies; just 10 days later, on October 17, 1597, Governor Méndez and his men landed at San Pedro to initiate the investigation into the uprising and punish those responsible.

Over the next two days, Florida's governor recorded the testimonies of several of San Pedro's Indians, including the island's *cacique*, don Juan. Governor Méndez also received formal statements from the two friars stationed on the island at the time of the assault. However, after reading each statement and hearing the witnesses' vague accounts of the Guale surprise attack on San Pedro, the governor recognized that the only way to uncover an accurate account of what had happened was to dispatch a scouting party up to Guale territory.

Thus, on October 19, Méndez ordered Captain Vicente González to lead 22 soldiers north to Tolomato to investigate, instructing the captain to do everything possible to capture witnesses for interrogation and bring them back to San Pedro.⁵ González never reached Tolomato. Instead, two leagues short of his destination, González and his men came across an Indian man in a canoe.

⁵ Vicente González was one of the most experienced veterans in Spanish Florida. A skilled navigator, González had lived in the region for more than four decades. González, a native of Seville, had a remarkable career in Florida and various parts of the Caribbean. For more details, see "Services and Merits of Captain Vicente González," AGI Patronato 51, N.3, R.12 (1593), fols. 1r–89v.

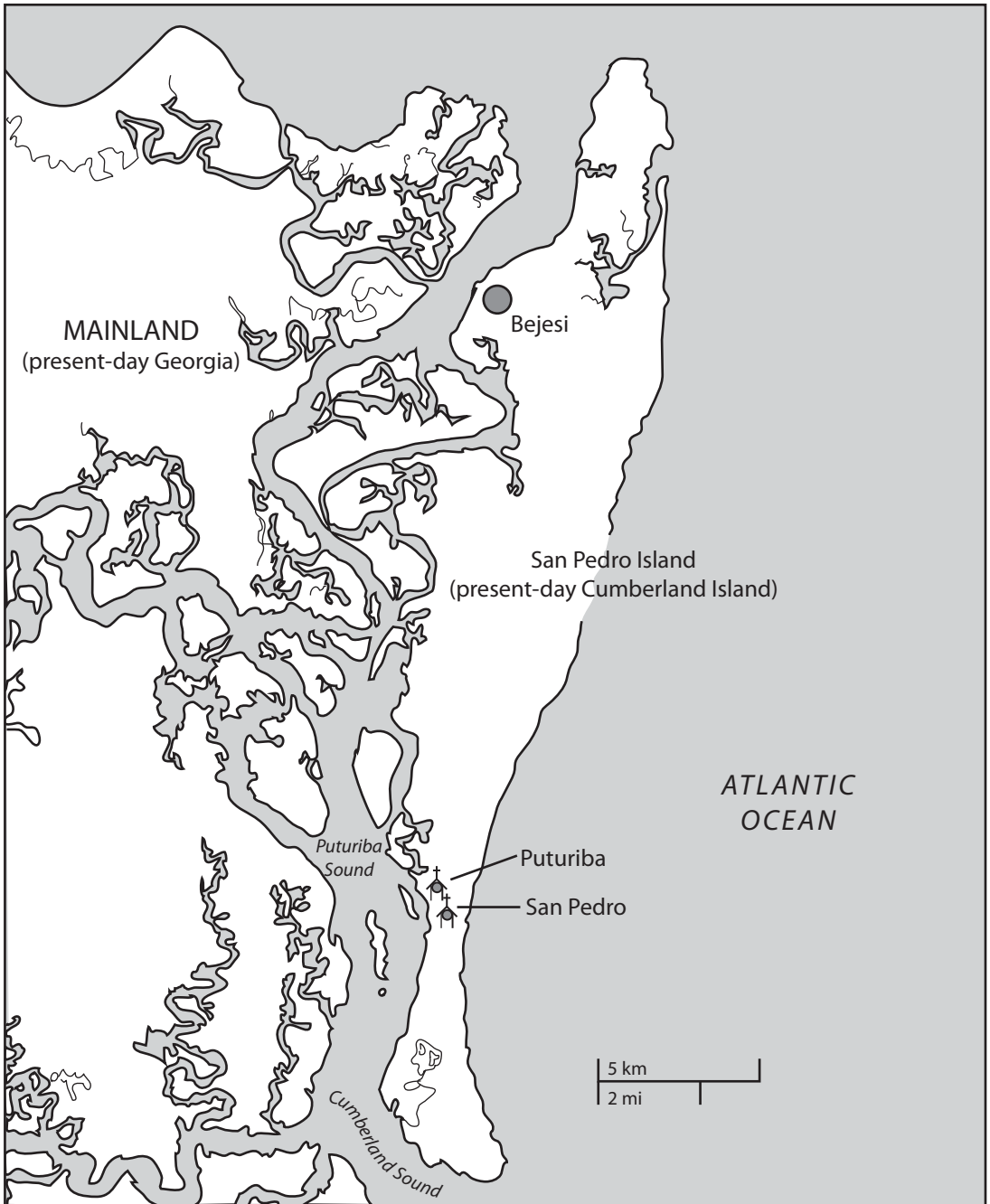
When the Indian saw the approaching soldiers, he jumped out of his canoe in an attempt to swim to shore and flee overland. To prevent the Indian's escape, González ordered his *harquebusiers* to fire. Several shots struck their intended target and the wounded Indian soon found himself aboard the Spanish vessel.

When the Spanish inspected the Indian's possessions, they discovered that he carried a frock that had belonged to one of the friars. Captain González then questioned his captive about the fate of the friars stationed in Guale territory. The Indian responded that they were all dead, adding that the chiefs from Cosahue (Cosague), Santa Elena, Tulufina, as well as the Salchiches, had ordered each Guale *cacique* to murder his resident friar. He made no mention of don Juanillo or the precise circumstances of the friars' deaths.

With his captive in hand and apparent confirmation that the Franciscan friars had all been killed, Captain González decided not to continue to Tolomato. Instead, he hurried back to San Pedro to report to the governor and deliver his new prisoner. On October 22, just three days after he had departed, Captain González and his men were back in San Pedro. That same day, Governor Méndez interrogated the Indian captive, who denied being present at any of the murders. When asked who had killed the friars, the witness added the *cacique* of Aluste to the chiefs he had mentioned earlier. He then reiterated his previous claim that each *cacique* had been responsible for killing his own resident friar. Again, he made no specific reference to Tolomato's heir, don Juanillo.

After hearing the Indian's testimony, Governor Méndez decided to lead an expedition into Guale territory to investigate the matter in person and, if possible, to identify and punish those found responsible. Over the next 11 days between October 27 and November 6, 1597, Governor Méndez and his joint Spanish-Indian force moved from one Guale village to the next, searching for evidence and, if possible, additional witnesses to interrogate. It was not long before the governor received confirmation that something terrible had occurred at the Guale missions. In an early dawn assault on the Guale village of Ospos⁶ on October 28, the governor's forces met fierce resistance. After a lengthy battle, Méndez and his allies had gained the upper hand, forcing Ospos's Guale de-

⁶ John Worth places the village of Ospos at or very close to the mouth of the Newport River.



Map 3. Names and approximate locations of the principal Indian villages and Franciscan missions on San Pedro Island (modern Cumberland Island, Georgia). Documentary evidence places both Puturiba and San Pedro on the southwestern part of the island, with the village of Bejesi located somewhere on the northwestern section. To date, the Franciscan missions have not been located.

fenders to retreat deep into the woods. The rapid withdrawal meant that the governor was unable to capture a single Indian for interrogation. However, in their subsequent search of the village, the Spanish soldiers discovered various items that had belonged to the friars, including a missal, a breviary, a friar's hat, and a chalice veil. Even more alarming was the discovery of what appeared to be a friar's scalp.

In the days ahead, the remains of three more friars were located, two at the Mission of Guale (St. Catherines Island) and one at the village of Tupiqui. Moreover, at Guale and Tolomato, the Franciscan churches and their residences had been burned to the ground. Unfortunately for the governor, the villages were all empty and he was unable to capture a single witness for questioning. What had happened? After two years of peaceful coexistence among the Guale, what could the friars have done to provoke such a violent response? Governor Méndez still had no answers.

Yet, Méndez's findings during the initial investigation also reveal some fascinating details—information often overlooked in the study of the revolt. For one, when the governor's forces first reached Tolomato, they did not discover Fray Corpa's head fixed to a pole beside the boat launch. Even more curious is Governor Méndez's initial description of Tolomato. In his report, Méndez indicates that the church and the friar's residence had been burned to the ground. However, these were not the only structures destroyed at Tolomato. The governor also reported that Tolomato's council house had been burned.⁷

Similar circumstances were reported in other mission villages. On November 5, 1597, the governor dispatched Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz to the Guale village of Tupiqui. Díaz returned later that day to report that when he reached the village, he found the church, the friar's residence, the council house, and the *cacique's* residence all burned. If the friars were the intended target, why were the other buildings destroyed, and by whom?

If the destruction of the elite buildings at Tolomato and Tupiqui merit some explanation, the same can be said about the conditions found in the mission village of Asao. Asao's *cacique*, don Domingo, appears to have played a central role in the Guale assault on San Pedro Island on October 4, 1597. During the retreat, don Domingo

was seen wearing Fray Francisco de Beráscola's hat and carrying the friar's harquebus. When Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz first entered the village of Asao on November 6, 1597, he found all the buildings still standing, and the storehouses filled with maize and other goods.⁸

Curiously, the different conditions of the mission villages and the destruction of elite structures seemed of little concern to Governor Méndez, who offered no comment or explanation for the differential burning patterns. In fact, the matter appears to have escaped his notice altogether. His focus remained on efforts to capture witnesses and gather evidence against those responsible for killing the friars. In the meantime, unable to secure a single captive, the governor ordered his men to burn the buildings still standing in each village and destroy all the maize fields and other crops. After more than a week in Guale territory, the governor decided to return to San Pedro frustrated that he had been unable to capture a single Indian to interrogate. From there the governor made his way back to St. Augustine.

On his return to St. Augustine, Méndez decided to suspend all further punitive campaigns into Guale territory until he received explicit instructions from the Crown. However, his investigations into the cause of the uprising and the fate of the missing friars continued into the early months of 1598. Still, no one seemed certain as to what had happened in the mission villages, or who was to blame for the friars' deaths. In fact, the governor was still uncertain whether any of the friars had survived the initial attacks. They had discovered the remains of only three friars, along with the scalp of another. What had happened to the other two?

In an effort to gather intelligence, on March 28, 1598, Governor Méndez reached a secret agreement with the *cacique* Escamacu, whose territory bordered Guale's northern frontier. In exchange for Spanish goods and favor, Escamacu vowed to launch his own punitive expeditions into Guale territory, and inflict as much damage on the "rebels" as he could. Escamacu also promised to gather intelligence to help the Spanish governor determine whether any of the friars had survived the 1597 attacks.

Two months later, Governor Méndez trav-

⁷ When Governor Méndez left Tolomato, he ordered the remaining buildings burned to the ground.

⁸ On the governor's orders, Díaz and his men razed all the buildings to the ground, including the storehouses.

eled north to meet in person with Escamacu, who presented the governor with a number of scalps, which he claimed to have taken from Guale rebels he had killed. Escamacu also confirmed that one of the friars, Fray Francisco de Ávila, was still alive and that he was being held captive in the village of Tulufina. With that news, Governor Méndez quickly set off for Guale territory to negotiate the friar's ransom. This time, he succeeded in making contact with a number of Indians from Tolomato, including several unnamed *caciques*. In exchange for the friar's safe release, the Indians issued a series of demands, including the return of several young Guale boys who had been taken to St. Augustine three years earlier. Governor Méndez accepted the terms and sent orders to St. Augustine to deliver the ransom goods to him at Tolomato, along with the young Guale boys.

What happens next is poorly documented and therefore difficult to piece together. According to the governor, after receiving the goods that had been demanded, the Guale still refused to surrender the friar. In response, Méndez threatened to gather his entire military force and launch a vicious campaign against them, vowing to put them all to the sword, raze their villages and fields, and pursue the survivors deep into the interior. According to the governor, the threat worked. Within the hour, he later reported, Fray Ávila was released. Not only that, but the governor managed to keep possession of the young Indian boys that the Guale had demanded as part of the exchange. Moreover, Méndez had also succeeded in capturing seven more Indian boys, including a young Guale named Lucas, the son of Tupiqui's *cacique*, don Felipe.

With the friar rescued and several new captives to interrogate, the governor returned to St. Augustine. He immediately sought permission from St. Augustine's Franciscan superior to question Fray Francisco de Ávila. Surely the lone friar to have survived the 1597 attacks would be able to shed light on the events that had occurred 10 months earlier. Yet despite the fact that Fray Ávila's superior granted the friar permission to testify, Ávila refused. Within months of his release, the friar had left Florida for Cuba.⁹ Shortly

thereafter, Fray Ávila returned to Spain.

More than nine months had passed since Governor Méndez first learned of the assault on the Franciscan missions. Yet St. Augustine's governor still knew virtually nothing about what had happened or who was responsible. With his frustration mounting, St. Augustine's governor turned to his new captives, the seven young Guale boys he had somehow taken during the negotiations for Fray Ávila's release. If the governor wanted to understand what had happened in the mission villages, and who was responsible for the friars' deaths, he would have to gather the information from his new prisoners.

In July of 1598, Governor Méndez proceeded to interrogate the seven young Guale boys. The testimonies are brief and contradictory, yet they provide some remarkable clues into the nature of the uprising and therefore merit careful scrutiny. It is worth noting that only two of the seven witnesses implicated don Juanillo for his role in the uprising, and neither of them testified that don Juanillo alone had issued the orders to kill the friars. Instead, both witnesses identified don Juanillo as one of several different leaders who had ordered and had carried out the attacks. Ultimately, six of the witnesses implicated their fellow captive, Lucas, for his alleged participation in the murder of Fray Blas Rodríguez. Under the threat of torture, Lucas ultimately confessed to having been present when one of the friars was killed. Following his confession, Lucas was found guilty of murder. In late July, he was hanged in St. Augustine—the only Indian officially charged and punished for participating in the uprising.

Following Lucas's execution, the investigation into the friars' deaths seemed to come to a close. Perhaps for that reason, the events that unfolded between mid 1598 and the end of 1601 have attracted little scholarly attention. Most scholars have argued that the governor continued his punitive campaigns in Guale territory, burning villages and agricultural fields, thus forcing the Guale to retreat into the Georgia interior. Such measures, it has been claimed, limited the Guale's access to precious maritime resources. Over time, a growing number of dissatisfied Guale chiefs began to turn against their *mico mayor*, don Francisco and

⁹ During his time in Havana, Fray Ávila wrote a captivity narrative, chronicling his capture and subsequent captivity. From Cuba Fray Ávila returned to Spain, where he spent the next two decades among his fellow Franciscans in the Province of Castilla. Fray

Ávila passed away in Toledo in 1617 and he was buried in the church of San Juan de los Reyes. See Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid. "Historias de la provincia franciscana de Castilla," Mss: 3840, fol. 98r.

his heir don Juanillo.

Beginning in early 1600, Governor Méndez began to negotiate separate peace accords with various Guale chiefs, a process that continued into 1601. As time passed, more Guale chiefs made their way south to St. Augustine to "render their obedience" to the Crown, in return for which the governor vowed to leave them in peace and allow them to return safely to their lands. Yet, despite the renewed alliances between Governor Méndez and a growing number of Guale *caciques*, the *mico mayor* and his heir refused to capitulate and remained in hiding deep in the Georgia interior.

In the final twist to the story, in late October of 1601, Governor Méndez reached a secret agreement with the Guale *cacique* of Asao, don Domingo, authorizing Asao's chief to organize and launch a military expedition into the interior to capture or—if necessary—kill don Francisco and don Juanillo. Don Domingo proceeded to assemble a war party of 500 Indians before leading his force inland. Curiously, the Spanish did not contribute any troops. Instead, Governor Méndez dispatched a lone Spanish soldier, Diego de Cárdenas, and an interpreter, ordering them to accompany the expedition, observe the campaign, and report back to him as soon as it ended. To assist don Domingo in his efforts to recruit allies, the governor authorized the payment of a wide range of luxury goods, including coins, pearls, hoes, and axes, taken from his own estate and from St. Augustine's royal coffers.

It took eight days for don Domingo to assemble his army, which consisted of warriors from more than a dozen different chiefdoms, both within and outside Guale territory. They all gathered at the village of Aleguifa before beginning their lengthy march into the interior toward Yfusinique, the heavily fortified settlement where don Francisco, don Juan, and all their followers had retreated. After a failed attempt to negotiate a peaceful surrender, don Domingo readied his forces and launched his attack.

The initial assault on Yfusinique failed miserably. Eight of don Domingo's men were killed and another 56 were injured. More alarming still was the fact that their enemies were so well entrenched that they could not even see them. Thus, don Domingo reassembled his men and ordered that they close ranks and storm the fortification, firing their arrows in unison the moment they breeched the fortress.

When the battle ended, don Francisco, don Juan, and 22 members of their immediate kin lay dead. Don Domingo chose to spare the lives of the women, children, and Indian commoners (called *anepecuatos*) captured in the assault. However, they did not go unpunished. Don Domingo gathered the prisoners together and then forced the women and children to scalp their dead kinsmen. He then ordered don Juan decapitated. With that, don Domingo's victorious forces returned home.

On November 27, 1601, Cárdenas returned to St. Augustine to report the gruesome details of what he had witnessed. He also presented Governor Méndez with don Juanillo's scalp, a gift from the new *mico mayor* of Guale territory, don Domingo of Asao. Don Juanillo, the alleged perpetrator of the 1597 Guale Revolt, and the individual believed to have been most responsible for the friars' deaths, was now dead. More than four years had passed since the assault on the Franciscan missions and the deaths of the five friars. As he concluded his testimony, Cárdenas assured the governor that the death of don Juanillo and all his relatives and heirs would bring lasting peace, tranquility, and calm to the region. The Guale Uprising had ended.

The preceding narrative, pieced together from a wide range of disparate sources, relates one of the most dramatic episodes in the early history of Spanish Florida, a topic that has generated a great deal of scholarly and public interest. Perhaps not surprisingly, the historiography is virtually unanimous in identifying don Juanillo as the uprising's principal leader, so much so that in several recent accounts the uprising is simply referred to as "Juanillo's Revolt."¹⁰

The accounts that follow trace a four-year period from the initial report of the friars' deaths to the capture and execution of don Juanillo and his principal followers. What emerges is a story strikingly different from the accounts told in the secondary literature. Through these firsthand primary documents, this volume provides a detailed and comprehensive account of the 1597 Guale Uprising and its aftermath. It chronicles a remarkable four-year period, from the earliest investigations of 1597 and 1598, to the 1601 capture and execution of don Juanillo, the man ultimately held responsible for the uprising. The sources present a fascinating tale, one that sheds light on

¹⁰ For a recent example, see Hoffman (2002: 82–84).

the serious limitations and precarious nature of Spanish colonial rule in Florida at the close of the 16th century. They also confirm the importance of Indian allies to Spain's Florida ambitions as well as the bitter disputes between Spanish officials themselves, both secular and religious.

Perhaps most importantly, the documents generated in the aftermath of the uprising provide unique insight into the rich and complex nature of Indian society in the colonial Southeast during the late 16th and early 17th centuries. They tell us a story of intense competition, fierce rivalries, and power struggles between various southeastern chiefdoms. What unfolds is a complex web of shifting alliances, political competition and intrigue, as well as violence, as Florida's Indian peoples competed for control of the Atlantic coast, from St. Augustine to Parris Island, South Carolina. On one level, the story highlights the tenuous nature of Spanish authority in late 16th-century Florida and the

importance of negotiation and accommodation in Spanish-Indian relations. At the same time, it also reveals the importance of European luxury items among southeastern chiefs, many of whom competed for access and control over such goods, especially clothing and metal tools. By the end of the 16th century, it appears that St. Augustine had emerged as both an important ally and a potentially dangerous foe.

Ultimately, a careful examination of the Guale Uprising and its aftermath reveals a fascinating story, one far more rich and complex than simply the tale of a disgruntled Indian ruler, angry at Franciscan interference in Guale political and religious affairs. And despite the many ambiguities and unanswered questions, we hope that this volume demonstrates that the traditional readings of the Guale Uprising should be reconsidered, and that it is worth taking another careful look at this much-studied episode, with fresh eyes and new questions in mind.



CHAPTER 2

LUÍS GERÓNIMO DE ORÉ'S ACCOUNT OF THE 1597 GUALE UPRISING

In 1568, at the age of 14, Luís Gerónimo de Oré entered Cuzco's Franciscan monastery as a novice. He later moved to Peru's capital city, Lima, where he completed his education at the University of San Marcos. At the age of 27, Oré was ordained. A gifted linguist with an acute intellect, Oré spent much of his early career in Peru's Colca Valley, where he served as *doctrinero* (missionary) of the Collaguas province, located between Cuzco and Arequipa. By the time his assignment in Collaguas ended in 1595, Oré had already authored four highly influential works on the evangelization of the Andes, including a grammar and dictionary in Quechua and Aymara.¹

Oré's career continued in Peru until 1605, when the Franciscan traveled to Spain for the first time. He remained in Europe until the end of the decade, spending time in both Spain and Italy. In 1611, Oré was assigned the task of recruiting friars for the Florida missions. Three years later, after numerous delays, Oré arrived in Florida. He was 60 years old. His first Florida inspection was brief and Oré soon returned to Cuba. However, two years later, he was back in Florida. It was then that the Franciscan likely gathered the material he needed to write his chronicle.

In early November of 1616, following a treacherous 25-day journey from Cuba, Oré arrived in Florida for a second time. After spending 10 days in St. Augustine, Oré joined three of his fellow Franciscans and began his inspection of Florida's missions. It is likely that Oré inter-

viewed numerous witnesses, both religious and secular, as he prepared his account of Florida's early history. And given his previous practices in Peru, it is also likely that Oré consulted native informants, although he does not identify anyone in particular.

On his return to Spain in 1618, Oré completed his Florida manuscript, which was published the following year in Madrid. The Franciscan remained in Spain until 1620, when he began his final voyage to the Indies, this time as the new bishop of the diocese of La Imperial, in Chile. It took Oré almost three years to reach his destination, but once there, he proceeded to inspect his new bishopric with the same passion and rigor that had characterized his work in Peru and Florida, including heated disputes with Chile's secular officials. As the 1620s drew to a close, Oré's health began to fail and he died in Chile on January 16, 1630.²

ORÉ'S ACCOUNT OF THE 1597 UPRISING: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

From Oré's version of the events, it is hardly surprising that don Juanillo has been represented as the principal protagonist. As the chronicler relates, the uprising began when Fray Corpa reprimanded young Juanillo for behaving like an "infidel" after the heir to the Guale chiefdom refused to abandon the practice of polygamy. In his

¹ See N.D. Cook, 1992. *Beyond the Martyrs of Florida: The Versatile Career of Luis Gerónimo de Oré*, *Florida Historical Quarterly* 71: 169–187.

² For the most detailed coverage of Oré's time in Chile, see N.D. Cook, 2008, *Viviendo en los márgenes del imperio: Luís Jerónimo de Oré y la exploración del Otro*. *Histórica* (Lima). XXXII.1: 11–38.

anger at the friar's interference in his affairs, don Juan fled into the interior, where he gathered a war party and returned to Tolomato to murder the friar. Dressed in full military regalia, the war party stormed Fray Corpa's residence and clubbed the friar to death. Still, Corpa's death did little to assuage don Juanillo's anger at the Franciscans; the young ruler then sent orders throughout the region, demanding that each chief murder the resident friar in his village.

When don Juan's mandate reached the Guale mission on St. Catherines Island,³ the resident *cacique* was distraught. Stationed in his village were two friars, the lay brother Antonio de Badajoz and the commissary, Fray Miguel de Auñón. Oré writes that St. Catherines' chief twice revealed the murderous plot to the lay brother and begged him to take Fray Auñón and flee south to San Pedro Island, where they would be safe. He even offered the friars a boat and a guide to lead them there. However, Fray Badajoz refused to believe the rumors, and therefore neglected to inform Fray Auñón of the *cacique*'s warning. The two friars thus remained on the island, seemingly unaware of the imminent danger.

Soon, don Juan's war party arrived at St. Catherines Island to verify that the local chief had complied with don Juanillo's orders. When they realized that the friars were still alive, they threatened the *cacique*, warning him that if he did not kill the friars they would have no alternative but to kill him as well. Still, the chief refused, and instead attempted to bribe the attackers, offering all his personal possessions if they agreed to let the friars go free and then conceal their treachery from Guale's paramount chief. But the warriors refused, insisting that they fully intended to carry out don Juan's orders.

With tears in his eyes, St. Catherines' chief informed Fray Miguel of the fate that awaited the two friars, and he promised to weep for them as though they were his own brothers. The *cacique* then gathered his people and retreated into the woods, unable to witness the executions about to unfold. On learning his fate, Fray Miguel said

Mass, after which he and his companion, Antonio de Badajoz, spent four hours in prayer. Badajoz was the first to die, shortly after being struck in the head by a *macana*.

Oré then explains that because of the profound respect they held for Fray Miguel, none of the warriors wished to carry out the attack against him. It took one of the "infidels" from the interior to execute don Juanillo's orders. However, the first *macana* blow only stunned the friar; and as the island's residents rushed to assist the wounded Franciscan, the infidel issued a second blow, this one mortal, spilling the friar's brains to the ground. A few days later, Oré records, the same infidel who committed the murder of Fray Miguel fell into deep despair and hanged himself from an oak tree.

From his account of the deaths of Antonio de Badajoz and Fray Miguel at St. Catherines, Oré then follows the war party to the nearby village of Tupiqui, where Fray Blas Rodríguez served as resident friar. In his brief description of Fray Blas's martyrdom, Oré claims that when the friar learned he was to be killed, he begged the Indians to give him time to say Mass, after which he distributed all his belongings among the villagers. In his final plea to convince the Indians to abandon their evil plot and spare his life, Fray Blas reminded his attackers that the Lord God was merciful and that if they repented they would be forgiven. For two days, according to Oré, Fray Blas's "pleas and petitions" appeared to work, and the Indians did not harm him. However, on the third day Fray Blas was murdered, again struck in the head with a *macana*. His assailants then left his corpse to the vultures, which refused to even approach the friar's body. And when a village dog reached the corpse, it suddenly dropped dead. In fact, the only person who dared to approach the dead friar was an old Christian man, who secretly moved the body into the woods where he buried it in an unknown location.

Oré then offers a brief overview of the capture of Fray Francisco de Ávila and the sufferings he endured during his lengthy captivity. Oré's quick summary is but a prelude to the following chapter in his chronicle, which he claims to have copied directly from Fray Francisco de Ávila's captivity narrative, which the friar allegedly wrote in Cuba shortly after his release. Sadly, the original captivity narrative has never been located and thus Oré's transcription, translated in chapter 3 of this volume, remains the only account of Ávila's text.

³ Readers should note that at the time of the uprising, St. Catherines Island was always referred to as the island of Guale. It does not appear to have been given the name St. Catherines until the early 17th century, perhaps 1604, when a new Franciscan mission was built on the island. In his chronicle, Oré still refers to the island as Guale.

It is therefore understandable why some scholars might perceive Ávila's captivity narrative with some skepticism. However, it is notable that there are minor differences between Oré's version of the events and his transcription of Fray Ávila's own captivity narrative recorded in the next chapter.⁴ Moreover, the narrative style seems to change dramatically between Oré's voice and that of Fray Ávila. These variations suggest that Oré did not simply invent the captivity narrative, and that while he was in Cuba, he did have access to Ávila's now lost account.

Of course, most scholars acknowledge the problematic nature of Oré's version of the events of 1597. After all, he was not present in Florida at the time of the uprising and he gathered his information almost two decades after the events that he describes. However, despite these concerns, Oré's account remains the authoritative voice in the historiography of the uprising. Virtually all scholarly treatments of this episode rely extensively, and in some cases exclusively, on Oré's narrative. With few exceptions, modern interpretations of the 1597 Guale Uprising characterize the revolt as a response to Franciscan interference in Guale affairs and missionary opposition to the practice of polygamy.

According to Oré, the dramatic events of 1597 unfolded as follows:

Document 2.1: Excerpt from Luís Gerónimo de Oré. *The Martyrs of Florida* (Madrid: ca. 1619), fols. 17r–19r (from the library of José Durand, University of Notre Dame Rare Books and Special Collections).

In the year 1597, two years after the friars first arrived in Guale territory, the Indians of that province launched a rebellion. Incited by the devil, who opposes all good works, the Indians seized upon a certain incident to justify their uprising. One of the fathers would not permit a young Indian man, who was a baptized Christian and heir to the Guale chieftaincy, to have more than the one wife with whom he was married.⁵ The revolt occurred because the

priest reprimanded the young man, demanding that since he was a Christian, he should behave as a Christian, and not like an infidel; and therefore, in accordance with Christian law, he should not have more than one wife, she being the one with whom he was already married.

This *cacique* and two other morally corrupt Indians who, like him, were prone to this same indecent vice, ventured into the interior among the Indian infidels; they did so without saying a word and without requesting permission (as they had done on previous occasions). After a few days they returned one night with a great multitude of Indian infidels, their bodies painted and smeared with a red dye [*bija colorado*],⁶ and their heads adorned with feathers; for them, this regalia is a sign of their cruelties, marking their number of kills.

On the night that they arrived, neither the priest nor anyone else in the village had heard a sound; and then in the morning, on entering the priest's house, the Indians found him in prayer. With no warning, they murdered the priest with a stone hatchet, which they call a *macana*, [or] *champi* in the language of the Incas of Cuzco.⁷ This occurred at Tolomato, the region's principal village, and the friar they murdered was named Fray Pedro de Corpa.

With the friar dead, the Indians began [once again] to exchange women, and to engage in their lascivious and immoral practices. They ordered that the head of the dead friar be placed on a pike and erected by the boat launch beside the river. And they ordered that two Indians carry the priest's body into the woods and hide it so that the Christians would not find it. That is why Fray Corpa's body has never been found.⁸

⁶ This red dye is produced from the seeds of a small tree from the bixáceas family.

⁷ Having authored a Quechua-language grammar guide and dictionary, Oré would have been familiar with the terminology for specific weapons used by the Incas.

⁸ The story of Fray Pedro de Corpa's skull continues to generate a great deal of scholarly interest. As readers will see in the documents that follow, the

⁴ For example, there are different versions of the circumstances around the removal and theft of Father Ávila's blood-stained habit.

⁵ Here, Oré is referring to Tolomato's heir, don Juan, or don Juanillo.

Later, the same Indians sent notice to the nearby island of Guale, ordering that the *cacique* there kill the two friars in his village. When the *cacique* learned of this, he was much aggrieved, and did not want to comply with the order. Therefore, he informed the lay brother [Fray Antonio de Badajoz], who served as interpreter, of what was happening; he advised Fray Badajoz that both he and the other friar, Father Commissary [Miguel de Auñón], should flee at once to the island of San Pedro.⁹ The *cacique* added that he would provide them with a boat, as well as people to guide them to San Pedro, even if such assistance risked of his own life. However, the lay brother refused to believe him, and therefore chose not to advise Fray Miguel de Auñón. The *cacique* himself did not dare tell Fray Auñón either, both on account of his own shame, and because of the profound love he felt for the friar.

On the following day the *cacique* once again warned Fray Badajoz; still, unable to fathom such a thing, the lay brother responded just as he had the first time. On the third day, the Indian war party arrived, and they informed the *cacique* that they had come to make certain that he killed the friars; if he refused to comply, they were going to kill him as well. The *cacique* replied that he was not about to murder the two friars; instead, he offered the Indian warriors all his possessions if they agreed to let the friars go free and then conceal the act. But the Indians responded that they had come to kill the two friars, and that they intended to carry out the task. The *cacique* then went to Fray Miguel, and with tears in his eyes told him what

was happening, and that he could do nothing to save them; he added that he and his subjects would go into the woods to weep for the two friars, as though they were their very own brothers.

On seeing what was unfolding, Fray Miguel and his companion began to pray in preparation for the hour of their deaths. Fray Miguel said Mass, and then spent more than four hours in prayer. Then, the Indians sacked the friars' residence; they reached the lay brother and delivered a blow with the stone hatchet, or *macana*, from which he soon died. However, they did not dare approach Fray Miguel because of the respect they held for him; that is, until an Indian infidel arrived and issued a fierce blow with a *macana*, which stunned Fray Miguel: at that moment, all the loyal Indians from the town arrived, hoping to defend and save the friar. However, another Indian infidel approached Fray Miguel from behind and delivered another very heavy blow, which spilled the friar's brains.

A few days later, this same Indian infidel fell into deep despair; and with the string from his bow he hanged himself from a holm-oak tree. This caused great wonder among the Indians. The Christian Indians then buried the body [of Fray Auñón] at the foot of a very high cross, which the friar himself had erected. And six years later, when the Spaniards returned to search for his bones, they found them at the foot of the cross, just as the Indians had told them.¹⁰

The Indian [war party] then arrived at the nearby pueblo of Tupiqui, where Fray Blas Rodríguez resided. There, they told him: "We have come to kill you and you have no other alternative but to die." The priest begged them to allow him to say Mass first, and that afterwards they could do with him as they pleased. He

Spanish never found Fray Corpa's body. Moreover, when the first punitive expedition arrived in Tolomato to investigate the fate of the friars, they found no evidence of Fray Corpa's remains; no mention is ever made of Corpa's skull. If Corpa's head had been placed on a pike and erected beside the river, it was removed before the first Spanish forces arrived. It should be noted that apart from Oré, no other primary documents claim that Fray Corpa had been decapitated and his disembodied head placed on a pole. Oré's version of Fray Corpa's murder must therefore be viewed with extreme caution.

⁹ Modern Cumberland Island, Georgia.

¹⁰ As readers will see in chapter 4, the Spanish initially discovered the remains of both friars in early November of 1597, just weeks (not six years) after the friars had been killed. The friars had been buried in shallow graves, which the Spanish marked in order to return at a later date to exhume the remains and return the bones to St. Augustine.

said Mass and all the Christian women, as well as some men, came to weep with him. Rodríguez then distributed his few personal possessions among them. Four hours after saying Mass, Rodríguez attempted to reason with his children, whom he had baptized and instructed in God's law; and recognizing that they had rebelled against him, he said to them: "My children, I do not fear death, for the death of the body is inevitable; even if you are not the instrument of my death, death will certainly come. Each hour we await its arrival. In the end, we are all going to die. What weighs on my conscience is the harm you have done yourselves, and that the devil has been able to manipulate you to commit such a grave offense against your God and Creator. It also pains me that you are so ungrateful for all the work that I and the other fathers have done for you to show you the path to heaven." With tears in his eyes, he said to them: "Look children, you still have time to cast aside this evil plot; Our Lord God is most merciful and He will forgive you."

However, those sacrilegious people paid no attention to his council or to his tears; rather, they seized all the church relics and vestments, as well as everything else the father had in his cell. Owing to his pleas and petitions, they held him alive for two days.¹¹ During that time, Rodríguez prepared for his death with the greatest disposition and care possible, like a good friar and a good Christian.

When the two days passed, they struck Rodríguez with a heavy blow from a stone hatchet, which spilled his brains. And they threw his body to the vultures because the Christian Indians did not dare to bury him. However, the vultures would not even approach the corpse. A dog walked toward the dead friar, but as soon as it reached Rodríguez's body, the dog suddenly dropped dead, an event that was witnessed by all. An old Christian man secretly took the body and buried it in the woods. And

because this good old man has since passed away we do not know the whereabouts of the friar's bones.

Fray Ávila was at his mission, which was where the Indians went next, with every intention to kill him. They arrived late at night; and since they found him already retired for the evening, they knocked at the door, feigning to deliver a letter from his prelate. However, because he already was filled with fear after learning that they had murdered Fray Corpa, Ávila responded that they should deliver the letter to him in the morning. But the Indians insisted that he open the door; again, he answered that the hour was late and that he would not open the door until morning. Ávila then bid them to go with God, for he already was in bed.

At that, the Indians proceeded to try to force the door open, which they managed to accomplish. Finding himself in imminent danger, the friar hid behind the door. The Indians then burst into the room to plunder the friar's meager possessions. Because the room was dark and the Indians distracted by their own greed, they did not see the friar, who managed to escape the Indians' fury and hide in some reeds. Nevertheless, they searched for him carefully, and soon found him because he could be seen under the light of the moon. They then shot Fray Ávila with three arrows and left him for dead. One of the arrows pierced through his right hand, another struck him in the shoulder, while the third went through his thigh. An Indian then approached Ávila in order to steal his habit; feigning charity, he said to Ávila, "hand over that habit, which is covered in blood, and I will have it washed for you."

The Indian then removed Ávila's habit and donned it himself, leaving the friar completely naked. Yet in spite of this, this particular Indian proved helpful; he was a young chief, and as such, he spared Ávila from the fury of the others. And therefore, the Indians did not kill the friar; instead, the young chief persuaded the others that they should take Ávila with them in order to subject him to a far more cruel death, or else hold him captive so that he serve them, especially since they were already willing

¹¹ Again, Oré remains the only primary source that chronicles the specific details of Fray Rodríguez's death. None of the original documents from the investigation of the friars' deaths corroborate Oré's version.

to leave him for dead among the reeds. They then bound his arms, and with the Indian guards who carried him, they took the captive to the villages of the infidels.

It is truly a remarkable thing to consider all that this friar suffered in the year of his captivity among those barbarians. There he was, naked, in a land where the winter is as harsh as that of Madrid, with no one to heal his wounds and no cloth for bandages to dress or bind them. Miraculously or mercifully, it was God who healed his injuries. After that happened, the Indians decided to burn the friar; they tied him to a wooden pole, covered in resin and surrounded with a great quantity of twigs and sticks which they had gathered for that purpose. With Ávila in this sorrowful situation, an Indian woman came forth and freed the friar from the pillar; Spanish soldiers [in St. Augustine] were holding her own son hostage, and thus she declared: "I must have this man in place of my son, for he is to have my son returned to me; if I spare him from death, the governor surely will not order my son to be killed." With that, Fray Ávila was spared death, after which he enjoyed somewhat more freedom.

Nevertheless, Fray Ávila suffered harsh persecution at the hands of the young boys, who on many occasions would leave him near death, or would choke¹² him; they did

this because Ávila had on occasion whipped the boys when he was teaching them the Christian doctrine and how to read. The Indians also made him serve as a slave in the council house; he suffered great hunger, but wherever he went, the Indians did give him something to eat because he asked for it for the love of God. They forced him to carry wood on his shoulders and they ordered him to protect their flocks and their maize fields from the ravens (jackdaws?) that pilfered them.

This is but a brief eulogy of the deaths and the martyrdom of four friars and the great sufferings of Fray Ávila; therefore, I have deemed it well to include the very narrative of Fray Ávila himself, which he wrote in his own hand before he returned to Spain, and which remained in the hands of Fray Marrón. Following [Fray Marrón's] death, the account was kept in the archives at the Franciscan convent in Havana.¹³ After a brief discussion of the deaths of his companions, the narrative records the story of Fray Ávila's imprisonment and captivity, recounting his terrible sufferings in great detail. His story follows in chapter 3.

means to drown. However, based on Ávila's account in the next section, which refers to attempts to choke him, I chose to translate the term as "choke."

¹³ The original version of Father Ávila's captivity narrative has never been located.

¹² Here, Oré uses the verb *ahogar*, which also



CHAPTER 3

FRANCISCO DE ÁVILA'S CAPTIVITY NARRATIVE

Fray Francisco de Ávila was the only friar stationed in Guale territory to survive the 1597 attacks. The fact that Ávila did not share the same fate as his fellow Franciscans merits some consideration. If don Juanillo had indeed ordered that all the friars be killed, it seems unlikely that Ávila would have survived. The reason why Fray Ávila's life was spared remains a matter of speculation, but the narrative that follows does offer some clues.

For one, following his capture, Ávila was taken to the Salchiche village Tulufina. As his captivity narrative reveals, Tulufina was Fray Ávila's first missionary post when he arrived in Guale in late 1595. We do not know how long he served at the Tulufina mission, or the circumstances of his departure to the village of Talapo. However, contrary to its portrayal in the secondary literature, Tulufina was not some unknown distant village, hidden deep in the interior and inhabited by Indians who had no previous contact with Spanish missionaries. Fray Ávila had already spent time there and he likely knew his captors well, even if he fails to mention any of them by name. In fact, it is worth noting that Ávila identifies none of the Indian protagonists in this story, even though he would have known many, if not most, of them by name.

Ávila's account offers another possible explanation for his survival. On the night he reached Tulufina, Ávila recalls hearing a number of his captors discuss the possibility of using the friar to negotiate an exchange with St. Augustine's governor. If Ávila's account is to be believed, the young heir to Tulufina's chiefdom was being held captive in St. Augustine. Indeed, there

might be some truth to the claim. In chapter 6 of this volume, when Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo began negotiations for the friar's release in July of 1598, Ávila's captors issued a number of demands, among which was the release of some young Indian boys who had been taken to St. Augustine in 1595.

Over the course of his 10 months in captivity (not a year and a half, as Oré suggests in the opening line), Fray Ávila experienced many hardships. His account chronicles a series of physical injuries he suffered, beginning with the arrow wounds he received on the night the uprising began. He records in detail his forced march to the village of Tulufina and the threats and physical punishments he endured during the early days of his captivity. His narrative highlights the mental abuses he endured and the constant subjection to teasing and mockery. Whenever there was a celebration, Ávila writes, "I was made to be the cow of the wedding," an early modern Spanish expression that could be translated as "buffoon." In his narrative, Ávila laments that the only reason he was brought to these celebrations was so that he could be mocked and ridiculed, much to the delight of all the Indians gathered.

But Fray Ávila's remarkable story is not simply a tale of torture and torment. As time passed, it becomes clear that the Franciscan enjoyed greater freedoms among his captors, even the ability to move from one village to another. At times, his narrative reveals his gradual acceptance into Guale society. He discusses briefly some of his conversations with his captors, who seem to urge him to get rid of his tonsure, abandon his

faith, and become an “Indian.” They debate their distinct world views and at one point, his captors even try to tempt the friar to take a wife.

On his release in July of 1598, Fray Ávila returned briefly to the Franciscan friary in St. Augustine. Florida’s governor eagerly sought to question the friar, from whom he hoped to gather information about the uprising and the identities of those who had committed the murders. Yet despite receiving permission from his superior, Fray Ávila refused to testify, citing ecclesiastical privilege in the matter. In a matter of such gravity, Ávila explained, he would not be able to testify against his captors. Shortly thereafter, Ávila left Florida for Cuba, where he allegedly wrote his captivity narrative. Several months later, Fray Ávila returned to Spain, where he remained until his death in 1617.

Finally, it should be noted that Ávila’s original captivity narrative has never been located and thus the text that follows should be read with some caution. One might also infer from the opening line that Oré did not transcribe the entire narrative or faithfully copy the full account. Moreover, Oré certainly injects his own voice into the narrative, which is evident when the chronicle shifts from a first-person narrative to the third person. Oré readily admits that his account of the Guale’s attempts to force Fray Ávila to make gunpowder did not come from Ávila’s captivity narrative; rather, he claims to have heard the tale from another Franciscan friar in Florida, quite possibly Fray Francisco de Pareja, who was the only friar present during both the uprising and Oré’s visits.

In the chapter’s final section, Oré provides a brief description of the murder of Asao’s resident friar, Fray Francisco de Beráscola, whom he claims was the last friar killed in the uprising. Of course, none of the accounts written in the immediate aftermath reveals the date or precise circumstance of Beráscola’s death and it is unclear how or from whom Oré learned of Beráscola’s death. Oré then ends his account of the Guale Uprising with a short summary of the period between Ávila’s rescue in July of 1598 and the uprising’s conclusion three years later. According to Oré’s rendering of the events, the governor’s persistent and harsh punitive measures eventually led most of Guale’s *caciques* to turn against their paramount chief from Tolomato and his heir, whom they murdered in protest.

Regardless of Oré’s additions, it seems unlikely that the chronicler invented the entire text,

even if he did take some liberties in his rendering of it. Even in translation, Ávila’s voice strikes a distinct tone, and their versions of the events include some striking differences, seen when both accounts are read together.

Document 3.1: Excerpt from Luís Gerónimo de Oré. *The Martyrs of Florida* (Madrid: ca. 1619), fols. 19r–23r. (from the library of José Durand, University of Notre Dame Rare Books and Special Collections).

Account of the Great Sufferings that Fray Ávila endured in the year and a half he spent in the hands of the Indian rebels, and of the death and martyrdom of Fray Beráscola, Viscaino.

Returning to the matter of how God rescued me from the hands of the Indians, I declare the following:

I hid myself among the thick reeds and when the Indians discovered my whereabouts, they shot me with arrows. Then they held me for about an hour, leaving one Indian to guard me while the other Indians sacked and looted the church, as well as our Franciscan residence. Then, the same *cacique* who earlier had spared my life arrived, accompanied by three or four other Indians. And at that late hour of the evening, they took me to their village, located two leagues away, over an extremely poor trail. But because I was injured, I could barely walk. The Indians urged me to keep going, under the guise that they were taking me to their village to cure my wounds and to honor me. Finally, at about midnight we arrived; the Indians threw me down on some reed-thatch inside one of their huts (*bohíos*). There, I was kept under guard until morning. I suffered terribly that night.

When daybreak came, the *cacique* arrived and stripped me of my clothing; he removed the habit I was wearing, leaving me in just my undergarments. The *cacique* explained that my habit was covered in bloodstains and that he wanted to have it cleaned.¹ In the meantime, he left behind

¹ Note the difference between Ávila’s narrative and Oré’s brief description from the previous chapter. According to Oré, Ávila had been stripped of his hab-

an old *gamucilla*, which is the clothing (*hábito*) that these Indians wear. Thus, as far as my clothing was concerned, I looked like an Indian and everyone mocked and ridiculed me.

The *cacique* then summoned all the young children and the women and said to them: "Come and kiss the hand of our priest and receive his blessing;" and since we [the friars] had taught them this respectful custom and [proper] upbringing, the *cacique* ordered that they perform this act solely to ridicule me.

After amusing themselves in their mockery, the *cacique* ordered two of the Indians to bind my hands with rope and take me thus to Tulufina; Tulufina was the first mission posting I had been given; it was located six leagues away, across bogs and marshes as high as one's waist. The Indians claimed that I had said that Tulufina was a wretched place and that its Indian inhabitants were very bad indeed. "Thus," the *cacique* spoke, "I want you to go there, to that miserable land; there, they will give you exactly what you deserve."

And thus they took me away, with such great cruelty, and with no sympathy for my wounds. The paths were so terrible that after each step I would fall and get stuck in the mud; this gave the Indians so much joy and satisfaction that they could hardly contain themselves. They mocked me with their gestures and their jeers, and they toyed with me, slapping the back of my neck. If God had not granted me strength and relief, given that I was ill and wounded, this journey would have been more than enough to kill me. However, Our Lord wanted to rescue me from their hands and thus He gave me the strength to endure it.

At about four in the afternoon, we arrived in a very large pueblo named Ufalage,² which is along the route to Tulu-

finá. There, many Indian men and women came out to receive me; their bodies were all painted and they performed great celebrations to mock me. In this manner, they took me to their *bohío* (council house?) and there, in the middle of the floor, they forced me to be seated. All the Indians surrounded me, laughing and ridiculing me. I was exhausted and I had not eaten; for that reason, I would have liked to have remained there that night. However, my captors did not wish the same and instead they took me to Tulufina that very night, claiming that the Indians there were awaiting my arrival.

Tulufina was another two long leagues from Ufalage, along a worse road than that we had passed. In many places the water reached as high as my waist. Still, God granted me strength through all of this and before nightfall we arrived at Tulufina. Shortly before we reached the village, we were met by a great multitude of Indians, their bodies painted, their faces covered in red ocher, and all of them armed with bows and arrows. Their numbers appeared infinite and they looked like demons. They all came out to receive me, and with much taunting, they escorted me to their *bohío* (perhaps the council house).

When I arrived at the door to the *bohío*, I found a pile of dried palm leaves. The Indians told me that they were to be used to burn me. On entering the *bohío*, I saw that the Indians had erected a large cross; on one side of the cross, there was a whip, made from a green branch with many small branches attached to it. They use this device and from the very first lash, blood begins to flow. At the other end of the cross, there was a torch, and a pine branch in front of it, with the skins from the head of a small animal.

They ordered me to be seated at the foot of the cross and they bound my hands. My arm was already swollen from the arrow wounds I had received on my hand and shoulder. They also tied me by the neck to the cross. They did this so tightly that I almost choked to death. With this done, an Indian who served as the *bohío's mandador* arrived. He said to me, "Do you understand what this is here? This cross you see

it shortly after he had been shot and taken captive. By contrast, Ávila's account reveals that his bloodstained habit was not taken from him until the following day.

² It is worth noting that in 1601, the *cacique* of Ufalage [Ufalague] is named as one of don Domingo's allies in the military campaign against don Juanillo and don Francisco.

erected here is your creation and therefore we are going to put you on it. The torch is to be attached to your body to burn you; the whip is to issue lashes, and this animal skin here is a sign that you are to die. Tomorrow this sentence will be executed.”

At that moment, an Indian dressed in a chasuble appeared, making a mockery and trying to mimic saying the Mass. With that, another Indian arrived and placed a book before me. When I refused to take it, a *cacique principal* approached and struck me with it in the face and over the head; the blow was so forceful that it knocked me senseless.

I was completely naked, having been stripped of even the wretched *gamucilla*. At that moment, another Indian arrived, carrying one of the cords we friars wear around our waists, knotted and doubled over; with it, he delivered three or four blows, so vicious that I thought they would leave me dead. In the midst of all this, a *cacique* stood up and carried a piece of burning coal, which he placed on my back. And because I was tied, I could not get it off very quickly. It left a large wound and caused a great deal of pain.

Then, the Indians began to dance all around me. With each pass, anyone who felt so inclined would issue me a good blow with a *macana*. They continued to dance in this manner for three hours, casting a thousand spells. Finally, weary from the dance, they sat down for a short time. When I observed a brief moment of silence, I begged them, for the love of God, to show me some charity and loosen the rope around my arms, which were both so swollen. Even though I fully understood that they were going to kill me, I asked that they show me this one mercy. However, at that moment they chose not to do what I had begged of them.

Nevertheless, soon they began to discuss among themselves the possibility of showing me some mercy. They reminded one another that the young heir to the chieftaincy was being held captive in St. Augustine.³ It appeared to them that if

they did not kill me, at some point they might be able to use me to negotiate an exchange. Other Indians suggested that anyone who had entered inside that *bohío* could not die. And others claimed that the daughter of the Sun, who is one of their witches, had appeared before them and told them not to kill me. In the end, with all of these views expressed, they agreed to keep me alive.

And thus, a *cacique* stood up and said to me: “Do you wish to be untied? Do you want to live or to die? We leave it in your hands; consider what it is you desire. But let me assure you this—if we do not kill you, you are to remain here with us, and serve us. You are to bring us water and wood, prepare the fields when it is time, and do everything that is asked of you.”

When the *cacique* uttered those words to me, I was half dead. I responded: “Do with me what you wish; my body is in your hands. However, if you do not kill me, I will do what it is you ask and behave well; for as you can see, I am barely able to move.”

That seemed acceptable to him and he said that I was most fortunate; with that, he untied me. He then ordered me to sit on the floor, resting up against a bench. He gave me two small ears of cooked maize to eat; however, I was in such a weak state that even though it was delicious food, and certainly substantial, I was unable to consume it. Nevertheless, to honor them I forced myself to eat. I begged them to let me have one of those thatched-reed mats on which to sleep; they complied, leaving an Indian to assist me in case I needed anything. Yet, being naked, injured, and so badly treated, how could I possibly sleep on a bed of gnarled reeds? Let me just say that if God had not granted me the strength, survival would have been impossible.

captors demand a ransom in exchange for the friar's release. In addition to some knives, hatchets, and beads, the Indians insisted that St. Augustine's governor release several young Guale boys who had been taken to St. Augustine in 1595. Unfortunately, none of the sources specifically name the young men; however, Ávila's narrative suggests that one of the Indians might have been the heir to the chieftaincy of Tulufina.

³ The specific identity of this young heir is unclear. As readers will note in chapter 5, Fray Ávila's

In this manner I remained in that *bohío* for 10 days, with the Indians dancing around until the middle of the night, showing no interest in curing my wounds. However, within a short time and without any treatment whatsoever, God who is merciful, allowed my wounds to heal and I became well. Somewhat fairer conditions followed, and the Indians allowed me to move freely from one house to another, yet still naked, even in the bitter cold of winter.

I was made to be the cow of the wedding ("buffoon of the party"); whenever there was a celebration, they would send for me and call me names. This would bring great joy to the fiesta, and they delighted in the fact that they had not killed me, as it gave them someone with whom they could amuse themselves.

They had me dig their fields and watch over their crops to keep the rooks from eating the maize. They all held dominion over me. Anyone who wanted to beat me could do so. In particular, the young boys wore me down completely; whenever they caught sight of me, they would chase after me like madmen, and throw sticks at me, or whatever else they could get their hands on. I endured terrible hunger and deprivation because the Indians had little food. Whatever they had went to meet their needs first, over mine. Therefore, on many occasions I was forced to satisfy my hunger by eating wild vine leaves and sorrel plants, because this land does not produce any other fruits.

During my captivity, the Indians often tried, even through force, to get me to abandon God's law and accept that of the Indians; they even tried to convince me to marry an Indian woman, in accordance with their customs. However, with great heart and spirit I resisted their efforts. The Indians were so confounded by this and they marveled at the spirit and freedom with which I spoke to them and repudiated their attempts.

Thereafter, they attempted to force me to clean the "House of the Demon," which is the name that we friars apply to it. The Indians refer to it as the burial [house]; it is there that they place the food and drink for

the dead. In the morning they discover that the food has all been eaten and they believe that the dead had consumed it. However, they are now finally persuaded that it is not the dead who eat the food; rather, it is their own sorcerers who do it, which we friars have shown them first-hand. Moreover, the very sorcerers themselves have confessed to it and we have been able to make good Christians out of them.

Anyway, I responded to their efforts to force me to clean the demon house, saying that even if they were to cut me into a thousand pieces I was not going to enter inside that house, unless it were to burn it to the ground. Seeing my fierce resolve, they left the matter alone.

With matters thus, they tried to convince me to remove my tonsure, telling me: "You are not going to see Spaniards again, nor will they ever see you. Abandon your customs and become an Indian.⁴ With that, you will be able to enjoy what we enjoy. You will have a wife, or more than one if you so choose. You will take pleasure in the next life from what you have in this one, because we know that he who is poor and miserable in this life will be so in the next as well. And however many wives one has in this life, he will possess the same number in the next. That is what we believe. Forget the things that you teach us; they are all nonsense. Here, we bring you this beautiful young Indian girl. Marry her and you will have a good life and she will reward you."

The Indian girl went into the forest and brought back some *guano*, which is like straw, and she made a bed. She then summoned me to dinner. When I saw all of this, I knew I was being pursued by the devil, who never passed an opportunity to tempt me and lead me to despair.

At that moment, I turned to God, and

⁴ The original passage here is rather ambiguous. In Oré's version, the Indians wanted to "take away" Fray Ávila's *corona*, which could also be translated as "rosary." However, there is no previous mention of a rosary and therefore I hesitate to interpret the passage thus. In his 1936 translation of Oré's chronicle, Maynard Geiger translates the phrase as follows: "... the Indians wished to take the crown from me ..." (see Geiger, 1937: 92).

with tears streaming from my eyes, I begged him to give me the grace to liberate me from such diabolic temptation. And thus God granted me such reason and courage that I was able to convince the Indians to let me be. To safeguard myself from all of this, I fled into the forest, where I remained for four days, living on roots and herbs. I never again returned to that village; instead, I went to another, and from that moment forward, the Indians never again spoke to me of such things.

Then one day, as I wandered distractedly, I passed through a field where some Indians were cultivating their crops. At that moment, possessed by the devil, six of them gathered their heavy wooden clubs and struck me with so many blows that they left me for dead. The strikes reopened my previous wounds and caused many new ones. However, once again it was God's will that within a short time my wounds healed, without any treatment or remedy.

I was held in captivity for a total of 10 months, during which time Our Lord spared me from so many dangers. He gave me more strength and greater health than I had ever known in my entire life.

On one occasion, the Indians were preparing to launch a military attack on their Indian enemies, and they said to Fray Ávila: "You see here that we have 10 *harquebuses* without gunpowder and without shot. Make us gunpowder and shot; should you refuse, we will kill you."⁵ However, Fray Ávila gave the excuse that he did not know how to make gunpowder or shot. At that, the Indians responded: "Do not even try that excuse. Of course you know how. Your books speak of this and explain how to make them." But the friar responded, "I do not have any books because you took them all away from

me." The Indians then replied, "We will bring the books back to you."

The Indians thus brought Fray Ávila a *Summa* and a prayer manual for friars, both written by Fray Lu s de Granada. They also brought him a breviary. All of these books provided Fray Ávila with great comfort in his solitude and he hid them in the hole of an oak tree, where he would go to read and take solace. He carried the breviary with him in public at all times, but the young boys tore out all its pages.

In response to the pressure that the Indians placed upon him to make gunpowder and shot, Fray Ávila simply requested that they bring him materials that were not available in that land. That way, they understood that his refusal was not because he was unwilling to make them, but rather, the lack of proper ingredients prevented him from doing so. With that, they left the subject alone for the time being.

As far as this matter of preparing gunpowder and shot is concerned, Fray Ávila does not write about it in his account. Instead, I learned of this from another friar who had spoken to Fray Ávila both before and after his time in captivity. This friar shared a great deal of information about this subject, and many other diverse topics, which we shall leave here in order to avoid prolixity.

When the uprising first started, Fray Ber scola was in the city of St. Augustine, where he had gone to gather some supplies needed for his private cell and for his Indians. Fray Ber scola was in charge of the mission of Santo Domingo de Asao;⁶ and he was so pleased as he made his way back to Asao to share all his goods with his children. However, Asao's Indians already had plotted their treason and had committed apostasy against the faith. Unfortunately, Fray Ber scola was aware of none of this.

⁵ Note that the chronicle shifts here from the first person to the third person. Or  later acknowledges that  vila never wrote about this particular incident in his captivity narrative. Instead, Or  claims that another friar (whose name he does not reveal) had learned of it from  vila himself. The only Franciscan friar who was present both during the time of  vila's captivity and in 1616, when Or  had gathered the material for his chronicle, was Fray Francisco de Pareja.

⁶ Or  refers to Asao's Franciscan mission as Santo Domingo de Asao, a name that does not appear in the documentary record until 1606, when a new Franciscan mission was established at Asao. All of the known records between 1595, when the initial mission was built, and the 1597 uprising, refer to the mission simply as 'Asao.'

Asao's Indians awaited the friar's arrival; as soon as he disembarked from his vessel, two Indians grabbed him by the arms, while the others rushed forward and killed him with axe blows. Then they buried his body.⁷

Then the Indians prepared to launch a military strike against their Indian enemies and kill the friars with them. It seemed to them an opportune time to attack their enemies because the friars had made them careless and ill-prepared for warfare. Thus, a great multitude of Indians gathered together; they appointed their captains and handed out other assignments. They crafted bows and arrows and made all other preparations necessary for war. A total of 40 canoes gathered together to attack the main village of San Pedro on the feast day of our father, St. Francis.⁸ They chose that day in order to catch San Pedro's residents off guard and they vowed that they would not stop until all the Spaniards were dead. In terms of sheer arrogance, these Indians certainly do not lack for it.

However, it just so happened that a Spanish brigantine had come to San Pedro to transport two friars and other goods to the island. The brig had come in peace, carrying no weapons, and just one soldier and a requisite number of sailors. It was God's will that this brigantine had been unable to leave port over the previous 30 days; a lack of wind had prevented the ship from returning to St. Augustine, either by sea or by river. On four separate occasions, the brigantine was forced to return to San Pedro. There it remained until the early dawn of St. Francis Day, when the enemy Indians launched their attack on the village. They came in more than 40 canoes, filled with great numbers of Indian infidels and Christian rebels. Many of them came ashore at the edge of the island, with plans to kill all the Indians while they were [asleep?] in their homes. However, when they saw the brigantine anchored at the port, the enemy

Indians lost all courage and confidence. They believed that the brigantine carried armed Spanish soldiers; moreover, San Pedro's *cacique* was a seasoned warrior. He quickly gathered some of his Indian archers, as well as some arquebuses, and left in pursuit of his Indian attackers. For their part, the enemy Indians fled in retreat.

Some of the Indian enemies who had come ashore were captured; others, unable to find a suitable escape route, paddled to the river's opposite bank. There, they abandoned their canoes and fled overland. However, they soon found themselves trapped in enemy territory, unable to find a passage home. Seeing that, these Indians used the strings from their bows to hang themselves from oak and laurel trees. Thus ended the lives of those who had laid their hands on the friars, as they were all accomplices who allowed these murders to happen. For that reason, these Indians all suffered miserable deaths.

Governor Domingo Martínez de Avendaño died on November 24, 1595; it was at his request that His Majesty had sent the said friars to Florida. They arrived just three months before Governor Martínez's death. By His Majesty's royal decree, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo succeeded the governorship. It was he who governed the *presidio* when the Indians from Guale murdered the friars. As soon as he learned of their deaths, the governor organized a general reprisal against Guale province. To that end, he dispatched 100 Spanish soldiers and 200 Indian allies. On entering the [Guale] villages, they discovered the friars' residences burned and many other buildings empty and in ruins. But when they went ashore, they encountered no Indian resistance. Passing through the various villages, they learned from an Indian they had captured that the entire province had gathered at the place where they were holding the "resurrected one," which was the name the Indians had given to Fray Ávila, whom they were holding captive.

Through the governor's skillful ingenuity, they managed to rescue Fray Ávila, saving him from that miserable state of slavery in which those barbarous Indians had him. However, because all the Indians

⁷ Despite Spanish efforts to locate his corpse, Fray Beráscola's remains were never found.

⁸ Oré exaggerates the number of canoes used in the attack on San Pedro, which probably did not exceed 28.

had retreated deep into the forest, the governor was unable to locate or punish them. Still, the Spaniards burned the Indians' maize fields and food supplies; the Indians themselves had burned their own houses when they fled. For the next few years, the Indians were unable to grow their maize crops; and because they had withdrawn away from the sea, they could neither fish nor gather shellfish. As a result, they suffered terrible famines; and although they managed to harvest some crops, they were few. Moreover, every year, the Spaniards continued to destroy their crops.

Eventually, the Indians understood all this to be God's punishment for having killed the friars. Therefore, they tried to arrange with the governor their formal subjugation to His Majesty's service. However, Governor Méndez responded that he would

not receive them unless they first brought him the head of the man who is heir to Tolomato's chiefdom, for he was the one who had led the plot to kill the friars. And because of his status as *cacique*, he was able to turn all the others into villains.

After careful consideration, the Indians began to turn against the *cacique*. In response, the *cacique* gathered reinforcements from the many Indians who had rushed to his assistance. With relentless determination, those who had turned against him attacked the *cacique* and his followers. They killed each and every one of them, sparing neither brother, cousin, relative, friend, nor neighbor. With that, the land became pacified. Within six years of the friars' deaths, the Indians were subdued to the obedience of Our Holy Mother Church and to the service of our Lord.



CHAPTER 4

ST. FRANCIS DAY, OCTOBER 4, 1597

In the predawn hours of October 4, 1597, more than 20 large wood canoes, filled with armed warriors from the province of Guale, paddled silently along the Puturiba River, which separated the western shores of San Pedro Island (modern Cumberland Island, Georgia) from the mainland. In the darkness, the men from two of the canoes disembarked and carefully maneuvered into the village of San Pedro, moving toward the residence, or *bohío*, of an Indian named Antonio López. López was one of the island's principal Indians, and would later become one of the island's *caciques*. It is unclear why the attackers chose López's residence to launch their assault, or even if he had been their target. Regardless, the attackers surrounded López's *bohío* and waited.

None of San Pedro's residents had heard the war party as it moved into the village. However, their arrival had not gone unnoticed. Alarmed by the intruders, Antonio López's dogs began to bark. The loud barking awoke López's 60-year-old father-in-law, Jusepe, who feared that the dogs would frighten the *cacique*'s horse. Hoping to quiet them, Jusepe stood up and shuffled toward the door. The moment he stepped outside, an arrow flew through the air and struck Jusepe in the arm. As he turned to retreat, four more arrows pierced his back. Jusepe stumbled inside the *bohío*, searching for his bow and arrow, and sounding the alarm: "War, War. They have come to wage war on us."

Hearing Jusepe's warning cries, San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan¹ rushed out of his residence,

¹ San Pedro's *cacique* should not be confused with another don Juan, the Guale heir to Tolomato's

gathered some of his own men, and quickly boarded two canoes to pursue the attackers. Other Indians from San Pedro hurried to the village of Puturiba to issue warning to the Franciscan friar, Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas.² When he heard their shouts, Fray Fernández stepped outside. As he stood in front of his house, which overlooked the Puturiba River, the friar counted 11 war canoes, filled with armed Indians from the land of Iba-ha, which the Spanish called Guale. In his later testimony, recorded two weeks after the attack, Fray Fernández stated that since he possessed no other weapons but his vestments, he dressed, entered the church, and said Mass in honor of St. Francis, "for it was his day."

As the morning hours advanced into the early afternoon, more details began to emerge. Fray Fernández learned that San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, and his men had captured, killed, and scalped one of the attackers, but that all the others had escaped. The friar had hoped that at least one Indian would be captured so that he could learn the reason for the assault on San Pedro. Still, that was not the most unsettling news. Even more alarming, don Juan also reported that he had recovered a friar's habit, which the Indians believed had belonged to Fray Francisco de Beráscola, a Franciscan friar stationed in the Guale village of Asao. Reports also reached the

chieftaincy and the person most often blamed for the uprising.

² Fray Fernández was one of two Franciscan friars stationed on San Pedro, but neither friar appears to have been targeted in the morning attack. The other friar stationed on San Pedro was Fray Francisco de Pareja.

friar that during the attack the Guale had fired five arrows into a nearby cross, each arrow representing one of the dead Franciscans. With that news, Fray Fernández's thoughts turned to the five friars and one lay brother living in Guale territory.

Fernández's worst fears seemed to be confirmed later that day when news arrived from the village of Bejesi, located on the northern tip of San Pedro Island. The friar's *fiscal*, who had been in Bejesi that morning, reported an encounter between Bejesi's residents and the retreating war party from Guale. According to the *fiscal*, as the enemy canoes reached the bay off Bejesi's shores, the Guale *cacique* from Asao [don Domingo] stood proudly at the front of his canoe. He was wearing the hat that had belonged to Asao's resident friar, Francisco de Beráscola. Asao's *cacique* was also carrying the same arquebus that Fray Beráscola would use to summon Indians to transport him by canoe to neighboring villages. Raising the friar's hat high in the air, Asao's *cacique* shouted loudly, "What you see here is that priest. Come here and feed him maize cakes."

The *fiscal* tried to convince don Domingo to come ashore, but Asao's *cacique* refused. Instead, he threatened Bejesi's residents to abandon the island and return to Timucua; if they complied, don Domingo assured them that they would not be warred upon again.³ With the warning issued, don Domingo and the Guale war party continued their retreat north.

Late that afternoon, his hands still trembling and his thoughts focused on the fate of his fellow Franciscans, Fray Fernández sat down to report the day's tragic events to St. Augustine's new governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. As he contemplated the martyrdom of the Guale friars, he began to write, "By whose virtue all hell bows to its knees: Grant us the strength to endure the tribulations that are imminent." Three days later, on the morning of October 7, 1597, Governor Méndez would read these words for the first time and realize that the peace and tranquility of his first three months as governor had just ended.

This chapter contains translations of the earliest known documents regarding the 1597 Guale Uprising, all of which were assembled together by St. Augustine's governor before he

sent the report to Spain in early 1598. The account opens with Fray Fernández's short letter, written at Puturiba on St. Francis Day, October 4, 1597. It ends in early January, 1598, less than two months after St. Augustine's governor completed a lengthy investigation and punitive expedition to Guale territory. The details included in these documents provide some of the richest and, in many respects, the most revealing material regarding the 1597 uprising. They also raise some provocative questions about the nature of the unrest and the murders of the five Franciscan friars.

Fray Fernández's opening letter is the earliest recorded reference to the murder of the friars stationed in Guale territory. The sense of urgency and fear in Fernández's brief account is apparent as he petitions St. Augustine's governor to dispatch soldiers to San Pedro as quickly as possible. The initial confusion of the early stages of the investigation is evident. For example, Fray Fernández erroneously claims the only friar spared was the lay brother, Antonio de Badajoz. More than a month would pass before the Spanish learned that Badajoz in fact had been killed; even more time would pass before the governor would learn that the Guale had spared Fray Francisco de Ávila, whom they held captive in the Salchiche village of Tulufina.

Likewise, the friar offers no explanation or justification for the uprising. Only one Indian, the *cacique* from Asao, is identified among the war party that attacked San Pedro. Not only does Asao's *cacique*, don Domingo, appear to have led the assault on San Pedro, but he is seen wearing Fray Francisco de Beráscola's hat and carrying the friar's arquebus. Unfortunately, Fray Fernández provides virtually no information on the identity of the other attackers. However, it is worth noting that neither don Francisco, the paramount chief of Guale territory, nor his heir, don Juan (or don Juanillo) are mentioned in any of the earliest accounts. If either of them were present during the October assault on San Pedro, none of the witnesses reported seeing them.

On the morning of October 7, Fray Fernández's letter reached St. Augustine's governor. The news must have come as a terrible shock. When he finished reading the friar's report, Governor Méndez convened an emergency meeting at St. Augustine's Franciscan convent. There, he shared the contents of the friar's letter with the convent's custodian, Fray Francisco de Marrón,

³ Fray Francisco de Pareja testifies he had heard that Asao's *cacique* urged Bejesi's residents to abandon the island and return with him to Guale territory.

as well as St. Augustine's three royal officials⁴ and the infantry captains Vicente González and Pedro de Portierra. After some discussion, everyone agreed the most appropriate course of action was to depart as soon as possible for San Pedro Island.

Within an hour of the meeting, Governor Méndez ordered Sergeant Juan de Santiago to lead a small company of six soldiers to San Pedro to protect the two Franciscan friars, as well as don Juan and his subjects. Santiago was ordered to leave immediately and to await reinforcements in San Pedro. Ten days later, on October 17, Governor Méndez and 150 infantrymen left St. Augustine, their vessels filled with supplies and munitions. They reached San Pedro on the following day to begin the investigation into the friars' murders, and to punish those responsible.

On his arrival in San Pedro on October 18, the governor initiated his official inquiry, summoning the island's *cacique*, don Juan, to be the first to testify. Under oath, don Juan declared that 26 canoes, filled with armed warriors from Guale territory, had arrived at San Pedro in the early morning of October 4, St. Francis Day. According to don Juan, men from two of the canoes disembarked and surrounded the house of an Indian principal named Antonio López. When López's father-in-law Jusepe stepped outside early that morning to quiet some barking dogs, the Guale warriors struck him with five arrows, knocking Jusepe to the ground. Don Juan heard Jusepe's call to arms and immediately assembled his own warriors to pursue the Guale attackers. They managed to capture a Guale *mandador*, whom they immediately killed and scalped.

After recording don Juan's testimony, Governor Méndez heard similar accounts from two additional Indian witnesses, Antonio López and his father-in-law, Jusepe, who was in bed recovering from the arrow wounds he had suffered during the attack. Their complete testimonies appear in translation below. The governor then recorded statements from three of Florida's veteran soldiers, Captain Vicente González, Andrés López de Simancas, and Corporal Juan de la Cruz.⁵

⁴ Here, I refer to the royal accountant, Bartolomé de Argüelles, the treasurer Juan Menéndez Marqués, and Juan López de Avilés, who served as *factor* and *veedor*.

⁵ By this time, Captain Vicente González had lived in Florida for 23 years and Juan de la Cruz had

None of their testimonies shed light on the Guale attack on San Pedro or the recent murders of the Franciscan friars; however, all three men testified to previous Guale attacks on friars, royal officials, soldiers, and translators. And despite the fact that most of the events to which they referred had occurred more than two decades earlier, the witnesses all agreed that such violence (during peacetime) represented typical Guale behavior.

Finally, Governor Méndez summoned San Pedro's two resident friars to testify, both of whom were present on the island when the attack occurred. Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas's testimony differs little from the letter he had written two weeks earlier. Fernández provided a few additional details, stating that in addition to the attack on Jusepe the Guale warriors had also looted one of San Pedro's residences, shot arrows at another, and had fired five arrows into a cross that stood on the mission ground.

Fray Pareja's statement shares many of the same details, with one significant difference. Whereas Fray Fernández's opening letter claims that Asao's *cacique*, don Domingo, had warned the residents of Bejesi to return to Timucua, Fray Pareja claims that don Domingo had instead urged them to abandon the island and join him in Guale territory. Despite the discrepancy, both testimonies certainly suggest that Asao's *cacique* played a central role in the attack.

Considered together, Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas's opening letter and testimony, as well as the testimonies of don Juan, Antonio López, Jusepe, and Fray Francisco de Pareja raise some provocative questions about the Guale attack on San Pedro. For one, why did the Guale warriors specifically target Antonio López's residence? If the principal aim of the uprising was to rid the region of Spanish friars, why did the war party not focus its attack on the island's two resident friars, Pedro Fernández de Chozas and Francisco de Pareja? Finally, as the Guale war party retreated past the northern village of Bejesi, why did Asao's *cacique* urge the residents to return to Timucua or, as Fray Pareja claims, to abandon the island and join him in Guale territory? Could the friars' murders have been part of a much broader regional conflict involving Guale,

lived in the province for 35 years. Andrés López does not reveal how long he had lived in Florida, but from his testimony it is clear that he had arrived more than two decades earlier.

Salchiche, and Mocama Indians—a conflict that somehow escaped the notice of Spanish officials and friars alike?

After hearing all eight testimonies from October 18, a frustrated Governor Méndez concluded that few details regarding the fate of the friars could be learned while he remained on San Pedro. Therefore, on Sunday, October 19, the governor ordered Captain Vicente González to select 22 infantrymen and sail up to the Guale village of Tolomato. Méndez instructed Captain González to pretend that he and his men had been sent to Tolomato to deliver foodstuffs and other supplies to the friars. Should they encounter any Indians at Tolomato, Captain González was to insist that they bring the friars to him so that he could deliver the supplies directly. If that should fail, he was instructed to use whatever means necessary to take Indian captives, who were then to be brought back to San Pedro for interrogation.

Captain González and his men departed immediately for Tolomato. His instructions mandated that he return to San Pedro before sunrise the following Friday, by which time the governor expected the arrival of additional Indian allies.⁶ These allies were to form part of any military expedition into Guale territory, should the governor determine the Guale had indeed murdered the friars. Until then, he would remain in San Pedro and await Captain González's return.

Three days later, González and his men arrived back to San Pedro. They brought with them a young Indian captive, whom they had shot four or five times in order to prevent him from escaping. Captain González explained that they had spotted the Indian aboard a canoe, roughly two leagues from Tolomato. When they summoned him to approach, the Indian dove into the water to try to escape. In response, Captain González ordered his harquebusiers to open fire. The Indian was struck several times before the Spanish succeeded in capturing him. Through the translator, the captain asked about the friars, explaining that they had come to deliver goods and supplies to

the missions. The injured captive responded that the friars were all dead, and that each *cacique* had murdered his resident priest. If that was not sufficient confirmation that the friars had been killed, Captain González also discovered that his Indian captive had one of the friar's woolen frocks in his possession. With that discovery and the news of the friars' deaths, Captain González decided to return immediately to San Pedro to inform the governor.

When they reached San Pedro on Wednesday, October 22, Governor Méndez proceeded to interrogate the wounded captive. The Indian claimed to be a subject of the *cacique* of Cascangue (adding that Cascangue's *cacique* was now dead).⁷ When the governor questioned him about the fate of the friars and the woolen frock in his possession, the Indian testified that the *caciques* from Aluste and all over the region had convened and decided to kill them, with each *cacique* responsible for killing his own friar. He then added that he had traded for the frock with an Indian from Ospó and that he had not been present when any of the friars were killed.

Unfortunately, the testimony contains few specific details about the friars' deaths and the recorded responses are all brief in nature. However, the Indian captive does offer information that merits careful consideration. For example, once again Asao's *cacique* appears to have played a central role in the uprising. In fact, few other *caciques* are even mentioned in the interrogation. According to the Indian witness, Asao's *cacique* had taken possession of everything that had belonged to Asao's friar, Francisco de Beráscola, including the chalice and the other church ornaments and books. That Asao's *cacique* had been seen at San Pedro two weeks earlier, wearing Fray Beráscola's hat and carrying the friar's harquebus, certainly makes this claim plausible.

When asked where the friars' bodies had been buried, the captive claimed that Asao's friar Francisco de Beráscola had been buried under Asao's church.⁸ The Indian also testified that

⁶ Unfortunately, the governor never specifically identifies the allies he was expecting, but it is likely that they included Indians from the St. Augustine area, perhaps from the missions of Nombre de Dios, San Sebastian, and San Juan del Puerto. By the time the governor launched his punitive expedition into Guale territory on October 24, 1597, he had been joined by hundreds of Indian allies.

⁷ The witness never reveals when his *cacique* died or how.

⁸ Despite this claim, it seems unlikely that Fray Beráscola's remains were buried under the church since his body was never found. Had the friar been buried under the church, as the witness suggested, the Spanish certainly would have located the corpse when they inspected the site weeks later.

Guale's friar (Miguel de Auñón) had begged that his body be buried at the church entrance, which is precisely where the Spanish found it (along with the corpse of the lay brother Antonio de Badajoz) when they arrived on Guale Island on November 4, 1597, less than two weeks after this testimony was recorded.

It is also worth noting that the Indian captive made no specific reference to the Guale *cacique* who was ultimately blamed for the entire uprising, don Juan of Tolomato. In fact, neither don Juan nor his uncle don Francisco, the paramount chief of Guale province, are even mentioned in the interrogation.

For Governor Méndez, the Indian's testimony provided confirmation that the friars had all been killed. It also confirmed the fears of another Franciscan friar, Fray Blas de Montes, the vicar of the Indian mission of Nombre de Dios; Fray Montes had accompanied the governor to San Pedro to monitor the investigation and, if necessary, to ensure the recovery of everything that belonged to the Order. The Franciscans also hoped to conduct their own inquiry into the murders. Thus, on the same day that the Indian captive declared that the friars were all dead, Fray Blas petitioned the governor to grant him the authority to launch an investigation into the murders.

Governor Méndez's response was immediate and unequivocal. As His Majesty's representative, Méndez claimed full jurisdiction over the matter, and thus prohibited the friar from interfering in the investigation in any way. Méndez even threatened to fine the notary 10,000 *maravedíes* if he recorded any decree or testimony without the governor's permission. Governor Méndez ordered Fray Blas to accompany him on the expedition to Guale, promising to protect the friar from any Indian assault. The governor also vowed to return to Fray Blas all church belongings, as well as any physical remains recovered at the missions. However, under no circumstance was Fray Blas to engage in any kind of inquiry without the governor's permission. This was not the first time that Florida's governor would clash with the province's Franciscans.

With the matter of jurisdiction resolved, Governor Méndez proceeded to organize his punitive expedition into Guale territory, to further investigate the matter and to punish those responsible. On October 24, just two days after the captured Indian had testified, Governor Méndez and his force departed for Guale.

The final few pages of the document record the details of Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo's punitive expedition into Guale territory. Between October 24 and November 6, the governor led his men north from San Pedro into Guale. On October 27, Méndez's forces engaged a Guale war party at the village of Ospó, eventually overtaking the settlement after its Guale defenders retreated into the forest. On capturing the village, the Spanish recovered a missal, a breviary, a friar's hat, and a chalice veil, all of which were returned to Fray Blas de Montes. They also made a grisly discovery, the scalp of one of the dead friars.⁹

From Ospó the governor moved his forces to Sapala, where they burned the entire village and its storehouses to the ground. That same day, Méndez and his men went ashore at Tolomato, the principal village in Guale province and home to the paramount chief, don Francisco, and his heir, don Juan. When they arrived at Tolomato, they found the village deserted, and the church and the friars' residence burned to the ground. However, that was not all they found. Governor Méndez reported that Tolomato's principal residences, including the council house, had also been burned.

Governor Méndez remained at Tolomato for a couple of days, confident that some of its residents would return to explain what had happened to the friars. To encourage them to do so, the governor ordered his interpreters to climb the highest trees and summon the Indians to return, promising that he would listen to their reasons for killing the friars. No one came to meet the governor; instead, a few Indians attacked some of Méndez's Indian allies.

From Tolomato, the governor dispatched Sergeant Alonso Díaz and some infantrymen to the island of Guale to investigate the fate of Guale's mission and, if possible, capture Indians for interrogation. Díaz returned that evening to report that he had found the island deserted and that the church and the friar's residence had been burned.

⁹This is the only reference I have found to the discovery of a friar's scalp at Ospó. None of the later accounts makes any mention of it. If, in fact, the scalp had belonged to one of the deceased friars, it must have come from Fray Pedro de Corpa or Fray Francisco de Beráscola. The bodies of Fray Miguel de Auñón and the lay brother Antonio de Badajoz were discovered on the Island of Guale, and Fray Blas Rodríguez's burned remains were found at Tupiqui.

However, the council house, the *cacique's* residence, and Guale's other buildings were all still standing. Díaz then added that he and his men had found the bodies of two friars, buried in shallow graves in front of the church. Their arms and legs had been broken in four places and their feet bound. Because of the wretched stench, Díaz ordered the bodies to be reburied, with their graves marked so that the bones could be recovered at a later date. However, Díaz presented the governor with Fray Miguel de Auñón's skull, which they had found nearly severed from the friar's corpse, as well as some of the friar's bones, all of which were given to Fray Montes.

On his departure from Tolomato, the governor ordered the remaining houses to be burned. The following day he dispatched Sergeant Díaz to the village of Tupiqui, where Fray Blas Rodríguez had been stationed. Once again, Sergeant Díaz had been ordered to try to procure an Indian captive and then to burn the entire village. When

Díaz returned that same day to report his findings, he informed the governor that he was unable to locate a single Indian, and that Tupiqui's church, the friar's residence, the council house, and the *cacique's* residence were all burned. Unfortunately, the language in the original document is rather ambiguous. It is unclear whether Díaz and his men burned the council house and the *cacique's* residence, or whether they had found them burned when they arrived (considering what happens later, the latter seems more convincing). Díaz also reported he had found the burned remains of Fray Blas Rodríguez and that the friar's skull had been smashed into three or four pieces.

The following day, November 6, the governor dispatched Sergeant Díaz to the villages of Asao and Talaje. Just a month earlier, Asao's *cacique*, don Domingo, appears to have played a central role in the Guale attack on San Pedro Island. When Díaz arrived at Asao, he found the

TABLE 5
Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo's 1597 Spanish Punitive Expedition to Guale Province

Village	Date	What the Spanish found	Condition of village	Structures burned by Spanish soldiers
Ospo	Oct 28	A missal, a breviary, hat, a chalice veil, and a friar's scalp.		Entire village, maize supply, and food storehouses.
Sapala	Nov 2			Village and food storehouses.
Tolomato	Nov 2–Nov 4	An altar and an image of St. Anthony of Padua.	Church, friar's house, and principal residences all found burned.	The remaining buildings burned to the ground.
Guale	Nov 4	Two shallow graves containing the bodies of Friar Miguel de Auñón and Friar Antonio de Badajoz (Albuera).	Church and friars' residences burned.	<i>Cacique's</i> house and council house.
Tupiqui	Nov 5	Grave of Friar Blas Rodríguez.	Entire village burned, including church, friar's house, council house, and <i>cacique's</i> residence	
Asao	Nov 6		Entire village intact.	Entire village.
Talaje	Nov 6		The entire village was still standing.	Entire village.

village deserted; however, all the buildings were still standing and Asao's storehouses filled with maize and other foodstuffs. He found the same situation at Talaje. Sergeant Díaz ordered both villages razed before he returned to report his findings to the governor. With that, the governor's expedition into Guale territory ended.

Table 5 provides a general overview of Governor's Méndez's 1597 punitive expedition into Guale territory, listing all the Guale villages mentioned in the two-week expedition, dates, and what the Spanish discovered. Considering the previous testimonies regarding the village of Tulufina and the claim that one of the friars (albeit the incorrect one) had been taken captive there, it is rather curious that Méndez did not send his forces. Was Tulufina too well protected to risk a military venture into the interior? Whatever the reason, it is clear that the governor was not willing to send his men deep into Guale to search for captives.

When Governor Méndez's two-week investigation and punitive expedition ended in mid-November of 1597, little had been resolved. Despite his efforts to gather intelligence, the governor still had no clear sense of what exactly had happened, why, or who had perpetrated the attacks on the friars. He had discovered the remains of three friars and possibly the scalp of a fourth. If any of the friars had survived, the initial investigation offered no conclusive evidence. All of the mission villages had been abandoned and only one Indian, a native from Cascangue, had been captured and interrogated.

On November 8, Governor Méndez and his men arrived back at San Pedro Island. Three days later, he summoned the island's *cacique*, don Juan, and all the other principal Indians to convene in San Pedro's main church. There, the governor urged the Indians to withdraw to San Juan del Puerto, where they would be better protected against another Guale assault, should one occur. At the same time, in recognition of their loyalty and their hardships, the governor lowered San Pedro's annual tribute assessment from one *arroba* of maize per married male, to just six ears of maize for each married man. The governor then ordered Sergeant Alonso Díaz and 24 soldiers to escort the Indians south to San Juan del Puerto.

Finally, on November 16, 1597, almost one month after he had arrived on San Pedro Island to initiate his investigation of the friars' murders,

Governor Méndez climbed aboard his ship to return to St. Augustine. He vowed to continue the investigation and to use all methods at his disposal to identify and punish those responsible. He then concluded his lengthy inquiry by issuing a decree that all Guale men and women captured alive were to be awarded as slaves to Spanish soldiers. In the governor's view, such an egregious crime against the friars deserved the harshest punishment possible. As we shall see later, the Spanish Crown immediately revoked the governor's decree and ordered Méndez to release all Guale slaves held in St. Augustine.

Document 4.1: "Testimony regarding the murder of the six friars in the Province of Guale." AGI Santo Domingo 224 R.5 N.31 fols. 160r–187v (October 4, 1597–January 12, 1598).

A Letter from Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas, October 4, 1597

By Whose virtue all hell falls to its knees: Grant us the strength to endure these imminent tribulations.

On this day, Saturday morning, 23 canoes carrying Indians from all over Guale territory appeared along the Puturiba River. These Indians were on their way back to the province of Guale after the men from two of their canoes had come ashore and attacked the island of San Pedro, which is the head of this province. These Indians fired arrows at an Indian from San Pedro, who had stepped out of his house to investigate the noise of barking dogs. From the shouts of the wounded man (who is still alive), the entire village learned of the assault; in response, San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, and his own Indians quickly set out in pursuit of the two enemy canoes, which had crossed to the river's opposite bank. Abandoning all their belongings in their canoes, the enemies fled overland on foot. Our Christian Indians pursued them into the woods until they captured one of the assailants. In accordance with their customs, they killed and scalped the man, even though he had short hair, suggesting that he was a Christian. I reprimanded them for this act; if only they had tied him up as I had asked, I could have determined the true cause of this war.

Another canoe was also seized. The

Indian attackers had abandoned it at the launch before fleeing into the forest; however, the people from San Pedro were unable to catch them. The remaining enemy Indians fled to Bejesi, which is located at the northern end of this island. There, through an interpreter (*atequi*), my *fiscal* spoke with the *cacique* of Asao. He reprimanded and scolded Asao's *cacique*, and then pleaded with him to come ashore. The *cacique* refused. Rather, with great shame, he displayed the hat (*sombrero*) that had belonged to Asao's priest, Fray Francisco de Beráscola, shouting: "What you see here is all that is left of that priest. Come forward and feed him maize cakes (*tortas*)."¹⁰ He also brandished the friar's harquebus, which [Fray Beráscola] was known to have used to summon canoes to take him by river to visit his other villages.

Asao's *cacique* then shouted in a loud voice, "Now there is no Christianity, since it was our very own God who had permitted this to happen." However, [the truth is that] this was all ordered by the enemy of our holy Catholic faith, for the condemnation of so many souls. It is enough to make one weep that in addition to Fray Beráscola, the Indians also killed the father of Guale, Fray Miguel de Auñón, the father of Tolomato, Fray Pedro de Corpa, the father of Tupiqui, Fray Blas Rodríguez, and the father of Talapuz [Talapó], Fray Francisco de Ávila.¹⁰ They spared only one, the lay brother Fray Antonio de Badajoz, who was taken captive, enslaved, and carried off to Tulufina. In sum, the evidence seems to suggest that the number of martyred friars is five.

The Indians then gathered all the spoils, cowls, and habits that they had taken from the friars, which they distributed among themselves. This is precisely what the Jews did with such great inhumanity to the most innocent lamb of all. Oh, how did they feel, lord governor, those little lambs, all alone at the moment they received their martyrdom? The very thought of it moves me such that I can

barely continue. I envy the crowns of glory that they carry before us, and I wait in this desert, with holy obedience, for whatever our lord God, through his mercy, has prepared for me.

The enemy Indians already have threatened the Indians here, ordering them to leave their lands and go to Timucua, where they will not be warred upon again. There were upwards of 400 Guale Indians who came here [to San Pedro]. May the one God protect this friar whose death, it is said, was spared, and who the Indians now hold in Tulufina. For the others, may God ensure a proper burial for the bodies of the blessed deceased, and may the number of deaths be lower, and may we remain free of danger until help and assistance can arrive.

It is not my intention that vengeance be exacted with blood and fire. Rather, the matter should be resolved as is customary to Your Grace, with kindness and forbearance. These Indians must be dealt with and treated as children. Nevertheless, I ask out of mercy that men be sent from St. Augustine to check on the friars, and that they be rescued and removed from the hands of their enemies. However, if it is not possible to attend immediately to our defense, protection, and assistance, and to that of these Christian Indians, I ask that you dispatch six or more veteran soldiers, who, in the interim, could be dispersed between Bejesi, here, and San Pedro, performing sentry duty with the Indians. [I pray] that these soldiers are content with maize cakes, *gachas*, and, when available, fish, because here there is nothing else to eat. Still, even this will not suffice, unless they are only here for a short time. However, as they are men of virtue, they will not lack for our Lord God, for whose love we subject ourselves to such perils; may He provide Your Grace with clear judgment, and protect us from our foes. From Puturiba, October 4, 1597.

Also, the vestments used to say Mass in this mission, which your Majesty gave us, together with the corporal cloths and a silver chalice that I had borrowed from the Franciscan convent in St. Augustine,

¹⁰ Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas mistakenly identifies Fray Antonio de Badajoz as the captured friar, instead of Fray Francisco de Ávila.

were all left in Tolomato when I made the journey into the interior (La Tama), from which I returned safely, thanks be to God. If it is deemed right, may I be provided with additional vestments, paid for out of Your Majesty's royal treasury? And may Your Grace see how necessary these things are for my own solace, for that of the Indians, as well as for the benefit of the souls in purgatory, which also plays an important role in the sacrifice of the Mass. I implore Your Majesty to honor this request; in doing so, God our Lord, etc., will be well served.

Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas.

The Letter Reaches St. Augustine, October 7, 1597

In the city of St. Augustine, provinces of La Florida, October 7, 1597, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, governor and captain general of these provinces in the name of the king our lord, declared the following, before me, the scribe:

On this day, Tuesday, at around 10 in the morning, I was in my house conducting Your Majesty's business when Martín Gudinez, a soldier of this *presidio*, arrived. Gudinez had gone in a brigantine to deliver food supplies to the friars of San Pedro province. He brought back with him a packet of letters written by the Fray Pedro de Chozas, who is stationed on San Pedro Island, at the mission of Puturiba. In one of the letters addressed to the lord governor, the said priest provides an account of how 400 Indians from Guale province, in 26 canoes, had come down to San Pedro with the intention of killing the Indians on the island, as well as all the friars stationed there.

San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, dispatched his own Indians in two canoes to pursue the attackers, one of whom they captured and killed; and from the others they learned that the Salchiche Indians and others had joined together and killed the prelate, Fray Miguel de Auñón, who resided in the mission of Guale. [They also murdered] Fray Pedro de Corpa from the mission of Tolomato, Fray Blas Rodríguez from Tupiquí, Fray Francisco de Beráscola, who resided at Asao; and

Fray Francisco de Ávila who lived in Talapuz [Talapuz]; all of these friars served as priests (*sacerdotes de misa*). The lay brother, Fray Antonio de Badajoz, was taken captive.

As evidence of the aforementioned, they brought a few shreds of the habits and the cowls worn by the said priests, as the letter appears to verify. And the governor ordered that [the letter] be added to these proceedings.

Then, in order to determine the punishment and remedy that is most advantageous to the service of God and to Your Majesty, and to ensure that the matter be dealt with in the most suitable manner, the governor went at once to the Franciscan convent in this city of St. Augustine; there, he joined the convent's custodian, Fray Francisco de Marrón. Also present were the royal officials from this province: Bartolomé de Argüelles, the royal accountant, Juan Menéndez Marqués, treasurer, Juan López de Avilés, *factor y veedor*, as well as the infantry captains, Vicente González and Pedro de Portierra. With everyone gathered together, the governor ordered that the letter be read.

After reading the letter, the governor asked Fray Marrón, the royal officials, and the infantry captains to offer their opinions on how best to carry out the punishment and remedy for such a crime. And having discussed and conferred on the matter, the governor, royal officials, and infantry captains reached a unanimous accord. They agreed that it would be best to depart from St. Augustine as quickly as possible for San Pedro Island, with all the necessary men and supplies. To this they all agreed and signed their names.

[signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, Fray Francisco de Marrón, custodian, Bartolomé de Argüelles, Juan Menéndez Marqués, Juan López de Avilés, the Captain Vicente González, and Pedro Portierra. In my presence, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

I, Alonso García de la Vera, chief notary public for the city of St. Augustine and the governorship of the provinces of Florida, hereby offer true and faithful tes-

timony to all those who read this, attesting to how on October 7, Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo received this letter.

Within an hour of his meeting with the friars, royal officials, and infantry captains at the Franciscan convent in St. Augustine, the governor dispatched Sergeant Juan de Santiago, with six other soldiers from his company, to the province of San Pedro. The men were sent with orders to protect and defend Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas, Fray Francisco de Pareja, as well as San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, and his Indian subjects. Moreover, the governor ordered that Your Majesty's launch (*lancha*), the *chalupa*, as well as the frigate belonging to the navigator Diego Franco, be fitted in great haste to follow [Santiago]. He then commanded that all the supplies, munitions, and other necessary items for the journey be placed on the vessels, and he prepared the infantry. Although he had fallen ill, the governor departed from St. Augustine as soon as it was possible, and on October 17, 1597, the governor left for Guale province. As evidence of this, at the governor's request I signed my name below, which was done on the shores of San Mateo on October 17, 1597, before the following witnesses:

Lieutenant (*alférez*) Alonso Díaz, Lieutenant Toribio Vásquez as well as many other individuals and soldiers.

[signed] Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

The Governor Issues Orders to Sergeant Juan de Santiago

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, governor and captain general of these provinces of Florida, on behalf of the king, our lord, etc:

On this day, October 7, 1597, news has arrived that the Indians from Guale territory have murdered the Franciscan friars who were there to enlighten them and to teach them the Holy Catholic Faith. In the interim, while I make preparations to embark with the infantry necessary to punish such a crime, it is appropriate to send 12 soldiers to San Pedro [to assist] our friend and ally, the *cacique* don Juan, and

to protect the priests there, Fray Pedro de Chozas and Fray Francisco de Pareja. It is also fitting that an officer should accompany these soldiers so that his orders are obeyed as though they are mine.

I hereby appoint Sergeant Juan de Santiago as commanding officer, with orders to take the said soldiers with the greatest possible haste, marching day and night, until you reach San Pedro. Once there, you are to establish a very good defense, with sentries posted day and night. And should you come under attack from enemy Indians, you are to protect the friars there until they are out of danger. Moreover, you are to assist don Juan in every way possible, for he is an ally, and time and again he has proven himself to be His Majesty's loyal vassal.

Sergeant Santiago is advised that under no circumstance is he to leave San Pedro, nor is he to permit don Juan to do so either. Should any issue arise, he is to communicate the matter directly with Fray Pedro de Chozas and Fray Pareja. Moreover, Sergeant Santiago is to ensure that the soldiers do no harm to any of the Indians there; I am also writing to the *cacique* don Juan, instructing him to provide the soldiers with food. They will surely be content with whatever he offers, as I am quite certain that he will provide them with everything they need.

May this order be carried out and faithfully observed because in doing so His Majesty will be greatly served. Issued in St. Augustine, October 7, 1597.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

In compliance with the above order, written by the governor and captain general, I, Sergeant Juan de Santiago, together with the number of infantrymen listed above, came to this village of San Pedro with all due diligence and haste. We arrived Thursday morning, October 10, at which point I carried out all of my orders, taking particular care of the friars, the *cacique* don Juan, and his pueblo. This I did until October 17, when the governor arrived. In order to confirm that I carried out my orders promptly, I hereby present my signature, given in the presence of the scribe.

From the village of San Pedro, October 22, 1597.

[Signed] Juan de Santiago. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.¹¹

San Pedro: The Governor's Decree

In the village of San Pedro, where don Juan is *cacique*, on October 18, 1597, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo announced that he had come to this village with 150 infantry men, brought with him to investigate the report he had received of the death of the friars in Guale province and to punish [those responsible]. [San Pedro] is the location where the Guale Indians came and attacked. [In response, the Indians of San Pedro] killed two Indians from the province of Guale, from whom they recovered a friar's habit. And the people who knew him declared that [the habit] belonged to Fray Francisco de Beráscola, who was stationed at the mission of Asao. These same Indians also testified that all of the friars [in the province of Guale] had been killed, with the exception of the lay brother, Fray Antonio de Badajoz. A crime of this nature merits the harshest of punishments and therefore the governor ordered that an investigation into this matter be conducted.

Even before now, the Indians from Guale province have killed friars, infantry captains, officials of Your Majesty's royal treasury, as well as a great number of infantrymen. And the witnesses who know, saw, and heard it said, will testify that all of [these crimes] were committed even though the Spaniards and the Guale were at peace. Moreover, [these Guale Indians] have fired arrows at crosses, as apostates of the faith, and they have denied obedience to Your Majesty as his vassals.

For the inquiry into this matter, the governor prepared the following report, in this manner. Dated *ut supra*.

[Signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Testimony of don Juan, *cacique* of San Pedro

For the purpose of this investigation, the governor summoned San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, to appear before him. Don Juan took and received the oath, in just accordance with the law, after which he was questioned about the tenor of the decree mentioned above.

The witness declared that on the day of San Francisco, the fourth of this month, he was in his house in his village of San Pedro when, early in the morning, 26 canoes arrived, carrying Indians from Guale province. They were all armed with arrows and *macanas*, the weapons with which they fight. The men from two of the canoes reached the house of Antonio López, who is one of the witness's Indian vassals. The men in the two canoes disembarked and then surrounded Antonio López's house. They kept the house surrounded until the morning, as they awaited the arrival of the remaining canoes, which had fallen behind. However, one of Your Majesty's brigantines, which had come up from St. Augustine, was on the river; and when the people in the 24 canoes realized that the brigantine was there, they did not dare approach the town.

At that moment, a Christian Indian named Jusepe, who resides in Antonio López's house, awoke. And when he stepped outside, the Guale Indians who had the house surrounded struck Jusepe with five arrows, knocking him to the ground. The wounded Indian shouted, issuing a call to arms. This witness heard the call; he left his house and gathered his subjects together. His Indians then pursued the Guale Indians downriver. As they drew closer, the Guale abandoned their canoes and fled inland. (Subsequently, this witness seized those two canoes from them).

Don Juan's men also moved inland and chased after the Indians from Guale. Among the thorn bushes, they captured a Guale *mandador*¹² and killed him. From

¹¹ At this point, Governor Méndez instructs Alonso García de la Vera to add Juan de Santiago's testimony, as well as his previous orders, to the proceedings into the deaths of the friars.

¹² The precise role(s) of a Guale *mandador* remains unclear, although it appears that this office was among the most important positions in Guale villages. The title itself implies that the *mandador* issued orders on behalf of his *cacique*, and he might have served as a military

this *mandador*, they recovered a friar's habit and cowl, which this witness and his subjects all recognized as belonging to Fray Francisco de Beráscola, who was in Asao. Don Juan's men then returned, withdrawing back to San Pedro.

Don Juan himself embarked in another canoe in pursuit of the Indian attackers, and he returned to San Pedro by following a different route. He captured another [Guale] canoe after the Indians in it had fled overland. Don Juan then sent orders to his subject villages, instructing them that if they should happen to capture anyone from [Guale], they should bring the captive to San Pedro. On the following day, Indians from the town of Ayacamale brought the scalp of a Guale Indian, whom they had captured and killed.

As the remaining Guale canoes made their way back to Guale territory, they stopped along the river next to a village called Bejesi, which is subject to this witness. There they spoke with the Indians, telling them that they had murdered the five friars who were in Guale and that they had taken the lay brother Fray Antonio to Tulufina, where he was being held captive. Later that very night, this witness sent word to the lord governor of what was happening.

The witness was asked if he knew whether before now the Indians of Guale had killed other friars, royal officials, or other soldiers. Don Juan responded that he does not recall if other friars, royal officials, or soldiers had ever been killed in Guale; however, he does know that in the Guale pueblo of Ospogue, the Indians killed Captain Otálora, who served as *factor*, as well as several royal officials and others who accompanied him, including the *sargentos reformados* and the *alférez*. These men were on their way from St. Augustine to pay the salaries to the soldiers at Santa Elena.

The witness then was asked if he knew whether the Indians of Guale were Your Majesty's vassals and that they had

pledged their obedience to him. Don Juan stated that he is aware that the Indians of Guale were Your Majesty's vassals and allies with the Spanish, and that a shield bearing Your Majesty's royal coat of arms used to hang in Tolomato's council house (*bohío*). And this is all that this witness knows and nothing more, in accordance with his sworn oath; and he signed his name. His testimony was then read back to him. The witness listened, and then affirmed and ratified it. He stated that he was about 26 years old, more or less.

[signed] don Juan. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Testimony of Antonio López, Indian *principal* from the town of San Pedro

For the purpose of this investigation, the governor summoned Antonio López, Indian *principal* from San Pedro and vassal of the *cacique* don Juan, to appear before him. Through Gaspar de Salas, soldier and interpreter for the Indians of San Pedro, Antonio was asked about the tenor of the aforementioned decree.

Antonio stated that on the feast day of St. Francis, he was inside his home that night when his father-in-law Jusepe went outside to scare away a barking dog. However, as soon as Jusepe stepped out of the house, he was struck with five arrows, fired by Indians from Guale who had surrounded the house. On hearing his father-in-law shout "they have come to wage war," Antonio ran out of the house and fled into his fields, where he hid until daybreak. At that point, knowing that the Indians from Guale had attacked them, he gathered his bow and quiver of arrows and went in search of his *cacique*, don Juan.

He found don Juan at the boat launch, where he had gathered with Fray Francisco de Pareja and the Spaniards from the brigantine that had sailed up from St. Augustine. There, they prepared to launch several canoes; don Juan himself set out, together with Antonio López and other *indios principales*, in pursuit of the two Guale canoes, which were making their way across the river. When they reached land on the opposite bank, the Indians from Guale jumped ashore and fled over-

leader in warfare as well. It is telling that in this instance the *mandador* was clearly part of the small war party that disembarked to attack San Pedro.

land. Don Juan intercepted them upriver; there, they killed and scalped two of the Guale Indians. With that, they brought the scalps back to San Pedro, along with the two canoes that the Guale had left behind. They also brought a friar's habit and cowl; however, Antonio López declared that he did not know to whom they belonged. And that is what happened, and all that Antonio López saw and knows.

The witness was then asked if he knew, or had witnessed, or had heard it said whether before now the Indians of Guale had ever killed friars, other Spaniards, or royal officials. López responded that he had heard it said that the royal officials and the soldiers who were on their way to Santa Elena to deliver payments were all killed in the Guale village of Espogue [sometimes referred to as Ospogue or Ospos].¹³

He was then asked if he knows if the Indians of Guale were vassals of the king, don Philip, our lord, and allies with the Spanish, whom they treated with friendship. And he was asked if Your Majesty's coat of arms used to hang in Tolomato. López declared that he knows that the Indians of Guale were Your Majesty's vassals, and allies of the Spanish, and a shield painted with the royal coat-of-arms used to hang in Tolomato's council house.

That is what Antonio López had to say regarding this question, which he answered through [the interpreter], Gaspar de Salas. And having his declaration read back to him, he affirmed its content. He did not sign [the declaration] because he does not know how. And Gaspar de Salas stated that he was 28 years old. By his facial appearance, Antonio López looked to be about 40 years old, more or less.

[signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.
Before me, Alonso García de la Vera,
scribe.

Testimony of Jusepe, Indian

Following the above-mentioned declarations, and to further investigate this matter and to clarify the truth, the governor took the testimony of Jusepe, a Christian Indian who was lying wounded in bed. Through the interpreter, Gaspar de Salas, Jusepe was asked about the tenor of the aforementioned decree.

The Indian Jusepe declared that on the feast day of St. Francis, he was at home in bed. At dawn, Jusepe heard his dog barking and, thinking that the dog was barking at one of the *cacique* don Juan's horses, he went out of the house. As he stepped out of the house to make his way toward the fields, he shouted to the dog, "get out of here." But the moment he stepped outside, five arrows struck him, four in the back, and one in the arm. Wounded, Jusepe went back inside his house, fetched his bow, and returned to the field. He attempted to arch his bow, but his injuries prevented him from doing so. Therefore, he returned inside, shouting aloud, "they have come to wage war." On hearing his shouts, other neighboring Indians rushed out of their homes.

Later, Jusepe heard it said that [the attackers] were Indians from Guale, who had come in 26 canoes. He also heard that the *cacique* don Juan pursued them, capturing two canoes and killing two Indians, and that they found a friar's habit. However, that is all he knows about this affair.

He was asked if he knew or had heard it said before now that the Indians from the province of Guale had killed any friars, royal officials, or other Spaniards. Through the interpreter, the Indian Jusepe stated that he is aware that some time ago, royal officials and soldiers on their way from St. Augustine to Santa Elena to deliver payments to [the soldiers there] were all killed in Guale province, in the town of Espogue (Ospogue). Moreover, on another occasion, the Indians from Tolomato killed the interpreter Aguilar, as well as other Spaniards. And this is how Jusepe answered this question.

He was then asked if he knew that the Indians of Guale were Your Majesty's vassals, and allies with the Spanish.

¹³ Here, the witness is referencing an event that occurred more than two decades earlier, in 1574. The witness erroneously claims that the murders took place at Espogue [Ospos]. The royal officials were assaulted and killed at the village of Sapala (on Sapelo Island).

Through the interpreter, Jusepe declared that he knows that the Indians from Guale province were in fact Your Majesty's vassals and that they had paid him tribute, and that they were Spanish allies; and as allies, they had friars for their missions. And he knows that a shield bearing Your Majesty's royal coat-of-arms used to hang in Tolomato's council house.

This is what the interpreter declared that the Indian Jusepe testified, and this he knows and swears before God, in accordance with the law, to be the whole truth. He did not sign this testimony because he does not know how, and Gaspar de Salas stated that he was 28 years old. The Indian Jusepe appeared to be a man of roughly 50 years, more or less.

[signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de La Vera, scribe.

Testimony of Vicente González, infantry captain

Then forthwith, for the purpose of the said investigation, the governor and captain general summoned Captain Vicente González, infantry captain of the fort of St. Augustine, to appear before him. Captain González took and received the oath, in just accordance with the law; and on being questioned about the tenor of the aforementioned decree, stated that in the 23 years that he has resided in these parts, he knows that the Indians from Guale territory have murdered Franciscan friars and [various] interpreters. Moreover, they killed 14 or 15 soldiers who were with the interpreter, Aguilar. And because Aguilar served as an interpreter, they roasted him in a fire.

Roughly 19 years ago, more or less, several royal officials from this province, namely Captain Otálora, *factor*, Pedro Menéndez, treasurer, Miguel Moreno, accountant, and a number of sailors and soldiers boarded a ship and were on their way to deliver payments to the soldiers at Santa Elena. On the way, Indians from the Guale village of Espogue killed them all, despite the fact that they were at peace. Later, in the same region, the Guale murdered Gaspar Arias. And now most re-

cently, while this witness was serving with his company in St. Augustine, news arrived that the Guale Indians had killed every friar in the Guale missions located between Aluste and Asao. The witness also saw one of the friar's habits, which had been brought to St. Augustine by the same man who reported the news of the friars' deaths.

At this, Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo summoned this witness to a meeting at the Franciscan convent, together with the royal officials, the father custodian, and other friars. There, in his capacity as captain the witness offered his opinions on the matter; and it was agreed to come investigate and punish those responsible. And thus, this witness has joined together with the governor in this village of San Pedro, the very place where San Pedro's Indians claim that the Indians from Guale province came to wage war on them.

And this, in accordance with his sworn oath, is everything that the witness has learned about the matter since his arrival in these provinces. The witness signed his name, and stated that he was approximately 55 years of age.

[signed] Captain Vicente González. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Testimony of Andrés López de Simancas

Then forthwith, in continuation of the said investigation, the governor summoned Andrés López de Simancas, soldier, who took and received the oath in just accordance with the law. Questioned about the tenor of the aforementioned decree, López declared that since his arrival in these provinces, the Indians of Guale territory have killed [Spanish] soldiers, as well as the interpreters Aguilar and Pedro Malduerme. And in Guale, they roasted Aguilar in a fire.

Then later, in the Guale town of Espogue, the Indians killed Pedro Menéndez, *Adelantado* Pedro Menéndez de Avilés's one-eyed nephew, who at the time served as treasurer and lieutenant governor. Along with him, they killed Captain Otálora, who was the *factor*, the *alférez* Miguel Moreno, who served as the

royal accountant, as well as a number of soldiers and mariners. These men were on their way from St. Augustine to Santa Elena to deliver payments to the soldiers there. And the Guale [at Espogue] killed all of them and stole their boat, despite the fact that the Guale and the Spaniards were allies and at peace at the time.

Later in the same province they killed Corporal Gaspar Arias. And on one occasion, again during peacetime, this witness and another soldier were on their way from Santa Elena to Guale territory; at the principal town of Tolomato, the Indians attempted to murder them. Only this witness's rapid response spared their deaths, as the two of them quickly escaped in a canoe.

Now, most recently, with the *caciques* of Guale territory living in peace and in alliance [with the Spaniards] and with many of these same *caciques* having become Christians, this witness has heard it said that these Indians from Guale territory have killed the Franciscan friars who were teaching them the Christian doctrine.

This is what he knows to be the truth, in accordance with his sworn oath. On hearing his testimony read back to him, López listened and affirmed its content. He did not sign his name because he does not know how, and he claimed to be 60 years old, more or less.

[signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.
Before me, Alonso García de la Vera,
scribe.

Testimony of Corporal Juan de la Cruz

In order to investigate this matter further, the governor summoned Juan de la Cruz, a corporal from the fort at St. Augustine, to appear before him. The witness took and received the oath, in just accordance with the law. When asked about the tenor of the aforementioned decree, the witness stated that in the 35 years since he arrived in these provinces, he did not recall if the Indians from Guale territory had killed any friar before now. However, he does know that the Guale Indians murdered some [Spanish] soldiers as well as the interpreters Aguilar

and Pedro Malduerme, and that Aguilar was roasted on a spit. This occurred in Guale territory, and despite the fact that the Guale Indians were Spanish allies, living together in peace, and paying tribute to Your Majesty.

Later, in the town of Espogue, which is here in Guale territory, they killed the royal officials Pedro Menéndez, the one-eyed, who was serving as treasurer and lieutenant governor in these provinces, along with Captain Otálora, who was the *factor*, the *alférez* Miguel Moreno, who served as the royal accountant, and a number of soldiers and mariners. These men were on their way [from St. Augustine] to Santa Elena to deliver payments to the soldiers there. And the Guale [at Espogue] killed all of them and stole their boat, even though the Guale and the Spaniards were allies and at peace. And later they murdered Corporal Gaspar de Arias.

Now, most recently, with the *caciques* of Guale territory living in peace and paying tribute to Your Majesty, as his vassals, and with many of these same *caciques* having become Christians, this witness has heard it said that these Indians from Guale territory murdered the Franciscan friars who were at their missions. Thus, that makes it three times that the Indians from Guale territory have rebelled against His Majesty, denying him their due obedience.

This is what he knows and has heard said, in accordance with his sworn oath; and on hearing his testimony read back to him, Juan de la Cruz affirmed and ratified it. The witness stated that he is 50 years old, more or less.

[signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.
Before me, Alonso García de la Vera,
scribe.

Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas's Statement

I, Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas, preacher of the Order of Our Father St. Francis, declare that I was present in the Indian village of Puturiba, Florida when, on Saturday October 4, shortly after sunrise, I was summoned by the Indians of our mission. They were all greatly alarmed and upset. On leaving my house I saw and

counted 11 enemy canoes belonging to the natives of Ibaha, whom the Spaniards call Guale. And, as I had no other weapons, I donned those of the church and I began to celebrate Mass in honor of my glorious and seraphic father, St. Francis, for it was his day.

When the Mass ended, a messenger from San Pedro arrived with news that the Indians of Guale had waged war against San Pedro, and that they shot arrows at an Indian named Jusepe, who was badly wounded. Moreover, they fired five arrows at the cross and standard of Our Lord Jesus Christ that stood in a small sandy plaza. After having sacked a house in San Pedro and fired arrows at another, the Guale Indians returned to their canoes and departed. At that point, the *cacique* from Bejesi arrived, along with the *fiscal* from this mission, and three other Indians, interpreters, and messengers from Guale province. They all confirmed that on the [northern] tip of this very island they had counted 23 enemy canoes, carrying 300 to 400 Guale warriors. Furthermore, they explained that the *cacique* from Asao, with great shame, little fear of God, and with less understanding than what he had professed at his baptism, climbed on the edge of his canoe and shouted: "What do you think? We have killed five friars; and only the one with the shaved head, the lay brother, do we hold alive in Tulufina. Look here at the hat of my own friar." He then raised the hat up high like a great trophy. With that, [his subjects] all ridiculed and made fun of it and of Christian law, just like apostates and excommunicates of the Catholic faith.

At nightfall that very day, our Indians entered the council house, while all the others gathered at the mission, with the oars from a canoe that they had captured [from the Guale], as well as some *macanas* and other spoils that they had found in it. There, I learned how the Indians from San Pedro had seized another two canoes, and had caught and killed one of the enemy Indians. On the following day, I discovered that the Indians from Atalacamo¹⁴

had killed another [Guale Indian] after the Guale had killed one of their young men.

Among the spoils, the Indians from San Pedro discovered a habit and a cowl that had belonged to Fray Francisco de Beráscola. With that discovery, combined with all the other evidence (Fray Beráscola's hat that the Indians exhibited at Bejesi, the appearance in Bejesi of Asao's *cacique*, and the fact that Fray Beráscola did not come from his mission to my own, having promised me that he would come within 15 days to bring me the vestments, the chalice, and other things that I had left behind in Tolomato when I went to preach the doctrine in the hills of Ocute), I can only deduce that he has been martyred. The same can be said for the other blessed friars, for that is what the Indian enemies themselves declared; in fact, they boasted of it.

If the friars are still alive, at the very least they have been taken captive; and they must be under very tight guard because since the attack on San Pedro, not a single Guale Indian, canoe, or anything else from that land has come here. However, they did promise to return to wage war against all these Christians, for whose defense and protection I wrote to the lord general Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo in St. Augustine. I begged him to send six or more well-armed¹⁵ veteran soldiers to this island, which Governor Méndez did, may God protect him, with as much speed and alacrity as he could muster. These soldiers walked night and day, over land, across rivers, and through swamps, until they arrived here in San Pedro where Fray Pedro Pareja and I and our Christian [Indians] stood on guard and sentry duty, awaiting the arrival of General Méndez and his army. They reached this town on October 17, 1597.

At Governor Méndez's request, I declare and certify that everything contained in the aforementioned account is true, to which I signed my name.

[signed] Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas.

of Ayacamale, which San Pedro's *cacique* don Juan mentions in his testimony.

¹⁴ Fray Fernández is likely referring to the village

¹⁵ Here, the Spanish term is *escupilados*.

Fray Francisco de Pareja's Statement

On October 4, 1597, the day of our father St. Francis, I, Fray Francisco de Pareja, was in the Indian village of San Pedro in these provinces of Florida and I certify that on that same day, at twilight, I was standing at the church door when I heard the Indians from this village shouting, "War! War!" Greatly alarmed, the Indians all rushed toward the source of the shouts. On seeing [San Pedro's] Indians approaching, the Indians from Guale climbed into the two canoes that they had brought with them, and they made their escape, paddling away with great haste.

At that point, I departed in a brigantine, along with some other Spaniards whom Governor Méndez had sent here, and we all saw the [Guale] canoes making their escape. Seeing this, a messenger was dispatched to the village of Puturiba to determine what was happening there. And the *cacique* of this land, named don Juan, set out in two canoes to try to intercept the Guale. Finding themselves surrounded and their escape route blocked, the Guale fled along a narrow river into the woods. Within a short time, don Juan's men captured one Guale Indian and killed him.

One of the interpreters informed me that [the Guale] had surrounded the house of an Indian named Jusepe, and that they fired arrows at him, and that he was badly wounded. On hearing this, I immediately went to Jusepe's house to hear his confession. When I returned to the church, I was told how another 27 [Guale] canoes had landed close to the village, just upriver. With little fear of God, they had come ashore on a small strip of beach, and they pointed out to me a cross that the Guale had shot with five arrows. When I inquired into the meaning of this, I was told that they had murdered five of the priests from their territory.

All of this appears to be true because as the Guale made their escape from the Spanish brigantine that was anchored here, they spoke with the *cacique* of Bejesi and with Puturiba's *fiscal*, and with the other Indians who were at the island's northern point, where [the Guale canoes] had to pass. There, they stood in their ca-

noes in the middle of the bay. Standing at the front of his canoe, the *cacique* of Asao spoke, shamelessly and with little fear of God, as an apostate of the Catholic faith:

"What do you all think? We have killed five friars and only the one with the shaved head remains, as he was a lay brother. What are you doing [here]? Come to our land." Then, with a look of great satisfaction and victory he showed us a hat, which he raised high in the air, claiming that it had belonged to Fray Beráscola, who preached the doctrine in his land and village of Asao. The Indians on shore responded, "Why don't you come here, and you can gather food and bows and arrows to take back to your land?" [But] with that, the Guale departed.

On that same day, [don Juan]¹⁶ went out again in another canoe, with several Spaniards in another. They made their way toward Talaje, and found yet another [Guale] canoe tied ashore; in it, they found a great number of *macanas*, but the people had fled. During the chase, don Juan and his men killed another enemy Indian, and the enemy Indians killed a young boy.

That night, all the Indians who had left this town to pursue [the Guale] gathered together; among the spoils that they brought with them were the habit and the cowl of one of the priests. That very night, I sent these items to St. Augustine's governor, carried by a messenger dispatched by San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan. The messenger was sent to inform Governor Méndez of what had happened, requesting that he send six Spaniards to defend this church and the Christians here. And this he did, may God protect him, on the very same night the messenger arrived. With great speed and haste, the soldiers marched night and day, across rivers and through swamps, until they reached San Pedro. There, on the governor's orders, Fray Pedro de Chozas and I, along with

¹⁶ Here, the letter is rather ambiguous. Fray Pareja does not name don Juan specifically. Instead, he simply writes, "el dicho cacique" (the said *cacique*). However, given the context, it appears that he is referring to don Juan, the *cacique* from San Pedro.

the other Christian Indians and the 12¹⁷ Spaniards, stood on guard and sentry duty, awaiting the arrival of General Méndez and his army. And despite the extremely poor weather conditions, they arrived here on October 17 of 1597.

At the governor's request, I certify that everything stated here is true, and thus I sign my name.

Fray Francisco de Pareja.

Governor Méndez Issues Orders to Captain Vicente González

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, governor and captain general of these provinces of Florida, on behalf of the King, our lord, etc.

The following order contains the instructions that Captain Vicente González must carry with him and observe on his journey to Guale territory in Your Majesty's shallop:

Inasmuch as I have been told, the Indians from Guale territory have murdered the Franciscan friars stationed there. Since my arrival in this village of San Pedro two days ago, I have endeavored to investigate and learn the details of this case. However, I have yet to uncover an accurate account of what exactly has happened. In order to do so, and thus provide the necessary justification to punish and wage war against the [Indians responsible] in the manner most appropriate to Your Majesty's service, Captain González will set out in Your Majesty's shallop; he will be accompanied by some of the infantrymen I have here with me. The captain is to select up to 22 men, all wearing *escupiles* and provisioned with all the necessary armaments, munitions, and food supplies.

Captain González will then depart from this port with all the secrecy and caution required for such a venture. He will go to Tolomato, in Guale territory; however, under no circumstance is he to proceed beyond Tolomato. Once there, he will lead the Indians to believe that he and his men have come in peace, as has been the custom, in order to deliver food sup-

plies to the priests and to check on them. Should any Indian come out to speak with them, Captain González is to ask after the priests and how they are doing; and he is to request that the friars come to see him in person so that he can give them their gifts and then continue on his way.

San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, has informed me that they came down to [San Pedro] to wage war on him. I order that Captain González and his men report back to me on this matter, and determine if the Indians from Tulufina and the Salchiches were responsible [for the attack]. And I should be well warned should [these Indians] dare pass through San Pedro.

It is for these purposes that I dispatch Captain González to determine the truth. He is to use all means necessary to bring me back an Indian, male or female, from whom we can discover the truth. Even if he fails to determine exactly what happened and why, he is not to send any of his men inland. Captain González shall endeavor to return here to San Pedro by Thursday evening or daybreak on Friday. It is then that I anticipate the arrival of our Indian allies. However, if he is not here in person, then no resolution on this matter can be taken.

For anything else that might arise up there, I shall remit the matter to Captain González's good judgment and the faith I have in his character.

Issued in San Pedro, October 19, 1597.

[signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

By order of the lord general, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Captain Vicente González Departs for Tolomato

Forthwith I, Captain Vicente González, in compliance with the governor's orders, gathered the number of infantrymen authorized above and departed in the said vessel. With all possible haste, I reached Guale territory, roughly two leagues from Tolomato and 16 leagues from the village of San Pedro. There, I came across a canoe with an Indian aboard. Even though he was at a great distance, I started to give chase. The Indian threw himself into the water in an attempt to reach the shore and escape

¹⁷ As his orders below indicate, Governor Méndez de Canzo immediately dispatched 12 soldiers, not six, to San Pedro.

overland. I called after him many times in his language, and when I realized that he had no intention of turning back, I ordered a few shots to be fired at him, from which he received several wounds.

Upon his capture, I ordered our Indian interpreter to ask him how the friars were doing because we had brought gifts and food for them. The Indian responded that they were all dead. He was then asked who had killed them, and for what reason, to which he responded that all the region's *caciques* had done it, and that each *cacique* had killed his own resident friar. The captive added that the Indians from Cosahue, the Salchiches, as well as the Indians from Tulufina and Santa Elena, had ordered the *caciques* to kill the friars, and thus each *cacique* killed his own friar.

Seeing this, and discovering that the said Indian had in his possession a friar's woolen frock (*camisa de estameña*), Captain González took the Indian and returned as quickly as possible to the village of San Pedro in order to provide the governor with a full account. On arrival in San Pedro, the captain presented Governor Méndez with the [captured] Indian, as well as the woolen frock. All of this is the truth, and I sign my name before the scribe.

From San Pedro, October 22, 1597.

[signed] Captain Vicente González.
Before me, Alonso García de la Vera,
scribe.¹⁸

An Indian's Confession

In the village of San Pedro, October 22, 1597: seeing that Captain González had brought this Indian to San Pedro in compliance with his written orders, the governor proceeded to take the Indian's statement. Governor Méndez warned him, through the Indian translator Andrés López, to tell the truth about what had happened in Guale, which *caciques* had killed the friars, and how many friars did they kill?

Through Andrés López, an Indian from Puturiba and Guale translator, the Indian responded that the *caciques* from

Aluste and the others killed five friars who served as priests in Guale territory. These Indians convened for the purpose of killing all the friars, with each *cacique* responsible for killing his own friar. They spared only one, the lay brother.

Andrés López translated everything the Indian said into the language of San Pedro, which Juan del Junco then translated into Spanish. Juan de la Torre, a Spaniard who understands the Guale language, was also present.

The Indian was then asked what led the Indians to murder the friars. He stated that he knew nothing beyond what he stated above: that one night the Indians all convened and killed the friars.

He was then asked of which *cacique* he was subject, to which he responded that his *cacique* was Cascangue, but that he was dead.

The Indian was asked if he was present, or had witnessed, the murder of any of the friars. He responded that he was not present, nor did he witness any of the murders.

Questioned about who had given him the woolen frock, the Indian responded that he had traded for it with an Indian from Ospo named Tocobiega.

Asked if he knew where the dead friars' bodies were buried, he responded that he knew that they had buried Asao's friar in the church at the village of Asao. Guale's friar begged the Indians to bury him at the entrance to the church, and that is precisely where this witness has heard that he was interred. He then added that he did not know where they buried the other friars.

He was asked if he knew the whereabouts of the [missions'] chalice, ornaments, and books. He responded that what had belonged to Asao's priest was now in the possession of Asao's *cacique*. Of the others, he knew nothing.

Everything contained in the Indian's aforementioned statement was translated by the Indian interpreters, Andrés López and Juan del Junco. As Andrés López translated the Indian languages [from Guale to San Pedro], Juan del Junco translated into Spanish; and this was all done in

¹⁸ Again, Governor Méndez then instructs the notary to add these documents to the proceedings.

the presence of the governor and me, the scribe. Also present were Juan de la Torre, Guale interpreter, the *alférez* Hernando de Mestas, Alonso Díaz, Cristobal de Verlanga, and Toribio Vásquez.

[signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.
Before me, Alonso García de la Vera,
scribe.

Fray Blas de Montes Petitions the Governor

In the village of San Pedro, October 22, 1597, Fray Blas de Montes, vicar of Nombre de Dios, stated: by virtue of the authorization granted by Fray Francisco de Marrón, custodian of Santa Elena and vicar general of these provinces of Florida, I have come to investigate the murder of the friars from Guale territory. There is evidence [that the friars have been killed]; Fray Marrón not only received a report from Fray Pedro de Chozas, vicar and preacher of Puturiba, but he was also sent a habit that belonged to one of the deceased friars. I have also been sent to search for and retrieve all of the items pertinent to the celebration of the divine cult.

However, in order to accomplish all of this I shall require the appearance and statements from certain Spaniards; of course, I cannot compel them to testify without the authorization and license from the governor and captain general of these provinces. At present, the governor has come [here] to punish those responsible. I beg and I implore that [the governor] grant this license so that the truth does not remain hidden in a case as important as this one.

Dated *ut supra*, Fray Blas de Montes.

Governor Méndez de Canzo Issues His Response

That same day, in the village of San Pedro, I, the scribe, read the above petition to Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, Your Majesty's governor and captain general of these provinces. After hearing and understanding its contents, the governor responded:

On the seventh day of this present month, 1597, the governor received word that the Indians from Guale territory had murdered the friars who were stationed there. He learned of this from a letter sent

by the preacher, Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas. [At once], the governor began to prepare the infantry and gathered all the supplies and munitions necessary to investigate and punish such a terrible crime. With everything prepared, our Lord has been well served to bring the governor [safely] here to San Pedro with all of his men, food supplies, and munitions. Following his arrival, the governor has established that the Indians from Guale territory have killed the friars; he learned this from an Indian captured by Captain Vicente González, whom the governor had sent [to Guale territory] for that purpose. [The Indian] acknowledged in his confession that everything written in Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas's letter was true.

As governor and captain general of these provinces, on His Majesty's behalf and as the person who administers His Majesty's royal justice, it is not appropriate for Fray Blas to interfere by conducting his own proceedings or investigations in these provinces. In fact, in terms of the powers granted to him by the father custodian [Marrón], he is not entitled, nor could he be, to anything other than the right to retrieve the ornaments and other goods that belonged to the friars. To that end, his grace the governor requests, and if necessary orders, that Fray Blas embark with him for Guale territory, which is where the governor is going with his army of infantrymen. On this journey [to Guale], the governor will take better care of Fray Blas than he will of himself; Fray Blas will be given every comfort, and the governor will assign guards to protect him so that he is never in any danger.

Wherever they should go in Guale territory, including the missions where the friars were stationed, the governor will hand over to Fray Blas all the ornaments, chalices, and other articles belonging to the church, without exception. Furthermore, the governor ordered that the friar's frock (*camisa*) that Captain Vicente González had given him yesterday (which the captured Indian was wearing), also be given to Fray Blas.

Moreover, the governor will give every priority to locating the bodies of the

[deceased] friars so that, with Fray Blas's agreement, those that are found can be transferred, with all due respect, to the Franciscan convent in St. Augustine. And should Fray Blas decide it appropriate to conduct some type of inquiry, investigation, or proceedings into this matter, he should do so before his grace, the governor. For his part, the governor is prepared to receive, admit, and order such investigations, backed by his authority and by judicial decree. If necessary, should Fray Blas or Fray Marrón still wish to pursue the matter once the current investigation is complete, the governor will give them the authority to do so.

In the meantime, the governor requests that Fray Blas not interfere in matters of royal jurisdiction, nor should he exercise ecclesiastical authority over this matter. Such actions will be viewed as an attempt to usurp royal authority because the governor does not authorize, admit, or recognize jurisdiction beyond that prescribed by law. To that end, the governor orders that I, the scribe, on punishment of 10,000 *maravedíes*, paid to Your Majesty's royal treasury, not record a single judicial decree with Fray Blas or any other friar from his order without the governor's authorization. The governor then ordered that I include this paper in the proceedings. Moreover, should the father custodian or Fray Blas wish to have a copy of this judicial claim, it should be given to them in the service of His Majesty.

And this the governor decreed, ordered, and signed with his name.

[signed] Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Then forthwith I, the scribe, read the above decree to Fray Blas de Montes. I also gave the friar a woolen frock (*tuniquilla*) worn by an Indian who was captured in Guale territory. Fray Blas de Montes listened to the decree, received it, and signed his name, which I faithfully certify. And he requested a copy of everything.

[signed] Fray Blas de Montes. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

The Governor Departs for Guale

On October 24, 1597, the governor and his men boarded their ships and left for the villages of Guale in order to investigate and punish the crime committed by those Indians for having murdered the friars. In his company, the governor brought Fray Blas de Montes so that he could return to him any of the friars' remains they might discover, in accordance with the contents of the aforementioned decree.

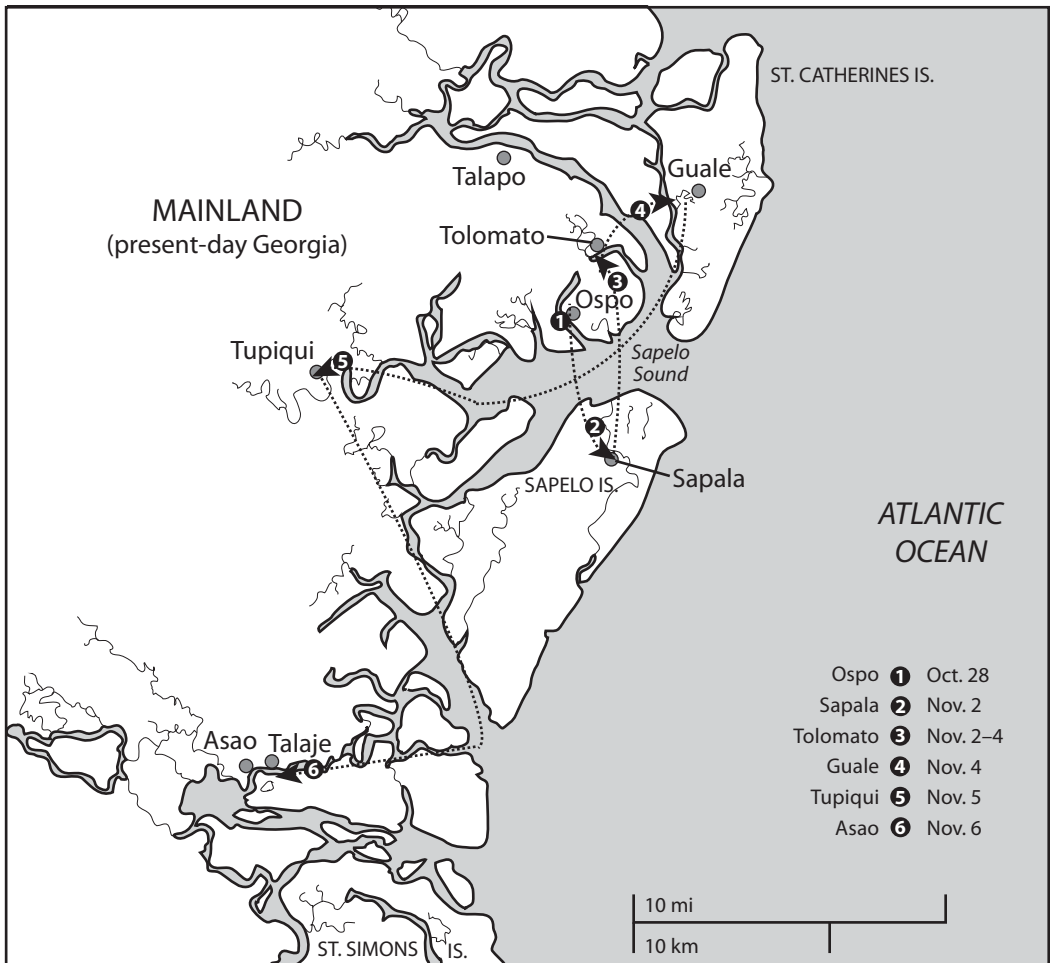
Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

The Attack on Ospó

On the 27th of said month and year, the governor once again interrogated the Indian captured by Captain Vicente González; through an interpreter, the governor asked him if the Indian forces were all gathered at Ospó. The Indian turned to look at him and responded that they were indeed at Ospó. On hearing that, the governor ordered his officers to follow him to Ospó that very night in order to attack the Indians at dawn. In response, the governor's officials agreed to obey the order and to accompany him.

Having embarked on some *chalupas* and canoes, they arrived within a league and a half of Ospó; there, the governor discovered that he was missing four canoes, which were carrying Indian [allies] and some Spaniards. All told, the governor found that he was missing 72 men. Seeing this great shortage, the governor solicited advice from Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz and from other sensible and experienced soldiers; this group included the present scribe, Alonso García de la Vera, Sergeant Santiago, and Sergeants Verlanga and Simancas.

The governor asked the men if his force was large enough to move ashore and attack the Indians, warning them of the news he had received that the Indians from the province had gathered their entire force at Ospó. Together in one voice, the men replied that they had sufficient men indeed to carry out their mission to go ashore and attack the Indians. On hearing this advice, the governor ordered the oarsmen to row quickly in search of the said village of Ospó. At daybreak, a dense fog



Map 4. Names and approximate locations of the Guale villages inspected during Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo's 10-day punitive expedition in 1597. The name of each village and the specific date on which Spanish forces arrived are indicated.

and a torrential downpour overcame them, making it impossible to distinguish the land around them. The governor then turned to the Indian who had been captured by Vicente González, threatening him to tell them where Ospo was located and which specific channel they needed to follow. But the Indian did not tell the truth; rather, he denied that they were on the correct channel, claiming instead that it led to Tolomato. The governor felt the Indian was only saying that so the Indians at Ospo would discover our presence when daybreak ar-

rived, and thus prevent the governor from carrying out a surprise attack.

In response, the governor ordered that the Indian be turned over to a group of Indians on another canoe, who were ordered to put him to the garrote (this in addition to the four or five harquebus wounds the Indian had received when he was taken prisoner). With that, the governor then continued his journey, arriving at Ospo at sunrise. He and his men went ashore, where they were met with a flourish of Indian arrows. Some soldiers were injured, but the governor and

his men still managed to enter the village. They burned the main residences and the maize storehouses; they spared no structure, save for the church, which the governor ordered not to be burned. As they went about setting fire to the village, the Indians rushed forth and fired arrows at them; their attacks were met with arquebus fire.

And in Ospó, the governor discovered a missal, a breviary, a [friar's] hat,¹⁹ a chalice veil (*pañó de cubrir el cáliz*), and a friar's scalp. As all these items belonged to the friars, the governor ordered that everything be given to Fray Blas, which it was.

Seeing that the Indians had all gathered and fled into the forest, no more punishment could be inflicted upon them. Thus, the governor decided to return to the woodlands of Asao (where he had left the large ships) to resupply with food and munitions. He also wanted to determine what had happened to the men and the canoes that had gone missing; just two leagues from there, they came across the missing men, at which point the governor gathered everyone and together they returned to the ships. There, the governor reprimanded the men for all the harm they had caused. As punishment for their carelessness, the governor relieved two squadron captains of their rank. With that, the governor ordered no additional disciplinary actions against them.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Sapala and Tolomato

On November 2, the governor and his men boarded their ships, leaving the woodlands of Asao once again for Guale. On that very day, they burned the village of Sapala, including its storehouses and the food contained in them. From there, the general departed for Tolomato, where he and all his men went ashore. There, they found the church burned, as well as the principal *bohíos* and the friars' residence. And because Tolomato was a

principal village, the governor decided to remain there for two days. He then ordered some interpreters to climb up into the treetops and shout summonses to the Indians to come and speak with the governor, who would listen to their justifications for murdering the friars. However, no one came, except for a few treacherous Indians who arrived and wounded two of our Indian allies.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

The Island of Guale

Then, on November 4, seeing that the Indians were not going to come, the governor ordered all the houses in Tolomato burned. In some bushes, they discovered an altar, as well as an image of San Antonio de Padua. Everything was returned to Fray Blas.

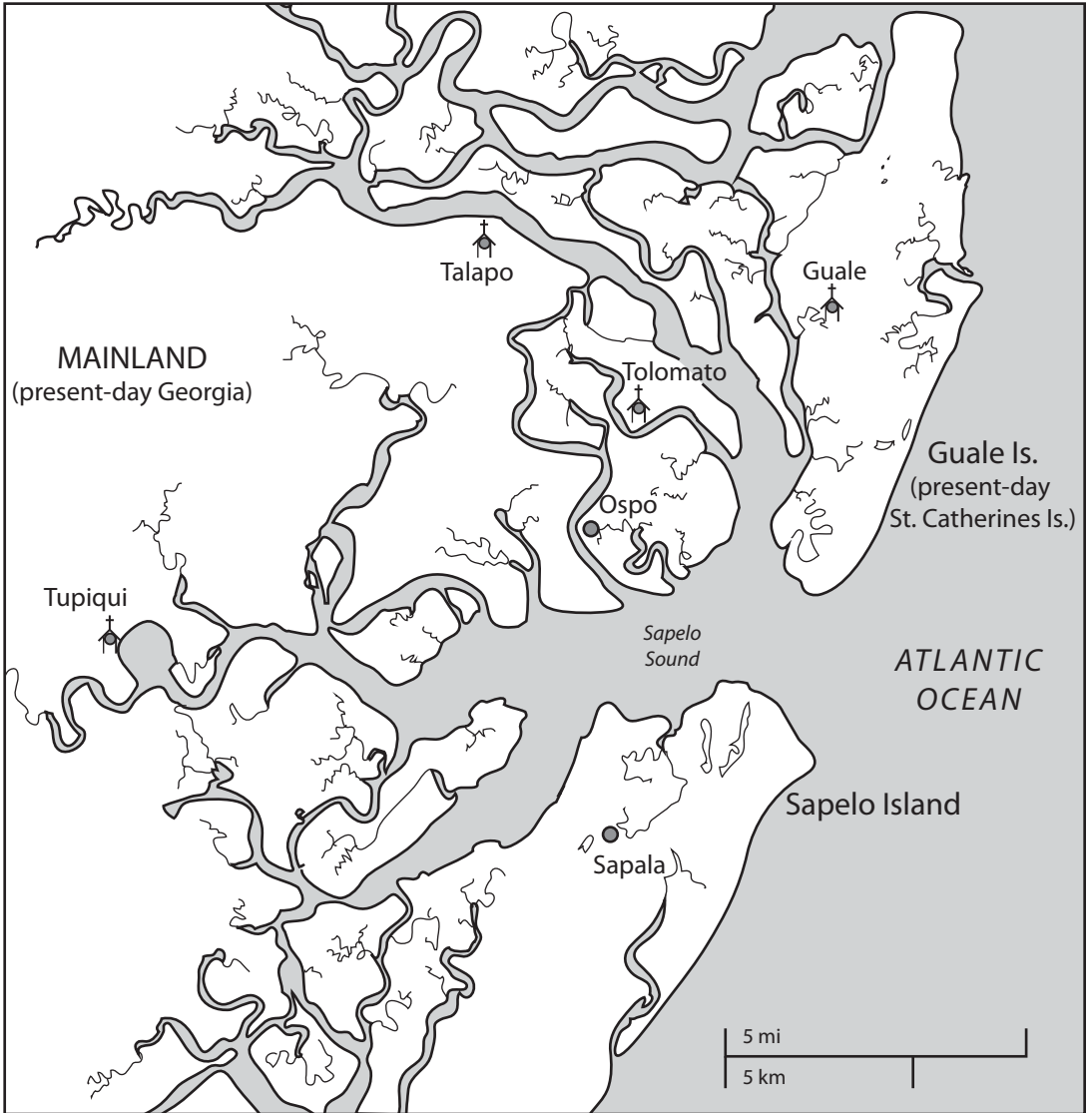
On that same day, the governor sent Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz and a number of infantrymen to the island and village of Guale to see what was there and, if possible, to capture some Indians alive. In the event that they should not capture anyone, they were to inflict as much damage as possible and set fire to the village and the island.

At nightfall that same day, the sergeant major returned from the expedition. In my presence, he reported to the governor that he found no Indians on the island or in the village. Moreover, he discovered the church and the friars' residence burned to the ground. However, the sergeant general set fire to the council house (*bohío grande*), the *cacique's* residence, and everything else that was still standing. He also found two graves, with two bodies buried in them. Based on their proportions and distinguishing features, the sergeant major and his men recognized that the bodies belonged to two friars, Fray Miguel and Fray Antonio. They were found with their arms and legs broken in four pieces and their feet bound. Next to the first grave there was a head, which [although unrecognizable] appeared to belong to Fray Miguel because it was not completely severed from his body. With a hoe, the men exhumed the body to verify,

¹⁹ None of the sources describe the hats (*sombretos*) worn by the friars; however, it is likely that they were broad brimmed hats, much like the *galero*, but without tassels.

after which they reburied him. They also covered the body of the other friar whose corpse had been poorly buried. However, due to the wretched stench, and because the bodies had not fully decomposed, it was not possible to bring them back, as the governor had ordered.

The sergeant major left the graves marked for whenever they should decide to retrieve them. However, he did bring back Fray Miguel's skull, as well as several other small bones from Fray Miguel's corpse. The governor delivered them to Fray Blas.



Map 5. Guale Island (modern St. Catherines Island) and its surrounding area. To date, the Franciscan mission on St. Catherines Island is the only 16th-century mission found in the archaeological record.

The sergeant major issued this declaration before me, the scribe, and he signed his name.

Alonso Díaz. Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Tupiqui

On November 5, the governor dispatched the sergeant major and some infantrymen to burn the village of Tupiqui. The sergeant major returned that same day, and reported that he did not find a single Indian, and that the church, the friar's residence, the council house, and the *cacique's* residence were all burned. Furthermore, he found another buried corpse, which appeared to be that of Fray Blas Rodríguez; the friar's head had been split into three or four pieces. The sergeant major unearthed the body but, because of the terrible odor, he did not bring the corpse back. Instead, he reburied it.

Asao and Talaje

On November 6, the governor sent the same sergeant major to the villages of Asao and Talaje, with orders to capture any Indian and, if possible, to take him alive. If not, the sergeant major should inflict upon them whatever punishment possible. The sergeant major returned here that same night and informed the governor that he did not find a single Indian. Rather, he found the entire village of Asao and all its houses still standing and the storehouses filled with maize and other foodstuffs. And he found the same in the village of Talaje. Thus, he razed everything to the ground.

The sergeant major issued this declaration before the governor and in my presence.

Alonso Díaz. Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Governor Méndez Returns to St. Augustine

With the Indians now on high alert, the governor recognized that he could carry out no further punishments; therefore, he began his withdrawal back to St. Augustine. On November 8, he arrived at

the village of San Pedro. On November 11, the governor summoned San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, and some of his *principales* and family members to gather in San Pedro's main church. There, he advised them not to remain in this place because they were under serious threat from the Guale Indians. Moreover, the governor ordered that the priests stationed at Puturiba return with him to St. Augustine. He added that it would be of great service to His Majesty if don Juan and his people withdrew to San Juan del Puerto, Socochuno, and to other villages in his territory. There, the friars would be able to gather without fear to teach them and to administer the sacraments.

Through the interpreter Juan de Junco, don Juan, his relatives, and *principales* all replied that they were in favor and that, as Your Majesty's loyal vassals, they would comply with whatever orders he issued them. Then, seeing how don Juan and his Indians accepted his orders with such great love, and because don Juan and many of his subjects joined the expedition to Guale territory, the governor, in Your Majesty's name, informed them that he was freeing them from the tribute they were required to pay Your Majesty. Previously, the tribute assessment called for each married man to provide one *arroba* of maize each year. However, in recognition [of their loyalty and services], the governor would prefer that each married man give six ears of maize until Your Majesty and Royal Council of the Indies order otherwise.

The governor took this action in consideration of all the aforementioned, and because these Indians suffer such poverty that they sustain themselves for most of the year on shellfish, acorns, and other plant roots. Moreover, the governor does not want the Indians to think, as they now do, that Your Majesty does not love them; nor does he want the natives to believe that Your Majesty's love is based on the tribute they provide. Rather, the Indians should understand that Your Majesty only wants them to come to recognize the Holy Catholic faith and the law of the gospel, and for them to accept Your Majesty as

king and lord.

In response, don Juan replied that he was most grateful and that he held Your Majesty in high regard. And instead of thanks, the Indians saluted the governor in accordance with their customs.

Governor Méndez Orders San Pedro's Indians to Retreat to San Juan del Puerto

On that very day, the governor issued the same speech to the *caciques* from Puturiba and Tocoaya so that they too would withdraw [to San Juan del Puerto, etc]. In Your Majesty's name, the governor granted them the same tribute concessions as he had to the others. And he left Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz and 24 soldiers behind to escort the Indians on their retreat.

On November 16 of this same year, Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo departed from the village of San Pedro to St. Augustine.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Then, on that same day, month, and year, the governor and captain general declared that he is departing for the city of St. Augustine and is therefore unable to attend to the punishment that the Indians from Guale territory deserve for having murdered the friars. The governor must return to St. Augustine in order to dispatch a ship to collect the payments for men of this province; he must also send

Your Majesty notice of the friars' deaths, the account of which will be sent to Your Royal Council.

To that end, the governor ordered that I, the present scribe, notarize these entire proceedings so that Your Majesty and His Royal Council will learn that the governor himself took part in punishing said Indians. And while he informs Your Majesty and Royal Council of this matter, the governor vows to continue to investigate the murders of the friars and punish those responsible, which he will do through force of arms and all other methods of warfare. This will continue until Your Majesty and Royal Council decide and order what is to be done in this case.

Until that time, all the Indian men and women captured alive from the province of Guale will be awarded to the soldiers, whom they shall serve until Your Majesty and Royal Council order otherwise. This action is to be taken because the gravity of the crime committed by these Indians merits such a punishment.

This is what the governor decreed, ordered, and signed his name.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.²⁰

²⁰ The proceedings end here, with the official certification of three other royal officials in St. Augustine (Bartolomé de Argüelles, Juan Menéndez Marqués, and Juan López de Avilés), who signed their names on January 12, 1598.



CHAPTER 5

A NEW PRETENDER: THE OTHER DON JUAN

He and the chieftainess were Christians and spoke the Castilian language very well. He had a very good carriage and countenance, of great strength. He was named don Juan and [he] dressed well in the Spanish manner. And when the chieftainess went out she wore a cloak like a Spanish lady....¹

—Fray Andrés de San Miguel, describing his initial impressions of don Juan, *cacique* of San Pedro, and his wife.

More than three months had passed since the Guale war party had launched its surprise attack on San Pedro. Governor Méndez had returned to St. Augustine, frustrated that he had been unable to gather much information about what had happened to the friars in Guale territory. Why had they been murdered and by whom? Were any of the friars still alive? If so, where were they and how would he retrieve them? The governor's punitive campaign had succeeded in destroying a handful of Guale villages, driving their inhabitants deep into the interior. His men had discovered the full remains of three friars and the scalp of another, and they had recovered some of the clothing, books, and church ornaments that belonged to the Franciscans. However, with the exception of the one Indian from Cascangue, whose testimony provided few details, the governor's force had been unable to capture a single Indian for interrogation. Uncertain of what actions the Guale might take next, Governor Méndez elected to retreat to St. Augustine, vowing to continue

with the investigation into the friars' murders until he uncovered the truth of what had happened and punished those responsible.

In the meantime, Florida's governor ordered all of his soldiers back to St. Augustine and, fearing another Guale attack, he urged San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, to withdraw south with all of his Indian subjects to the mission of San Juan del Puerto. Lastly, Governor Méndez mandated that all the province's friars return to the Franciscan convent in St. Augustine, claiming that he could not provide them with adequate protection at the missions. For the moment, missionary activity in Florida would cease and the friars would be confined to St. Augustine until the matter was resolved and it was safe to return to their missions.

It is unclear how the friars initially responded to the governor's order, however, it appears that they all returned to St. Augustine voluntarily. Still, their return did little to ease tensions between the friars and Florida's governor; not only that, but their confinement to the Franciscan friary raised concerns about the future of Florida's missions. Thus, on December 1, 1597, the friars convened a formal meeting to discuss how best to proceed with their missionary work in Florida. When the meeting ended, the friars agreed that one of them should return to Spain to inform their superiors of the deaths of the six friars and to request ornaments, images, bells, and other provisions necessary to continue their work in Florida. (Note that they believed that all six friars had been murdered. At this time, no one in St. Augustine knew that Fray Francisco de Ávila was alive and in captivity.) To carry out this task, the friars unanimously agreed that the best person for

¹ Fray Andrés de San Miguel, *An Early Florida Adventure Story* (Hann, 2001: 70).

the task was the vicar of Puturiba and Cascangue, Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas.

When Governor Méndez learned of the friars' decision he simply refused to grant Fray Fernández license to return to Spain. According to the governor, the Crown had invested a great sum of royal funds to support the friars' missions in La Florida and he was not prepared to allocate additional funds to pay for Fray Fernández's return. Moreover, now that six Franciscans had been murdered (at the time, he too believed that all six friars were dead), leaving just a handful of friars in the province, Governor Méndez declared that he could not spare the loss of yet another, arguing that their continued presence was now more important than ever. If that were not reason enough, Méndez added that he did not possess the authority to grant such a license, which he claimed had to come directly from the Crown.

Nevertheless, the governor's refusal to authorize the friars' request did little to deter the Franciscans, who immediately challenged his authority to make such a decision. Relations between the friars and Governor Méndez had already been strained from the beginning of the investigation into the friars' murders; with Méndez's refusal to accept the friars' request to send Fray Fernández to Spain, relations deteriorated even further. Fray Francisco de Marrón, the guardian and custodian of Florida's Franciscan Order, petitioned the Crown, blaming the governor for the terrible state of St. Augustine's church and the Franciscan friary, both of which he claimed desperately needed repair. Fray Marrón added that the temporary absence of one friar would make no difference to the missionary work in the province, especially since the governor had confined the Franciscans to their convent, refusing to allow them to work with the Indians. Moreover, their services were not required in St. Augustine, Marrón claimed, because the governor had brought his own parish priest, an Irishman named Ricardo Arturo (Richard Arthur), to serve St. Augustine's parish.²

Fray's Marrón's persistent campaign proved successful, and in early January of 1598 Governor Méndez finally relented, granting Fray Fernández permission to return to Spain to report

to the king and to Fray Francisco de Zubiaga, the Commissary General of the Indies.³ The governor justified his decision, stating that Fray Marrón was absolutely determined to send the friar to Spain and that by allowing him to do so, the governor would avoid endless waves of petitions and requests.⁴ However, it is clear that the governor resented the friars' demands. In a letter to the Crown written the following month (and translated in chap. 6), Governor Méndez reported that Fray Fernández had returned to Spain without his authority or his consent. Furthermore, the governor reported that the friars had defied his explicit orders to remain in St. Augustine and had returned to their missions where their safety could not be guaranteed.⁵

If the governor had difficulty convincing the friars to obey his orders and remain in St. Augustine, he also proved unable to convince San Pedro's *cacique*, don Juan, to retreat south to the mission of San Juan del Puerto. In fact, it is unclear whether don Juan ever abandoned San Pedro, but if he did, his absence was brief. By January of 1598 (if not sooner) don Juan and his subjects had returned to San Pedro. Expenditures from St. Augustine's royal coffers in mid-January of 1598 indicate that Governor Méndez regularly authorized some of his men to sail up to San Pedro to barter for maize.⁶

It is rather curious that don Juan of San Pedro has not received more attention in the scholarship on the 1597 Guale Uprising. In fact, he is rarely mentioned in the literature on the subject.⁷ In most versions of the uprising story, the Guale targeted San Pedro because of the Franciscan

³ It is unclear whether Fray Fernández made it back to Spain. To date, we have found no evidence that the friar ever met with King Philip II or any of his officials. "Letter from Fray Francisco de Marrón," AGI Santo Domingo 231 (December 7, 1597), fols. 864r–867v.

⁴ *Ibid.*, fols. 864v–867v.

⁵ A translation of this letter appears in chapter 6.

⁶ AGI "Contaduría 950," bl. 2, sf (January 16, 1598).

⁷ In his rigorous examination of the 1597 Guale Uprising, Ignacio Omaecheverría, 1955, makes reference to don Juan's 1598 letter. Omaecheverría concludes that don Juan issued the petition because he hoped to unite the rival "nations" of Guale and Timucua under one leader. See Ignacio Omaecheverría, "Mártires Franciscanos de Georgia," *Missionalia Hispanica*, Año XII, 32: 46.

² See "Letter from Fray Francisco de Marrón," AGI Santo Domingo 231 (December 7, 1597), fols. 864r–867v.

presence there. But is that really why the Guale war party attacked the island? If that were the case, why did they surround Antonio López's residence and not the dwellings of the two Franciscan friars stationed there? Even more troubling is the fact that less than a year later, in early September of 1598, another Guale war party, perhaps with the assistance of Indian allies from Escamacu, returned to attack San Pedro. Again, the island's friar was not the intended target. Instead, the assailants burned three of the island's villages and killed some of its residents.

The document that follows represents the only primary source in this volume written by one of the Indian protagonists.⁸ On January 16, 1598, three months after the Guale assault on San Pedro, the island's *cacique* don Juan dictated a brief letter to the Crown. In it, San Pedro's *cacique* offers his account of the October attack, explaining that the Guale had intended to kill him and his subjects. He makes no mention of the friars as potential targets of the assault. For don Juan, this was a conflict between San Pedro and Guale. Don Juan then informed the Crown of his immediate response to the attack and his unwavering alliance with the governor during the subsequent punitive expedition into Guale territory. San Pedro's *cacique* then praises St. Augustine's governor for lowering his subjects' annual maize tribute assessment and asks the Crown to ratify the new tribute requirements. He also requests additional resources, which he insists will be used to help convince other *caciques* to "render their obedience" to the Crown. Undoubtedly, both the Crown and Governor Méndez applauded don Juan's strategy to use "royal gifts" to bring other *caciques* into the service of the Spanish monarch. However, don Juan likely had other motivations in mind.

Don Juan concludes the letter with a stunning appeal. He asks the Crown to authorize his appointment as *mico mayor* of Guale territory. According to San Pedro's *cacique*, the Guale had committed the murders of the Franciscan friars because they did not have a leader whom they respected, suggesting that his appointment to that office would remedy that fact.

⁸ To clarify, the text itself was not written in don Juan's hand; rather, it was likely recorded by a Franciscan friar or one of St. Augustine's royal scribes. However, don Juan signed his name at the end of the letter.

At first glance, the request seems rather unusual. Don Juan was not even from Guale territory and he certainly had no legitimate claim to the office of *mico mayor*. Moreover, even if the Crown granted his request, what made don Juan think that the Guale would accept such an outrageous appointment? What then had motivated don Juan to issue such a request? In the aftermath of the attack on his village, was this an effort to secure legitimacy to launch a counteroffensive against the Guale, perhaps with Spanish military assistance? If so, did he really need the Crown to authorize his appointment as *mico mayor*?

Perhaps there is a different explanation altogether, one that takes into account the instability and fluctuation of southeastern chieftaincies in the 16th century and the power on which chiefly authority rested. If authority over the spiritual realm helped to legitimize chiefly authority, there was also an economic component to chiefly power. A *cacique's* capacity to redistribute resources, both food and luxury goods, also appears to have played a significant role in determining the extent of his or her authority.⁹ Thus, access to rare and prestigious European goods likely would have reinforced (and perhaps even increased) a leader's power and influence. Moreover, as Joseph Hall has recently suggested, Spanish goods enjoyed a "certain prominence" among southeastern Indian chiefs, who sometimes used these items as replacements for traditional symbols of power and authority.¹⁰ These goods could then be redistributed through long-standing networks of exchange, thus further enhancing a chief's authority. For southeastern chiefdoms, gift-giving represented power and superiority, not subordination.

Thus, if don Juan could increase his royal favor through the appointment to the office of *mico mayor*, he would also gain access to an increased supply of Spanish goods, such as axes, hoes, glass beads, clothing, imported foods, European livestock, and even swords and horses. More importantly, as *mico mayor* of Guale territory, don Juan would then control the distribution of these goods, further increasing his authority in the region. Perhaps his request made perfect sense.

Of course, don Juan never became *mico*

⁹ Paar (1999: 144).

¹⁰ Hall (2007: 93–94).

mayor. On August 16, 1598, exactly seven months after don Juan had written his letter to the Crown, the Council of the Indies in Spain issued its response. Once again, the council members reiterated their appreciation for don Juan's services and voted to award San Pedro's *cacique* with an additional 200 ducats.¹¹

However, when it came to don Juan's appeal to be appointed *mico mayor* of Guale territory, the council members hesitated. Clearly unaware of the nature of the office and title that don Juan had requested, the council turned to Governor Méndez to provide it with additional information, together with a detailed explanation of the office itself.¹² Almost two years would pass before the council members received the governor's reply.

It was not until February 28, 1600, that Governor Méndez drafted his response (a translation of which is found in chap. 7), which reached the council three months later at the end of May. In his letter, the governor explained that the office of *mico mayor* was similar to that of a king, and then he urged the council to deny don Juan's request to be named *mico mayor* of Guale territory. Governor Méndez wrote: "My own opinion on this matter is that Your Majesty should not award the *cacique* don Juan with the title of *mico mayor* ... such a move would ruin everything that I have worked so hard to accomplish in subduing that province and winning over its inhabitants."¹³

It appears that the Council of the Indies agreed with Governor Méndez's recommendation and therefore chose not to make the appointment.¹⁴ Yet, it is unlikely that don Juan ever learned of the council's decision. On June

16, 1600, don Juan passed away. In a letter written to the Crown 10 days later on June 24, Governor Méndez reported the sad loss of the region's most important *cacique*. "He died a good Christian," the governor wrote, "receiving the sacraments at the hour of his death and thus providing a wonderful example to all the native Indians."¹⁵ After his death, don Juan was succeeded by his niece, doña Ana, who became San Pedro's next *cacica*.¹⁶

Document 5.1: "Letter from don Juan, *cacique* of San Pedro, to the king," AGI Santo Domingo 231, fols. 744r–744v (January 16, 1598).

My Lord: I kiss Your Majesty's feet for the great favors that you have bestowed upon this Indian *cacique*, by honoring me with a letter from Your Majesty himself, and also for ordering the now-deceased governor, Domingo Martínez de Avendaño, to once again send a friar [to my village] to instruct me as well as the Indians to whom I am *cacique*. And thus, I beg that Your Majesty grant me the favor of continued support for my Indians and for me, here in this doctrine. As a Catholic Christian and as Your Majesty's loyal vassal, I am obliged to serve Your Majesty, which I always do, attending to everything asked of me, as ordered through your governors and captain generals of these provinces.

And now, regarding the matter that has presented itself with the Guale Indians who murdered the friars stationed in their province: 28 canoes carrying more than 400 Indian warriors arrived at my village of San Pedro with the intent to kill me and my people. Through God's favor, and with the help of some Spaniards who had come to my village in a brigantine

¹¹ In another letter written to the Crown on February 4, 1600, don Juan acknowledged the receipt of the additional 200 ducats, which he claimed had been given to him in the form of metal tools, clothing, and wheat. He thanked the Crown for the support and once again offered his unqualified support in the conflict against the Guale, whom he claimed had launched warfare against him and his people. See "Letter from don Juan to the Crown," AGI Santo Domingo 231, fol. 773r (February 4, 1600).

¹² "Council of the Indies Decree," AGI Santo Domingo 6, fol. 21v (August 16, 1598).

¹³ "Letter to the king from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo" AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.35 fol. 220r.

¹⁴ See AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.35 (May 28, 1600), fol. 231r.

¹⁵ "Letter from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo," AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.36, fol. 283v. The governor does not reveal the cause of don Juan's death, which remains unknown. It is unlikely that don Juan had been killed in combat, which would have sparked Spanish reprisals.

¹⁶ Following traditional inheritance patterns, San Pedro's chieftaincy transferred to the child, in this case the daughter, of don Juan's sister (see Deagan, 1994: 103).

from St. Augustine, I defended myself against the attackers, killing a certain number of Indians and seizing from them three canoes.

And when your governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, passed through my pueblo of San Pedro on his way to punish the Indians of Guale, I joined him, together with many of my Indians. I remit this entire matter to Governor Méndez, who will provide Your Majesty with a full account.

In Your Majesty's name, the governor has rewarded me by lowering the tribute demands that my people and I used to pay; previously, those of us who were married paid one *arroba* of maize [each year]. In consideration of our poverty, of which the governor is well aware, he has now ordered that we each pay six ears of maize as tribute until Your Majesty orders otherwise.¹⁷ And although your governor has granted me this favor, I beg of Your Majesty, in view of my desire to serve you, to order the governor to provide me with a good amount of financial assistance in order to provide better gifts to

the other *caciques* so that they will come to obey Your Majesty. I also beg that Your Majesty confirm the [new] tribute assessment.

Moreover, I trust in God that very soon your governor will bring the Guale Indians back under your obedience; for my part, and with my people, I will assist in everything I am ordered to do. It is the governor's opinion that I should take my people and withdraw to other towns in my territory situated closer to St. Augustine; that way, the friars, namely the one stationed here and another I will take with me, will be safer. These friars do not want to remain in San Pedro or in Puturiba. For the same reason, the governor also ordered the Indians of Puturiba to withdraw to my other [subject] pueblos. It gives us great pleasure and joy that we are so well treated and privileged.

Furthermore, I beg your Majesty to do me the favor of ordering Governor Méndez to grant me the title of *mico mayor* and *cacique* of Guale province, and that I be accepted and recognized thus. The Guale do not have a leader they respect, and thus they do not obey their own *caciques*. It is for that reason they committed this wicked act, among others.

Thus, I defer all of these matters to your governor who will inform you of my good Christian character and of all of my services. May our Lord save your Majesty, as this *cacique* greatly desires. From St. Augustine, January 16, 1598.

[signed] Don Juan.

¹⁷ A report from December of 1601 claims that between 1597 and 1599 the Indians from San Pedro and Nombre de Dios paid no annual tribute. Tribute payments began again in 1600. However, even then, the assessment appears to have been lower than the six ears of maize mandated by Governor Méndez in late 1597. Instead, the Indians from San Pedro paid an annual tribute (per married male tributary) of four ears of maize. See "Account from the Officials of the Royal Treasury," AGI Santo Domingo 229, fol. 327v (December 13, 1601)



CHAPTER 6

THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES AND A FRIAR'S RANSOM

On seeing his older brother again, Amador suddenly became acutely aware how much he himself had changed. Almost three years had passed since Florida's previous Spanish governor, Domingo Martínez de Avendaño, had brought Amador from his native village to St. Augustine, where he was to be trained as an interpreter and taught the Christian doctrine.¹ Amador was one of several Guale Indian elites that had been brought to St. Augustine in the year 1595 as part of an accord to establish Franciscan missions in Guale territory. At the time, Amador was still a child, perhaps seven or eight years old, when he left his family and his home, the Guale village of Tupiqui, where his father ruled as *cacique*. The rest of Amador's family, including his older brother, who had been baptized and given the Christian name Lucas, had remained behind. After three years in St. Augustine, Amador now dressed like a young Spaniard and spoke fluent Spanish. On occasion, Florida's governor or one of the friars would call on Amador to serve as a translator in matters involving Guale Indians. However, when

Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo summoned Amador to serve as one of two translators in the interrogation of seven recently captured Guale Indians, the young interpreter never imagined he would find himself in a circumstance like this. He could not recall the last time he had seen his brother Lucas and he wondered why the governor had summoned him to translate. Perhaps, Amador thought, Governor Méndez believed his presence would encourage Lucas to confess the truth about the friars' murders.

Clearly unsettled by the words he had just heard, Lucas stared incredulously at his younger brother, looking for any sign that the other translator had misunderstood the governor's orders. Amador stood in silence. Lucas then turned back to the other translator, Gaspar de Salas, and asked him to repeat the governor's warning.

Amador listened intently as Salas reiterated the governor's decree: "The governor has ordered that you be placed on a rack, and that your hands and feet be tightly bound. With that, two garrotes are to be tightened around your legs, one over each thigh and the others placed just below your knees. Two more garrotes are to be secured around each of your arms, one over the upper portion and the other just below the elbow." Amador could no longer look at his brother as he heard Salas relate the final act of torture: "A thin piece of cloth will be placed inside your mouth, after which four *cuartillos* of water will be poured directly into your nose and mouth."

On hearing the threats, Lucas quickly amended his earlier testimony, in which he denied any participation in the uprising, claiming that he had arrived precisely at the moment that Fray

¹ Following a long-standing pattern adopted by Spanish officials throughout the New World, Governor Martínez de Avendaño believed that a stable alliance with Guale Indians, as well as their successful conversion to Christianity, required the assistance of Guale leaders. To that end, on his first (and only) inspection of Guale territory, the governor brought a number of young Guale boys, most of whom were children and nephews of Guale *caciques*, to St. Augustine. The goal was to establish close ties with these young men, teaching them Spanish and converting them to Christianity. When they reached adulthood, the boys would then be sent home to govern their villages and assist with the broader conversion efforts.

Blas Rodríguez was killed. To avoid the torment described above, Lucas confessed that he was indeed present when Fray Blas was killed and that he had helped to bury the friar in Tupiqui's church. Lucas added that he had learned of the plot to kill the friars one day before it was executed. It was a deadly admission. For his alleged participation in the uprising, St. Augustine's governor sentenced Lucas to death.

On the morning of July 29, 1598, Lucas was executed, hanged at the gallows of San Juan de Pinillo. Governor Méndez ordered that Lucas's body be left in public view to serve as an example to all others who might dare challenge Spanish authority. It is worth noting that Lucas was the only Indian tried and convicted for participating in the Guale Uprising. Governor Méndez ultimately pardoned all but two of the uprising's principal protagonists.

The following section contains introductory commentary by the authors of this volume, each followed by translations from two separate documents, both written in 1598 by Florida's governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

Document 6.1: "Letter from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo." AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.31, fols. 148r-148v, 144v-156r, 159r-159v (February 23, 1598).

INTRODUCTION

More than two months had passed since the governor completed his initial investigation of the uprising. The peaceful relations with Florida's Indian populations that had characterized his first few months as governor had been shattered, and now Méndez was faced with the difficult task of informing the Crown of the destruction of the Guale missions and the deaths of the friars. For the governor, the uprising could not have happened at a worse time. Méndez's ongoing official audit (*residencia*) of St. Augustine's royal officials already had strained his relationship with some of St. Augustine's most veteran ministers, most notably Alonso de Las Alas and Bartolomé de Argüelles. To make matters worse, the Franciscans, who uniformly disliked the new governor, had determined to send Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas back to Spain to issue their own report on the matter. Méndez undoubtedly realized that Fray Fernández's account of the situation in Florida would not portray his governorship in a favorable light. Therefore, not only

did the governor need to explain and justify his actions in the aftermath of the revolt, but he also had to assure the Crown that he was an effective leader. With that, on February 23, 1598, Florida's governor sat down and dictated a lengthy report to the Crown, a portion of which is translated in this chapter.

In the letter, Governor Méndez outlined his immediate response to the news that the friars had been killed, stressing his personal participation in the initial investigation and punitive expedition (despite the fact that he was terribly ill at the time). He reported that he had already exacted harsh punishments for the murders, burning Guale villages and destroying their maize fields. He explained that he was unable to carry out his intended punishments because the Indians had been warned of his imminent arrival and had all escaped deep into the interior. However, the governor insisted that he intended to continue preparations for another expedition into Guale. To that end, he mandated the construction of two small ships, both fitted for warfare, which he claimed would be used in future surprise campaigns.

In spite of his insistence that he was prepared to find and punish those responsible for the friars' murders, Méndez explained that, for the moment, he had decided to suspend any further punitive expeditions against the Guale until the Crown had an opportunity to respond to his initial report and issue its recommendations. For now, the Spanish would remain in St. Augustine.

At the time he wrote the letter, Governor Méndez believed that all six friars stationed in Guale territory were dead. He makes no mention of the initial rumors that at least one of the friars had been taken captive. In fact, it was not until the end of May, 1598, that Governor Méndez received confirmation that Fray Francisco de Ávila had survived the initial attack and that the friar was being held captive at the village of Tulufina.

It is worth noting that Governor Méndez was quick to point out that St. Augustine's governing officials played absolutely no role in provoking the uprising. Instead, Méndez hints that the friars themselves might have played some part in the unrest. According to the governor, before the uprising occurred, some of the friars in Guale territory had removed "certain *caciques*" from office and replaced them with other Indians. Méndez is careful not to blame the friars directly; instead, he frames his concern for the friars' actions as a jurisdictional matter, claiming that only the gov-

ernor had the legal authority to remove *caciques* from office. Whatever his intentions, the implication that the friars' intervention in Guale political affairs had somehow sparked the violence is not lost on readers.

After criticizing the friars for their decision to send Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas back to Spain (which he insists was done without his approval or license), Governor Méndez seems to anticipate the criticisms that the friars will level against him. He assures the king that the friars receive all their payments and provisions with due promptness; he then urges the king to provide the funds necessary to rebuild the Franciscan monastery and the church, both of which were at great risk because of the frequent fires in St. Augustine. The original monastery was a thatch construction and Méndez advocated a new building made from brick or adobe. A devastating fire a year later, in 1599, destroyed St. Augustine's Franciscan friary and church, neither of which had been reconstructed.

Governor Méndez devotes much of the letter to highlighting the warm relationships he had established with the region's Indian leaders. He explains that since his arrival in St. Augustine in early June of 1597, a total of 22 different *caciques* had come to visit him and to "render their obedience" to the Crown. Even more importantly, according to Méndez, seven or eight of these leaders had never before "rendered their obedience." The governor reserves particular praise for the *cacica* of Nombre de Dios, doña María, and the *cacique* of San Pedro, don Juan, and requests that the Crown provide additional financial support for both leaders. Méndez then concludes the letter by reminding the Crown of his three decades of loyal service, after which he humbly requests additional resources to help meet his financial obligations as governor and thus maintain peaceful relations with Florida's Indians.

THE DOCUMENT

1. The moment I reached these provinces I sent notice to Your Majesty of my arrival. I also informed Your Majesty that I would initiate the official audits and visitations (*residencias* and *visitas*), from which I would send Your Majesty a detailed report of all the happenings in these provinces. Thus, in accordance with Your Majesty's royal decree, I announced the official audit and investigation (*residencias*) of your for-

mer governors, Gutierre de Miranda and Domingo Martínez de Avendaño, as well as Florida's other royal officials.

However, I had not fully completed these investigations when I received a report from San Pedro Island, where Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas served as missionary. In his letter, Fray Fernández informed me that the Indians from Guale province, located 40 leagues from this garrison, had murdered six Franciscan friars who served in their missions. Three of the said friars had resided in that province for more than 10 years. Within an hour of reading the letter, I had prepared the infantry and gathered all the necessary munitions; I accomplished all of this in spite of the fact that I was terribly ill at the time, with chills and a high fever. Still, I went in person to that province in order to investigate the matter and to punish those responsible (as outlined in the testimony that I now remit to Your Majesty with this present letter, outlining all the steps I have taken to resolve this matter).

Unfortunately, the Indians had been well warned of my arrival in Guale territory, and thus had withdrawn deep into the forest. Therefore, I was unable to inflict upon them the type of exemplary punishment that I would have preferred. However, I did burn their villages and their food supplies, which is precisely the punishment that these Indians consider most harmful. I also mandated the construction of two light rowboats to be utilized in a future attack against said Indians, and that the other ships be fitted for war. With these vessels, we will launch an early-dawn assault because it is imperative that we attack when the Indians are asleep.

2. I can assure Your Majesty of one thing: for its part, the government here did nothing to justify the Indians' decision to commit such a terrible crime. And until Your Majesty has been fully informed of this matter, I have decided to suspend further investigation until Your Majesty mandates what should be done. In the meantime, I trust that God will bring these Indians back to obedience, and that they will reveal what led them to murder the friars.

3. I have issued a decree (contained

herein), declaring that all the Indian men and women captured alive from Guale province are to serve the soldiers in this *presidio*, until the time Your Majesty orders otherwise. It seemed to me a just punishment given the gravity of the crime they committed.

4. In regard to the friars and their return to the missions, Your Majesty would be well served to send orders advising me on how to proceed. I ask this because when the disastrous murder of the friars occurred, the remaining friars all withdrew from their missions [and returned to St. Augustine], which I had ordered them to do. However, since then, the friars have decided on their own accord to return to their missions; yet, neither they nor their prelate ever consulted with me on this matter.

5. Moreover, I have been informed that before I arrived to begin my governorship of these provinces, some of the friars who died in Guale territory had removed certain *caciques* from office and replaced them with other Indians. Such an action, and other things that they have done, falls under the jurisdiction of the government, not the friars.

6. In addition to the report that I now remit to Your Majesty, the guardian and the friars of the Franciscan convent here in St. Augustine have resolved to send Fray Pedro Fernández de Chozas back to Spain. They reached this decision despite all of my efforts and the considerable warnings I gave the guardian to postpone sending Fray Fernández back until Your Majesty had been informed of this matter and had sent orders on how we should proceed. Yet none of my efforts prevented them from sending the said friar back to Spain; and so he returns, without my authority or my consent. I remit to Your Majesty a full report of everything the friars have done in this particular case so that Your Majesty can decide what should be done.

7. With all due promptness, the friars all receive deliveries of the provisions necessary for their missions, as well as all of their clothing, undergarments, and shoes.

8. Furthermore, I feel obligated to inform Your Majesty of the urgent repairs required for the Franciscan monastery and

convent in this city and in particular the body of the church, which is covered in thatch. Since there are frequent fires, the church is at great risk; and thus, to avoid future problems, it would be most advantageous to cover it with adobe or brick. Moreover, additional cells are needed for the friars here, as are a number of religious ornaments for religious celebrations.

(We pick up the letter with fol. 155v)

38. A total of 22 *caciques* have to come to St. Augustine to meet with me and to render their obedience to Your Majesty.² Seven or eight of these *caciques* had never before come here, and thus I rewarded them handsomely. I continue to send gifts in an effort to win over as many Indians as possible, a policy I will always maintain for those who are loyal allies. The aforementioned *caciques* are as follows:

1. don Juan, *cacique* of San Pedro
2. doña María, *cacica* of this province
[Nombre de Dios]
3. Gaspar, *cacique* of San Sebastián
4. The *cacique* of San Pablo
5. The *cacique* of Mosquitos
6. The *mico mayor* of Tolomato
7. The *cacique* of Guale
8. The *cacique* of Tupiqui
9. The *cacique* of Asao
10. The *cacique* of Aluste
11. The *cacique* of Aobi
12. The *cacique* of Aspogache
[Espogache]
13. The *cacique* of Aybe
14. The *cacique* of Tulufina
15. The *cacique* of Chucalate
16. The *cacique* of Yua (Yoa)
17. The *cacique* of Antonico
18. The *cacica* of Aquera
19. The *cacique* of Beca
20. The *cacique* of Potano
21. The *cacique* of Becao
22. The *cacique* of Timucua

In order to give Your Majesty a better sense of the gifts that I have awarded these

² Here, Governor Méndez is listing the *caciques* who had appeared in St. Augustine since his arrival as governor in early June 1597.

Indians, I remit with these proceedings two separate testimonies of all the goods that I have ordered to be taken from Your Majesty's royal coffers.

Among these aforementioned *caciques*, there are a great number of baptized Indians. Some time ago, I traveled up to Guale territory, and I was deeply moved by the poverty and the misery in which the Indian *caciques* don Juan, doña Maria, Gaspar, and Francisco and their subjects lived. Not only are they our close neighbors, but they also comply with every order we give them. For those reasons, I have decided to lower their tribute payments until Your Majesty orders otherwise. In the past, each married man was required to provide an annual tribute of one *arroba* of maize. In recognition of their services, I have ordered that each married man provide only six ears of maize per year. I did not want the Indians to continue to think, as they did at the time, that Your Majesty was only interested in collecting tribute from them. Let Your Majesty mandate what best serves his interests, because it costs more to collect the tribute and bring it to St. Augustine than the total tribute is worth.

39. The *cacica* doña Maria is a good Christian Indian, and is married to a Spaniard. Her village is located at a distance of two musket shots from this city of St. Augustine. She and her subjects always comply with everything they are ordered to do. Doña Maria's residence serves as an inn for all the other *caciques* and Indians who come to St. Augustine, and she provides them with gifts from her own meager possessions in order to bring them into Your Majesty's obedience. Furthermore, doña Maria's mother was also a very good Indian. She too proved a loyal ally in every situation or emergency that occurred in this *presidio*. In consideration of all this, doña Maria is most deserving of any financial support that Your Majesty can offer to help cover her expenses. Moreover, she would be extremely appreciative if Your Majesty would send a royal decree offering gratitude for her services.

40. Likewise, the *cacique* don Juan [from San Pedro], is a much Hispanicized Indian (*muy españolado*) and a very good

Christian. He has always supported the friars in his territory, and he too complies with great promptness to everything I ask of him. He also gives gifts to other *caciques* from his own meager possessions, all in an effort to bring them to Your Majesty's obedience. Therefore, he too deserves that Your Majesty provide him with some financial support, which he will put to very good use.

(We pick up again with fols. 159r–159v)

51. I humbly implore that Your Majesty take into consideration my 30 years of uninterrupted service, 20 years of which were served in extremely important posts. At present, my services to Your Majesty have cost me a fortune and I find myself deeply in debt. I am unable to support myself here on the salary granted to me by Your Majesty. Food and everything else is all incredibly expensive; furthermore, the natives here are very poor and I am forced to spend a great deal of my own wealth in an effort to convert them to Christianity and to bring them into Your Majesty's royal service. Thus, with great humility, I beg Your Majesty to provide me with some decent financial support to help me to meet my obligations. The funds could be taken from Your Majesty's royal coffers in Mexico or from here, once the infantry has been paid. With this, I will be most grateful.

May Our Lord God protect Your Majesty for many more years. From St. Augustine Florida, February 23, 1598. Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

Document 6.2: "Report concerning the murder of the friars in Guale territory, and the execution of Lucas, an Indian who was present at one of the murders." AGI Patronato 19, R.28, fols. 1r–10v, July 1598.

INTRODUCTION

In early July, 1598, Governor Gonzalo Méndez began to assemble a lengthy report outlining the measures he had undertaken to investigate the murders of the friars stationed in Guale territory. The account that follows describes a series of events that unfolded over a five-month period, between March of 1598 to the end of July, and describes some of the most dramatic and tragic

episodes that occurred in the aftermath of the Guale Uprising.

As the letter explains, Governor Méndez's decision to suspend further Spanish military action in Guale territory did not prevent him from continuing his investigation into the murders. Shortly after he dispatched his February 23 letter to the Crown, the governor ordered some of his infantrymen to travel to the port of Santa Elena, located just beyond the northern frontier of Guale territory, roughly 50 leagues north of St. Augustine. Once there, the men were instructed to negotiate with the region's most powerful Indian leader, the *cacique* of Escamacu, whom Méndez identified as a close Spanish ally. The governor instructed his men to escort Escamacu down to St. Augustine so that he could negotiate an agreement with the *cacique*.

Escamacu complied with the request and in late March, 1598, he sat down in St. Augustine with Governor Méndez to discuss the situation in Guale. In exchange for a "great quantity of goods," Escamacu agreed to launch his own punitive expeditions into Guale territory and to try to determine if any of the Franciscan friars were still alive. When the negotiations ended, Governor Méndez vowed to travel to Santa Elena within 60 days to meet personally with Escamacu and to verify that the *cacique* had complied with the agreement.

On May 23, 1598, just four days before the 60-day period expired, Governor Méndez departed for Santa Elena. However, his arrival was delayed by several days when a fierce storm damaged the governor's ship, forcing him to abandon his vessel at San Mateo. As soon as he reached Santa Elena's port, the governor met with Escamacu, who presented him with four scalps,³ which the *cacique* claimed he had taken in an attack against the Guale. Escamacu then confirmed the rumors: one of the friars, Francisco de Ávila, was still alive and was being held captive near the village of Tulufina.

With that news, Governor Méndez began his return to St. Augustine, sailing close to the coastline in an attempt to make contact with the Guale as he moved south. When he reached the

port of Tolomato, Governor Méndez managed to convince an Indian to approach his vessel, in exchange for "a few gifts and some kind words and assurances." From the Indian, the governor received further confirmation that Fray Ávila was still alive. With that, Méndez quickly scribbled a letter and promised the Indian additional rewards if he agreed to take it to the Franciscan friar. The Indian complied.

Within a short time, a number of Guale *caciques* arrived at Tolomato.⁴ After dispensing numerous gifts, Governor Méndez asked to see the friar in person, promising to negotiate the terms of his release as soon as he had visual confirmation that Fray Ávila was still alive. However, the chiefs refused, demanding that the governor pay a ransom in exchange for the captive friar.

At first glance, the ransom demands appear rather insignificant: the chiefs requested six knives with yellow handles, three bundles of beads, six hatchets, 12 axes, and one white blanket (see table 6). Why just six knives? Why not request dozens of knives, hatchets, and axes? Who was to receive them?⁵ Who was meant to have the one white blanket? Clearly, this small supply of elite status goods was not meant to be widely distributed.

Perhaps the most intriguing of the ransom demands was the insistence that the governor release a number of young Guale boys who had been taken to St. Augustine in 1595, during the previous governorship of Domingo Martínez de Avendaño. Unfortunately, the document does not identify the young boys, other than to say that all of the boys in question were "chiefly heirs and the sons of *caciques*."⁶

In response, Governor Méndez sailed back to St. Augustine, promising to comply with the *caciques'* demands and return to Tolomato within 30 days. It only took him half that time. Just 15 days later, the governor was back in Tolomato with all of the hostages, as well as the other goods re-

⁴ Again, the document does not identify any of the *caciques* by name.

⁵ Based on Fray Ávila's own captivity narrative, one might assume that the Salchiche *cacique* of Tulufina was one (the only?) of the alleged recipients of the governor's ransom. Sadly, the documents fail to name any of the recipients of the exchanged goods.

⁶ While his name is not mentioned, it is likely that Lucas's younger brother, Amador, was one of the young Guale boys in question.

³ Escamacu added that his ally, the *cacique* of Cayagua, had taken another three Guale scalps. Unfortunately, none of the accounts record the identity of the Guale victims whose scalps Escamacu claims to have captured.

TABLE 6
**Ransom Items Demanded for Release of
 Fray Francisco de Ávila, June 19, 1598**

Item	Quantity
Knives with yellow handles	6
Bundles of beads (each bundle carrying 20–70 strings of beads)	3
Hatchets	6
Iron axes	12
White blanket	1
Muskets?	4
Indian boys who had been held in St. Augustine since 1595	?

quested as part of the exchange. What happened next remains unclear.

According to the governor's account of the events (in fact, his is the only known version of the events), the negotiations began smoothly, with the governor distributing a large number of gifts to the *caciques* and all the Indians gathered. However, Méndez claims that he soon realized that the Guale had no intention of returning the friar and that "their entire negotiation was based on treachery and deceit." He therefore decided to alter his tactics.

Feigning great anger, Méndez warned the Guale chiefs that if they did not release the friar immediately he would dispatch 300 Spanish soldiers, with orders to put them all to the sword, destroy their crops, and if necessary, pursue them into the interior as far as La Tama. The governor's threat apparently worked. Within an hour Fray Francisco de Ávila had been released into Spanish custody. The friar's 10-month captivity had ended.

It is difficult to determine the trustworthiness of Méndez's rendering of the events that day at Tolomato. If the Guale chiefs had indeed attempted to deceive the Spanish in their negotiations, the Spanish certainly did the same. When Governor Méndez issued the orders to return to St. Augustine, his ships carried more than the rescued Spanish friar. The governor also had in his possession all the young Guale boys who were supposed to have been released as part of the exchange agree-

ment. Not only that, but he somehow managed to capture another seven young boys, four of whom he claimed were sons or brothers of prominent Guale *caciques*. One of these young boys was an Indian named Lucas, from the village of Tupiqui. Lucas's younger brother, Amador, was one of the boys who had been taken to St. Augustine in 1595. Soon, the two brothers would be reunited, if only briefly.

On his return to St. Augustine, Méndez's first priority was to seek permission to question Fray Francisco de Ávila, from whom he hoped to learn the cause of the uprising and the identity of those who carried out the murders. For that purpose, the governor ordered his scribe, Juan Jiménez, to the Franciscan convent to meet with the custodian, Fray Francisco Marrón. Fray Marrón responded that Ávila was the ideal person to testify and therefore the custodian granted him license to do so, provided the proceedings did not involve matters in which priests are forbidden by law to testify.

On July 20, 1598, with Fray Marrón's written permission in his hands, Governor Méndez summoned Fray Ávila. When he learned of Marrón's decision, Fray Ávila acknowledged his license to testify; however, he still refused, claiming that church law prohibited him from testifying in such grave criminal matters. Ávila then informed the governor that he could learn everything he wanted to know from the seven Guale captives he had brought to St. Augustine. Ávila would not testify. Months later, the friar would leave Florida for good. After a brief stay in Havana, Fray Ávila returned to Spain, where he remained for the rest of his life.

With his most important witness refusing to speak about the matter, Governor Méndez turned his attention to the seven recently captured young Guale boys, currently held under guard in St. Augustine. Aside from Fray Francisco de Ávila's captivity narrative (chap. 3), the testimonies provided by these young captives offer the only first-hand accounts from witnesses who were in Guale territory when the uprising occurred.

Lucas from Tupiqui was the first captive summoned to testify. Through the *atequi* (interpreter), Gaspar de Salas, Governor Méndez asked Lucas what had happened to Tupiqui's resident friar, Blas Rodríguez. In response, Lucas explained that 10 or 11 months earlier, eight *caciques* had gathered together at the village of Tupiqui: they were the *caciques* of Asao, Talaje, Atinche, Fulo,

Tupiqui, don Juan (from Tolomato), Ufalague, and Aluste. That same night, the same eight *caciques* authorized an Indian *principal* named Aliscache to murder Tupiqui's resident friar, Fray Blas Rodríguez.⁷ According to Lucas, the friar was struck in the head with an axe and died within an hour. His body was then buried at the church.⁸ Asked why the friar had been killed, Lucas responded that the *caciques* issued the order because Fray Blas "was a wicked man who tried to stop their witchcraft (*hechicertas*) and had forbidden them from taking more than one wife."

When asked about the fate of the other friars, Lucas stated that they were all dead. He explained that Guale's friars, Miguel de Auñón and the lay brother Antonio de Badajoz, were both bound with rope and then clubbed with *macanas*. Lucas then added that it was the *caciques* of Ufalague and Sufalete who had killed Fray Pedro de Corpa, a murder they committed while the friar slept in his cell. Finally, Governor Méndez asked Lucas if he had been present when Fray Blas or any of the other friars were killed. In response, Lucas testified that he had arrived at the very moment when Fray Blas was murdered, but that he was not present at any of the other killings.

The second Indian to testify was a young boy from Tolomato named Francisco. Francisco's mother was a member of the Guale elite and it is likely that Francisco was in line to inherit one of the principal chiefdoms. Since he resided in Tolomato, Francisco was questioned first about the fate of Tolomato's friar, Pedro de Corpa. In response, Francisco stated that Fray Corpa had been killed by the *cacique* of the Salchiche Indians, and that the heir to Tolomato's chiefdom, don Juan, had ordered the killing. Asked why don Juan had ordered the friar's murder, Francisco claimed that it was in retaliation for Fray Corpa's decision to punish don Juan for following native laws and customs (Francisco does not specify which laws or customs). Following Fray Corpa's death, Francisco

continued, don Juan then ordered the Salchiches to join him and lead a rebellion, which ultimately led to the deaths of the other friars.

Governor Méndez concluded the questioning by asking Francisco if any of the other six Indians he had brought with him from Guale had been present during any of the murders. Francisco replied that he had heard that Lucas was present when Fray Blas Rodríguez was killed.

Five more Guale Indian witnesses testified during the July 1598 proceedings, all of whom offered different explanations of the events that had unfolded in the fall of 1597. In some instances, the testimonies vary significantly and it is impossible to draw meaningful conclusions from them. One witness from Tolomato, named Buenaventura, insisted that all the friars had been murdered by the same man, an Indian named Soso Olata. Who was he? The term Olata (Holata) is likely of Muskogean origin and appears in several 17th-century documents as a term synonymous with "chief."⁹ Could this have been the name of the Salchiche chief from Tulufina?

Three of the witnesses say nothing about the participants in the uprising. However, it is worth noting that only two of the seven witnesses identify don Juan as a principal leader in the rebellion. Instead, most of the witnesses stress the involvement of many of the chiefs from Guale and Salchiche territory. Even the two witnesses who mentioned Tolomato's heir, don Juan, by name do not implicate him as the only protagonist. None of the witnesses testify that don Juan (don Juanillo) alone ordered the friars' murders. Instead, when he is named, don Juan is mentioned as one of several *caciques* who plotted to murder the friars. It is not until 1600 that don Juan is identified as the uprising's principal leader.

Table 7 provides an overview of the testimonies recorded during the interrogation of the seven young Guale boys captured during Governor Méndez's negotiations to secure Fray Ávila's release.

Six of the seven witnesses insisted that they had not been present during the murders. Only Lucas admitted to having witnessed one of the friars' murders, claiming that he had arrived at the precise moment that Fray Blas Rodríguez was killed. Despite Lucas's insistence that he did not participate in Fray Blas's murder, the other six witnesses all claimed that he had been pres-

⁷ Unfortunately, Lucas provides no additional information about Aliscache. It is unclear whether Aliscache was a *principal* from Tupiqui or from another village.

⁸ Here, Lucas appears to be telling the truth. Readers will recall from chapter 3 in this volume that when the first Spanish expedition reached Tupiqui in October 1597 to investigate the uprising, the entire village had already been burned to the ground. Fray Rodríguez's burned remains were found in the ruins.

⁹ See Hann (1992).

ent. Why they testified against Lucas is unclear. However, it is rather curious that Lucas was the only Indian from Tupiqui, the one village that appears to have been completely destroyed during the 1597 uprising.

With the interrogations completed, Governor Méndez at last had found someone to punish for the friars' murders. On July 27, 1598, the governor declared that he had no other alternative but to subject Lucas to further interrogation, this time under torture. When Lucas learned of the punishments he was to receive, he clarified some of his previous testimony. Asked how far in advance he

knew that the Indians intended to kill the friars, Lucas responded that he had learned of the plot one day before the attacks occurred and that Fray Blas became aware of his fate just two hours before he was killed.

Under threat of torture, Lucas insisted that he was merely present when Fray Blas was killed and that he was one of several Indians who had buried the friar after his death. Lucas also insisted that Fray Blas learned that he was going to be killed just hours earlier, and that when he heard the news he celebrated Mass and then distributed all his belongings among the Indians gathered.

TABLE 7
1598 Interrogations of Guale Captives¹

Indian witness	Native village	Motivations for killing the friars	Who participated
Lucas	Tupiqui	They were belligerent, interfered with local customs, and prohibited polygamy.	Asao, Talaje, Atinche, Fulo, Tupiqui, Aluste, Ufalague, Sufalete, and don Juan (from Tolomato). Lucas testifies that an Indian <i>principal</i> named Aliscache murdered Fray Blas Rodríguez and that the <i>caciques</i> of Ufalague and Sufalete murdered Fray Pedro de Corpa.
Francisco	Tolomato	Testifies that don Juan ordered Fray Corpa's murder because the friar had punished him for following "native laws and customs."	Claims that Tolomato's paramount chief, don Francisco, and his heir, don Juan, ordered the Salchiche Indians to kill the friars, adding that Fray Corpa was murdered by the <i>cacique principal</i> of the Salchiches.
Bartolomé	Tolomato	The friars were "cunning" and they did not allow the men to have multiple wives.	Does not say.
Buenaventura	Tolomato	The friars were wicked men who prohibited the Indians from practicing their own laws and customs and prevented them from taking more than one wife.	Testifies that an Indian named Soso Olata used a <i>macana</i> and murdered all the friars with his own hands.
Alonso	Ospo	The friars were wicked men who reprimanded the Indians and prohibited polygamy.	Does not say.
Uchilape	(near Tolomato)	He did not know how or why the friars died.	Does not say.
Pedro	Asao	The friars reprimanded the Indians and did not allow them to take multiple wives.	Claims that Indians from Guale territory and from Tulufina killed the friars.

¹ AGI Patronatio, 19, R.28, fols. 3r–8v.

On the following day, Lucas was summoned to confirm the accuracy of his previous testimony, which he did. That same morning, at 9:00 A.M., Governor Méndez sentenced Lucas to death for his participation in the uprising. The account ends with a brief entry from July 29, 1598. In it, St. Augustine's notary, Juan Jiménez, reports that Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz escorted Lucas out of prison, guarding the young Indian while Lucas's hands were bound and rope was placed around his neck. Lucas was then marched to the gallows at San Juan de Espinillo, where he was hanged.

THE DOCUMENT

The following is a good and faithful copy of an official report from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, Your Majesty's governor and captain general in these provinces of Florida, regarding the deaths of the Franciscan friars killed at the hands of the Indians who rebelled in Guale.

In the city of St. Augustine, provinces of La Florida, on July 1, 1598:

On behalf of Our Lord King, Governor and Captain General Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo reported that last October, 1597, he received notice that the Indians from Guale territory had rebelled. Renouncing their obedience to Your Majesty, the Indians had murdered the Franciscan friars who had been stationed there to teach and convert the Indians of Guale province.

With the greatest haste possible, the governor gathered some infantrymen, munitions, and ships, and set out in person for Guale territory to investigate why the Indians had committed such a terrible crime, and to punish those responsible. Throughout Guale province, the governor and his infantry inflicted considerable ruin, razing villages to the ground and burning whatever food supplies they discovered. However, because the Indians had been well warned of his arrival, the governor was unable to administer any additional punishments, nor was he able to capture a single Indian alive, save one.¹⁰ Through interpreters, the

only thing the governor managed to learn from this captive was that the friars were dead (the details of which can be found in his testimony contained herein).

Nonetheless, the governor understood the importance of uncovering the root of these murders, and the reason why the Indians had forfeited their obedience to Your Majesty; moreover, he was determined to find out if any of the friars were still alive. To that end, the governor very cleverly employed every method at his disposal. He sent gifts and exchange goods by way of La Tama and to neighboring *caciques*, all in an effort to convince the Indians to investigate whether any of the friars were still alive and, if so, to secure their release. In exchange, the governor offered them rewards.

Thus, the governor dispatched a ship with infantrymen to the port of Santa Elena, located more than 50 leagues from this garrison. He sent them there to employ the services of the *cacique* from Escamacu; the governor had been informed that Escamacu's *cacique* had been a Spanish ally, and that he commanded a force of Indian warriors. Furthermore, since he resided so close to Guale territory, Escamacu's *cacique* would be able to inflict harsh punishments on the Guale. The ship's captain, Lieutenant Ecija, brought Escamacu's *cacique* back to St. Augustine. There, the governor negotiated an agreement with him, which called for Escamacu's *cacique* to wage war against the Guale and exact upon them as much damage as possible. The *cacique* was also asked to try to determine whether any of the friars were still alive. In return for all this, the governor gave the *cacique* a great quantity of goods, some of which came from Your Majesty's royal coffers and some from the governor's personal belongings. In the end, the governor arranged to travel up to Escamacu within 60 days to verify what actions the *cacique* had taken in compliance with their agreement.

As this matter was of such great importance to Your Majesty's service, on

¹⁰ Here, the account refers to the Indian from Cascangue, who was captured (after being shot) by Captain Vicente González. For more details about this

Indian, including his unfortunate fate, see documents in chapter 3.

May 23 of this year, no more than four days before the expiration of his agreement with Escamacu's *cacique*, the governor departed from this port. He took two ships, infantrymen, and munitions, in accordance with the agreement he had made with Escamacu's *cacique*. However, just one day later, on May 24, the ships had reached as far north as the bar of Asao, 30 leagues from this port, when they were struck by a fierce hurricane. The governor had no choice but to run his ships aground at San Mateo beach. Yet despite this setback, the governor continued his journey up to the port of Santa Elena. He boarded another ship, which had suffered less damage and therefore was more seaworthy, leaving his own badly damaged vessel beached at San Mateo.

Upon his arrival at the port of Santa Elena, the governor met and spoke with Escamacu's *cacique*. The *cacique* presented the governor with four scalps, which he claimed to have taken from four Guale Indians during his attack on the province. He added that the *cacique* from Cayagua, who had joined him on the campaign, had claimed another three scalps. Moreover, Escamacu's *cacique* also confirmed that one of the six friars, Francisco de Ávila, was still alive, and that he was being held in Guale territory in a village next to Tulufina.

With that knowledge, the governor began his return to St. Augustine; he sailed close to the Guale coastline, passing by all the ports and launches to see if any Indian would come out to speak with him. However, no one came, except for one Indian from Tolomato. With a few gifts and some kind words and assurances, the governor convinced the Indian to come speak with him. From this Indian, the governor was able to confirm that said friar was still alive. Thus, he offered the Indian a reward to take a letter to the friar, which he did. In the meantime, as he awaited a response, the governor remained at the launch at Tolomato. Shortly thereafter, certain *micos* and *caciques* arrived. The governor asked that they show him the friar to verify that he was still alive, after which he would negotiate with them for his release. How-

ever, at that time they refused to return the friar, despite the fact that the governor had given them a great many gifts and trade goods. They declined to release the friar unless the governor returned to them some young boys, all chiefly heirs and sons of *caciques*. The previous governor, Domingo Martínez de Avendaño, had taken the boys to St. Augustine to hold as hostages, a measure designed to secure peace in Guale territory.

In exchange for the friar's release, the governor promised that within 30 days he would return all the hostages. He also offered them a certain quantity of axes, hoes, and blankets, which the *micos* and *caciques* had demanded as part of the agreement. And within 15 days, the governor returned to the port of Tolomato, bringing with him everything that had been requested. Again, he conferred and negotiated with the same *micos* and *caciques* for the friar's release. With great generosity, the governor distributed gifts to the *micos* and *caciques*, and to the multitude of Indians who had gathered there. However, as they are a belligerent, deceitful, and treacherous people, the gifts and offerings made little impression on them. In fact, the governor quickly realized that their entire negotiation was based on treachery and deceit.

Seeing that the Indians refused to comply with the agreement or honor their word to release the friar, the governor was forced to try another tactic. Feigning great anger, he vowed that if they did not release the friar within the hour, he would dispatch 300 soldiers who would put them all to the sword, destroy their maize fields and food supplies, and pursue them all the way to La Tama. That was reason enough; within an hour, the Indians released the friar. Once he had the friar safely in his possession, the governor took his reprisal. He kept the Indian hostages that he had brought with him, along with another seven Indians, whom the governor had cleverly kept aboard his ships during the negotiations. Four of these seven Indians are *principales*, sons and brothers of *caciques*.

The governor has brought the Indians here to St. Augustine, where they are be-

ing held at present. Governor Méndez intends to conduct an investigation, gathering their statements regarding the nature of the friars' murders. Moreover, the Indians are to testify how the friars died, and for what reason they were killed. Should the governor discover that any of these Indians played a part in the murders, they are to be sentenced and punished for it. This is not only an appropriate action on behalf of Your Majesty's service, but the punishment will also serve as an example to others, especially since those Indians have committed other acts of treachery and have murdered captains, royal officials, and soldiers, among others. And this was decreed, ordered, and signed in his name—Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Then forthwith, the governor ordered that I, the scribe, go to the Franciscan monastery here in St. Augustine. There, on the governor's behalf, I am to ask the father custodian, Fray Francisco Marrón, to grant license and permission to question Fray Francisco de Ávila, who served in the conversion of the Indians from Guale province. Under the oath that is customary to the friars of his religious order, and as someone who served the Guale missions with the friars who died, Fray Ávila is to declare what he knows about the murders. He is to be asked what he had witnessed, and what he understood or heard said about the reasons why the Indians decided to commit such an awful crime, and why they have forsaken their obedience to Your Majesty. Moreover, he is to reveal everything else he knows about the murders, and he is to answer all other questions so that Your Majesty can be fully informed on this matter. This is what the governor decreed, to which he signed his name, adding that the friar's testimony could very well provide useful information for the interrogation and cross-examination of said Indians.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

Fray Francisco Marrón Grants License

Then forthwith, I, the scribe, went to the city's Franciscan monastery, where I read and then showed the governor's decree to

Fray Francisco Marrón, father custodian of these provinces. Fray Marrón replied that Fray Francisco de Ávila was one of the six friars who served in the missions of Guale province, and that it was Our Lord God's will to spare his life and free him from the Indians who had killed the other friars. For that reason, and because Fray Ávila understood the life and customs of those Indians as well as their language, it is only appropriate to grant him license and freedom to testify in this matter. Let him testify to that which best serves the interests of Our Lord God, and that he declare all that he knows regarding the deaths of his fellow friars so that the circumstances surrounding their deaths can be known and understood. Fray Ávila is hereby granted freedom and license to testify, unless the matter involves criminal proceedings where priests are forbidden by law to testify, namely capital cases or crimes that mandate the severing of limbs.

This is what Fray Francisco Marrón, custodian, declared, to which he signed his name. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Fray Ávila Refuses to Testify

In the city of St. Augustine, July 20, 1598: By virtue of the license granted by the lord Father Custodian, Fray Francisco Marrón, Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo summoned Fray Francisco de Ávila. Fray Ávila was asked to declare everything he knew about the murders of his fellow priests. He was also asked to describe the ill treatments he received during his captivity and anything else worth testifying to, so that those who committed this terrible crime might be punished. In response, Fray Ávila acknowledged that Fray Francisco Marrón had granted him license to testify; however, Ávila explained that he is unable to exercise that right in criminal proceedings of this gravity and that he is forbidden to do so by the sacred canons, which prohibit priests from testifying in such trials. Fray Ávila added that he did not want to testify in this matter in order to avoid the risk of committing some unlawful act, especially since his statements would leave the governor with no option but to condemn the

Indians [to death].

Furthermore, Ávila stated that when the governor rescued him from Guale territory, he brought seven Indians back with him; from them, the governor could learn everything he needs to know. And this was Fray Francisco de Ávila's response. He then signed his name, before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

The Interpreter (*atequi*) Gaspar de Salas Takes his Oath

Then, to investigate the matter further, Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo summoned Gaspar de Salas, who serves as the Guale-language interpreter. Salas took the oath, in just accordance with the law. Under this oath, Salas promised to tell the truth, and that he would repeat everything he is ordered to say to the Indian witnesses who appear in this investigation. He also promised, under oath, to translate faithfully all the statements and responses provided by said Indians.

Testimony of Lucas, Indian from Tupiqui

Then, the governor summoned one of the seven Indians whom he had brought to St. Augustine from Guale territory. The Indian was asked where he is from and to state his name. He replied that he is from Tupiqui, and that his name is Lucas. Asked if he was a Christian, Lucas replied yes. The witness was asked the identity of his father, to give his name and to state whether his father is, or has ever been *cacique*, to which Lucas replied that his father's name is don Felipe, and that he used to be the *cacique* of Tupiqui.¹¹

Lucas was asked if any friar had served in his native village of Tupiqui. Lucas replied that one friar, named Blas Rodríguez, served in the chiefdom of Tupiqui. He was then asked to explain what had happened

to Fray Blas. Lucas responded that 10 or 11 moons ago, eight *caciques* gathered together: they were the *caciques* of Asao, Talaje, Atinche, Fulo, Tupiqui, don Juan,¹² Ufalague, and Aluste. When nightfall came, the *caciques* authorized an Indian *principal* named Aliscache to kill Fray Blas with an axe. Aliscache struck the friar in the head. From the wounds, Fray Blas died within an hour, after which his body was buried at the church.

Lucas was then asked to explain why they killed the said friar. He responded that the *micos* and *caciques* had stated that they ordered the friar murdered because he was a wicked man who tried to stop their witchcraft (*hechicerías*), and who had forbidden them from taking more than one wife. Asked if he knew anything else about the case, Lucas replied no.

Questioned whether he knew Fray Miguel de Auñón and the lay brother Antonio from the mission of Guale, as well as Fray Pedro de Corpa from the mission of Tolomato, Fray Beráscola from the mission of Asao, and Fray Francisco de Ávila from the mission of Ospo, Lucas responded that he knew all of the aforementioned, and that they were all dead. He testified that the Indians had tied Fray Miguel with rope, but that he did not know how they had killed him; and they did the same to Fray Antonio but, again, he claimed that he did not know how he was killed except that he had heard it said that both friars were murdered with *macanas*.

Concerning the death of Fray Pedro de Corpa, Lucas stated that the *caciques* of Ufalague and Sufalete murdered him during the night while the friar slept in his cell. As far as Fray Beráscola is concerned, Lucas had heard that they killed him with *macanas*. He added that the Indians did not kill Fray Francisco de Ávila; instead, they held the friar captive in a village next to Tulufina, where he remained until the governor rescued him just now.

Lucas was then asked if Fray Ávila had been treated well during his captivity. He

¹¹ Don Felipe had passed away some time before Lucas's testimony. In early July of 1597, just a few months before the uprising began, a group of Guale leaders appeared in St. Augustine to meet with Governor Méndez. Among them was the *mico mayor* of Guale territory, don Francisco, and the *cacique* of Tupiqui, whose name was recorded as don Alonso de Argüelles. See AGI Santo Domingo 231, fols. 854v–855r.

¹² It is likely that the witness was referring to don Juan of Tolomato, heir to the Guale paramount chieftaincy.

replied that at times the Salchiche Indians flogged him with sticks and abused him. Sometimes the Indians gave the friar food; on other occasions, they did not. For the most part, the friar survived only on grapevine leaves, and the bread made from their native flour (*pan panoso*). Asked if he had ever heard why the Indians had killed the friars, and why they had treated Fray Ávila so poorly, Lucas replied that he knew nothing except that the *micos* and *caciques* would say that the friars were wicked and quarrelsome men, who often scolded them and tried to prevent them from taking more than one wife.

Asked if he knew the whereabouts of all the church ornaments, chalice, and the friars' other belongings, Lucas responded that they had been divided among the Indians and that the Salchiches had taken everything into the interior and nothing remains.

Lucas was then asked if he had been present when Fray Blas or any of the other friars were murdered. To that, Lucas replied that he arrived just when Fray Blas was killed; as far as the others were concerned, he was not present, nor did he witness their deaths. Instead, he simply heard that they had been killed, in accordance with his previous testimony. He was then asked if any of his fellow Indians who had been brought here with him to St. Augustine were present at any of the friars' murders. Lucas responded that he had heard that one of the Indians from Tolomato, named Francisco, had seen Fray Pedro de Corpa's body after he had been killed, but that was all he knew.

Thus, in accordance with his sworn oath, Gaspar de Salas declared that the aforementioned is what the Indian Lucas testified. He did not sign his name because he does not know how.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Testimony of Francisco, Indian from Tolomato

To investigate this matter further, Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo summoned another Indian to appear before him. Through the *atequi*, the Indian stated that his name is Francisco and that

he is a native of Tolomato. Under his sworn oath, the *atequi* translated the following testimony:

Francisco was asked if he was a Christian and to identify his parents. He responded that he was a Christian, and that his mother is a *principal*, directly related to *caciques*. His father is now deceased. Francisco was then asked which friar served the mission of Tolomato, to which he replied that Fray Pedro de Corpa served the mission, and that he had known the friar for a long time. He was then asked what had happened to Fray Pedro de Corpa. Francisco replied that the friar had been killed in his cell while he slept, and that the principal *cacique* of the Salchiches had killed him with a *macana*. Asked if he had witnessed the murder, Francisco replied that it happened during the night, but that he had heard that both Tolomato's *mico* and his heir, don Juan, had ordered it. As soon as he heard of the order, Francisco went to the friar's residence; however, by the time he arrived Fray Corpa was already dead.

Francisco was then asked if the *tuniquilla* he was wearing had belonged to one of the friars from that province. He responded that it had, but that he did not know which friar, and that he had traded for it with a *cacique*.

He was then asked why the Indians had killed Fray Corpa, to which Francisco replied that don Juan, Tolomato's heir, had ordered the murder because Fray Corpa had punished him for following his native laws and customs. Then don Juan ordered that the Salchiches join him, and together they led a rebellion within the province, resulting in the friars' deaths. Francisco was then asked if he knew Fray Miguel de Auñón and lay brother Antonio who served in the mission of Guale, as well as Fray Beráscola, Fray Francisco de Ávila, and Fray Blas Rodríguez. He stated that yes, he knew those friars, but that the Indians had killed all of them, with the exception of Fray Francisco de Ávila, who was held captive among the Indians of Tulufina. However, Fray Ávila has now returned to St. Augustine, having been ransomed by the governor.

Asked how the friars were killed, Fran-

cisco stated that he had heard that Fray Miguel and Fray Antonio were both killed with *macanas*, but he does not know how the others died. Then he was asked how Fray Francisco de Ávila was treated while in captivity. Francisco answered that he had heard that the Indians from Tulufina treated him poorly; he was whipped and the young boys chased after him. Furthermore, he did not eat well because the Indians themselves had little food; and at times he ate only vine leaves and *pan panoso*.

When asked what happened to the church vestments, chalice, and friar's clothing, Francisco replied that all of the vestments and clothing had been divided up and taken away by Indians from the interior. Asked if any of the Indians brought with him (from Guale territory) had been present during one of the murders, Francisco responded that he heard that don Felipe's son Lucas witnessed the murder of Fray Blas Rodríguez, but as for the others he does not know. The *atequi* Gaspar de Salas stated that the aforementioned was an accurate account of what the Indian Francisco had told him in his language, in accordance with the oath he had taken. He did not sign his name, because he does not know how.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, before me
Juan Jiménez scribe.

Testimony of Bartolomé, Indian from Tolomato

To investigate the matter further, the governor summoned Bartolomé, an Indian from Guale province, whom the governor had previously dispatched with a group of other Indians to carry a message for the *micos* and *caciques* of Guale territory. The message gave the governor's assurances (that he would not raze any more of their villages, fields or storehouses) and it also asked them to clarify if any of the friars were still alive. However, Bartolomé did not return to St. Augustine with a response until just recently, when he came with the *lancha* that was used in the expedition to pay Fray Ávila's ransom. Bartolomé claimed that the *caciques* and *micos* did not want him to go back to St. Augustine and, against their wishes, Bartolomé

returned with the governor instead of remaining among them. Through the *atequi* he declared the following:

He was asked to give his name, state where he is from, and declare whether or not he is a Christian. The Indian replied that he is a native from Tolomato in Guale province, that he is a Christian, and that his name is Bartolomé. Seven or eight months ago, the governor sent him with a message for the *micos* and *caciques* of Guale, but after he arrived there they prevented him from returning to St. Augustine, and even threatened to kill him.

The witness was then asked what he had learned during his time in Guale territory concerning how the friars were murdered. Bartolomé answered that he had heard that Fray Corpa was killed with *macanas* in his room while he slept. And the other friars were also murdered with *macanas*. However, Fray Ávila, who has just returned (to St. Augustine) after being rescued, was the first friar taken captive after being shot with three arrows. It was God's will that he did not die from the wounds. Yet the Indians would have killed him, just like they had the other friars, if it had not been for the *cacique* of Talapo, who defended the friar and told them not to kill him because Ávila was his priest.

Then he was asked why the Indians committed the murders, to which Bartolomé answered that the friars were cunning; they did not let the men have more than one wife, and the Indians did not want friars among them. When asked if he knows what became of the vestments and chalice, Bartolomé stated that the items were divided up and that Indians from the interior had taken everything. In addition, the young men destroyed many of the books. Then he was asked if he had heard that don Felipe's son, Lucas, had been present during one of the murders. The Indian answered that he had heard that Lucas was present during the murder of Fray Blas.

Bartolomé was asked to declare what he had seen or heard concerning the captivity of Fray Francisco de Ávila. He testified that he had heard in (the Indian villages of) Tulufina, Yoa, and Chucalagayte that the friar was treated poorly; he was chased by

young men, tied up, and paraded around naked, dressed only in undergarments. Eventually he would have died of hunger because the Indians had very little food to eat. The *atequi* Gaspar de Salas stated that the aforementioned was an accurate account of what Bartolomé had told him in his language, in accordance with the oath he had taken. He did not sign his name because he does not know how.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, before me Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Testimony of Buenaventura, Indian from Tolomato

To investigate this matter further, the governor summoned another one of the Indians who had been brought to St. Augustine. In accordance with the questions asked of him by the *atequi*, the Indian declared the following:

Asked to state where he is from, to give his name and to declare whether or not he is a Christian, the Indian replied that he is a native of Tolomato, a Christian, and that his name is Buenaventura. He was then asked if he knew Fray Pedro de Corpa, who had been stationed at the mission of Tolomato, and to explain what had happened to the friar. Buenaventura replied, yes, he knew Fray Corpa, and that one night while the friar slept, Indians from the interior murdered him with their *macanas*. He added that they buried him in the very same room where he had been killed.

Buenaventura was then asked if he knew the other friars who served the missions in that province. He responded that he did know them and that they had all been killed with *macanas*, with the exception of Fray Francisco de Ávila, who was taken and held captive until his recent release. The Indians had shot arrows at the friar, but he did not die from his wounds. Buenaventura stated that they would have killed Fray Ávila had it not been for Talapo's *cacique*, who defended the friar.

Asked to explain why they had killed the friars, Buenaventura responded that he had heard that the individual responsible was an Indian named Soso Olata, who used *macanas* to murder all the friars

with his own hands. Soso Olata had persuaded everyone else to join him, arguing that it was not good to have friars around because they were all wicked men who tried to destroy [our] laws and customs. Moreover, they prevented [us] from having many wives.

Asked whether he or any of his fellow Indian colleagues had been present during the murder of any of the friars, Buenaventura responded that [since] he is just a boy, he was not present during any of the murders, but that he saw [the bodies] after they had been killed. He added that he had heard that don Felipe's son Lucas was present at the murder of Fray Blas.

He was then asked if Fray Ávila had been treated well during the time of his captivity. Buenaventura replied that they had treated him poorly; he heard that they had whipped the friar and that the young boys would chase after him. He also heard that Fray Ávila went about completely naked, wearing nothing but some old undergarments. Asked if he knew what had happened to all the church vestments and the friars' clothing, Buenaventura responded that everything had been torn and broken into pieces, and thus rendered useless. The pieces were divided among the Indians and taken into the interior.

When asked if he had anything else to add, Buenaventura stated that he did not. The *atequi* Gaspar de Salas stated that the aforementioned was an accurate account of what the Indian Buenaventura had told him in his language, in accordance with the oath he had taken. He did not sign his name, because he does not know how.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Testimony of Alonso, Indian from Ospó

To investigate this matter further, the governor summoned another one of the Indians who had been brought to St. Augustine. In accordance with the questions asked of him by the *atequi*, the Indian declared the following:

The Indian was asked to give his name, to state where he is from, and to declare whether or not he is a Christian. He replied that he is a Christian, that his

name is Alonso, and that he is a native of Ospo. He was then asked if he knew Fray Francisco de Ávila as well as the other friars in the Guale missions. Alonso responded that yes, he knew Fray Ávila, and that the Indians had shot him with two arrows; however, the friar did not die from his wounds. The witness added that he had heard that all the other friars had been killed with *macanas*. They would have killed Fray Francisco de Ávila as well, had it not been for Talapo's *cacique*, who defended the friar and told them not to kill him because Ávila was his priest.

Asked if he or any of the Indians who had been brought with him were present during any of the murders, Alonso responded that he was not there for any of the murders since he is only a young boy. However, he had heard that don Felipe's son Lucas was present during the murder of Fray Blas Rodríguez. Alonso was then asked if he had heard the *caciques* or other Indians explain why they had killed the friars, to which he replied that he had heard that they did not want the friars there because they were wicked men, who prohibited their laws and customs, and who prevented them from taking more than one wife.

Alonso was then asked if the Indians had treated Fray Ávila well during his time in captivity. The witness responded that Ávila was not treated well; rather, they made his life miserable, whipping him and forcing him to go about completely naked. Furthermore, the young boys would chase after him and, because the Indians had little food, the friar was poorly fed. At times, he was forced to eat herbs.

The witness was then asked if he knew what had happened to all the church vestments and the friars' clothing. Alonso responded that he did not know, because he was just a young boy. However, he had heard it said that everything had been distributed among the Indians and taken into the interior. To all the other questions asked of him, Alonso replied that he knew nothing else.

The *atequi* Gaspar de Salas stated that everything stated above was a faithful account of what the Indian Alonso had told

him in his own language, which Gaspar understood very well; this is all true, in accordance with the oath he had taken. Gaspar did not sign his name because he does not know how.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Testimony of an Indian from Uchilate

In order to investigate this matter further, the governor summoned another Indian to appear before him. Based on the questions below, the *atequi* Gaspar de Salas declared the following:

The Indian was asked his name, where he is from, and whether or not he is a Christian, to which he responded that he is from a village named Uchilate, located next to Tolomato, and that he is not a Christian. He was then asked if he knew the friars who had resided in the Guale missions. The Indian answered that he knew Fray Pedro de Corpa from Tolomato, and that he had heard that they had killed him, but he does not know how the friar died. He had also heard it said that the Indians had killed all the other friars, with the exception of Fray Francisco de Ávila, whom the governor recently had rescued.

The witness was then asked if the *caciques* and the Indians had treated Fray Francisco de Ávila well during his time in captivity. In response, the Indian stated that they did not treat him well; they would beat him with sticks, and the young boys would chase after him. Moreover, the friar went about completely naked, except for some deerskin undergarments. The Indian was then asked why the Indians had killed the friars, and why they treated Fray Francisco de Ávila so poorly. He replied that he did not know, because he was not a Christian, he never went to church nor anywhere else the friars happened to be. To all the other questions asked of him, the Indian witness answered that he knew nothing more than what he stated above.

The *atequi* Gaspar de Salas stated that everything written and stated was an accurate account of what the Indian had told him, in accordance with the oath he had taken. Gaspar did not sign his name because he does not know how.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Testimony of Pedro, Indian from Asao

To investigate this matter further, the governor summoned another of the seven Indians he had brought to St. Augustine. In accordance with his sworn oath, the *atequi* Gaspar de Salas translated as the Indian witness answered the following questions:

The witness was asked to state where he is from and to give his name. He responded that he is from Asao, that his name is Pedro, and that he is a Christian. Pedro was then asked if he knew Fray Francisco de Beráscola from the mission of Asao, as well as the other friars from Guale territory. To that, Pedro replied that he knew Fray Francisco de Beráscola, Fray Miguel de Auñón, the lay brother Fray Antonio, as well as Fray Pedro de Corpa and Fray Blas Rodríguez, and that he had heard that the Indians from Guale province and from Tulufina had killed all of them. However, since he is merely a boy, Pedro did not see the murders happen. He had also heard that the friars were killed with *macanas*.

Pedro was then asked to explain what had led the Indians to kill the friars. Again, he stated that he did not know because he was just a boy; however, he had heard the *caciques* say that they did not want the friars because the friars had reprimanded them and did not want them to take more than one wife.

The witness was then asked if he or any of the Indians who had been brought to St. Augustine were present during any of the murders. Pedro replied that because he is just a boy, he fled into the forest the moment the Indians decided to kill Fray Beráscola. However, he had heard it said that don Felipe's son Lucas was present at the murder of Fray Blas Rodríguez in Tupiqui.

Asked if he knew where the Indians were holding all the church vestments, chalices, and the friars' clothing, Pedro answered that the chalices had been smashed and broken, and that all the clothing had been taken and distributed among the Indians. Everything taken, he added, has since worn out and thus is of no use whatsoever.

Pedro was then asked a series of other questions, to all of which he responded that he did not know.

The *atequi* Gaspar de Salas stated that everything stated above was a faithful account of what the Indian Pedro had told him in his own language, which Gaspar understood very well; this is all true, in accordance with the oath he had taken. Gaspar did not sign his name because he does not know how.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

The Indian Lucas Sentenced to Torture

In the city of St. Augustine, July 27, 1598: Based on all the evidence presented against the Indian Lucas, son of the *cacique* of Tupiqui, and in order to investigate this matter with all requisite care, Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo declared that he had no choice but to condemn Lucas to further interrogation under torture, which he ordered to be carried out in the following manner:

Lucas is to be put to the rack, with his feet and hands bound. Two garrotes are to be tightened around each leg, one over the thigh and the other around the calf, just below the knee. Another two garrotes are to be placed on each arm, one on the upper arm and the other just below the elbow. All told, eight garrotes are to be used. The governor also ordered that four *cuartillos*¹³ of water be poured into his mouth and nose, over a thin piece of cloth, part of which should be placed inside Lucas's mouth to allow the water to enter inside.

The governor then declared that he reserved the right, at any time or place, to mandate any other form of torture he deemed necessary. And thus he pronounced this decree and sentence, before the following witnesses: the *alférez* Bartolomé López Gavira and Sebastián de Ynclán.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Lucas hears the Sentence

¹³ The amount of water in four *cuartillos* likely measured somewhere close to one-half gallon.

Then forthwith, I, the scribe, informed the Indian Lucas (through the *atequi* Gaspar de Salas) of his sentence, that under torture he was to be asked to testify the truth: Was he present during the murder of Fray Blas or any other friar? Likewise, how far in advance did he discover that the Indians wanted to kill the friars, and did Fray Blas learn before his death that the Indians were going to kill him?

Through the interpreters Gaspar de Salas as well as Lucas's brother (named Amador), Lucas testified that Fray Blas had learned that he was going to die approximately two hours before they killed him. Lucas then added that he had heard that the Indians were going to kill the friars one day before it happened. And that is what Lucas responded, before the following witnesses: the *alférez* Bartolomé López Gavira and Sebastián de Ynclán.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Lucas's Confession

Thereafter, in St. Augustine on July 27, the governor summoned the Indian Lucas to appear before him in the torture chamber. Through the *atequi*, Governor Méndez de Canzo informed Lucas of his intent to torture him so that Lucas would confess what role he had played in the friars' deaths; moreover, that Lucas testify how long before his death did Fray Blas learn that he was going to be killed. The governor advised Lucas that if he told the truth, he would be treated well.

To this, Lucas replied that the truth of the matter is that he was present when the others killed Fray Blas, and that he had helped to bury the friar in the church. He added that Fray Blas learned that they were going to kill him just before he had left to say Mass, and they murdered him as soon as the Mass ended. Before his death, Fray Blas gave away all his clothing so that it would be put to good use, and distributed to anyone who wanted it.

Under further questioning, Lucas stated that they had killed Fray Pedro de Corpa at night; however, he was not present, nor did he see it happen. Furthermore, unlike Fray Blas (who learned in advance of the

plot to kill him), none of the other friars knew of the hour of their deaths.

According to the sworn statement of the *atequi*, this is how Lucas responded to all the questions and cross-examinations, to which I faithfully certify: Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Lucas Reaffirms his Testimony

Thereafter, in St. Augustine on July 28, the governor once again summoned the Indian Lucas to appear before him. He also called for the *atequi*, Gaspar de Salas, who translated Lucas's statement exactly as I, the scribe, had recorded it. Having read his testimony word for word, the *atequi* then translated Lucas's response: Once again, Lucas acknowledged that he was present when they killed Fray Blas, and that he had helped to bury the friar. He also confirmed his previous statement that Fray Pedro de Corpa was killed shortly before daybreak (*cuarto del alba*),¹⁴ and that the other friars were all murdered during the night. Lucas declared that everything he confessed yesterday was the truth, which he stated before the following witnesses: Fabricio López and Antón Salido.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

Lucas Receives his Sentence

After reviewing the statements and decrees contained in these proceedings, it is evident that Lucas, the son of Tupiqui's *cacique*, is guilty of having participated in the murder of Fray Blas, who led the mission of the chiefdom of Tupiqui. By my decree, and in consideration of Lucas's own testimony and his subsequent confirmation of its content, I must therefore sentence and condemn Lucas to death. Justice is to be carried out in the following manner:

Lucas is to leave the military prison where he is currently held; a rope is to be tied around his neck and his hands are to be bound. The town crier is to announce

¹⁴ The term *cuarto del alba* is a Spanish military term, which refers to the last quarter of the night watch to indicate the time when an event occurred.

his crime, and he is to be taken to the gallows, which have been erected for this very purpose. There, he is to be hanged by the neck until his natural death. This is a most appropriate execution of royal justice so that other Indian natives of this province do not dare commit such a dreadful crime. Let this punishment serve as an example to others. By my decree, I order this sentence to be executed. And given that Lucas has received holy baptism, should he decide to die unrepentant and without Christian faith, the governor ordered that he be garroted and that after his death his body be burned to ashes.

As far as Lucas's six Indian colleagues are concerned, no further proceedings are to be taken against them because they are all under-aged young boys and, by inference, were too young to participate in the friars' murders. Instead, the six boys are to be divided among the *presidio's* royal officials and soldiers so that they might serve them until Your Majesty and his royal council order otherwise. Lucas was then notified of this decree and sentence.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

The aforementioned sentence was pronounced on July 28, 1598, before me, Juan Jiménez, chief notary public of this governorship. The following witnesses were present as the governor notified Lucas of his sentence, and ordered that his decree be executed as instructed above: Juan de Espinosa, Diego Pérez, and Fernando Gutiérrez. And I, the scribe, faithfully certify. Juan Jiménez, scribe.

In the city of St. Augustine, Tuesday, July 28, 1598: At 9:00 this morning, in compliance with the sentence issued by Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, I, Juan Jiménez, and the witnesses contained herein, went to the military garrison where Lucas was held prisoner for his crime. Through the *atequí*, Gaspar de Salas, Lucas was informed of the governor's sentence against him, to which he listened and

understood. The signed witnesses were the interpreter Salas, Sergeant Juan de Santiago, and Juan de Espinosa. Before me, Juan Jiménez, scribe.

The Execution

In the city of St. Augustine, July 29, 1598: In compliance with the aforementioned sentence, Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz took Lucas out of prison. He then ordered that Lucas's hands be tied, and a rope placed around his neck. The town crier was then ordered to proclaim that this is the punishment that His Majesty and our lord governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, ordered against this Indian named Lucas, son of Tupiqui's *cacique*.

And thus, Lucas was removed from prison and, accompanied by the town crier, he was led to the gallows at San Juan de Espinillo (which are there precisely for such a punishment). There, Lucas was hanged until his natural death and until his soul departed from his body. After his death, the town crier shouted loudly that the governor of these provinces has ordered that no one dare remove Lucas's body without the governor's authority. This order was shouted for all to hear. And thus the sentence against the Indian Lucas was executed, to which I, the scribe, faithfully certify. Many others were also present, in particular the *alférez* Bartolomé López Gavira, the interpreter Gaspar de Salas, Sergeant Juan de Santiago, and Andrés Redondo. I, the present scribe, hereby certify that in my presence the above sentence was executed and that Lucas died naturally on the gallows by hanging. Dated *ut supra*, Juan Jiménez, scribe.¹⁵

¹⁵ The final paragraph in this document is not included here. It simply states that Juan Jiménez had made a copy of this entire document from the original documents in his possession. Francisco Poveda and Pedro de Garnica Solís signed as witnesses.



CHAPTER 7

A BITTER FOE AND OLD ALLIANCES RESTORED

A native of Oviedo, Bartolomé de Argüelles was one of 12 children, several of whom eventually received royal appointments in the New World. Argüelles's Florida career began in 1578, when he arrived as a soldier, earning a modest salary. For almost five years, Argüelles served as one of several hundred soldiers, and most likely was stationed at Florida's northern garrison, Santa Elena. In 1583 Argüelles was promoted to the office of lieutenant of the garrison and fortress of Santa Elena, a post he held for four years. In 1587, citing personal reasons, Argüelles petitioned Florida's governor to grant him license to return to Spain. The following year, 1588, Argüelles was back in Europe, where he served as sergeant major of two Spanish galleons, both vessels part of the formidable Spanish Armada.¹ Soon Argüelles found himself appointed infantry captain on the *Santa María de la Rosa*, as the Armada prepared to do battle against the English navy.² Unlike so many of his countrymen, Argüelles survived the devastating defeat against the English and not

long thereafter, he returned to Florida.³

His many years of loyal service to the Crown did not go unrewarded. In May of 1590 Argüelles was appointed Florida's royal accountant, a position he held for the next two decades.⁴ However, it was Florida's governorship that Argüelles coveted.

His opportunity arrived unexpectedly in late 1595, when Florida's Governor Domingo Martínez de Avendaño suddenly fell ill and died. At the time of Avendaño's death, Argüelles was in Mexico collecting Florida's royal subsidy, or *situado*. After a lengthy delay in Mexico, Argüelles returned to St. Augustine in January 1596. Upon hearing of Avendaño's death, Argüelles wasted little time. On January 22, 1596, just 10 days after his return to St. Augustine, Florida's royal accountant dispatched his petition to Spain, requesting that the king grant him the vacant governorship. As if anticipating the Crown's reservation that such an appointment would mean the loss of its royal accountant, Argüelles identified

¹ The two galleons were under the command of General Diego Flores [de Valdés]. See "Services of Captain Bartolomé de Argüelles," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (1609), sf.

² Argüelles claimed that he had been appointed captain by the Duke of Medina Sidonia. The *Santa María de la Rosa* wrecked in Blasket Sound, in southern Ireland, on September 11, 1588. Unfortunately, at present it is unclear whether or not Argüelles was still in command of the ship's infantry when it sank. It seems unlikely, since only one crew member allegedly survived, a young Italian boy who was later interrogated by the English and then executed. If Argüelles had served in the 1588 Armada, as he implied, it must have been on another ship.

³ In the 1609 account of his services to the Crown, Argüelles states that when he returned from the Armada expedition to England he presented his letters of reference to serve in the first available post under one of two Spanish generals, don Juan de Cardona or don Alonso (Álvaro?) de Baçán. "Services of Captain Bartolomé de Argüelles," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (1609) sf. For more information on the Spanish Armada and the reign of King Philip II, see Parker (1998).

⁴ Argüelles was not the only Florida veteran who sought the governorship. In his detailed petition to the Crown, Captain Vicente González also requested the appointment. His request was also denied. See "Services and Merits of Captain Vicente González," AGI Patronato 51, N.3, R.12 (1593), fol. 2v.

the ideal successor, “the experienced and most capable Alonso Sancho Saez de Mercado.”⁵

To enhance his possibilities of success, Argüelles turned to St. Augustine’s Franciscan friars. Just one day after Argüelles drafted his petition to the Crown, St. Augustine’s chaplain, the Franciscan friar Francisco de Marrón wrote a strong letter of support for Argüelles’s candidacy. Fray Marrón informed the Crown of the chaos that erupted following Governor Avendaño’s death. With no one appointed successor, the public discord between Florida’s royal treasurer, Juan Menéndez Marqués and the royal *factor*, Alonso de Las Alas continued to worsen. According to Marrón, the dispute ended abruptly with Bartolomé de Argüelles’s arrival from New Spain, where he had gone to collect the *situado*. According to the friar, Argüelles possessed the unique ability to mediate conflicts peacefully, surely a valuable skill for a governor. Finally, Marrón continued, Argüelles already had extensive experience in Florida and he was much loved and respected among the region’s Indian peoples.⁶

Despite his efforts and the enthusiastic support of Florida’s Franciscans, Argüelles never became Florida’s governor, even if he shared the office briefly. Following Governor Avendaño’s death, Argüelles performed the governor’s duties together with St. Augustine’s other three royal officials. From the time of Avendaño’s death in late November 1595, until Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo’s arrival in early June 1597, Argüelles and the other royal officials governed La Florida jointly.⁷ Although the situation was not ideal, Argüelles seemed to relish his new authority. Thus, when news reached St. Augustine that a new governor had been named, Argüelles must have been disappointed, especially when he learned that the office had gone to an outsider with no previous Florida experience.

The long history of conflict between Argüelles and Governor Méndez began almost immediately. As outlined in chapter 1, the two men initially fought over payments for St. Augustine’s

new parish priest, Ricardo Arturo. Weeks later, the governor suspended Argüelles’s close friend and ally, Alonso de Las Alas from office. When the 1597 uprising began, just four months after Governor Méndez arrived, the two men already disliked one another intensely.

In his 1596 appointment to Florida’s governorship, the Crown authorized Méndez to name his own successor, in the event that Méndez should fall ill or otherwise find himself in imminent danger. He was also granted the right to name a replacement to serve as governor during his absence from St. Augustine. On May 23, 1598, Governor Méndez named his own nephew, Juan García de Navia, as his deputy. García was also a newcomer to Florida and his appointment undoubtedly infuriated St. Augustine’s accountant. As if to antagonize Argüelles even further, Governor Méndez ordered that Argüelles himself record the appointment, “so that the said accountant and the other royal officials acknowledge and recognize [Juan García de Navia] as my deputy, and whenever I am absent, as my representative.”⁸

Of course, Argüelles was in no position to challenge García’s appointment. After all, the Spanish king had granted Méndez the authority to name his own deputy and to grant other offices and honors. Direct confrontation with Méndez was far too risky (a painful lesson that Argüelles’s friend and colleague Alonso de Las Alas learned too late). But there were other strategies that the royal accountant could adopt to undermine Méndez’s governorship. He had parchment, ink, and a plume; over the next three years St. Augustine’s disgruntled accountant would put them all to good use.

Argüelles accused García of selling clothing, wine, salt, cured meat, oil, and other goods at inflated prices, far beyond their value.⁹ To make matters worse for Florida’s already impoverished soldiers, Argüelles added, Governor Méndez and his nephew prevented other merchants from selling their merchandise in St. Augustine.

In the same letter to the Crown, Argüelles questioned Governor Méndez’s other appointments and the nepotism that threatened St. Augustine’s very existence. Again, he attacked the

⁵ See “Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles,” AGI Santo Domingo 231 (January 22, 1596), fols. 721r–722v.

⁶ “Letter from Fray Francisco de Marrón to the king,” AGI Santo Domingo 235 (January 23, 1596), fols. 22r–2v.

⁷ “Services of Captain Bartolomé de Argüelles,” AGI Santo Domingo 229 (1609), sf.

⁸ “Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles,” AGI Santo Domingo 231 (May 25, 1598), fols. 899r–900v.

⁹ “Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles,” AGI Santo Domingo 229 (August 3, 1598), fols. 112r–112v.

governor's nephew, Juan García de Navia, this time because the governor had promoted García to captain of one of the garrison's two infantries. According to Argüelles, the appointment was a great insult to the entire garrison, especially since García had no previous military experience. Worse yet, Argüelles continued, García did not possess the character or the proper disposition to be a captain.

He then claimed that the governor had granted license for one of Florida's most veteran soldiers to retire from his duties and leave for Havana.¹⁰ Argüelles did not question the license itself, noting that the soldier in question was an elderly man who had already served a long and distinguished career. The problem, the accountant noted, was Méndez's chosen replacement, the governor's own son, who at the time was only 10 years of age. Argüelles then described an elaborate celebration he witnessed a week earlier in St. Augustine's church, presided over by the garrison's new Irish priest, Ricardo Arturo. A special Mass had been organized to celebrate the Feast Day of Santiago (St. James), held annually on July 25. According to Argüelles, Governor Méndez requested that the priest place a sword and a dagger on top of the altar; then, with great pomp and circumstance, the priest was instructed to present the weapons to the young boy, after which the governor officially appointed his son as one of the garrison's soldiers.

The accountant then concluded his attack on the new governor, stating: "In a garrison like this, for which Your Majesty spends 48,000 ducats per year to maintain, it is not advisable that these important positions be given to such [unqualified] people, whose appointments effectively render these jobs worthless."¹¹ His letter ended with one simple request. Argüelles asked that the Crown grant him license to return to Spain, where he needed to attend to urgent family matters. In addition to the license, Argüelles requested that the Crown specifically order Governor Méndez not to place any impediments on his departure and he promised that once in Spain, he would inform His Majesty's royal council of many more important

matters related to Florida.

Despite Argüelles's plea to return to Spain, the Crown refused to order Méndez to allow him to return home to Asturias, leaving the matter to the governor's discretion. Over the next two years, the royal accountant issued the same request in a series of letters to the Crown. With each request, his urgency seemed to intensify. Again and again he asked Governor Méndez's permission to leave Florida. Again and again the governor refused. Méndez undoubtedly delighted in witnessing Argüelles's mounting frustration. Still, the royal accountant refused to relent, and over time his campaign against the governor grew bolder, until eventually the governor's only recourse was to confiscate Argüelles's most effective arsenal: his plume, parchment, and ink.

The seven documents that follow cover the two-year period between August 3, 1598 and May 18, 1600. They include excerpts from four different letters written by Bartolomé de Argüelles to the Crown and three excerpts from letters sent by Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

Document 7.1: Excerpt from a "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles." AGI Santo Domingo 229, fols. 109v–110r (August 3, 1598).

INTRODUCTION

Five days after the young Indian boy Lucas was hanged in St. Augustine, Bartolomé de Argüelles sat down to write a letter to the Spanish Crown, just one of numerous letters he would send to Spain over the next few years. In the excerpt below, Argüelles opens with a brief description of the situation in Florida before Governor Méndez's arrival. He recalls a peaceful era, a time when the region's Indians responded promptly to all the governor's orders. They paid tribute and they showed signs that they were beginning to accept the new faith.

For Argüelles, everything quickly deteriorated the moment Governor Méndez arrived. In the letter, he blames Méndez for all the ills that had befallen the colony over the previous year, including the murder of the five friars in Guale. Had the governor bothered to solicit advice from experienced men who understood Florida and how to govern it, Argüelles suggests, none of these unfortunate events would have occurred.

Argüelles then proceeds to condemn Governor Méndez's handling of the investigation into the friars' murders. While he acknowledges

¹⁰ Almost two months after this letter was written, Argüelles drafted another letter to the Crown. Again, he reiterated the many abuses committed by Governor Méndez's nephew, Juan García de Navia.

¹¹ "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (August 3, 1598), fol. 112v.

that Lucas's sentence was probably justified, he questions its rapid execution, arguing that Lucas's execution had scandalized the entire region, making it virtually impossible to capture and interrogate additional witnesses. Argüelles then bitterly denounces Governor Méndez's secret alliance with the *cacique* of Escamacu, whom Argüelles characterizes as a deceitful and treacherous individual.

Finally, it is worth noting that Argüelles suggests that all the Indian witnesses interrogated in St. Augustine had confessed that Tolomato's *cacique* had devised the plot to murder the friars. He does not mention don Juanillo by name and it is likely that he was referring to Tolomato's ruler, don Francisco. Regardless, Argüelles's characterization of the uprising, namely that all the witnesses confessed that Tolomato's *cacique* had devised the plot, does not correspond to the testimonies gathered during the previous month's interrogations. Only one of the witnesses, Francisco from Tolomato, testified that don Francisco and don Juanillo had issued the order to kill the friars.

THE DOCUMENT

In previous letters that I have written to Your Majesty, I have reported how the Indians who inhabit the region were living in peace and tranquility. There were clear signs that real progress was being made in regards to their conversion to Christianity; moreover, the Indians always responded promptly to whatever orders the governor issued, and each married man paid an annual tribute of one *arroba* of maize, which they had offered to Governor Avendaño.

However, [that all changed] with the arrival of Governor Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, who had never been to this region before and thus had no idea how to govern it. To better understand the nature of his new governorship, he could have solicited advice from those of us who have lived here for many years. However, he refused to do so; not only that, but whenever any of us, Your Majesty's loyal subjects who serve your interests with such great zeal, approached him to offer our advice, we were so rudely dismissed that we were obliged not to offer again.

After the new governor arrived, terrible things began to occur, such as the mur-

der of Juan Ramírez de Contreras, whom the governor had sent to Cape Canaveral, together with an Indian *cacique* and two other Christians. The governor had given them some goods to barter in exchange for the amber that is usually found down there. However, as soon as they arrived [to Cape Canaveral], the *cacique* from Ais killed them.

Then later, in the month of September, the Guale Uprising occurred, which resulted in the martyrdom of five Franciscan friars who were there to preach and convert the Indians to Christianity. There were six friars who served in that province, and initially we thought that all six had been killed. However, it was later discovered that one of the friars, who had been left for dead, was still alive. After spending nine months in captivity, during which he suffered terrible hardships, the governor rescued him.

When the governor first went up there [to negotiate the friar's release], he met in his ship with the region's most powerful *caciques*. But because they did not have the friar with them, they departed, leaving six young Indian boys behind. Among them was one young man who had been present and helped to murder one of the friars.

The governor brought these boys back to St. Augustine, where he began proceedings against them to determine who was responsible for the murders. They all confessed that Tolomato's *cacique* devised the plot, and that all the other [*caciques*] assisted. Each *cacique*, they confessed, killed the friar from his own village. The governor then ordered that one of the Indians, who was the young son of a *cacique* named don Felipe, be hanged. Although this appears to have been a fair and just punishment, it has created a tremendous obstacle to what we are trying to achieve. In the past, whenever our ships sailed up to Guale territory, the Indians all used to approach and climb aboard; because of that, there was an opportunity to [secure witnesses] and conduct a full investigation. But now, the entire region has been so scandalized by the execution that it will be difficult to capture anyone.

Around the time that the aforementioned frigate departed for Spain (March 2, 1598), the governor dispatched a lieutenant and 20 soldiers up to Santa Elena, under secret orders. Only later, when I saw the account of their expenses, paid for from the *situado*, did I learn the true nature of their mandate. The governor had sent the men to Santa Elena Island to speak with the *cacique* of Escamacu, and to present him with a certain quantity of metal tools, axes, hoes, and other goods. In exchange, they were to ask the *cacique* to assemble his men and launch a military campaign against the Guale, killing or capturing as many Guale as they could.

Upon his arrival at Santa Elena, the said lieutenant discovered the *cacique* hunting in the nearby woods. These are poor and miserable Indians, who have no other sustenance beyond a tiny bit of maize, which is enough to last only about eight days after it has been harvested. After that, for the remainder of the year they survive by hunting deer, bears, and wolves, and collecting shellfish.

Later, the said *cacique* from Escamacu was brought down to St. Augustine, a distance of 50 leagues. Here, he reached a verbal agreement with the governor to carry out the task mentioned above, which he promised to execute within two months.

This clever bit of negotiation may very well have achieved precisely what the governor intended. However, it seems to me, and to all those who know these people well, a grave error even to attempt such a thing. It is an affront and a great insult to request this kind of assistance from Indians who only a few years ago, in an act of great treachery, murdered a lieutenant and 25 soldiers from the Santa Elena garrison, who had simply gone to Escamacu to visit them and search for a little food...¹²

And now, as these Indians are such braggarts, their understanding of this accord is that we depend on them to avenge the abuses committed by the Guale Indians against the friars. It seems a great in-

dignation against our nation, made even worse by the fact that these Indians are neighbors, and there is no way to know whether they will do anything of significance against [the Guale]....

Document 7.2: “Letter from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo to the king.” AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.33, fols. 211r–211v (August 8, 1598).

INTRODUCTION

The brief letter that follows, written about a week after Lucas’s execution, was probably drafted to serve as an introductory letter to the 1598 interrogation of the seven young Guale boys. It is likely that this letter accompanied the entire 1598 trial transcript. Méndez’s letter outlines the trial’s context, addressing the governor’s negotiations with Santa Elena’s *cacique*, the rescue of Fray Francisco de Ávila, and the capture of the seven Guale boys.

THE DOCUMENT

My lord: On February 25 of this year I dispatched the frigate that services this *presidio* back to Spain with a message to be delivered to Your Majesty; I now have received word that the frigate safely arrived at San Lucar de Barrameda. I sent Your Majesty a lengthy account of everything that has happened in these provinces. Since then, I can report to Your Majesty the following update:

In the month of May, I went in person to Guale territory, 40 leagues from this *presidio*, where the Indians had murdered the friars who had been entrusted to their conversion. I traveled up there in order to inflict upon these Indians whatever damage or punishment I could for their terrible crime. Moreover, I wanted to determine from the source itself whether or not they had spared any of the friars.

On the trip to Guale, I was struck by a fierce hurricane, so strong that I was forced to beach the two ships that carried us; nonetheless, it was God’s will that the storm never endangered the lives of any of the soldiers. After making the best possible repairs, I continued on the journey.

Earlier, I had negotiated an agreement with a certain *cacique* from Santa Elena, whose territory borders Guale. The agree-

¹² Here, Argüelles is referring to the 1576 murders of the Spanish soldiers who had gone from Santa Elena to Escamacu.

ment called for the *cacique* and his Indians to inflict upon the Guale as much damage as they could, and to learn if any of the friars were still alive. When I met with this *cacique*, I discovered that he and his subjects had killed eight Indians; furthermore, he informed me that they were holding one of the friars, Francisco de Ávila, alive.

With this news, I went to Guale territory to negotiate the friar's release. I gave the Indians a great many presents; without such generous gifts, the friar's rescue would have been impossible because they were holding him deep in the forest interior. However, since these Indians are a belligerent and deceitful people, they did not honor the promises they had made to me. For my part, on the other hand, I moved with great promptness to give them everything that I had offered. Thus, it was only by God's will that I managed to bring this friar back with me to St. Augustine, where he is at present. I also captured seven Indians alive, having killed several others during the course of the friar's rescue.

As far as these seven captives are concerned, I have taken all of their statements regarding the friars' murders, and the reasons why the Indians killed them. All of this information, as well as the sentence I have imposed in this case, are contained in the testimony that accompanies this letter.

Document 7.3: Excerpt from a "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles." AGI Santo Domingo 229, fols. 116r–117r (September 24, 1598).

INTRODUCTION

Bartolomé de Argüelles did not wait long to renew his verbal assault on Governor Méndez and his ill-informed policies. Before launching into his criticisms of the governor's handling of the uprising, Argüelles opened his correspondence with a statement that he would repeat in many subsequent letters to the Crown: "Before the governor arrived in this land, everything was peaceful and tranquil, not only with the Natives but in all other matters as well. It pains me greatly to see how things have changed..."¹³

In the excerpt, Argüelles once again con-

demns the governor for entering into a secret accord with the *cacique* from Escamacu. As he outlined in his correspondence from early August, Argüelles reiterates his previous claim that the *cacique* Escamacu and his subjects were not to be trusted, citing their many acts of treachery against the Spanish. To this he added another concern, claiming that the governor's actions had cost him both respect and authority over Escamacu and his subjects, who had interpreted the alliance as a clear sign of the governor's weakness.

According to Argüelles, Escamacu had deceived the governor, only pretending to comply with his agreement to wage war against Guale with whom, Argüelles insisted, Escamacu had a close friendship. And while the governor naively pursued this false alliance, Escamacu and his subjects secretly plotted and carried out a violent attack on Spanish Florida's most loyal Indian allies on San Pedro Island. Again, Argüelles blamed Méndez for the San Pedro assault, during which three of the island's villages were burned to the ground. He explained that after traveling north to meet with Escamacu and negotiate their accord, Governor Méndez returned to St. Augustine with two of Escamacu's subjects, including the village *mandador*, a man of very high status. According to Argüelles, Governor Méndez had promised to grant safe passage for the men to return to Escamacu, a promise he allegedly did not honor.

Argüelles thus characterizes the assault on San Pedro as a retaliatory strike against the governor. However, it is difficult to determine the veracity of Argüelles's claims, if in fact they hold any truth at all. San Pedro had been attacked, but the identity of the assailants remains unclear, with some accounts suggesting that it had been another Guale attack. Likewise, there are no other accounts that reference Governor Méndez's refusal to allow Escamacu's *mandador* safe passage to return home.

THE DOCUMENT

As far as the Indians are concerned, I have written to Your Majesty already to explain how, since the governor's arrival, the Guale Indians have rebelled and have murdered the friars who lived among them. Only one of the friars, named Francisco de Ávila, survived. Ávila was the first friar the Indians attacked; he was badly hurt, and nearly died from his wounds. However, it was God's will to spare this blessed man;

¹³ "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (September 24, 1598), fol. 115v.

and although he suffered terrible hardships after nine months in captivity, the governor rescued him.

In order to secure the friar's release, the governor took two skiffs and sailed up to Guale territory. There, he attempted to carry out some strategy, which I always understood to be the following: without consulting me on the matter, the governor negotiated and then proceeded to arrange a deal with the *cacique* from Escamacu, from the Province of Santa Elena. The governor's plan was to offer gifts to the *cacique* of Escamacu so that he and his people would wage war against the Guale Indians.

As Your Majesty's servant, over the past 20 years I have dealt with these people, and I know them well. I could have told the governor what I thought of his plan; it was so clear to me that he was going to lose a great deal of respect as soon as Escamacu and his subjects learned that we needed them to avenge our own grievances. This is especially true when one considers that, until very recently, we held them in very low esteem. When the *presidio* was located at Santa Elena, these same Indians committed many acts of treachery, killing a great number of [Spaniards]. Moreover, the Indians from Escamacu and Guale are neighbors and allies.

Nevertheless, in order to comply with the agreement, [Escamacu and his Indians] provided some indications that they were doing something. This is what happened: when the governor arrived up at the island of Santa Elena, the *cacique* presented him with six Indian scalps, which he claimed were taken from Guale Indians that he had killed. But it was all a lie.

It was on his return voyage to St. Augustine that the governor took Fray Ávila out of [Guale territory]. The Indians sent the friar to the governor's ship after the governor had promised them gifts of clothing and metal tools.

Back here, it has been learned from the friar himself that when the *cacique* of Escamacu left St. Augustine (where he had come, at the governor's request, to negotiate the agreement), he went straight to Guale territory. There, he told the Guale

the nature of his negotiations with the governor. Moreover, he told the Guale that if they wanted, he and his men would help them. He explained that he could arrange a time for the Spaniards to come to Guale by sea; and as soon as the Spaniards disembarked to attack, all of the Indians would join together and descend upon the Spaniards. This is but a glimpse of how these Indians behave.

Even so, it is unwise to give these Indians from Santa Elena any justification to [wage war against us], but that is precisely what the governor has done. Instead of pursuing an alliance, the governor brought two Indians from Santa Elena back with him to St. Augustine; one of these Indians is the island's *mandador*, a person whom the Indians hold in very high esteem. The governor had promised to allow them free passage to return, but he has not done that.

Almost 20 days have passed since the Indians from Guale came down to San Pedro, where they burned three villages and killed several people. San Pedro's residents testified that they recognized people from Escamacu, and that the arrows used by the attackers were the kind used by Santa Elena's warriors. It has caused tremendous harm that the Indians from Santa Elena have been given reason to declare themselves our enemies. And even though we had little trust in them before, their alliance with the Indians from Guale should be cause for deep concern.

Don Juan, the *cacique* from San Pedro, has demonstrated very clearly his loyalty to Your Majesty and his humble character; moreover, he is the most highly regarded *cacique* on this entire coast. Recently, don Juan requested that we send soldiers [to San Pedro] to defend against the Indians from Guale. In response, the governor dispatched 16 soldiers, who are currently in San Pedro; however, the governor did not provide these soldiers with any food to support themselves, thereby saving their salaries and food rations. But because these Indians are poor, and have just the little maize that they harvest to sustain themselves, feeding the soldiers [as well] is a terrible burden on them.

In fact, it would be of enormous benefit if we took their rations to them, because the Indians from the interior are watchful to see how we treat our allies. And as the Indians from San Pedro have no other source of wealth or revenue besides the miserable amount of food that they produce, they see this [military] aid more like an expense than real assistance.

And this all stems from the fact that the governor still does not recognize the importance of these Indians [from San Pedro], or the manner in which to deal with them; in times of need ... San Pedro's Indians could prove extremely useful.

Document 7.4: Excerpts from a "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles to the Crown." AGI Santo Domingo 229, fols. 124r-124v, 126r (March 18, 1599).

INTRODUCTION

As 1598 drew to a close, Argüelles began to realize that his correspondence had not persuaded the Crown to act against its governor. Governor Méndez had not been removed from office; in fact, he had not even received a reprimand for his actions. Perhaps concerned that his letters represented the lone voice of criticism against Florida's governor, Argüelles drafted another, dated November 2, 1598, in which he insisted that many other Spaniards in Florida would confirm his complaints against the governor if they were not so fearful that Méndez would discover their letters, and then make life here difficult for them.¹⁴ But he was the only one to brave the governor's wrath.

By early 1599, a new opportunity presented itself. On September 13, 1598, King Philip II died, and the Spanish Crown passed to his son, King Philip III. Exactly when the news of Philip II's death reached Florida is unclear, but Argüelles was certainly aware of the succession when he wrote the following letter in March 1599. Perhaps he thought his words would now find more receptive ears. His attack on Florida's governor intensified. Again, Argüelles highlighted Méndez's mishandling of the investigation into the murders of the Franciscan friars in Guale territory.

Echoing his correspondence from the previous year, Argüelles criticized the governor for executing Lucas, emphasizing Lucas's elite status as the son of one of Guale's *caciques*. Of course, Argüelles had expressed his disapproval before, but this time his objection included details he had not mentioned earlier. Argüelles now claimed that the seven young boys interrogated in St. Augustine had been brought there under a truce and that Méndez had assured the Guale that no harm would come to them. The governor's blatant deception, Argüelles continued, meant that the Guale would never again trust the Spanish as long as Méndez remained in office. Argüelles now openly advocated the governor's removal, insisting that peace would never be restored while Méndez ruled.

According to Argüelles, not only had the governor's actions brought increased instability in Guale, but they also threatened the conversion efforts among the region's most loyal Indian allies. In the letter, Argüelles alleges that Governor Méndez advised neighboring Indian leaders that the only Spanish authority they needed to respect was his, not the friars. As a result, the conversion efforts had stalled and even the most enthusiastic and loyal converts, such as San Pedro's *cacique* don Juan, had started to disobey their missionaries. Argüelles laments that Florida's Franciscan friars had all become "extremely disillusioned and upset."

THE DOCUMENT¹⁵

Nothing in the world could possibly justify the sacrilege committed by the Guale Indians, whose crime certainly merits harsh punishment. Nevertheless, the

¹⁵ Argüelles wrote this letter just four days after a devastating fire in St. Augustine had destroyed the Franciscan convent and 14 houses. Witnesses testified that the blaze began in the morning hours of Sunday, March 14, and that it started in the home of Juan Núñez de los Ríos, consuming his kitchen and residence first before spreading throughout the town. A strong northeasterly wind caused the fire to move quickly. By the time it was contained, the flames had consumed another 13 residences, the Franciscan convent, and the city's royal storehouse, destroying all the maize inside. For additional details on the fire, see "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles to the Crown," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (March 18, 1599), fol. 124r and AGI Contaduría 950, bl. 2, sf. See also AGI Contaduría 951, sf.

¹⁴ "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles to the Crown," AGI Santo Domingo 229 (November 2, 1598), fol. 122v.

governor should have adopted a different strategy and proceeded against the Indians in a different manner. Instead, he took two skiffs and some soldiers from this *presidio*, and went up to the province of Guale. While there, under the guise of a truce and with assurances for their safety, the governor brought up to six young Indian boys back with him to St. Augustine. And as soon as he arrived back here, he had one of the boys hanged; this boy was the son of a *cacique* named don Felipe.

The governor was convinced that the young man had been present during the murder of one of the friars, and therefore deserved the punishment he received. However, the governor should never have carried out this sentence, having brought this Indian to St. Augustine under a truce. Moreover, he should have waited until he learned what had happened to the other friars before deciding how to proceed against those responsible. With that, he could have returned immediately to the task of converting the Indians to Christianity and establishing alliances with those [innocent of this crime]. Unfortunately, this course of action will be extremely difficult now, because the Guale Indians have already received news of the Indian's death.

In fact, the last time a Spanish ship sailed up to Guale province with orders to bring some *cacique* back to St. Augustine, the Indians there refused even to approach the vessel. Rather, they shouted from a distance that they did not want our friendship, and then they all fled. My understanding is that as long as this governor remains in office, the Indians will never trust him....

(We continue the letter on fol. 126r)

The Franciscan friars who survived [the uprising] are all extremely disillusioned and upset with the governor, and not just because they receive less support than they used to [under the previous governor]. More troubling is the fact that the governor has discredited the friars right in front of the Indians, telling the natives that they only needed to respect his authority and that the friars were not allowed to harm them in any way. With that said, as

we know that these people are governed by fear, everything related to the conversion efforts has cooled off considerably.

Consider what happened last year with don Juan, the *cacique* from San Pedro, who until now was universally considered the most loyal of them [*the caciques*]. For more than 11 years, Fray Baltasar López has taught and baptized all of San Pedro's Indians. As vicar of that province, Fray López has brought order to their lives. However, on the Day of Ascension last year, some of San Pedro's Indians were on their way to work, drinks in hand. Fray López reprimanded them and urged them not to go. With that, the *cacique* don Juan arrived. Visibly angered, don Juan told the friar that he had lost all respect for him, and then warned López not to meddle in his affairs or order anything from his Indians. Now the friars lament that if order is not established soon, all of their time and effort here will have been wasted....

Document 7.5: Excerpt from a "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles." AGI Santo Domingo 229, fols. 134r–135r (February 20, 1600).

INTRODUCTION

By February of 1600, Florida's royal officials finally received confirmation that the Crown had been made aware of the friars' deaths and that it had issued its recommendations. Following Fray Ávila's successful rescue and Lucas's subsequent execution, Governor Méndez dispatched Hernando de Mestas to Spain to present a full report to the Council of the Indies. By February 1600, Mestas had returned to Florida with the council's recommendations.

The report clearly shocked Argüelles, who was dismayed to learn that the council not only accepted Méndez's distorted version of the events, but that it also recommended no further punishments for those who perpetrated the attacks. Convinced that the Crown had been misled, Argüelles proceeded to write another letter to King Philip III, defending the friars' actions and denouncing Méndez's characterization of the uprising.

THE DOCUMENT

Whenever the opportunity has arisen, I have written to Your Majesty and his royal Council of the Indies to give full account

of the happenings in this land and of the hardships we endure in it. In this present letter, I feel it is in Your Majesty's best interest if I were to reiterate some of these matters, as well as add something about what has happened recently.

Regarding the topic of the Guale uprising and rebellion, and the murder of the five Franciscan friars, we have received news that Your Majesty has been informed of this matter. However, in terms of the reasons why the Indians committed this crime, and the nature of the punishment they received for it, it is quite possible that Your Majesty has been misinformed. I say this based on the messages and the resolution that Hernando de Mesetas, whom the governor had dispatched to Spain with a report of the uprising, brought back from the Council of the Indies. The Council's resolution does not mandate that these Indians be punished in order to bring them back to the service of God and of Your Majesty.

In fact, it appears as though Your Majesty has been informed that the friars themselves did something to provoke the uprising and thus justify the Indians' rebellion against them. Not only that, but it appears that it has been argued that the Indians who dared to commit this crime have already received sufficient punishment for it.

However, as someone who has resided in this land for more than 20 years, all of which has been spent in Your Majesty's faithful service, I can assure you beyond any doubt of this: the Franciscan priests who died in Guale territory were all considered to be men of exemplary and virtuous character. In my previous conversations with the governor, he identified three things that the friars had done and said to spark the uprising. The friars are innocent of all three of these charges; and even if they had committed them, such actions certainly did not justify the Indians' response.

The first charge was that one of the friars had removed a certain *cacique* from office and replaced him with another. While this might appear to be a matter of some gravity and sufficient provocation,

for those familiar with the details of the case and who understand how these Indians live and behave, the friar's actions were of little significance. Moreover, the Indians themselves were not at all offended because the *cacique* who had been removed was not the legitimate holder of that office; rather, he had usurped the title by force and had committed many abuses against the Indians. He also mistreated an older Indian, the legitimate *cacique*, stripping him of his office simply because he was less belligerent. Ultimately, when the Indians learned of the friar's desire to restore the legitimate heir to office, they all obeyed the friar. With the office restored, all the Indians, who numbered roughly 60, were most content.

It was then said that the other cause of the uprising was that another friar from a different mission had placed a gag on an Indian to prevent him from speaking. Upon careful consideration, this was indeed a laudable action because the Indian was an *anepecuato*, which is the name that the Indians assign to commoners of lowly status. The person who ordered the gag was Fray Miguel de Auñón, commissary of the friars who were stationed in Guale province. Having traveled down to this *presidio*, Fray Auñón informed me in person that he had carried out this particular punishment and penitence because the Indian had taken certain liberties and had committed blasphemy. The punishment was well deserved, and served as a lesson to others; moreover, the Indian did not die from this punishment, nor did it cause him any pain whatsoever.

It was also said that another reason for the uprising was that the father commissary [Miguel de Auñón] had issued orders forbidding Indians from going from one village to another without permission and license to do so. In fact, this was one of the best orders that Fray Auñón could have issued because these barbarians are accustomed to moving from one village to the next without informing their own *caciques* or any other authority. As a result, the friars and the *caciques* had no idea when they had people in their village and when they did not. In addition to the gen-

eral chaos this movement caused, it also proved problematic for religious instruction and conversion.

Therefore, a careful consideration of the three charges leveled against the friars reveals that their actions deserve nothing less than complete gratitude and thanks. Instead, the truth of the matter is that this terrible crime should be attributed to the Indians' own evil inclinations and customs. In fact, they have committed similar crimes in the past, all during times of peace. For example, 25 years ago, officials from Your Majesty's royal treasury boarded a ship and were on their way from St. Augustine to the garrison at Santa Elena to issue payments to the men stationed there. When they reached the coast of Guale province, the men all went ashore. Despite the fact that they were friends and allies, the Indians killed all the royal officials and another 12 people who had accompanied them. The Indians also murdered four people who were with them at the time; these four individuals had gone to Guale territory to deliver messages from the Santa Elena garrison.

Later, after having waged warfare against them, an alliance was once again renewed; with that, a squadron leader passed through Guale province, carrying a message from the Santa Elena garrison. The Indians killed him for no other reason than to commit evil and to rob him of the clothes he wore. And now, 16 years later, these same Indians have committed this diabolic act, despite the fact that we have been allies over all that time; for the past 16 years, they have come and gone from this garrison, each time receiving gifts. Furthermore, we sent the friars up to their villages at the behest of the Indians themselves, who requested friars to teach and baptize them, which is precisely what the friars did. It was Your Majesty who sent these friars from Spain, with such care and at great cost.

Therefore, it cannot even be suggested that the friars did anything to provoke the Indians to commit this act because nothing in the world could have justified their crime. The only explanation is the devil himself, who continues to hold the Indians

under his sway; it was the devil who insisted that they [kill the friars], stirring the Indians' greed to possess the friars' habits and other meager articles of clothing they had to protect themselves against the harsh cold. The Indians also coveted the small rations of bread and wine that had been sent to the friars from this garrison. We know this to be true because when the Indians first laid hands on the friars, they removed all their clothing, which they then divided among themselves. They did this with all the clothing and food they found.

Immediately after the uprising occurred, the governor assembled some men and departed from this *presidio*; after gathering an Indian force made up of our ally don Juan's subjects, the governor set out to punish those responsible for this crime. However, his actions had little effect. Moreover, as a result of subsequent expeditions that have been carried out in Guale province, the governor has lost whatever reputation (fear?) he had initially won. The reason for that is because in his absence, the governor entrusted the campaigns to a particular sergeant major, who took a small group of men on those expeditions. However, [instead of punishing the Indians], the sergeant major ended up bartering with them, exchanging worthless items that the Indians seek with such greed. This caused great murmurs and grumbling by all who witnessed what happened. Even our Indian allies considered his actions vile.

As soon as the uprising occurred, an effective punishment would have been to dispatch someone from St. Augustine with 50 soldiers in two shallows to the island of San Pedro, which borders Guale province. From there, these men could have sailed frequently up and down the coastline and along the rivers, seizing all the Indian canoes that pass daily between these islands in search of food supplies. Moreover, they could have burned all the villages they came across, destroying maize crops and other vegetables that the Indians cultivate. They also could have captured a number of Indians; this would have been the best method to punish them for such a crime and to exact revenge. Such actions would

have compelled the Indians, through necessity, to come to us and beg for mercy. Those who remained would have been fully subdued, and the punishment would have served as an example to the Guale and to other Indians so that they would never again dare commit such a crime.

If we do not proceed along this path, or along a better one, we will not have any security whatsoever....

Document 7.6: Excerpts from a “Letter to the king from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.” AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.35 fols. 220r–220v (February 28, 1600; received May 28, 1600).

INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes with excerpts from two separate letters written by Governor Méndez to the Crown. Dated February 28, 1600, and May 18, 1600, respectively, both accounts record Governor Méndez’s early peace negotiations with several Guale *caciques*. Méndez is so confident of his actions that he projects that peace will be fully restored to Guale within days.

The letter below opens with Governor Méndez’s response to a specific query sent from Spain’s Council of the Indies. In January 1598, San Pedro’s *cacique* don Juan sent a letter to the Crown requesting that he be appointed *mico mayor* of Guale. Initially, the Council of the Indies seemed agreeable to the request, but chose to defer the matter to Florida’s governor. In their response to don Juan’s petition, the council members called on Governor Méndez to clarify the specific nature of the office to which don Juan aspired and they asked the governor to submit his own recommendation. Méndez’s response was unequivocal. If don Juan were appointed *mico mayor* of Guale, Méndez warned, everything he has done over the past few years to pacify the province will be for naught.

Méndez then outlines the recent success of his campaign to restore peace and tranquility to Guale territory. For the first time since the outbreak of the 1597 uprising, Guale chiefs once again returned to St. Augustine to “render their obedience” and beg for mercy. Unfortunately, Méndez does not identify the four “high-ranking *caciques*” who journeyed to St. Augustine to meet him (although one of them was likely the *cacique* of Espogache), but their arrival initiated a lengthy process of negotiation in which all but

two of Guale’s *caciques* traveled south to speak with the governor. Without exception, those *caciques* who journeyed to St. Augustine received pardon. The two leaders who did not “render their obedience,” Tolomato’s *mico mayor* don Francisco and his heir, don Juanillo, were ultimately blamed for instigating the uprising.

For the first time in the documentary record, the governor identifies don Juanillo as the lone individual responsible for the friars’ deaths. Méndez claims that the uprising began after friars Pedro de Corpa and Blas Rodríguez had forcibly removed don Juanillo from office and replaced him with the more “humble” and compliant man, named don Francisco. However, this explanation should be viewed with caution. No record from before the uprising ever refers to don Juanillo as *mico mayor*, nor is there any mention that the friars had attempted to remove him from office. Instead, colonial records uniformly recognize don Francisco as the paramount chief and don Juanillo is always mentioned as his legitimate heir. It is not until 1600, almost three years after the uprising, that blame for the friars’ deaths shifts almost exclusively toward Tolomato’s two leaders. By the fall of 1601, don Francisco and don Juanillo stood alone as the only accused culprits.

THE DOCUMENT

In response to Your Majesty’s request that I give my opinion regarding the *cacique* don Juan’s ambition to become the *mico mayor* of Guale territory, and explain what exactly that title means:

My understanding is that a *mico mayor* is akin to a king of a certain region; wherever he goes, all the *caciques* in his villages and *bohíos* recognize and acknowledge him as *mico*, and they concede to him the principal seat in their *bohíos* and council houses. Once seated, [all of his subjects] approach to offer oaths of obedience. Each year, they provide him with certain tribute payments, in pearls and other currencies, which, depending on local resources, they fashion from shells or animal skins.

My own opinion on this matter is that Your Majesty should not award the *cacique* don Juan with the title of *mico mayor* of Guale territory. Such a move would ruin everything that I have worked so hard to accomplish in subduing that province and winning over its inhabitants. I have paci-

fied most of the region, which is now quite calm; moreover, four of the province's highest-ranking *caciques* have come to see me, begging mercy for their past crime and for the murder of the friars. They wish to return to their old lands, having grown tired of roaming the forests on account of the attacks that I have launched against their lands.

I received [these four *caciques*] amicably, assuring them that I would do well by all those [*caciques*] who came to see me, and that I would provide them with gifts in exchange for the [safe] return of the many baptized souls from that province. However, those *caciques* who do not come to pledge their obedience and beg for mercy will be to blame for my decision to once again destroy their maize crops, which is the punishment they most fear. In fact, no other punishment or killing that I have done has led them to come here to pledge obedience as much as taking away their food. Thus, I trust in our Lord that within a matter of days the Guale province will be completely pacified. However, until that happens, I think it unwise to administer additional punishments or sentences beyond what has been done already, at least until, as I have said, everyone (all the Christians?) is secured.

The individual I have determined to be most guilty [of the friars' murders] is don Juanillo, who was due to become *mico mayor* of Guale territory. I have been told that because don Juan was a belligerent young man, the friars Pedro de Corpa and Blas Rodríguez (two of the friars who were killed), had removed him as *mico*, and had awarded the office to don Francisco, an old and humble man. It was this "shake-up" (*descomposición*), among others, that led [the Guale] to commit this crime. In statements that I have taken from some of the Indians regarding the friars' deaths, they have placed the blame on the friars themselves. However, despite these claims, I have never consented to write an indecent word about them or their religious order, because I also recognize these Indians to be gifted liars who, in order to disguise their wicked acts and their treachery, will invent a thousand lies.

Document 7.7: "Testimony of Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo." AGI Santo Domingo 231, fols. 812r–813r (May 18, 1600). Another copy of this letter can also found in "Testimony of the submission offered by the *caciques* of Guale, who seek mercy for having committed the murderous offense against the friars." AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.36, fols. 302r–304v.

INTRODUCTION

After Méndez pardoned four of Guale's *caciques* early in 1600, negotiations with other Guale chiefs soon followed. For the governor, the reappearance of Guale chiefs in St. Augustine represented a clear sign that his policies had worked. Indeed, in the following letter, Méndez boasts that his punitive campaigns had achieved their intended aim and that the Guale finally had grown weary of the destructive measures he had implemented. It is a rather curious claim, especially since there is no evidence that Méndez authorized any further punishments against Guale after Lucas's execution in late July, 1598. In fact, between August, 1598, and the end of the uprising in November, 1601, there is no evidence of any Spanish military campaigns in Guale. If Guale *caciques* had determined to negotiate new peace accords with the governor, their motivations for doing so likely had less to do with their fear of Spanish military reprisals than with their own internal issues.

With no permanent Spanish presence in Guale territory after the uprising, it is impossible to ascertain what was happening within the region's chiefdoms. However, by 1600, it is clear that some Guale rulers chose to reestablish ties with St. Augustine. Messengers from Guale began to appear in the Florida garrison to inform the governor that some of the region's *caciques* wanted to restore their alliances with St. Augustine. To determine the sincerity of these messages, Governor Méndez dispatched Sergeant Díaz to Guale province. When Díaz returned from Guale, he brought with him several principal Indians and Indian laborers, including the *cacique* of Espogache, his brother and heir, as well as Ytuchuco, the *cacique* of Tulufina. It is worth noting that Tulufina is where Fray Francisco de Ávila had been held captive. Clearly, conditions had improved such that Ytuchuco did not fear any punishment for his involvement in the uprising.

When they reached St. Augustine, the *caciques* were escorted to the governor's residence. During the meeting, Espogache and Ytuchuco declared that they had come as representatives of the most

powerful *caciques* from Guale territory, namely Asao, Guale, Tupiqui, Aluste, Ufalague, Talapo, Talaje, Ospos, Tulufina, Yfulo, and Otalapotoque. Claiming to speak on their behalf, the two Indian leaders "rendered their obedience" and begged the governor's pardon for their participation in the uprising. Méndez accepted their apology and pardoned them for their participation in the friars' murders. The governor then vowed not to wage any further military campaigns against them, or any of the *caciques* they represented.

In his letter dated three months earlier, Méndez blamed don Juanillo for the 1597 uprising. Below, the governor identifies Tolomato's paramount chief, don Francisco, as well as don Juanillo as the uprising's leaders. Both men, it seems, assured their guilt by not traveling to St. Augustine to "render their obedience." "It can only be assumed," Méndez writes, "that they were among the instigators in the friars' deaths."

It is unlikely that we will ever know why don Francisco or don Juanillo did not attempt to negotiate peaceful terms with Governor Méndez, but their failure do so ultimately meant that they would become the only leaders held accountable for the uprising. It would cost both men their lives.

THE DOCUMENT

In the city of St. Augustine, May 18, 1600.

On behalf of the king our lord, Governor and Captain General Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo declared the following, before me Juan Jiménez, chief notary:

After the Indian rebellion in Guale province and the murder of the friars who were stationed there to instruct and convert the Indians, the governor gathered infantrymen and went in person to punish those responsible for the crime. To that end, he employed every means possible, killing and injuring large numbers of Indians, many of whom were Indian leaders, or *principales*. The governor destroyed their crops and food supplies; he burned their houses and villages, forcing the Indians to abandon their lands and retreat deep into the forests.

As a result, the Indians have grown weary of the harsh punishments they have received and, therefore, they have once again submitted to [royal authority]. The *caciques* from that province have sent messages to St. Augustine indicating that they do not

want the governor to wage further warfare against them. Thus, in order to verify and confirm the Indians' real intentions, some days ago the governor dispatched Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz de Badajoz up to Guale province to ascertain their true will from the Indians themselves. Díaz found them greatly changed from how they were before; on going ashore, the Indians warmly received the sergeant major and the 18 soldiers who accompanied him. Díaz and his men spent several nights in their villages, where they slept with complete assurance of their safety.

On his return to St. Augustine, the sergeant major brought with him a number of *indios principales*, as well as some Indian laborers, which is a matter of great importance for this city and its garrison. These laborers were used to cultivate Your Majesty's fields, as well as those of the city's private residents; moreover, their own *caciques* willingly sent them for that very purpose, in particular, the *cacique* from Espogache, who was the very first to surrender and render obedience.

Despite the fact that the Indians labored in the aforementioned fields, they were well compensated for their work, so much so that the Indians who decided to return to Guale province departed with joy, grateful for the lord governor's kindness and mercy. The squadron leader, Diego de Cárdenas, accompanied these Indians to ensure that they returned safely to their lands. Having gone alone, without any other soldier to accompany him, Diego de Cárdenas was received with much love and was showered with many gifts. When he arrived at the village of Espogache, all the *caciques* from around the province went to see him. They begged him to help them convince the lord governor to forgive their grave error; as newcomers to the faith, they did not fully understand what they had done. They pleaded, for the love of God, that no further warfare be waged against them, and that their food supplies and maize crops not be destroyed. The punishments they have received and the deaths they have suffered were quite enough.

And with that resolution, Diego de Cárdenas arrived in this city today, where

he went directly to the governor's residence. In his company came the *cacique* of Espogache, together with one of his brothers, the heir to the chieftaincy. Cárdenas also brought with him Ytuchuco, the *cacique* of the Salchiche Indians from Tulufina; Ytuchuco and Espogache are among the most important *caciques* in the entire province. In addition to the *cacique* Espogache, there were other Indian *principales*, the *mandadores* of other *caciques*. They all gathered together at the governor's residence. Also present were this scribe and an Indian interpreter who was a native of that province. The *atequi's* name is Amador, and he is well acculturated (*españolado*). Gaspar de Salas, a soldier from this garrison who understands their language, was also present.

Through these interpreters and in my presence, the governor asked the *caciques* to clarify why they had come, and what exactly they wanted to negotiate with his grace. Having asked the question, both Amador and Gaspar de Salas replied in Spanish that the *caciques* responded that they had come to St. Augustine on behalf of the most important *caciques* from the entire province: namely the *caciques* from Asao, Guale, Tupiqui, Aluste, Ufalague, Ytalapo (Talapo), Talax (Talaje), Ospó, Tulufina, Yfulo, and Otalapotoque. They explained that they had come on behalf of all the important *caciques*, with the exception of don Francisco, the *mico mayor* of Tolomato, and his heir, don Juanillo, on whose behalf they brought no message or notice for the governor.

Thus, on behalf of the aforementioned *caciques*, Ytuchuco and Espogache explained that they had come to St. Augustine to render obedience to His Majesty and to the governor who serves in his name. They added that His Majesty would be well served to accept their obedience and to forgive them, for the love of God, for the terrible crime and error they committed in having murdered the friars. As savage people with limited understanding, they did not fully comprehend what they were doing.

The *caciques* explained that even though the friars had provoked them on a number of occasions, the Indians did not have the discernment to launch a complaint against them, nor did they have an interpreter

to speak on their behalf. Moreover, they were fearful of Fray Blas Rodríguez, one of the friars who had been stationed there; Rodríguez had threatened that if they said anything he would have them whipped.

According to Amador and Gaspar de Salas, the aforementioned is exactly what Espogache and Ytuchuco testified. The governor then asked another Indian, nicknamed "the little navigator" (*el pilotillo*) and who is also acculturated (*españolado*), whether Gaspar de Salas and Amador had translated truthfully what the *cacique* Espogache had testified. At this, "el pilotillo" replied that the *cacique* had stated exactly what Amador and Salas said he did. Moreover, despite the fact that I, the present scribe, do not know how to speak that language, I did spend eight years in the Province of Santa Elena, and I understood enough of what was said to know that the interpreters are telling the truth.

With the discussion ended, the *cacique* of Espogache and the other Indian *caciques* and *principales* in his company knelt to the ground; there, in their own names and on behalf of all the aforementioned *caciques*, they kissed the lord governor's hand. With that, the governor ordered them to rise. Through the interpreters, the governor spoke to them, assuring them that he would treat them well if they followed his orders. Having translated the governor's words, the interpreters declared that the Indians replied that they would comply. At that point, again through the interpreters, the governor issued the following statement:

The crime you have committed in having murdered the friars is a most grievous offense. Had a group of Spaniards committed such an act, I would have ordered them burned alive. However, as newcomers to the faith, and as people of little substance, these Indians did not comprehend the gravity of their crime. Furthermore, after taking into account the many Indians that the governor and his infantry have killed in Guale territory, as well as the utter destruction of their crops and food supplies, the governor has decided for now to accept their offer of obedience to His Majesty. However, from this moment forward, these Indians have received due warning that under no cir-

cumstance, no matter the offense, are they to kill anyone who offends them. This applies to all individuals, no matter their position, rank, or class. Moreover, they are not to permit or authorize any other Indian to commit murder; instead, they are to restrain the offended individual(s), and issue them gifts. Should anyone commit any grievance against them, they are to advise the governor immediately, and he gives his word that he will issue harsh punishments to anyone who happens to offend them or their women.

Furthermore, in no instance are they to prevent messengers from passing through their territory; rather, they are to provide these messengers with safe passage and generous provisions. And with great care and diligence, they are to dispatch Indians to this garrison whenever they are asked to do so for the purpose of fulfilling the daily tasks required in Your Majesty's service. When the governor travels up to Guale province, all the aforementioned *caciques* will appear in person before his grace; they will surrender their weapons and they will beg for mercy. In addition to issuing this same statement to them, the governor will discuss additional matters of equal and even more importance. For example, because there are so many baptized Christians in Guale province, they must all return to the knowledge and recognition of their holy Catholic faith and plead for forgiveness and absolution for the terrible sin they have committed against our Lord God.

After the interpreters translated the governor's statement, Espogache and the other *caciques* responded that they will honor and comply with everything the governor ordered and declared. Seeing that they conceded to all of his requests, the governor ordered the interpreters to tell all the present *caciques* to return to their lands and villages; there, they are free to plant their fields and harvest their crops, just as they used to do. The governor gives his word that from this moment forward he will do them no more harm. This applies to all the aforementioned *caciques*, except for the *mico* don Francisco and don Juanillo; as leaders of the uprising, the governor reserves the right to punish

them for it. And since don Francisco and don Juanillo have decided not to come here to render obedience with the others, it can only be assumed that they were among the instigators in the friars' deaths.

Everything stated above occurred in my presence, to which I faithfully attest. The following witnesses were also present: Captain Hernando de Mestas, Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz de Badajoz, Diego de Cárdenas, squadron leader of one of this garrison's companies, the *alférez* Bartolomé López Gavira, the soldier and *atequi* Gaspar de Salas.

The governor then signed his name and ordered me to make two or more copies (or however many necessary) ... and to send notice to our lord the king. Under oath, Gaspar de Salas was asked to declare whether everything written above was what the *caciques* responded to the questions asked by the governor. Salas responded, under oath, that it was all true and that is exactly what the *caciques* had said to him in their language, and what he said on their behalf in our language. Based on his appearance, Amador did not appear to be old enough to take the oath.¹⁶ To all this I, the present scribe, faithfully declare.

Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me,
Juan Jiménez, scribe.

¹⁶ In the Spanish-American colonies, no single legal text existed. Instead, royal officials relied on a series of authoritative codes, laws, and practices established in manuscripts and printed compendia dating from the late medieval ages to the early modern era. In St. Augustine, the scribe stated that the Indian translator, Amador, appeared too young to take the oath. This legal tradition derives from King Alfonso X's *Siete Partidas* (Seven Parts) published in the 13th century. The third volume of this collection addresses trials and courtroom procedures with an entire section on *juramento* (swearing an oath). There, the third *partida* advises against administering the oath to anyone under 14 years of age, "... Because they are under age, they sometimes swear to and state things which they should not." For further information, see Title XI, Law VII in Scott, Burns, and Alfonso X (2001: 632). Additional information on law and its application to minors in the Spanish Americas see Blum (1998: 240–71), Cicerechia (1997: 331–47), Hect (2002), and Premo (2005).



CHAPTER 8

THE DEATH OF DON JUAN AND GUALE'S NEW *MICO MAYOR*

In late March of 1595, a Spanish vessel named *Our Lady of Mercy* departed from Cuba on its return voyage across the Atlantic. Just five days after leaving port, a terrible storm struck as the ship sailed through the Bahama Channel. Badly damaged, the ship began to sink. *Our Lady of Mercy* had only one launch, too small to carry the entire crew. When the storm subsided, a small group of crewmen seized the launch, leaving more than 30 men behind, condemned to a watery grave as *Our Lady of Mercy* slowly took on more water. Quickly, the abandoned crewmembers struggled to assemble a vessel that could keep them afloat and perhaps reach land, which the men knew could not be far. Together, they removed pieces of the ship's lumber, and then convinced the lone caulker on board to piece together a makeshift craft. Soon, the men succeeded in building a small craft, capable of holding 30 men. One survivor later described it as "a long box, tall and narrow."¹

Among the survivors was a young Spaniard, no more than 18 years of age, named Andrés de Segura. Years later, writing from Mexico as a friar of the Carmelite Order, Fray Andrés would record the details of his adventures along the Florida coast. The account, expertly introduced and translated in John Hann's 2001 publication, *An Early Florida Adventure Story*, contains some of the richest ethnographic evidence available for 16th-century Guale territory. It also provides the earliest recorded encounter with one of the forgotten protagonists of the 1597 Guale Uprising, don Domingo, the *cacique* from Asao.

After 12 days at sea, the young Andrés and

the other Spanish survivors reached land, a small island at the mouth of the Altamaha River.² The island was unpopulated, and for the next eight days, the 30 men were alone, living on a diet of oysters, sorrel, and palm tree roots. As they contemplated how they might possibly escape the island and reach St. Augustine, two small boats arrived, carrying two Indian men and an elderly woman, whom Andrés identified as the mother of Asao's chief. The three Indians gave the shipwrecked Spaniards some maize and acorn cakes, and prepared a fire. In exchange, the elderly Indian woman received a rosary and a small blanket.

On April 29, 1595, the Day of St. Peter Martyr, Andrés and his companions reached the village of Asao, where they were escorted into a large council house. There, Andrés met Asao's principal chief, a young man of 17 or 18 years of age.³ Owing to their similar age, Fray Andrés later recorded, the two men became fast friends. In his detailed account, Andrés describes his visit to the chief's private residence, a building with three or four different rooms, but otherwise similar to the village's other dwellings.

After spending several days in Asao's vicinity, the Spanish purser requested provisions and a couple of vessels that could carry them to St. Augustine. Asao's chief complied with the request, supplying two small pirogues for transportation and ordering his subjects to prepare maize cakes and other provisions for the voyage. With prepa-

¹ Hann (2001: 6).

² John Worth has convincingly argued that the island where Fray Andrés and the other survivors landed was modern Wolf Island; see also Hann (2001: 98, fn. 15).

³ Hann (2001: 62–63).

rations made, Asao's ruler decided to accompany the survivors back to St. Augustine. There, the young chief met with Florida's new governor, Domingo Martínez de Avendaño. The details of their encounter were not recorded, but it is likely that the governor rewarded Asao's chief with food and luxury items, perhaps cloth and metal tools. Before he returned home, Asao's *cacique* was baptized, taking his name from the governor himself. Later that year, when Governor Avendaño visited Guale territory, Asao was chosen as one of the locations for the region's five Franciscan missions.

Two years later, don Domingo would play a central role in the 1597 Guale Uprising, leading the October 4 surprise attack on San Pedro Island. For his actions, don Domingo not only escaped punishment, but he slowly emerged as one of Governor Méndez's closest allies in Guale territory. By the spring of 1601, don Domingo had claimed the title of *mico mayor*. Later that year, at the age of 23, he organized and led a military strike on the heavily fortified village of Yfusinique, where he and his forces killed Guale's previous *mico mayor*, don Francisco, his heir, don Juanillo, and 24 of their kinsmen. With the victory, don Domingo confirmed his status as the province's most powerful leader.

Document 8.1: "Letter from Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo." AGI Santo Domingo 232, fols. 911r–912v (March 12, 1601).

INTRODUCTION

Not long after the *caciques* of Espogache and Tulufina had renewed their alliance with St. Augustine, more Guale messengers arrived in St. Augustine to negotiate peace terms on behalf of their *caciques*. Soon Guale chiefs themselves followed, also carrying messages on behalf of other Guale *caciques*.⁴ Among Governor Méndez's new

⁴ For example, on January 17, 1601, a Guale Indian named Oscache received six *varas* of cloth as compensation for some messages he had brought on behalf of some of Guale's *caciques*. See AGI Contaduría 950, bl. 2, sf. Later that year, the Guale *cacique* of Chinafasque also received six *varas* of woolen cloth, to be tailored into a new suit. Chinafasque received the cloth in exchange for bringing messages to Governor Méndez from other Guale chiefs. Royal expenditures from August 1601 record additional blankets and woolen cloth granted to Talapo's *cacique*, who had journeyed to St. Augustine that summer to negotiate his peace with the governor (Hann, 2001: 62–63).

allies was don Domingo, the *cacique* of Asao. Initially, don Domingo hesitated to leave Guale and travel in person to St. Augustine. His arrival was likely preceded by negotiations carried out by his appointed emissaries. Don Domingo certainly had reason to fear a journey to St. Augustine's garrison. After all, four years earlier, the same don Domingo had been seen standing at the front of his canoe, wearing the hat of Asao's dead friar, Francisco de Beráscola. In the immediate aftermath of the uprising, don Domingo had appeared as perhaps its greatest outlaw. But by the spring of 1601, Governor Méndez was eager to put the matter behind him and restore peaceful relations with Guale's leaders, including those who participated in the friars' murders.

To guarantee his security in St. Augustine and his safe passage home, don Domingo demanded that a Spanish captain be sent to Asao. St. Augustine's governor accepted the terms and in early 1601, Méndez and don Domingo stood face to face, their first meeting since the summer of 1597. According to Méndez's version of the meeting (the precise date of which was not recorded), don Domingo allegedly threw himself to the ground and kissed the governor's feet. He then begged the governor's forgiveness, before distancing himself from the events of 1597. While don Domingo acknowledged that the friars had been killed in his territory, he denied any participation in their murders. Instead, Asao's ruler identified four different Guale chiefs whom he claimed were responsible for the attacks: don Francisco and don Juanillo from Tolomato, the *cacique* from Guale (St. Catherines Island), and the *cacique* from Aluste. These four men alone, don Domingo insisted, had planned and carried out the attacks. As further confirmation of their guilt, not only had these four *caciques* not traveled to St. Augustine to "render their obedience" (something that Governor Méndez viewed as clear evidence of their guilt), but they had also retreated deep into the interior where they had joined other rebellious Indians.

Don Domingo's denial of any participation in the friars' deaths is not surprising, but it is unlikely that the governor believed the *cacique's* claim to innocence. Governor Méndez was certainly aware that Asao's *cacique* had led the October 1597 attack on San Pedro Island, yet the governor makes no mention of it. Instead, like those chiefs who came before him, don Domingo was officially pardoned for what

ever role he may have played in the uprising, and the governor vowed to honor the new truce between them.

That don Domingo received the governor's pardon is one of several striking details outlined in the following letter. Even more curious is the fact that don Domingo does not identify himself as the *cacique* of Asao, although he is referred to with this title in all known records before March 12, 1601. Instead, he describes himself as *cacique* and as *mico mayor*, the paramount chief over all other Guale leaders.

An entry from St. Augustine's royal account book, dated March 28, 1601, not only confirms don Domingo's appearance in St. Augustine, but it also sheds some light on the terms of his new alliance with the governor. The entry, which refers to Asao's *cacique* as the paramount chief of Guale province, suggests that don Domingo brought with him a number of Indian laborers to cultivate the maize fields around St. Augustine. In exchange for his generosity, Governor Méndez issued don Domingo a blanket and some woolen cloth, from which a new suit was to be tailored for the *cacique's* return home.⁵

THE DOCUMENT

In the city of St. Augustine in the provinces of Florida, on March 12, 1601, Governor and Captain General Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo issued the following statement, before me, Alonso García de la Vera, chief notary public for the governorship of these provinces:

Immediately after the murders of the Franciscan friars stationed in Guale province, his grace the governor adopted a number of strategies to subdue the province and return the Indians to the union of the Church and to His Majesty's obedience. The governor gathered infantrymen and went in person to Guale province to punish those responsible; he devastated their lands, destroying their maize fields and burning their villages to the ground. These punishments continued until some of the *caciques* came to St. Augustine and appeared before the governor; they threw

themselves at the governor's feet, and begged him for mercy. For his part, the governor received them with all his love and affection. He issued them gifts, and he embraced them all.

The governor then asked after the head *caciques* and *micos* of Guale province. Each one of the *caciques* replied that the *cacique mayor* of Asao chose not to come to St. Augustine in person because he was fearful, and because he had been injured in one arm. Despite the fact that these *caciques* have come to St. Augustine on numerous occasions, bringing their Indian subjects with them, the *cacique* and *mico mayor* of Asao has never come, that is, until now.

His grace the governor had dispatched Sergeant Alonso Díaz to lead a group of soldiers on a peaceful expedition to Guale province, where they were ordered to sail up the entire Guale coast. During the expedition, the *cacique mayor* of Asao received Díaz and his men, and the *cacique* honored them and gave them gifts.

With that, Asao's *cacique* then came to St. Augustine accompanied by 40 of his Indian vassals and the *cacique* of Talaje. They were all taken to the governor's residence. When the governor entered inside, the *caciques* of Asao and Talaje and all the Indians with them threw themselves at the governor's feet. Through the interpreter, Mateo Alemán, the governor asked why they had come to St. Augustine.

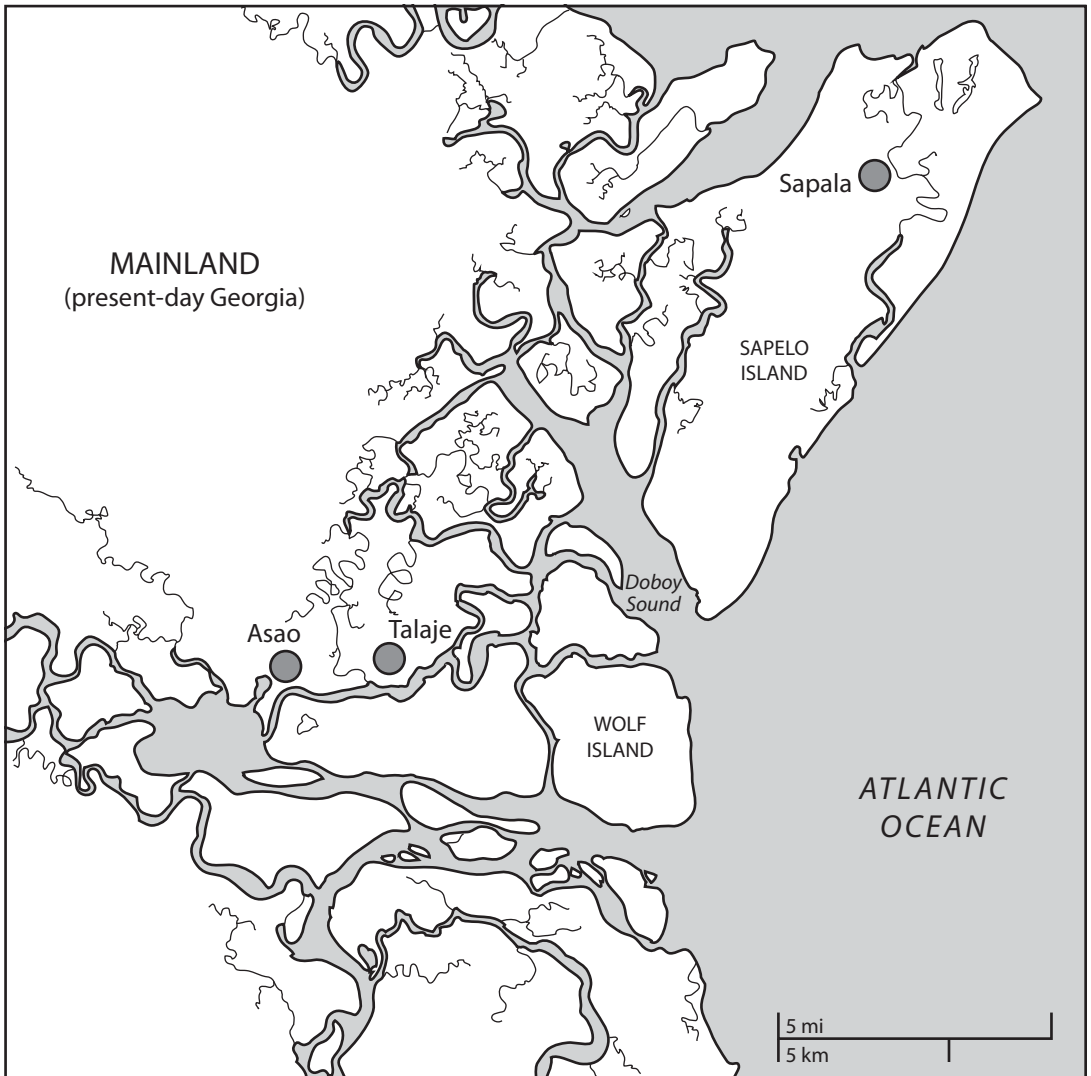
In response, the *cacique mayor* of Asao replied that he had come from his land specifically to see the lord governor, having received reports of the warm treatment that the governor had bestowed upon other *caciques* and their subjects. He then added that he had come to beg for mercy and ask that they be forgiven, for the love of God. The *cacique* explained that, even though the murders had occurred in his territory, he was not guilty of committing the crime. Rather, those guilty were don Francisco, *cacique mayor* of Tolomato, the *cacique mayor* don Juan, the *cacique* of Guale, and the *cacique* of Aluste. It was those four *caciques* and their Indians who killed the friars. Furthermore, as evidence

⁵ AGI Contaduría 950, bl.2 (March 28, 1601), sf. It appears that the *cacique* of Talaje had joined don Domingo in St. Augustine. He too was given a blanket as a reward for his "obedience."

of their guilt, they have never come here to speak with the Spanish. Instead, they have all retreated into the interior, where they reside among the belligerent and militaristic Indians (*indios de guerra*).

Thus, Asao's *cacique mayor*, and on behalf of all the *caciques* of Guale province, he had come to beg for mercy and to render obedience

to the lord governor, as His Majesty's representative. He did so because they were friends and allies, and he vowed that from this moment forward, the Indians would take part in everything the governor requests of them. Moreover, he promised to provide for all the Spaniards who passed through his territory, and treat them well. He then clarified the names of the *caci-*



Map 6. Approximate locations for the Guale villages of Asao, Talaje, and Sapala.

ques in whose name he had come to beg for mercy and to render obedience. In his capacity as *cacique* and *mico mayor* of Guale, don Domingo spoke on behalf of the *caciques* of Espogache, Tupiqui, Tullufina, Talaje, Chucaleygate, Ufalague, Talapo, Tufasque, Ospó, Sapala, Oculygue, Espogue, Yfulo, Atiene, La Tamufa, Hegua, Uchiliche, and the *cacica* [female ruler] from Oache.

Speaking for all the aforementioned chiefs and their subjects, don Domingo offered obedience to the lord governor. He added that from this moment forward, they would all be loyal and faithful allies, and they would answer the governor's call whenever his grace requested their assistance in Your Majesty's service and in the service of this garrison.

In response, the governor issued the following statement through the interpreter, Mateo Alemán. On behalf of His Majesty, the governor told the Indians that he accepted their offer of friendship, and that he would treat them warmly and with mercy, provided that, from this moment forward, all the *caciques* mentioned above comply with his orders. They are to take part in everything and anything the governor orders, and they are to provide for any soldiers who happen to be in their territory. Should they fail to comply, the governor will punish them with the greatest severity possible for breaking their word. However, if they do what the *cacique* of Asao has offered, the governor vowed to maintain peace and friendship with them. Through the interpreter, Asao's *cacique* replied that he would comply, as would the other *caciques* and their vassals.

With that, the discussions ended. The following individuals were present: Sergeant Major Alonso Díaz de Badajoz, Captain Hernando de Mestas, Captain Juan García Navia y Castellón, *teniente de alcalde* Gil Cebadilla, as well as the said interpreter Mateo Alemán. The witnesses and the lord governor signed their names. Everything mentioned above occurred in my presence, to which I faithfully attest: Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Document 8.2: "Letter from Bartolomé de Argüelles." AGI Santo Domingo 232, fols. 65v–66r (April 28, 1601).

INTRODUCTION

Despite Governor Méndez's renewed alliances with most of Guale's leaders and the prospect of a new peace in the region, tensions between the governor and Florida's royal accountant Bartolomé de Argüelles continued to escalate. In the letter below, Bartolomé de Argüelles once again condemns the governor's handling of Guale affairs. He reiterates that everything the governor had done had proved detrimental, adding that the situation with the province's Indians was worse now than it had been at any point in Argüelles's 22 years in Florida.

In his previous correspondence, Argüelles often criticized the governor for his heavy-handed approach to the Guale Uprising, in particular, the governor's decision to execute Lucas, the son of a prominent Guale *cacique*. As Governor Méndez worked to restore his alliances with Guale's rulers, Argüelles suddenly changed his assessment of the governor's earlier strategies. Florida's royal accountant now insisted that the governor had been far too lenient on the rebels; he then lied to the Crown, claiming that Lucas was an Indian of lowly status and not the son of Tupiqui's *cacique*. Not only had the perpetrators escaped punishment, but to make matters worse, the governor continued to issue them clothing and metal tools, receiving nothing in return.

It seems that four years of bitter disputes between the two men had taken their toll on Florida's royal accountant, whose letter ends in a tone of tragic defeat. He claims that in the aftermath of the 1597 uprising, he had tried, with great humility, to offer the governor advice on how best to proceed. In return for his generous offer, he continued, the governor had revoked his salary and had tried to suspend him from office. When that failed, Argüelles added, Méndez refused to issue the paper and ink necessary to carry out his duties. Undoubtedly, Méndez had other motivations for attempting to limit the amount of parchment and ink available to his enemy. The letter ends with Argüelles appealing for royal protection, claiming that the only thing left for the governor to take from him was his life.

THE DOCUMENT

At present, the governor has asked me to certify all the payments he has ordered disbursed to the soldiers since the time he arrived to govern these provinces. He has also asked me to certify the city's total *diezmo* (10% royal tax) for last year, 1600, so that he can forward everything to Your Majesty.

Furthermore, it has been said that the governor has gathered certain testimonies as evidence of his services to the Crown. These testimonies record the offerings that a certain group of *caciques* from this region have made to the governor. Moreover, they explain how several *caciques* from Guale province came to this garrison to petition the governor for peace and to beg him not to punish them any more than he has already for [the crime they committed]....

Regarding the Indians of this province, I can assure Your Majesty that they are in the worst state that I have seen in the past 22 years. The Indians from this region do not even bother coming to this garrison unless they are summoned directly by the governor. Even when they do come here, their arrival is of little value; in fact, it is quite harmful because the governor always issues them gifts from Your Majesty's royal treasury, yet the Indians offer nothing of value in return, except for a few items that they give directly to the governor.

As far as the Guale Indians are concerned [as punishment for having killed the friars], the only action the governor took was to order an Indian of low status hanged here in St. Augustine. On one of his expeditions to Guale territory, the governor destroyed a few maize fields and burned a few thatch huts. Having executed those punishments, he has since gone up there to barter with the Indians for sassafras wood, deerskins, and a few other items of little value that they possess. The only reason these Indians follow the governor is because of the benefit they receive from bartering their goods in exchange for all the clothing and metal tools that they need. Furthermore, seeing that the governor also issues them goods from Your Majesty's royal treasury here in

St. Augustine, some of these Guale chiefs have come down to this garrison. Still, in order to convince the *cacique* from Asao to come here in person, the governor had to send one of the garrison's squadron leaders to Asao as a hostage.

In terms of their conversion to Christianity, the governor has done absolutely nothing, which has scandalized the Franciscan friars stationed here. Moreover, these Indians have done so little to atone for the deaths of the five friars that they killed. For that reason, on several occasions I have attempted to speak directly with the governor, and with great humility, offer my suggestions for how best to proceed in this matter. For having done that (and because he knew that I had sent several notices of this issue to Your Majesty's Council of the Indies), the governor is so annoyed and upset with me that he has brought legal action and has issued sentences against me.

In addition to revoking my salary, the governor has also tried to remove me from office. Moreover, he refuses to provide me with the necessary supply of paper and ink, or the books I require to perform my duties as accountant. The only thing left for him to take from me is my life. For that and for everything else I ask for Your Majesty's protection; and I humbly implore that Your Majesty investigate the matter and decree a remedy that serves Your Majesty's best interests.

From the garrison of St. Augustine, Florida, on April 28, 1601.

Bartolomé de Argüelles.

Document 8.3: "Investigation into the death of don Juanillo, Indian from Guale and his vassals." AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.41, fols. 644r-647r (November 27, 1601).

INTRODUCTION

The final document in this story records the dramatic assault on the village of Yfusinique, where Tolomato's rulers don Francisco and don Juanillo had taken refuge. When the battle ended, don Francisco, his heir don Juanillo, and all their male kin lay dead. Juanillo's scalp was then sent to St. Augustine's governor, who declared the uprising ended.

Written on November 27, 1601, the account opens with Governor Méndez's brief description of his investigation into the 1597 uprising. Méndez reports that after careful inquiry, it had been determined that only two men were responsible for the friars' deaths, don Francisco and don Juanillo. As evidence of their guilt, Méndez again reiterates his earlier claim, namely that both men had refused to travel to St. Augustine to "render their obedience," despite the governor's truce offering and guaranteed safe passage.

However, even after their guilt had been established, the governor explained that he had been unable to carry out any kind of campaign against them because they had retreated so deeply into the interior. If the two men were to receive any punishment, Méndez continued, it would have to be carried out by the Guale themselves. Asao's *cacique* volunteered to recruit the necessary forces and if possible, to capture don Francisco and don Juanillo alive. Should that prove impossible, Governor Méndez ordered don Domingo to send both of their scalps to St. Augustine as proof that the two men were dead.

Governor Méndez supplied no Spanish forces to join in the attack. However, he did send Diego de Cárdenas and another interpreter, instructing them to observe the campaign and ensure that don Domingo complied with his instructions. To assist don Domingo in the recruitment of Guale warriors, Governor Méndez issued him a rich bounty of goods, from his own possessions and from the king's coffers. With these items in hand, don Domingo proceeded to recruit his army.

Diego de Cárdenas and the interpreter who joined him on the expedition, Sebastián de Ynclán, would later testify that don Domingo had traveled to the village of La Tamufa, where he began his preparations for battle. From there, he sent messages to the *caciques* of Tulufina, Tapotoque, Ytochuco, Guale, La Tama, Espogache, Cosapue (Cosague), Ufalague, Talapo, as well as to the *mico* of Yoa, the *cacique* of the Salchiches, and a number of other *caciques* who remained unnamed (see table 8).⁶ Shortly thereafter, the

caciques began to arrive, accompanied by large numbers of warriors. Over the next eight days, the gathering forces prepared food and weapons. From La Tamufa, don Domingo moved his forces to the village of Aleguifa, near Tulufina. There, he awaited the arrival of additional *caciques* and their warriors. From the assembled men don Domingo selected 500 Indian fighters to carry out the assault.

With his forces ready, don Domingo led his war party into the interior, crossing forests, swamps, and streams until they reached the village of Yfusinique. The site was heavily fortified, protected by wooden posts and large mounds of earth, and surrounded by deep trenches. According to Diego de Cárdenas's later testimony, don Domingo promised Yfusinique's inhabitants that no harm would come to them if they surrendered don Francisco and don Juanillo to him. Yfusinique's residents refused, vowing instead to fight to the death.

A bloody battle ensued. After suffering early losses, don Domingo reassembled his forces, closed ranks, and stormed the village. When the battle ended, don Juanillo, don Francisco, and 22 of their immediate kinsmen were dead. Don Domingo spared the Indian commoners, as well as the women and the children. He then summoned Diego de Cárdenas to the battleground to verify that don Juanillo and don Francisco had indeed fallen.

In his final assault on Tolomato's leadership, don Domingo ordered the surviving women and children to scalp their deceased kin, except for don Juanillo, whose body he ordered them to decapitate. With that done, don Domingo forced his new captives to carry the corpses back to La Tamufa. There, Guale's new *mico mayor* distributed gifts and scalps to his allies. As rewards for their services, he issued coins, pearls, deerskin blankets, metal tools, and other goods.

Because of the terrible stench, Cárdenas refused to take don Juanillo's disembodied head back to St. Augustine. Don Domingo then ordered that it be scalped and that Cárdenas present it to Governor Méndez as evidence of his compliance with their agreement. Yet despite his instructions to send both scalps to St. Augustine, don Domingo sent only don Juanillo's. Neither Diego de Cárdenas nor Sebastián de Ynclán revealed the recipient of don Francisco's scalp, but it is unlikely that don Domingo was willing to part with the most prized scalp of them all, that

⁶ Readers will note that only a few months earlier don Domingo had cited the *cacique* of Guale as one of the principal leaders in the uprising. Now, it appears that Guale's *cacique* actually contributed warriors to help track down and capture don Juanillo and don Francisco. The documentary record does not explain this shift (see the first letter in this chapter).

TABLE 8
**Indian Chiefs Who Contributed Warriors
 to Don Domingo's War Party¹**

<i>Cacique</i> from Tulufina
<i>Cacique</i> of the Salchiches
<i>Cacique</i> from Tapotoque
<i>Cacique</i> from Ytochucho
<i>Cacique</i> from Guale
<i>Cacique</i> from La Tama
<i>Cacique</i> from Espogache
<i>Cacique</i> from Cosapue (Cosague)
<i>Cacique</i> from Ufalague
<i>Cacique</i> from Talapo
The <i>mico</i> of Yoa
And many other <i>caciques</i>

¹ The table lists the *cacique* of Tulufina, the *cacique* of the Salchiches, and another *cacique* from Ytochucho. In Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo's letter from May 18, 1600, he records the arrival in St. Augustine of two different *caciques*, one of whom is named Ytuchucho (Ytochucho). In the letter, Ytuchuco is identified as the Salchiche *cacique* from Tulufina. Although they are listed separately, all three names might refer to just one individual.

of Guale's previous *mico mayor*.

Finally, in exchange for his services, don Domingo requested that Governor Méndez send him six soldiers, purely a symbolic gesture to confirm that don Domingo now enjoyed Spanish favor. According to Cárdenas, don Domingo was convinced that the mere presence of Spanish soldiers, however small, would prevent other Guale *caciques* from turning against him.⁷ Now that he

⁷ Several entries from St. Augustine's royal account book suggest that Governor Méndez honored don Domingo's request. Records dated December 6, 1601, just a week after the governor received news of the victory at Yfusinique, Méndez ordered Domingo Rodríguez to lead a group of well-armed Spanish soldiers to Guale. The details of this mission have not been found, but it is likely that Rodríguez met with Guale's new *mico mayor*. Rodríguez had also been instructed to bring food supplies back from Guale. See AGI Contaduría 950, bl. 2 (December 6, 1601), sf. An earlier letter dated September 21, 1601, suggests that the fall harvest that year had been poor, and

was *mico mayor*, don Domingo intended to hold the office and he was going to use his new alliance with St. Augustine to help him maintain it.

THE DOCUMENT

An Agreement between the *cacique* of Asao and St. Augustine's governor

In the city of St. Augustine, provinces of Florida on November 27, 1601:

On behalf of our lord king, Governor and Captain General Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo stated that from the very moment the Indians from Guale province revolted and killed the Franciscan friars stationed there, he has taken every measure possible to investigate and punish those responsible. He has done all of this in compliance with Your Majesty's written orders, dated in Madrid, November 9, 1598, which mandated that he investigate the crime and execute justice against the principal leaders. In the investigations that followed the arrival of this order, it has been learned that the principal culprits were don Juan and don Francisco, *micos* of Tolomato and rulers of the entire Guale province.

As clear evidence of their leadership roles in the rebellion, don Juan and don Francisco decided to abandon Tolomato and flee deep into the interior, where they have taken refuge with a large number of Indian men, women, and children. They chose not to come to St. Augustine to render their obedience to Your Majesty or to me as Your representative; moreover, they have refused to do this despite the fact that on Your Majesty's behalf the governor has sent them numerous messages, offering a truce and safe passage to St. Augustine to come and see his grace and to render their obedience to Your Majesty, as many other

the garrison lacked the provisions necessary to feed its small slave population, likely numbered around 40 individuals. Governor Méndez had negotiated an agreement with Nombre de Dios's *cacica*, doña Ana, to supply 1000 arrobas of maize, at a payment of four reales per *arroba*. Whether the maize reached St. Augustine is unclear, but based on the governor's instructions to Domingo Rodríguez that December, it appears that the garrison still suffered a food shortage. "Letter from St. Augustine's royal officials," AGI Santo Domingo 224, R.5, N.41 (September 21, 1601), fols. 636r-639r.

Guale *caciques* have done.

However, because don Juan and don Francisco are the principal leaders of Guale province, and because they have retreated so deep into the forest, it is virtually impossible for the governor to execute any type of punishment against them unless it is ordered and carried out by the Indians themselves. For precisely that reason, the governor negotiated an agreement with the *cacique* of Asao, don Domingo, the most powerful *mico* and *cacique* of the entire Guale territory. As evidence of his loyalty to Your Majesty, Asao's *cacique* volunteered to gather all the *caciques* and Indian allies who wished to serve Your Majesty and his lord governor and go in person to attempt to capture don Juan and don Francisco alive. However, if that proved an impossible task, Asao's *cacique* vowed to kill them both and then send their scalps to the governor in St. Augustine. In order to provide additional assurance and peace of mind, the governor appointed a Spanish soldier to go to Guale territory to witness and certify everything that don Domingo does in this matter. To perform that task the governor appointed a man in whom he has great confidence, squadron leader Diego de Cárdenas, a man who understands the language spoken at Santa Elena, as well as the language of Guale territory.

Cárdenas was dispatched with instructions to confirm and verify that don Domingo complied with and executed everything specified in the aforementioned agreement. If Asao's *cacique* did as he promised, the governor vowed to do well by him and issue him with gifts and goods from the governor's own estate as well as from Your Majesty's coffers. The governor recognized that such a campaign would require that payments be issued to foreign *caciques*, such as the *cacique* of the Salchiches, the *cacique* of Tulufina, as well as other leaders in La Tama Province.

In accordance with the aforementioned agreement, the governor dispatched Diego de Cárdenas to join the *cacique* of Asao in Guale province, where he remained in the *cacique's* company for several days. At present, Diego de Cárdenas has just returned to St. Augustine; he is joined

by an Indian interpreter who understands Spanish very well. The interpreter's name is Sebastián de Ynclán, who is usually referred to by his nickname, "The Little Navigator" (*el pilotillo*). The two men had come to see the governor with a message from the *mico* of Asao, on whose behalf they also delivered the governor a scalp, which they claimed had belonged to don Juan. Unable to capture don Juan alive, the Indians had killed and scalped him. Don Domingo and his company fought against a large number of Indians until they managed to kill don Juan and most of the men with him. During the fighting, many of the men in don Domingo's war party were also killed or injured.

The Governor's Decree

Thus, to clarify precisely what happened and what exactly the *mico* of Asao had done in Your Majesty's service, the governor ordered that the squadron leader Diego de Cárdenas and the *atequi* navigator (Sebastián de Ynclán) both appear before him. Under oath, the squadron leader was ordered to declare what he saw happen in that province and whether don Juan's death would be enough to pacify Guale province. Moreover, the squadron leader was to testify if he believed that the Indians would now comply with the governor's orders. The *atequi* was also ordered to answer the same questions.

This is what the governor decreed, to which he signed his name before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

Testimony of Diego de Cárdenas

Then forthwith the governor summoned the squadron leader Diego de Cárdenas to appear before him in this fortress. Cárdenas took and received the oath, in just accordance with the law. With that done, he was asked to comment on the aforementioned decree.

Cárdenas testified that he left this city about a month ago under the governor's orders. He journeyed up to Guale province, carrying a message for the *cacique* and *mico* of Asao, don Domingo. Upon arrival in Guale territory, the witness made his way to the village of La Tamufa, where

he found Asao's *cacique* as well as several other *caciques* from the region. The witness then delivered to don Domingo the message that he had carried from the lord governor. After eight days at that village the witness observed how Asao's *cacique* began to gather his vassals together; he had them assemble great quantities of arrows and prepare much food. Furthermore, he dispatched messages throughout the region to the *cacique* of Salchiche, as well as the *caciques* of Tulufina, Tapotoque, Ytochuco, Guale, La Tama, Espogache, Cosapue, Ufalague, Talapo, the *mico* of Yoa, and many other *caciques*.

Then the *mico* of Asao and this witness went together to the village of Aleguifa, which is located next to Tulufina. There, the other *caciques* whom don Domingo had summoned began to gather, with each *cacique* bringing a group of men. From those gathered, the *mico* of Asao selected up to 500 of the best Indian warriors. With that, the *mico* of Asao departed from Aleguifa together with all the other *caciques* gathered there and the 500 Indians; he also brought this witness along with him.

Together they made their way to [the village of] Yfusinique, where don Domingo knew the *micos* of Tolomato, don Juan and don Francisco, had withdrawn with many other Indians, including women and children. Don Domingo and his company walked roughly eight leagues through thick forests, swamps, along difficult roads, and across freshwater streams. Finally, they reached the village that housed the *micos* don Francisco and don Juan. However, on first sight they quickly realized that the village was heavily fortified, fully entrenched with wooden posts, large mounds of earth, and surrounded by deep pits. The *mico* of Asao knew that it would be extremely difficult to penetrate inside and inflict any damage upon its residents. Therefore, he sent some of his Indians to negotiate on his behalf, instructing them to inform the villagers that if they turned over the *micos* of Tolomato, don Juan and don Francisco, Asao's *cacique* would not wage war against them. Moreover, if they agreed to become friends and allies with the Spanish and the governor in St. Au-

gustine, no harm whatsoever would befall them.

In response to don Domingo's messengers, the Indians in the village replied that they did not want to surrender their *caciques*, nor did they want friendship with the Spanish, adding that they would rather die instead. Moreover, they intended to kill Asao's *cacique* and all the Indians he had brought with him.

When don Domingo heard their response he readied his forces. This witness then heard Asao's *cacique* order them to begin the assault, calling them to fire their arrows at don Juan, don Francisco, and their Indians. Don Domingo promised a handsome reward to any Indian who managed to capture don Juan or don Francisco alive, so that they might be sent to St. Augustine's governor. Thus, with that said the *cacique* of Asao, his vassals, allies and their subjects all began to exchange arrow fire with the *caciques* of Tolomato and their Indians.

Don Juan, don Francisco, and their Indians killed eight of don Domingo's subjects and badly wounded another 56. Don Domingo and the other *caciques* with him soon realized that their men were getting killed and injured; moreover, they could not even see don Juan, don Francisco, or their Indians because they were so well covered and so deeply entrenched. Therefore, don Domingo gathered all the *caciques*, along with this witness, and together they agreed to close ranks and storm their attackers. Leaving he who falls to fall, they agreed that the moment they reached don Juan and his men they would fire their arrows in unison and kill them all.

This witness then watched as the *mico* of Asao and the other *caciques* and Indians closed in on don Francisco, don Juan, and their Indians. Arrows flew back and forth, and they killed the *micos* don Juan, don Francisco, and all the Indians who were with them. In total, they killed 24 *indios principales*, including the *micos* don Juan and don Francisco. In addition to don Francisco and his heir, all the others killed were their relatives. With [the leaders] dead, don Domingo and his allies chose not to put to death the great number of

Indian commoners, women, and children who had been there with them.

At that point, don Domingo gathered all his dead and wounded. He then escorted this witness to the site of the battle in order to show him the bodies of the dead, including the corpse of don Juan. He did this so that the witness would see that it was not possible to capture don Juan alive because he had died fighting; moreover, don Domingo wanted this witness to see the site of the battle so that he could inform the governor of exactly what had happened. Therefore, the witness went to see the bodies of the deceased. He saw with his own eyes the bodies of 24 dead; among them were the corpses of don Francisco, the *mico* and *cacique* of Tolomato, and his heir. This witness knew them both well.

Thereafter, the *mico* of Asao gathered all the women and children and had them scalp the dead in accordance with their Indian customs. He also had them cut off don Juan's head. Then the *mico* of Asao forced them to carry the bodies of his own dead and injured men back to the village of La Tamufa, along with don Juan's severed head and all the scalps. There, he began to care for and heal the injured. Don Domingo also distributed a great quantity of coins, pearls, deerskin blankets, hoes, axes, and other goods to all the *caciques* who had accompanied him, as well as to those Indians who had distinguished themselves through courage and valor.

Owing to the wretched stench of don Juan's severed head, the *mico* of Asao ordered that it be scalped in the presence of this witness and that don Juan's scalp be given to the witness to take to the lord governor in St. Augustine. The witness was then told to take the scalp and to report to the governor what he had seen. Don Domingo appointed the Indian ladino and interpreter *el pilotillo* to accompany this witness on the journey. The *mico* of Asao then asked this witness to inform the governor that he was sending him the scalp of don Juan, the *mico* of Tolomato, whom he was unable to capture alive. Furthermore, he requested that the governor grant him the favor of sending six Spanish soldiers

to stay in don Domingo's villages for a few days and he promised to provide well for them. Asao's *mico* issued the request so that other *caciques* would see that the lord governor looked upon him favorably. With Spanish soldiers in his village, none of the other *caciques* would dare turn belligerent against Asao's *mico* or even dare to speak ill of him.

Thus, this witness has returned to St. Augustine and has delivered to the lord governor the scalp of don Juan, who was the *mico* and *cacique* of Tolomato. The witness assured the governor that it was indeed don Juan's scalp because he had seen the Indians remove it with his own eyes. Furthermore, as he mentioned earlier, he had also seen don Juan's corpse and he had witnessed first-hand everything mentioned in his testimony.

In accordance with his sworn oath, the witness verified that everything he stated is the truth. I, the scribe, read his testimony back to him, to which the witness declared that he confirmed and ratified its contents, to which he signed his name. Cárdenas stated that he was 36 years old more or less. He then explained that he has been to Guale territory many times; he understands their language and the language of Escamacu, and he understands their affairs well. For those reasons, he is quite certain that with the death of don Juan, the *mico* of Tolomato, as well as the relatives and heirs who died with him, the province of Guale will be peaceful, tranquil, and calm.

Diego de Cárdenas. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera.

Testimony of Sebastián de Ynclán, Indian *atequi*

The governor and captain general then summoned the Indian interpreter Sebastián de Ynclán, who understands Spanish and who is known as *el pilotillo*. Having been issued the oath, Sebastián was then told to testify the entire truth of what had happened in Guale territory between the *mico* of Asao and the *micos* don Juan and don Francisco of Tolomato and their Indian subjects.

Sebastián replied that he would tell the lord governor the whole truth. He ex-

plained that he was in the village of La Tamufa with the *mico* of Asao when the squadron leader [Diego de] Cárdenas arrived. Cárdenas informed the *mico* of Asao that he had come from St. Augustine. Eight days later the witness saw Asao's *mico* gather all his Indian warriors, instructing them to assemble a vast supply of arrows and to prepare a great quantity of food. Don Domingo also sent messengers to summon the *cacique* of the Salchiches as well as the *caciques* from the villages of Tulufina, Ufalague, Guale, Espogache, Talapo, Tapotoque, Ytochuco, Cosapue, and the *mico* of Yoa. He also sent a message to the *cacique* of La Tama to request additional Indians.

With that, various *caciques* began to arrive, bringing their Indians with them. Everyone gathered in the village of Aleguifa, where the *mico* of Asao had been awaiting their arrival. From Aleguifa, as many as 500 Indian warriors and their *caciques* departed. This witness joined them and together they walked eight leagues through forests, swamps, and across a great many streams. Finally they reached the village of Yfusinique, where the *micos* of Tolomato had retreated with a large number of Indian women and children.

On reaching the village, Asao's *mico* instructed this witness and a few other Indians to tell the Indians of Yfusinique to surrender the *micos* don Juan and don Francisco. If they did so, he promised not to wage war against them, nor would any harm come of them; in fact, they would be well treated and would become friends and allies with the Spanish governor. The Indians in the village responded that they did not want to be friends with the Spanish nor did they want to surrender their *caciques*. Instead, they declared that they preferred to fight and that they intended to kill everyone who had come with Asao's *cacique*, including don Domingo himself.

When the messengers delivered the response to the *mico* of Asao, the *mico* ordered arrows to be fired against the villagers and for the battle to begin. With that, the arrows began to fly. The *mico* don Juan, don Francisco, and their Indians

killed eight of don Domingo's men and they badly injured another 56. Despite the fact that this witness and the other Indians with him all fired their arrows, they fought blindly because they could not even see don Francisco, don Juan, or any of their Indians. In fact, they could not even ascertain from which positions they were being fired upon and killed because don Juan and his men were so well hidden behind the large wooden posts and piles of earth.

At that point the *mico* of Asao decided to gather his dead and wounded and then he convened all the *caciques* there with him. He told them all to charge the village and close in on don Juan and don Francisco. Leaving the fallen behind, Asao's *cacique* ordered his men to keep fighting until they killed everyone inside. Don Domingo then promised that he would issue a handsome reward to anyone who captured don Juan or don Francisco alive. With that, they stormed behind the wooden posts and earthen mounds and they fought against don Juan, don Francisco, and their Indians. They killed all of them, including don Juan, whom they were unable to capture alive because he put up a fight until he fell dead. In addition to don Juan himself, they also killed his heir and 24 *indios principales*, all of whom were don Juan's relatives.⁸

Then, the *mico* of Asao gathered all the women, children, and Indian commoners and forced them to scalp the dead and sever don Juan's head. He then returned to the village of La Tamufa so that those injured in the fighting could be healed. Don Domingo brought all the women, children, and other Indians that he had captured back to La Tamufa, where he had don Juan's scalp removed. He gave the scalp to Cárdenas and told him to deliver it to the lord governor (Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo). He also sent this witness to accompany Cárdenas back to St. Augustine and he instructed Cárdenas to inform the governor that since he was unable to capture him alive, don Domingo

⁸ Here, Sebastián de Ynclán appears to confuse don Juanillo as the *mico mayor*. Don Juanillo was the heir to the position.

was sending him don Juan's scalp instead. Cárdenas was also told to inform the governor that the village of Tolomato was no more and to request on don Domingo's behalf that the governor dispatch six Spanish soldiers to join Asao's *cacique* for a few days. He made this request in case any other *caciques* decided to rebel; when they realized that don Domingo was in the governor's good favor, they would be much too afraid to do anything.

The witness then stated that Guale territory was now at peace and that Spaniards could go there safely.

This is what the Indian Sebastián de Ynclán testified before the lord governor and in the presence of this scribe, to which I faithfully attest. The witness did not sign his name because he does not know how.

Signed, the lord general Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo. Before me, Alonso García de la Vera, scribe.

EPILOGUE

DON DOMINGO'S REVOLT?

The deaths of don Francisco and don Juanillo, and the emergence of the new *mico mayor* from Asao, surely represented dramatic political changes in Guale territory. Tolomato's entire elite had been killed in the 1601 assault on Yfusinique, and their village was never resettled, at least not in its original location.¹ For his part, don Domingo appears to have maintained his status as Guale's new *mico mayor*. In the years that followed his successful overthrow of don Francisco and his heir, Guale's new paramount chief made regular trips to St. Augustine, taking Indian laborers with him to perform public works in the Spanish garrison. In exchange, don Domingo received Spanish luxury goods and continued favor. In 1604, don Domingo once again traveled to the Spanish garrison to "render his obedience" to Florida's new governor, Pedro de Ibarra, who had replaced Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo.

The following year, Governor Ibarra reported that a group of *caciques* had arrived in St. Augustine to "render their obedience" and to request that friars be sent to their villages. Among these leaders were the *caciques* of Guale and the *cacique* from Asao, don Domingo. In response to their requests, Governor Ibarra petitioned for 12 Franciscan friars to be sent to Florida and that new missions be established in Guale territory.²

¹ Curiously, in the mid-1620s a new village was established just north of St. Augustine, to serve as a ferry town. At least some, if not all, of the town's new residents were Guale Indians, who named the site Tolomato (see Worth, 2004: 243).

² AGI Santo Domingo 232, fol. 974r. Exactly when these missions were built is unclear, but they were certainly completed by April of 1606, when Cuba's Bishop Juan de las Cabezas visited the missions.

By 1606, almost a decade after the 1597 uprising, Franciscan missions once again stood in the villages of Asao and on Guale Island.

The last recorded reference to don Domingo comes from the 1606 ecclesiastical visitation conducted by Cuba's bishop, Juan de las Cabezas. The bishop had arrived in St. Augustine on March 15, 1606. After conducting inspections of the Franciscan missions at nearby Nombre de Dios and at San Pedro, the bishop continued north into Guale territory, where he was received "with great cheer and with customary celebrations."

In his capacity as paramount chief, don Domingo accompanied Cabezas throughout the bishop's visitation of Guale's four new missions, presiding over all the celebrations to honor the visiting dignitary. At Guale Island's new mission, called Santa Catalina de Guale, Bishop Cabezas presided over the confirmation of a number of *caciques*, whom he identifies as: the *mico* [of Guale], the *caciques* of Aluste, Otafe, Oculeya, Unalcapa, Culopala (Çapala?), Talapo, and Chatufa. According to the bishop's report, all of the aforementioned chiefs, including Guale's *mico*, were don Domingo's loyal subjects.

Not surprisingly, don Domingo's own village of Asao had been chosen as the location for one of the new missions. Rather appropriately, it seems, Asao's mission was given a name that must have delighted the paramount chief; it was christened Santo Domingo de Asao.

See "Letter from Juan Menéndez Marqués," AGI Patronato 19, R.30 (June 7, 1606), fols. 6r-6v and AGI Santo Domingo 235, fols. 58r-62v.

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ILLUSTRATIONS: Jennifer Steffey

ON THE COVER: Gold-plated silver medallion (28.0/6503) recovered during archaeological excavations on St. Catherines Island depicts a Pietà image with the Blessed Virgin Mary sitting on the rocks of Golgotha, grieving the loss of her son, Jesus Christ. This *venera* may have originally been attached to clothing or a hat, but when found in the nave of the church at Mission Santa Catalina de Guale, it was associated with several copper links, suggesting that perhaps it had been strung on a necklace. The shroud-draped cross, depicted in the background, is particularly apropos because this medallion was associated with a preserved remnant of 300- to 400-year-old European linen shroud cloth, with several beads woven into the fabric. Photograph by Bill Ballenberg.



cover design by Jennifer Steffey

[This is] a long-needed and necessary first step in reexamining the political and historical context of the uprising as one facet in the long and tragic colonial experience of the Guale Indians. The translations are of the highest quality, and present what are sometimes difficult colonial Spanish bureaucratic texts in smoothly rendered modern English.

John Worth (Assistant Professor, University of West Florida)

Francis and Kole . . . challenge past interpretations of both the internal relations between native southeastern ethnic entities and with their response to the outsiders, thus providing a richer insight into the shifting complexities and impact of the encounter between the Amerindians and Europeans.

Noble David Cook (Professor, Florida International University)

Following several decades of archaeological work on Santa Catalina de Guale, this complements beautifully the published results of all that work. Michael Francis is himself a highly accomplished digger—but in the Spanish archives. The result is a meticulously researched, thoughtfully packaged, and engagingly written presentation of source accounts on Guale's dramatic events at the turn of the 17th century.

*Matthew Restall (Professor, Pennsylvania State University,
author of Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest)*

In the late fall of 1597, Guale Indians murdered five Franciscan friars stationed in Spanish Florida. A sixth friar was taken captive and held for 10 months. Through a series of firsthand accounts, this book chronicles the 1597 Guale uprising and its aftermath, to the 1601 capture and execution of don Juanillo, the Guale leader ultimately blamed for inciting the uprising. The tale that emerges highlights the limitations and precarious nature of Spanish colonial rule in Florida and sheds light on the importance of Indian allies to Spain's Florida ambitions, as well as the bitter disputes between Spanish officials. Perhaps most importantly, this book provides unique insight into the nature of Indian society in the colonial southeast during the late 16th and early 17th centuries, revealing a complex web of shifting alliances, political competition, and violence.

J. MICHAEL FRANCIS earned his Ph.D. in history from the University of Cambridge. He is a Research Associate of the American Museum of Natural History and a Professor of History at the University of North Florida (Jacksonville). He has written extensively about Spanish colonial society in the New World and his many publications include *Invading Colombia: Spanish Accounts of the Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada Expedition of Conquest* (Penn State University Press, 2007). In 2010 he was awarded the Jay I. Kislak Fellowship at the Library of Congress.

KATHLEEN M. KOLE received an M.A. in American history from the University of North Florida, and is currently a graduate student and Kellogg Institute Ph.D. Fellow at the University of Notre Dame.