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AT THE PERIPHERY OF EMPIRE: INDIANS AND SETTLERS IN THE PAMPAS

OF BUENOS AIRES, 1580-1776

by

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

At the Periphery of Empire: Indians and Settlers in the Pampas  
of Buenos Aires, 1580-1776

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This is a study of the multifaceted interactions between Porteños and Indians in the plains or Pampas that extended southwest of Buenos Aires, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. In the Pampas, the Spaniards did not encounter large, farming Indian populations like those of central Mexico or the Andean highlands, but mobile hunter-gatherers whom they were unable to conquer and subdue. Using an ethnohistorical approach, this dissertation shows that although Indians remained independent, they thoroughly reinvented their societies under the multidimensional impact of the Spanish arrival, which included ecological changes, epidemics, slaving raids, and intercultural commerce. Most dramatically, the Pampa Indians became superb horse-riders, deft hunters of (feral) cattle, avid consumers of Spanish manufactures, and an integral part of long-distance exchange networks that extended west across the Andes and reached into southern Chile.

On the basis of this ethnohistorical understanding of the Pampas, this dissertation offers an ambitious reconsideration of Buenos Aires' early colonial period. The intersection of Andean and Atlantic trade circuits in Buenos Aires during the seventeenth century provided the stimuli for the development of cattle ranching as a

main local economic activity. Spanish settlers adapted Iberian cattle-ranching practices to the challenges and opportunities of the Pampas by developing a hunting industry to exploit the proliferating herds of feral livestock that roamed the plains. Such hunting industry put the Spaniards in direct contact, and competition, with the Indians who inhabited the Pampas and with the Indians who arrived seasonally from the Andean zone to hunt and trade. The dissertation examines the complex intercultural and intertribal relations that ensued, which included Indian raids, military expeditions, diplomatic negotiations and treaties, and short-lived Jesuit missions. By the 1750s, these relations had resulted in the emergence of a militarized frontier line lying barely a hundred miles southwest of Buenos Aires. This frontier line defined intercultural relations in the Pampas for the next hundred years, and became a fundamental element in the narrative of Argentina's emergence as a modern nation in the early twentieth century.



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ii	Abstract
iv	Acknowledgments
viii	List of Maps
xix	Abbreviations
1	<b>Introduction</b>
	PART ONE. NEW WORLDS IN THE PAMPAS
18	<b>1. Beginnings</b>
19	I. The Land and its Peoples
29	II. First Encounters
43	III. Settlement
50	<b>2. An Unfinished Conquest</b>
52	I. Early Transformations: The Pampas in 1580
60	II. The Spanish Conquest: A View from the Periphery
82	III. Native New Worlds
	PART TWO. OLD WORLD ANIMALS IN NEW WORLD SETTINGS. LIVESTOCK, SETTLERS AND INDIANS IN THE LONG SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
98	<b>3. Feral but Claimed: Spanish Cattle Ranching in the Pampas</b>
100	I. Buenos Aires: An entrepôt Connecting the Andes to the Atlantic
118	II. A New World Cattle-Ranching Model
129	III. Whose Property? Inter-Jurisdictional Conflicts over Feral Cattle
	<b>4. Indian Ecological and Intercultural Adaptations from the Pampas to the Andes</b>
140	
142	I. A Wider Native World

150	II. West of the Andes: War and Tribalization
160	III. East of the Andes: A Sociopolitical Mosaic
	<b>5. Cattle at the Crossroads: Indians and Spaniards in the Southern</b>
175	<b>Sierras</b>
175	I. Encounters in the Sierras
188	II. Trans-Andean Patterns: Gift-Giving and Raiding in the Sierras
198	III. Hesitant Beginnings: Diplomacy in the Pampas
	PART THREE. THE BIRTH OF THE FRONTIER
	<b>6. Intercultural Violence and Intercultural Negotiations in the Early</b>
211	<b>1740s</b>
212	I. Porteños and the Pampas during the 1720s-1730s
222	II. “A Devastation never Experienced before:” The Raid of 1740
243	III. A Precarious Peace: The Treaty of 1742
263	<b>7. The Jesuit Experiment</b>
265	I. The Missions at a Glance
275	II. The Missionary Experience Redefined
291	III. The Perils of Intercultural Communication
300	<b>8. A Militarized Frontier</b>
301	I. From Friends to Enemies: the Raid of 1744
314	II. The End of the Missions
320	III. The Ascendancy of the “Rural Experts”
335	<b>Conclusions</b>
343	Appendices
355	Bibliography
372	Curriculum Vita

## LIST OF MAPS

20	Map 1. The Argentine Pampas
22	Map 2. The Pampas sub-regions
46	Map 3. Cities and Governorships in the Sixteenth Century
101	Map 4. Buenos Aires in the Early Seventeenth Century
105	Map 5. Buenos Aires in 1713
110	Map 6. Inter-regional trade roads
143	Map 7. The East-West trans-Andean boundary
224	Map 8. The Buenos Aires Campaña in the Mid-Eighteenth Century
266	Map 9. The Missions of the Pampas

## ABBREVIATIONS

AAC FC	Archivo del Arzobispado de Córdoba, Fondo Monseñor Pablo Cabrera
AECBA	<i>Acuerdos del Extinguido Cabildo de Buenos Aires</i>
AGI ABA	Archivo General de Indias, Fondo Audiencia de Buenos Aires
AGI ACh	Archivo General de Indias, Fondo Audiencia de Charcas
AGN	Archivo General de la Nación
AGPC	Archivo General de la Provincia de Córdoba
APSL	Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de San Luis
DHG	<i>Documentos Históricos y Geográficos Relativos a la Conquista y Colonización Rioplatense</i>
ME AGI	Museo Etnográfico, Fondo Documentos del Archivo General de Indias

## INTRODUCTION

In 1776 the Spanish Crown carved the Viceroyalty of the River Plate out of its southernmost American territories. The new jurisdiction extended from Upper Peru to the Magellan Strait and had its capital in Buenos Aires. This move was part of the Bourbon reforms, the colonial policy overhaul undertaken under Charles III that reflected the Crown's novel concern with the empire's peripheral regions.<sup>1</sup> By creating this more manageable Viceroyalty, the Crown hoped to stop the drainage of Potosí silver through the Buenos Aires port as well as to secure the territory from Portuguese encroachment and English marauding.

The man sent to execute Bourbon policy in the River Plate was army officer Pedro de Cevallos. Soon after arriving in Buenos Aires in 1777, Cevallos was calling Minister José de Gálvez' attention to yet another problem to be tackled in that forsaken part of the empire. There were "numerous nations of heathen Indians," Cevallos wrote, that waged

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<sup>1</sup>In the classic world-system perspective of Immanuel Wallerstein, the periphery was the area that the European core came to dominate during the early-modern era. Thus, all of the Americas were part of the periphery. Recently, historians and cultural geographers have sought a more refined geographical understanding of the areas covered with the blanket-term periphery, and have suggested that center-periphery concepts can be used to describe a process of differentiation *within* the Americas. I follow Amy Turner Bushnell's distinction between colonial cores (several Spanish settlements and their corresponding hinterland of native provinces grouped around a colonial center) and colonial peripheries ("the most remote area where the authority of a particular colonial center was recognized"). Amy Turner Bushnell, "Gates, Patterns, and Peripheries. The Field of Frontier Latin America," in *Negotiated Empires. Center and Periphery in the Americas, 1500-1820*, ed. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), 18.

“a continuous and cruel war” against the “poor rural dwellers,” and threatened the trade roads connecting Buenos Aires to the neighboring cities of Córdoba and Mendoza.<sup>2</sup>

Peripheral regions of sudden interest to the Bourbons were also frontier regions—the River Plate, but also Louisiana, Florida, and California, among others. Unlike the empire’s well-sheltered cores, peripheral regions bordered on extensive areas under the control of independent Native peoples. As David Weber has recently argued, the Bourbons soon realized that to secure and develop these vulnerable but potentially prosperous peripheries, they had to bring the “savage Indians who lived on the frontiers under control.”<sup>3</sup> Thus, officials dispatched to the peripheries implemented military reforms that established fortifications and professional troops along the so-called “interior frontiers.” In a more enlightened vein, officials also resorted to commerce and diplomacy to try to transform Indians into dependent, useful subjects.<sup>4</sup>

In the River Plate, the task of bringing the Indians under control fell on Cevallos’s successor, Viceroy Juan José de Vértiz. Vértiz quickly implemented military reforms, including the building of a “frontier line” (*línea de fronteras*) of forts that traced a long diagonal less than a hundred miles southwest of Buenos Aires, and the professionalization of militia forces to defend it. As Vértiz explained to Minister Gálvez, in Buenos Aires there was little use for enlightened policies such as diplomacy, because the “savages” who lived on the plains or Pampas that surrounded the city “did not have

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<sup>2</sup>AGI: ABA 57, "Pedro de Cevallos a José de Gálvez, Buenos Aires, 27 de noviembre de 1777." All translations from Spanish are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>3</sup>David J. Weber, "Bourbons and Bárbaros. Center and Periphery in the Reshaping of Spanish Indian Policy," in *Negotiated Empires. Center and Periphery in the Americas, 1500-1820*, ed. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), 80-81.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



sufficient principles to comprehend the power of these pacts.”<sup>5</sup> Vértiz described the Indians and the territories left on the other side of the frontier line as follows:

These Indians wander in groups, their settlements or hamlets are merely a few hide-tents badly made. They lack any kind of material wealth, they do not cultivate the land, and they do not appreciate comforts. Their main sustenance consists of mares and other animals that are different from the ones we consume. They do without fire for their food. They carry no gear or provisions during their marches. They live in barren sites, and traverse swampy, sterile, and arid roads. Their sturdiness, grown from constant exposure to the elements, makes them resistant to a point that we cannot imagine. We lack knowledge of their extensive and mysterious territories because we do not have factual maps.<sup>6</sup>

The Indians of Vértiz’s mind were feral creatures frozen in the beginning of time, untouched by almost two centuries of Spanish civilizing influences in the River Plate. They lacked fixed towns, which to European eyes were the most basic quality that distinguished men from animals. Their primitiveness made them impervious to the lure of civilized comforts. They were so like beasts that they ate uncooked food, and could resist hardships to which any civilized man would succumb. From Vértiz perspective, then, the militarized line at the center of his frontier policy only gave physical manifestation to a pre-existing gulf between civilized Spaniards and savage Indians. The line simply marked the end of the domesticated Spanish territory—with its carefully traced streets and plazas, its houses, churches, farms and ranches—and the beginning of the wilderness that the Indians inhabited.

But Indians were far from the wild, untouched men that Vértiz described. At least since the seventeenth century, Indians had been in increasing contact with encomenderos, priests, rural laborers, ranchers, farmers, itinerant merchants, Spanish officials, and missionaries. They had made radical adaptations in their lifestyle to take

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<sup>5</sup>Quoted in *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>6</sup>“Memoria del Virrey Vértiz,” in Sigfrido Augusto Radaelli, ed., *Memorias de los virreyes del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Bajel, 1945), 144-145.

full advantage of elements that the Spaniards introduced to the region, such as horses and iron tools. They did not wander aimlessly but followed seasonal migration patterns to maximize the use, for their pastoralist activities, of the Pampas' rich pastureland and uneven water distribution. They had become integrated into sophisticated trade networks that extended west across the Andes into Chile. Plenty of "civilized comforts" like clothing, iron pots, and metal tools circulated through these trade networks. Finally, a fact that Vértiz did not mention, the Indians had held formal diplomatic relations with Porteños since the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The Pampas, furthermore, were not a mysterious wilderness to Buenos Aires' dwellers, or Porteños.<sup>7</sup> Even though they had not settled the Pampas, since the seventeenth century Porteños of diverse backgrounds had regularly pushed far into the plains in search of feral livestock, and of salt from flats located more than three hundred miles south of Buenos Aires, in the heart of Indian country. These expeditions had produced territorial knowledge about the Pampas that was orally transmitted among guides or *baqueanos*. By the late 1740s, moreover, the Jesuit fathers who briefly carried out missionary work in the Pampas had already produced the first rough maps of the area.<sup>8</sup>

The frontier line that the Bourbon administration established in 1776, thus, did not separate Spanish civilization from Indian barbarism, domesticated territory from mysterious wilderness. Rather, it was superimposed onto a wide space where Porteños and Indians overlapped, a space with a complex and ongoing story of intercultural

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<sup>7</sup>Literally, "people of the port." This is the most accurate term to refer to the settlers and inhabitants of Buenos Aires. Throughout this dissertation, however, I also refer to them as "Spaniards," even though few of them were born in Spain, or of Spanish parents. They were Spaniards only in the sense of being subjects of the Spanish Crown.

<sup>8</sup>See the maps by father Joseph Cardiel in Julio F. Guillén y Tato, *Monumenta Cartographica Indiana*, vol. IV: Regiones del Plata y Magallánica (Madrid: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1942).

relations that had started the moment the Spaniards arrived on the River Plate shores in the sixteenth century. This space and its story are the subjects of this dissertation.



This is a study of the multifaceted interactions between Porteños and the Pampa Indians<sup>9</sup> in the plains that extended southwest of Buenos Aires, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries. It places such interactions in a broader theater, as they occurred in the context of the overlapping of two different cultural worlds: a Native, trans-Andean world that reached west into the Chilean Araucanía, and a Spanish colonial world that reached north to Potosí and across the Atlantic to Europe. From this broader perspective, this dissertation examines how inter-cultural trade, slave- and livestock-raids, diplomacy, and missions gradually and steadily, throughout two centuries, tied Indians and Porteños in ambivalent and often violent relations that were at once competitive and cooperative.

This dissertation contributes, in the first place, to our understanding of the River Plate during the pre-Viceroyalty era (prior to 1776), to which historians have paid little or no attention. In the typical periodization that goes from conquest to maturation of the colonial order, peripheral areas such as the River Plate are merely a footnote in the first stage, as the Spanish conquest there lacked the drama and epic proportions it had in Mexico and Peru. And they are largely absent from the mature period, when historians focus primarily on the features of colonial institutions and life as they developed in the wealthy and densely populated cores of the empire. It is only in the late eighteenth

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<sup>9</sup>As I explain in chapter 2, this is shorthand for the Native peoples whose homeland was the Pampas.

century, thanks mostly to the Bourbon reforms, that the peripheries are said to have “emerged.” The River Plate and Buenos Aires, which in 1776 became Viceroyalty and viceregal capital, are usually offered as one of the most salient examples of the emerging peripheries.<sup>10</sup> Most studies on this region, thus, focus on the post-1776 period.<sup>11</sup>

The exceptions to such a trend are a few pioneering studies in the field of economic history that, as I show in chapter three, provide the essential context to understand the Spanish side of the intercultural interactions that took place on the Pampas. These studies have examined Buenos Aires’ integration into the Atlantic economy, as well as into an Andean economic space centered at Lima and Potosí. They have shown that, although Buenos Aires was indeed a humble village, it had experienced rapid growth during the long seventeenth century. During this period, the activity of its port, although mostly illegal, was comparable to that of Portobello, the designated port for the Viceroyalty of Peru.<sup>12</sup> Historians have also begun to explore how these economic

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<sup>10</sup>See for instance Mark Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); James Lockhart and Stuart Schwartz, *Early Latin America. A History of Colonial Spanish America and Brazil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). Amy Turner Bushnell comments on historians’ neglect of the Spanish peripheral and frontier areas during the long seventeenth century, see Amy Turner Bushnell, “Gates, Patterns, and Peripheries.” General histories of Argentina usually dispatch the early colonial history of Buenos Aires in a few pages. See for instance David Rock, *Argentina 1516-1987. From Spanish Colonization to Alfonsín* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); James Scobie, *Argentina. A City and a Nation*, Second ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>11</sup>The following two historiographical articles, although somewhat outdated, show a tendency that has not changed in more recent years, see Juan Carlos Garavaglia and Jorge D. Gelman, “Rural History of the Río de la Plata, 1600-1850: Results of a Historiographical Renaissance,” *Latin American Research Review* 30, no. 3 (1995); Susan Migden Socolow, “Recent Historiography of the Río de la Plata: Colonial and Early National Periods,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 64, no. 1 (1984).

<sup>12</sup>See, among others, Jonathan Brown, “Outpost to Entrepôt: Trade and Commerce at Colonial Buenos Aires,” in *Buenos Aires: 400 Years*, ed. Stanley R. Ross and Thomas F. McGann (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982); Zacarias Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial en el siglo XVII. Buenos Aires, el Atlántico, y el espacio peruano* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1988); Eduardo Saguier, “The Uneven Incorporation of Buenos Aires into World Trade Early in the Seventeenth

forces shaped the spatial and social configuration of the city and its surrounding rural belt.<sup>13</sup>

In the second place, but more fundamentally, this dissertation contributes to our understanding of the Indian world that lay beyond the narrow area of Spanish settlement. Except for the brief role of the “hostile” Indians who resisted the first and failed foundation of Buenos Aires in the 1530s, the Native peoples who inhabited the Pampas are absent from accounts of the colonial River Plate. Scarce written records and undying evolutionary assumptions have relegated the Pampa Indians into the category of faceless “peoples without history.”<sup>14</sup>

The Indians of the Pampas were part of the non-imperial, mobile peoples whom Spaniards referred to as *bárbaros sin Rey, sin Fe, sin Ley*, or “savages without king, without faith, and without law.” As opposed to the Native peoples of the core areas of the empire, the “savages” of the peripheries did not live in impressive urban centers,

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Century (1602-42). The Impact of Commercial Capitalism under the Iberian Mercantilism of the Hapsburgs” (Doctoral Dissertation, Washington University, 1982). Although not centered on Buenos Aires, see also the foundational work by Carlos Sempat Assadourian, in Carlos Sempat Assadourian, *El sistema de la economía colonial: el mercado interior, regiones, y espacio económico* (Mexico: Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1983).

<sup>13</sup>Jorge D. Gelman, “Cabildo y elite local. El caso de Buenos Aires en el siglo XVII,” *HISLA* 6, no. 2do semestre (1985); Jorge D. Gelman, “Economía natural, economía monetaria. Los grupos dirigentes de Buenos Aires a principios del siglo XVII,” *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 44 (1987); Rodolfo González Lebrero, “Chacras y estancias en Buenos Aires a principios del siglo XVII,” in *La historia agraria del Río de la Plata colonial. Los establecimientos productivos*, ed. Raúl Fradkin (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993); Rodolfo González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea. Sociedad y economía en Buenos Aires (1580-1640)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2002); Zacarias Moutoukias, “Power, Corruption, and Commerce: The Making of the Local Administrative Structure in Seventeenth-Century Buenos Aires,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (1988); Eduardo Saguier, *Mercado inmobiliario y estructura social en el Río de la Plata en el siglo XVIII* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993).

<sup>14</sup>I borrow this expression from Eric Wolf’s classic book, Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). A recent exception to this trend is Rodolfo González Lebrero’s work on early Buenos Aires, see Rodolfo González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, chapter 1.

organize their societies in rigid hierarchies, or practice intensive agriculture. Many of these Native peoples, moreover, successfully resisted the Spanish colonization efforts, and remained independent throughout the colonial period. As a result, for most of the twentieth century historians of Latin America have ignored them, dedicating their energies instead to the more “advanced” and better-documented Native societies of the core areas.<sup>15</sup> The study of the Native societies of the peripheries was thus left to anthropologists. Until the mid-twentieth century, according to the evolutionist and racist assumptions prevalent in the field at the time, anthropologists classified these Native societies as “cold” or “simple,” and placed them in the first stages of an evolutionist scheme that proceeded from “primitive” nomad hunter-gatherers to “civilized” sedentary agriculturalists.<sup>16</sup>

In the particular case of the Native peoples of the Pampas, the stereotype of the “savage Indian” was compounded by Argentine history’s emphasis on the “frontier wars” (*guerra de fronteras*) that dominated much of the nineteenth century. The frontier wars culminated in 1877-1880 with the so-called “Conquest of the Desert,” when the Argentine Army ruthlessly killed, displaced, or imprisoned most of the Native peoples

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<sup>15</sup>Since the 1960s, historians of Latin America have produced many groundbreaking Indian-centered studies that focus on the Mesoamerica and the Andean highlands. Classic studies include Inga Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests. Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Inga Clendinnen, *Aztecs. An interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Nancy Farriss, *Maya Society under Colonial Rule: the Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs under Spanish Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964); James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the conquest. A social and cultural history of the Indians of Central Mexico, sixteenth through eighteenth centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Karen Spalding, *Huarochiri, and Andean society under Inca and Spanish rule* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1984); Steve Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest. Huamanga to 1640* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

<sup>16</sup>See for instance Julian H. Steward and Louis C. Faron, *Native Peoples of South America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959).

who until then had proudly owned the Pampas.<sup>17</sup> These military campaigns opened thousands of acres to white settlement, and set in motion an era of rapid economic growth. They also fixed the “civilization versus barbarism” formula that underlay the perception of Indian-Spanish/Creole relations for generations to come. As a General put it in 1885, the “lances of the savages” had imposed “humiliating frontiers” to civilization for too long. The “Conquest of the Desert” was simply the final battle in a “centuries-old war against the Indian,” which had “started in 1535, in the surroundings of Buenos Aires.”<sup>18</sup> Historians have uncritically reproduced this vision for most of the twentieth century, reducing intercultural relations in the Pampas to a chronicle of savage Indian raids against the Spanish settlers and their Creole descendants.<sup>19</sup>

In the past decade, a combination of historical and anthropological approaches—usually referred to as ethnohistory—has begun to unseat unyielding evolutionary assumptions and to infuse new life in the study of the Native peoples who inhabited the peripheries of the Spanish Empire. Recent scholarship has shown that these societies had a long history before the European arrival, and that they developed multiple strategies of adaptation and resistance to European colonialism. Scholars have also

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<sup>17</sup>The “Conquest of the Desert” had much in common with the “Winning of the West” in the United States. For a suggestive comparison of southward expansion in Argentina and westward expansion in the United States, see Kristine L. Jones, “Conflict and Adaptation in the Argentine Pampas 1750-1880” (Ph. D. Dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1984), chapter 8.

<sup>18</sup>General Lorenzo Vintter to General Joaquín Viejobueno, Viedma, February 20, 1885, quoted in Juan Carlos Walther, *La conquista del desierto. Síntesis histórica de los principales sucesos ocurridos y operaciones militares en La Pampa y Patagonia, contra los indios (1527-1885)* (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1980 [1964]), 560-561.

<sup>19</sup>See Ibid. See also the multi-volume work sponsored in 1979 by Argentina’s military dictatorship, in the context of the centennial of the “Conquest of the Desert.” Academia Nacional de Historia, *Congreso Nacional de Historia sobre la Conquista del Desierto. Celebrado en la ciudad de Gral Roca del 6 al 10 de noviembre de 1979, con los auspicios de la Comisión Nacional de Homenaje al Centenario de la Conquista del Desierto*, 4 vols. (Buenos Aires: 1980).

emphasized that precisely these adaptive strategies, and not Indians' supposed isolation, allowed them to maintain their independence throughout the colonial period, and in many cases well into the nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

For the particular case of the Pampas, this new scholarship focuses mostly on the nineteenth century. Consonant with trends in the study of frontiers throughout the Americas,<sup>21</sup> scholars have left behind the previous stress on Indian hostilities and frontier wars, taken Indians seriously as historical actors, and redefined the frontier as a space "of conflict, negotiation, and cohabitation."<sup>22</sup> But, more importantly for the

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<sup>20</sup>This is the main thrust behind Cambridge's recent synthesis. See Frank Salomon and Stuart Schwartz, eds., *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas. Vol. 3: South America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also David Weber's recent synthesis of the "indios bárbaros" that inhabited the frontier of the Spanish Empire during the late eighteenth century: David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005). For a discussion of how recent anthropological theories about ethnic identity should change our understanding of the history of the Native peoples who lived beyond the frontiers of the Spanish Empire, including the Pampas, see Guillaume Boccara, "Mundos nuevos en las fronteras del Nuevo Mundo," *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* Nro 1-2001, mis en ligne le 8 février 2005, référence du 12 mai 2005, disponible sur: <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/document426.html> (2001).

<sup>21</sup>See among others Amy Turner Bushnell, "Gates, Patterns, and Peripheries;" Erick Langer, "The Eastern Andean Frontier (Bolivia and Argentina) and Latin American Frontiers: Comparative Contexts (19th and 20th Centuries)," *The Americas* 59, no. 1 (2002); Patricia Nelson Limerick, "What on Earth Is the New Western History?," in *Trails. Toward a New Western History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991); Gregory Nobles, *American Frontiers: Cultural Encounters and Continental Conquest* (New York: 1997); David J. Weber and Jane M. Rausch, eds., *Where Cultures Meet. Frontiers in Latin American History* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994).

<sup>22</sup>Silvia Ratto, *La frontera bonaerense (1810-1828): espacio de conflicto, negociación y convivencia* (La Plata: Archivo Histórico de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 2003). See also, among others, Jones, "Conflict and Adaptation;" Raúl Mandrini, "Indios y fronteras en el área pampeana (siglos XVI-XIX). Balances y perspectivas," *Anuario IEHS* 7 (1992); Raúl Mandrini, "Las fronteras y la sociedad indígena en el ámbito pampeano," *Anuario IEHS* 12 (1997); Raúl Mandrini, ed., *Vivir entre dos mundos. Las fronteras del sur de la Argentina. Siglos XVIII y XIX* (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2006); Carlos A. Mayo and Amalia Latrubesse, *Terratenientes, soldados y cautivos: La Frontera (1737-1815)* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, 1993); Eugenia Néspolo, "La sociedad indígena en la frontera bonaerense: Resistencia y complementariedad (los pagos de Luján, 1736-1784)," *Atek na (en la tierra)* 1, no. 1 (2003); Sara Ortelli, "Marginalismo y relaciones interétnicas: blancos e



purposes of this dissertation, scholars have also begun to study the emergence, beginning in the seventeenth century, of Native networks of exchange that connected the Pampas to the Araucanía in southern Chile. These studies have emphasized the existence of an interconnected, trans-Andean Indian world lying southwards to the line of Spanish settlements that extended from Buenos Aires on the Atlantic coast to Concepción on the Pacific coast (see Map 7, p. 143).<sup>23</sup>

This dissertation builds upon these recent advances to bring Native peoples into the history of the colonial River Plate. Traditionally, historians have focused on the narrow coastal area where the Spaniards founded Buenos Aires. From Buenos Aires, historians have looked to the east, across the Atlantic to Europe; and to the northwest, along the overland trade roads that led to Potosí (see Map 6, p. 110). They have thus ignored the vast plains that extended to the southwest, under the mistaken assumption

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indios en la frontera rioplatense en el siglo XIX," *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 26 (2000).

<sup>23</sup>For a partial list of this scholarship, see Martha Bechis, "Interethnic Relations During the Period of Nation-State Formation in Chile and Argentina: From Sovereign to Ethnic" (Ph. D. Dissertation, New School for Social Research, 1983); Martha Bechis, "Fuerzas indígenas en la política criolla del siglo XIX," in *Caudillismos rioplatenses. Nuevas miradas a un viejo problema*, ed. Noemí Goldman and Ricardo Salvatore (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1998); Margarita Gascón, "The Southern Frontier of the Spanish Empire, 1598-1740" (Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1994); Margarita Gascón, "Fluctuaciones en las relaciones fronterizas en el sur del Imperio Español (siglo XVII)," *Atek na (en la tierra)* 1, no. 1 (2003); Leonardo León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores en Araucanía y las pampas, 1700-1800* (Temuco: Ediciones Universidad de la Frontera, 1990); Raúl Mandrini, "Procesos de especialización regional en la economía indígena pampeana (s. XVIII-XIX): el caso del suroeste bonaerense," *Boletín Americanista* 32, no. 41 (1991); Raúl Mandrini, "Las transformaciones de la economía indígena bonaerense (ca. 1600-1820)," in *Huellas en la tierra. Indios, agricultores y hacendados en la pampa bonaerense*, ed. Raúl Mandrini and Andrea Reguera (Tandil: IEHS, 1993); Raúl Mandrini and Sara Ortelli, "Repensando viejos problemas: Observaciones sobre la araucanización de las Pampas," *Runa* 22 (1996); Miguel Palermo, "La compleja integración hispano-indígena del sur argentino y chileno durante el período colonial," *América Indígena* 1 (1991); Jorge Pinto Rodríguez, ed., *Araucanía y Pampas. Un mundo fronterizo en América del Sur* (Temuco: Universidad de la Frontera, 1996); Daniel Villar, ed., *Relaciones interétnicas en el sur bonaerense, 1810-1830* (Bahía Blanca: Universidad Nacional del Sur - Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1998).

that, during this period, Porteños ignored them too. The Pampas have remained an area devoid of historical inquiry, which has contributed to their stereotypical image as a vast “desert,” and to the absence of Indians from the history of the early colonial era.<sup>24</sup>

This dissertation shifts the focus southwards. More concretely, it moves the locus of inquiry away from Buenos Aires and into the Pampas themselves. The Pampas were not a “desert” but grasslands deeply transformed by the Spanish arrival in the sixteenth century. In a well-known case of ecological imperialism, domesticated horses and cattle introduced by the Spaniards rapidly gave origin to abundant feral herds that thrived in the grassy plains. Wild horses and cattle kept moving south, advancing as far as the formidable barrier of the river Negro, hundreds of miles south of Buenos Aires.

From the Porteño perspective, the Pampas were the *tierra adentro*, a backcountry teeming with feral animals that could be turned into commodities thanks to Atlantic and Andean commercial circuits. Porteños, however, were not alone in making this assessment. Settlers from the neighboring jurisdictions of Córdoba del Tucumán and Cuyo also looked at the Pampas as a backcountry offering enticing natural resources. The Pampas had not been formally assigned to any jurisdiction in particular. They were just royal lands (*tierras realengas*) over which the Spanish Crown claimed nominal sovereignty. As a result, there were incessant conflicts among the competing groups of Spaniards that entered the Pampas in search of feral livestock.

From the perspective of the diverse Native peoples grouped under the label of Pampa Indians, the Pampas were homeland and hunting grounds. Like Porteños,

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<sup>24</sup>As David Weber points out, the description of the Pampas as a “desert,” both “uninhabitable and nearly devoid of people,” parallels that of the Great Plains, to which North Americans referred as the “Great American Desert.” Weber, *Bárbaros*, 64. Kristen Jones emphasizes that Euroamerican perceptions of grasslands such as the Pampas and the Great Plains as “deserts” sprang from the fact that they were seen as “worthless,” rather than devoid of people. When concepts about the value of the grassland environment’s resources changed, they went from “worthless deserts” to the “the last frontiers of opportunity.” Jones, “Conflict and Adaptation,” 3.

however, the Pampa Indians were not alone in making this assessment. In the post-contact era, the Pampas became an integral part of a trans-Andean Indian world built upon exchange networks, sustained by intertribal alliances, and crossed by intertribal conflicts. As the Pampa Indians themselves, Indians across this wider trans-Andean world had rapidly adopted European livestock and reinvented themselves as equestrian peoples. The Pampas hence became a hot spot where different groups of Indians from the wider trans-Andean world regularly converged to hunt the abundant feral herds. As a result, intertribal conflict and cooperation acquired particular urgency in the Pampas.

The Pampas were thus a space where two different and complex cultural worlds, Indian and Spanish, overlapped. This overlapping resulted in conflicts and collisions, but the internal fractures of each world also provided opportunities for cross-cultural cooperation and alliances. The story of these variegated intercultural contacts is at the heart of this dissertation.

In reconstructing this story, I encountered two main challenges. The first challenge was finding valid models to apprehend these variegated intercultural contacts. Historians of Latin America are trained to see two outcomes of Spanish colonialism: either the formation of complex, stratified societies that included Indians and Spaniards, or the formation of frontiers with presidios and missions. Neither of these models is useful when trying to understand what happened in the Pampas. The field of Latin American history still has to produce valid interpretative frameworks for the Spanish colonial experience in peripheral areas that did not conform to the mission-frontier model. I therefore had to foray into other historical fields. Studies on the multifaceted overlapping of distinct cultural worlds in places as variegated as the Great Lakes, the Great Plains, and eastern North America proved the most illuminating. These studies share an ethnohistorical approach, and an analytical emphasis on the interplay among

culture, economics, politics, and the environment.<sup>25</sup> They opened venues of inquiry that I would not have opened on my own, such as the role of animals in the relations between Spaniards and Indians. Throughout the dissertation, thus, I place the Pampas in a wider, loosely comparative context that includes cases of Indian-European interactions in areas of the Americas that were not necessarily part of the Spanish Empire.

The second, and biggest challenge was to capture, to the extent that this is possible, the Indian side of the story.<sup>26</sup> The Indians who inhabited the Pampas during this period did not leave written documents behind, and there are no present-day Indian communities holding an orally transmitted memory of what happened. The only points of entry to the Indian side for this time period are European-produced documents. I used two methodological strategies to read these documents “against the grain,” in order to discover something about the Indian past.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>See especially Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison. An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Space, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700-1850* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997); Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country. A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency. Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (London and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1983); Richard White, *The Middle Ground. Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>26</sup>I do not pretend to recover what historian Daniel Richter calls the “mental world” of Indian peoples—their everyday life and how they thought about it—as such a world is irrevocably lost to us. But I do attempt to reconstruct the Indian side in the interactions they had with Porteños and other Spaniards in the Pampas.

<sup>27</sup>Superb Indian-centered histories and ethnohistorical literature showed me the way in this regard. I found particularly useful the following works, Guillaume Boccara, “Mundos nuevos;” Colin Calloway, *First Peoples. A Documentary Survey of American Indian History*, Second ed. (Boston - New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 1-11; Lidia Nacuzzi, “De la relación arqueología/ etnohistoria al estudio de las entidades étnicas en perspectiva histórica: deconstruyendo lo Tehuelche,” *Memoria Americana* 9 (2000); Daniel Richter, *Facing East*, 1-40; Frank Salomon and Stuart Schwartz, “New Peoples and New Kinds of People: Adaptation, Readjustment, and Ethnogenesis in South American Indigenous Societies (Colonial Era),” in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart Schwartz (Cambridge:

First, I read the available archeological and anthropological literature on the Native peoples of the Pampas, as well as anthropological and historical scholarship about hunter-gatherers, pastoralist nomads, and equestrian hunters. Reading across these various disciplines provided essential theoretical tools to sift through the archival material, to read written sources closely and pierce through their European biases, and to trace connections that otherwise would have passed unnoticed.

Second, I made my best efforts to supersede the fragmented Porteño vision of the Indian world. Porteños, after all, saw only a narrow slice of it, and had only a dim idea that this Indian world existed at all. To get the widest possible vision, I relied on the recent historiographical advances concerning the interconnected, trans-Andean Native world that existed to the south of the Spanish-controlled territory. More importantly, I spread my archival research along the “southern frontier” of the Spanish Empire, that is, along the southernmost line of Spanish settlements. I thus did archival stints in Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and San Luis. Most of the time, events that seemed extemporaneous when seen from the Porteño perspective, made perfect sense when put in the larger, trans-Andean context from where they had sprung.



The dissertation is organized both chronologically and thematically into three main parts. In Part I (chapters one and two) I define the Pampas as a region and revisit the story of early Spanish explorations and settlement. To do so, I take into account

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Cambridge University Press, 1999); William Simmons, "Culture Theory in Contemporary Ethnohistory," *Ethnohistory* 35, no. 1 (1988); Bruce Trigger, "Ethnohistory: Problems and Prospects," *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 1 (1982); Bruce Trigger, "Ethnohistory: The Unfinished Edifice," *Ethnohistory* 33, no. 3 (1986).

environmental changes, stress the constraints that the peripheral setting of the Pampas imposed on the Spanish typical institutions of colonization, and examine the emergence of a new, post-contact Native world that blended old and new elements.

Part II (chapters three to five) focuses on the long seventeenth century. In this part I borrow from the historians who have taken animals seriously as agents of historical change during the age of European expansion. Domesticated livestock (cattle and horses) that the Spaniards brought with them produced rather quickly abundant herds of feral animals that roamed the plains. I examine the role of these feral animals in the Spanish world and the Indian world that overlapped in the Pampas. I also examine the novel type of intercultural relations that emerged around the acquisition of feral livestock during the transitional decades from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century.

Finally, Part III (chapters six to eight) closes the dissertation by examining the agitated intercultural climate of the middle decades of the eighteenth century. By the 1750s, intercultural blunders, inter-tribal readjustments, and contested intra-Spanish politics had led to the birth of a militarized frontier lying less than a hundred miles southwest of Buenos Aires. This frontier line was the foundation upon which Bourbon officials built, defined intercultural relations in the Pampas for the next hundred years, and became a fundamental element in the narrative of Argentina's emergence as a modern nation in the early twentieth century.



## **PART I**

### **NEW WORLDS IN THE PAMPAS**



## 1. BEGINNINGS

The European imagination ran wild regarding the southernmost corner of the Atlantic New World. Since the early sixteenth century such imagination endowed the River Plate area with fabulous riches in fabled places—the Silver Mountain and its White King, the City of the Caesars, Trapalanda—and with semi-fantastic creatures: gentle giants, men with hands like cat paws and legs like fish tails. With time the rumors of easy-to-grab wealth continued, but consecutive explorations and growing settlements slowly allowed for a more realistic cartography and anthropology. Thus by the early eighteenth century European maps identified the vast territory west of the River Plate as “Pampas,” the Quechua word for “plains.” The inhabitants of these Pampas, maps’ illustrations showed, were wandering but otherwise wholly human Indians.<sup>1</sup>

By the time Europeans were able to locate, not always accurately, the Pampas on a map, many decades of Spanish colonization had altered the environment, taken a toll on the indigenous inhabitants, and subordinated the region to a larger, trans-Atlantic imperial structure the pinnacles of which were in faraway Peru and Castile. This chapter focuses on the Pampas before all these changes were triggered, that is, before the Spaniards settled definitely at the mouth of the River Plate in 1580.

In the pages that follow, I define the Pampas as a geographical region, and review the anthropological literature on the hunter-gatherers that lived there during the pre-

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<sup>1</sup>Ramiro Martínez Sierra, *El mapa de las Pampas*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Archivo General de la Nación, 1975), vol. 1, chapters 1 and 2. According to Martínez Sierra, the first map that identified the Pampas and its indigenous inhabitants was G. de L’Isle’s *L’Amérique Meridionale*, which dates from 1700. Eighteenth-century maps frequently misplaced the Pampas, gave them inaccurate dimensions and shapes, and adorned them with mountains and rivers that only barely reflected the actual geography. See Julio F. Guillén y Tato, *Monumenta Chartographica*, Appendix.



contact period. On the basis of printed primary and secondary sources, I present a synthesis of the first encounters between European and Native peoples in the Pampas during the early sixteenth century. Finally, I place the definite Spanish settlement of the Pampas through the foundation of Buenos Aires in 1580 within the larger context of Spanish imperial consolidation in South America.

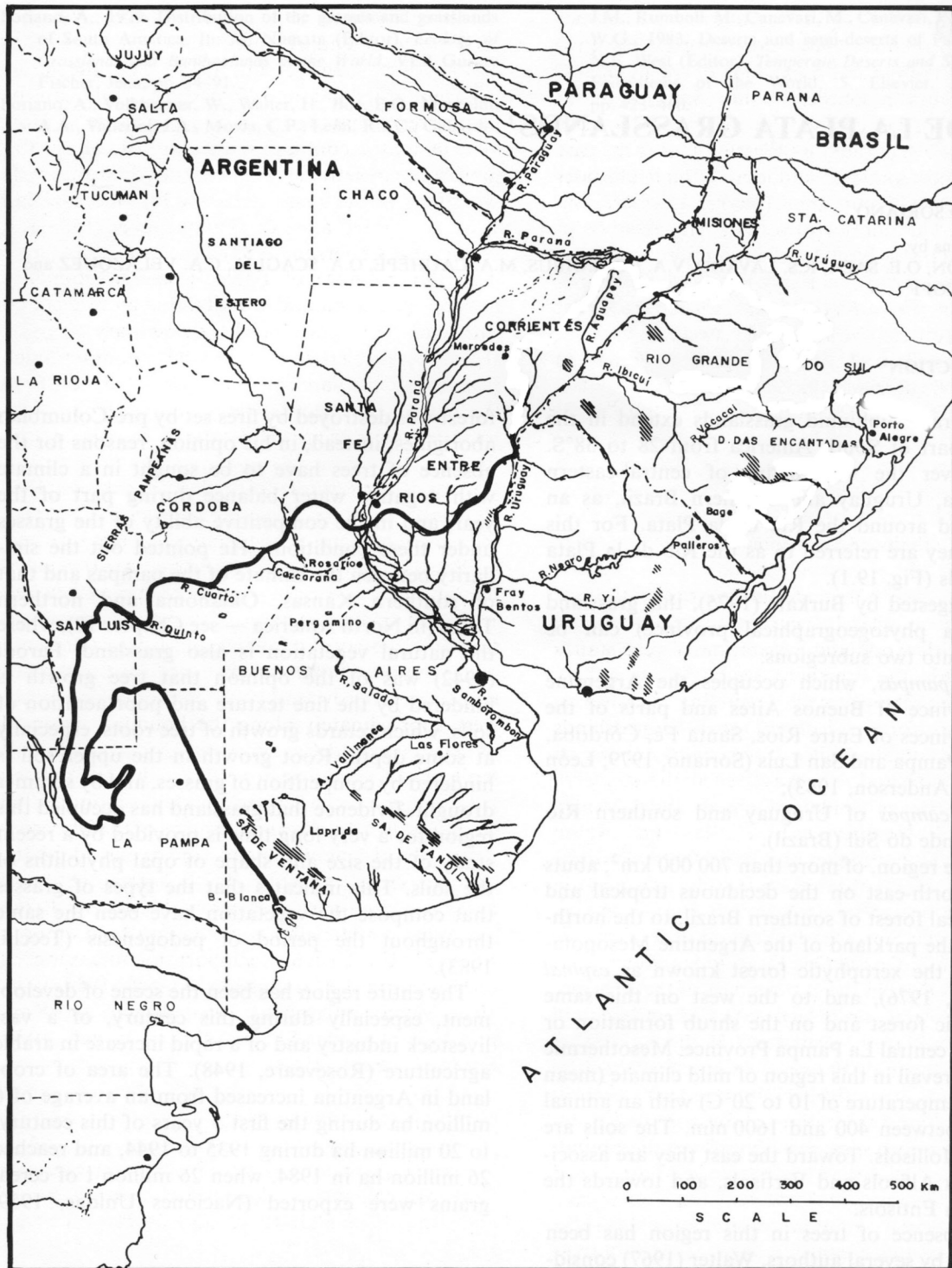
### *I. THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLES*

The lands that were mysterious to the Spaniards still in the eighteenth century comprise what contemporary geographers distinguished as the Argentine Pampas, a grassland plain located in central-eastern Argentina that stretches between latitudes 31° S and 39° S and encompasses approximately 375,000 square miles. The Argentine Pampas borders with the River Plate and the lower-Paraná on the northeast, the Atlantic Ocean on the east, the *espinal* and *monte* (xerophytic forest) on the northwest and west, and the Patagonia steppes on the south (Map 1).<sup>2</sup>

The region is a vast and continuous grassland plain, in which completely flat areas alternate with gently-rolling landscapes, and a few *sierras* (low-mountain ranges)

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<sup>2</sup>The Argentine Pampas are part of a larger region, the Río de la Plata grasslands, which includes the plains of Uruguay and southern Brazil. A description of the Pampas from a geographical perspective is in Alberto Soriano, "Río de la Plata Grasslands," in *Natural Grasslands. Introduction and Western Hemisphere*, ed. Robert T. Coupland, Ecosystems of the World (Amsterdam-London-New York-Tokyo: Elsevier, 1992). For a historical perspective, see Juan Carlos Garavaglia, *Pastores y labradores de Buenos Aires. Una historia agraria de la campaña bonaerense, 1700-1830* (Buenos Aires: IEHS - Ediciones de la Flor - Universidad Pablo de Olavide, 1999), chapter 1.



Map 1. The Argentine Pampas<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from Alberto Soriano, "Río de la Plata Grasslands," 368.

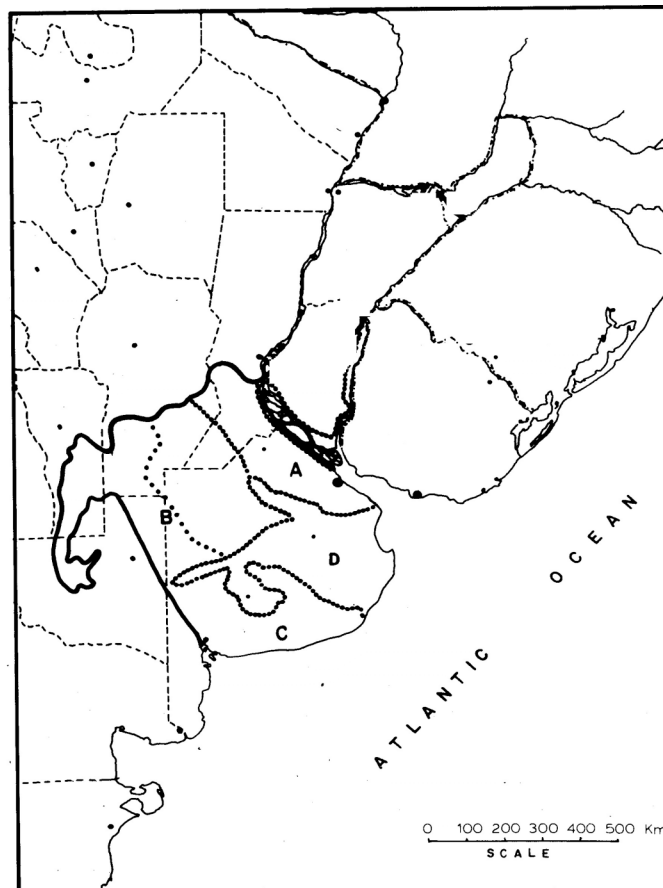
break the evenness of the landscape. Needle grass, guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*, a camelid of the llama family), ñandú (*Rhea darwiniana* or American ostrich), deer (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*), and predators such as pumas and gray foxes are the vegetable and animal species that tie together the Argentine Pampas as a grassland region.

In general terms, average rainfall diminishes from east to west, ranging from 1,500 mm on the Atlantic coast to 400 mm in the westernmost areas. Concomitantly, the vegetation changes from prairie (soft grasses) in the more humid areas to pseudo-steppe (hard grasses) in the drier ones. The predominance of soft grasses in the more humid areas is also a long-term result of the introduction of horses and cattle by the Spaniards during the sixteenth century. Horses and cattle, which reproduced rapidly throughout the Pampas, contributed to the expansion of grassy pastures by eating the hard grasses when soft young, spreading the seeds of their preferred soft grasses, and changing the nature of the soil with their excrement.

As in other grasslands, trees have a difficult time in the Pampas, owing to summer droughts, soil quality, and grasses' competitive advantages. The region is similar in this regard to southern Kansas, Oklahoma, and northern Texas. There were only a few species of trees original to the region, such as *talas* (*Celtis spinosa*), and *ceibos* (*Erythrina crista-galli*). They huddled in small, isolated woodlands known in the colonial period as "islands," which were scattered along the Atlantic coast and along the region's main courses of water. The Spaniards and their Creole descendents heavily exploited these woodlands for firewood and timber, and thus most of them became extinct during the course of the nineteenth century. The tree most associated with the Pampas, the *ombú* (*Phytoloca dioica*), is original from the northeastern Parklands, and is in fact a giant shrub. Ombúes can reach fifty feet high, and their tops can reach a diameter of sixty-five feet. During the colonial period, the Spaniards introduced several

fruit trees (such as peach, quince, fig, almond, and olive trees), which were mostly cultivated in the farms and ranches around Buenos Aires. Finally, during the nineteenth century, new species of trees that adapted well to the grassland environment were introduced, especially Lombard poplars (*Populus spp.*) and eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*).

On the basis of features such as climate, drainage, type of soil, and vegetation, geographers distinguish four sub-regions in this vast grassland area (Map 2).



Map 2. The Pampas sub-regions<sup>4</sup>

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| A. Rolling pampas | C. Southern pampas |
| B. Inland pampas  | D. Flooding pampas |

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<sup>4</sup>Adapted from Ibid., 373.

The Rolling Pampas stretch from the fluvial system River Plate-lower Paraná to the river Salado. A strip of gentle alluvial valleys, the Rolling Pampas contain many small rivers and streams that feed from the year-round abundant rains, and empty to the River Plate. This sub-region was the seat of Spanish settlement from the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Europeans arrived in the area for the first time, and throughout the colonial period. To the south and east of the Rolling Pampas are the Flooding Pampas, a poorly drained lowland subjected to extensive and lengthy flooding during particularly rainy springs and falls. To the west of it stretch the Inland Pampas, a flat landscape that lacks fluvial networks and is covered instead with marshes and natural ponds of salty or fresh water. The two main courses of water, the rivers Cuarto and Quinto, lose their respective channels and convert into marshes. Finally, on the southern Atlantic coast, the Southern Pampas hold the Tandil Sierras (with its highest peak reaching 1,732 feet) and the Ventana Sierras (where the highest peak reaches 4,115 feet). The Southern Pampas were rich in essential resources such as water from the region's well-defined fluvial networks, stone deposits—a material absent in other sub-regions—and salt deposits. In the post-contact era, feral cattle and horses thrived in this sub-region.

The pre-contact history of the indigenous peoples that inhabited the Argentine Pampas still needs to be fully fleshed out. Until recently, a heated and somewhat sterile debate over ethnological classifications had dominated the anthropological literature on the subject, as scholars, relying on different criteria, produced alternative and irreconcilable classifications. In the last decade, a renaissance in the field of archeology and the convergence of historical and anthropological approaches has produced a more dynamic perspective that rejects the traditional view of indigenous societies as static and closed cultural entities, and emphasizes instead their dynamism, historicity, and openness to intercultural contact. Scholars now agree that despite the political de-

centralization and seeming ethnological diversity of the pre-contact Indian world, there was intense interaction and many shared traits among the Native peoples who occupied the Pampas before the European arrival.<sup>5</sup>

The archeological record shows that highly mobile hunter-gatherers, travelling on foot and organized in small bands, inhabited the Pampas at least 11,000 years ago.<sup>6</sup> Mobility depended, on the one hand, on the availability of resources such as water, wood, and stone—there is no evidence that the Pampas first peoples worked or used metals. For instance, archeological sites in Tandil Sierras, which contained precious deposits of quartzite otherwise scarce in the region, show signs of temporary occupation geared towards the production of stone tools. On the other hand, mobility followed the seasonal cycles of game and wild plants. After the extinction of mega-mammals about 7,500 years ago, the Pampas first peoples' main prey were guanacos and deer, which provided meat, fat, and bone marrow for food; hide for clothes and shelter; and bones as raw material for tools. Ñandúes provided feathers and eggs in addition to meat. Native peoples also hunted smaller mammals such as nutrias and hares for meat and pelts. In the Rolling Pampas, Native peoples also consumed fresh-water fish and shellfish. The highest point of the hunting and fishing season was the summertime, when deer herds were larger, guanacos had their offspring (*chulengos*) whose pelts were widely appreciated, and fresh-water fish like sábalo (*Prochilodus* or shad) congregated in large shoals.

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<sup>5</sup>Isabel Hernández, *Los Indios de Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Mapfre, 1992), 38-49; Gustavo Politis, "The Pampean Foragers," in *Archeological and Anthropological Perspectives on the Native Peoples of Pampa, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata (Westport and London: Bergin & Garvey, 2002), 32-33. For an insightful review of recent trends, see Mandrini, "Indios y fronteras."

<sup>6</sup>Excellent syntheses of the archeological findings in the Pampas can be found in Gustavo Politis, "Los cazadores de la llanura," in *Nueva historia argentina. Los pueblos originarios y la conquista*, ed. Myriam Tarragó (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000); Politis, "The Pampean Foragers."

Summertime was also the best season to gather ñandú's eggs as well as *algarroba* (*Prosopis* or carob beans)—the latter were abundant in the Inland Pampas.

Approximately after 3,000 BC, the archeological record shows signs of accelerated change. Native peoples began to deploy increasing logistical mobility, staying longer and returning seasonally to certain areas. The gentle river valleys of the Rolling Pampas and Tandil and Ventana Sierras in the Southern Pampas, particularly, show signs of dense human occupation. Native peoples also expanded into the western, drier areas of the Inland Pampas. They developed innovative strategies to cope with the uneven geographical distribution of natural resources. For instance, they hauled rocks from the sierras to the plains, creating artificial lithic deposits useful for manufacturing projectiles and other tools on the spot while hunting. A new type of stone projectile in the form of a small isosceles triangle dating from this period indicates a key technological innovation, the bow and arrows, which allowed for better aiming at longer distances. Ritual activities, and not solely resource availability, began to determine Native peoples' mobility, as can be seen in entire areas that were reserved to inhume the dead. The use of plain as well as geometrically decorated pottery for cooking and storing became widespread. And finally, archeological remains of materials original to other areas indicate that intercultural trade expanded beyond the Pampas. For instance, archeologists have unearthed in various sites beads of chrysocolla, an emerald-green copper silicate unavailable in the region; tools made of obsidian, a dark, hard volcanic rock of which the closest deposits are in the Andes mountains; and ceramics original from the Chilean Araucanía.

Archeological remains suggest that during the centuries just before the European arrival, this increased intercultural contact resulted in at least three trends. In the Southern Pampas, the local population of the Ventana Sierras mixed with Native peoples coming from the Northern Patagonia steppes. In the Inland Pampas, along the rivers

Cuarto's and Quinto's basin, hunter-gatherers had intense contact with expanding farming peoples from the northwestern Sierras Centrales—peoples whom the Spaniards would later call Comechingones. Finally, in the Rolling Pampas there was intense contact between the local population and the Tupí-Guaraní, a northeastern Native group that practiced slash-and-burn agriculture and that was rapidly expanding south along the Paraná-River Plate system. As a result of this contact, the Native peoples of the Rolling Pampas acquired a relatively advantageous position as trade mediators between their hunters-gatherers counterparts to the south and the farming Tupí-Guaraní to the north.<sup>7</sup>

As the existing archeological record suggests, history did not begin when a new ethnic group, Europeans, arrived at the Pampas shores in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Before the European arrival, the Pampas' first peoples had for centuries had their own history, their own ways of occupying the territory, their own patterns of contact, conquest, and cultural change. While the European arrival did not initiate history in the Pampas, it certainly introduced radical changes. The clearest proof is that, as anthropologist Gustavo Politis has put it, the "dynamic and diverse ethnic mosaic" that Europeans found was extinct by the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> This extinction of multiple, diverse cultures resulted from complex historical processes that included not

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<sup>7</sup>Kristine L. Jones, "Warfare, Reorganization, and Readaptation at the Margins of Spanish Rule: The Southern Margin (1573-1882)," in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas*, ed. Frank Salomon and Stuart Schwartz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 150; Beatriz Nores and Ulises D'Andrea, *Los aborígenes de la región del Río Cuarto* (Córdoba: Editorial Nuevo Siglo, 1996), 28; Politis, "Los cazadores," 93, 96. On the Comechingones, see Mirta Bonnin and Andrés Laguens, "Esteros y algarrobales. Las sociedades de las Sierras Centrales y la llanura santiagueña," in *Nueva historia argentina. Los pueblos originarios y la conquista*, ed. Myriam Tarragó (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000). On the pre-contact Tupí-Guaraní, see Barbara Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule in the Río de la Plata* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), chapter 1.

<sup>8</sup> Politis, "Los cazadores," 64.



only the Spanish conquest and colonization but also miscegenation, intra-indigenous dynamics—particularly the so-called Araucanization of the Pampas<sup>9</sup>—and Creole aggressive expansionism after the wars of Independence in the nineteenth century. This extinction means that the many languages and cultural traditions of the Pampas' first peoples are lost to the contemporary scholar, as the few Native communities that today live on the Pampas hold Mapuche traditions and speak the Mapuche language.

More specifically for the purposes of this dissertation, this extinction means that there are no oral histories to examine when trying to recover a Native perspective on the early encounters with Europeans in the Pampas.<sup>10</sup> All we have left is not yet fully exploited archeological evidence,<sup>11</sup> and European-produced documents such as chronicles, reports, letters, and legal proceedings. While the archeological record is reticent, these written documents offer a cacophony of tales that make the task of building a cohesive and overarching narrative difficult. The tales are highly synchronic and very geographically specific. This hinders the reconstruction of processes throughout time and the ability to gauge the regional implications of an event that took place in a particular location. Furthermore, Europeans identified Native peoples with ever-changing names that might indistinctly refer to individual leaders, whole groups of

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<sup>9</sup>Such is the common name for the slow but persistent spread of Araucanian or Mapuche cultural markers and peoples east of the Andes. I expand on this subject in chapter 4.

<sup>10</sup>My review of the scholarship on Native oral histories from the Pampas yielded no insights into the pre-Mapuchization past. This is an area of research yet to be fully exploited by anthropologists and ethnohistorians.

<sup>11</sup>The field of archeology in Argentina is experiencing a renaissance, which in the coming years will hopefully yield new insights on the immediate pre-contact history of the region. Urban archeologists, for instance, have recently excavated areas of downtown Buenos Aires in order to contribute to the history of the city's first and failed foundation. Daniel Schávelzon, *The Historical Archeology of Buenos Aires. A City at the End of the World*, Contributions to Global Historical Archeology (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2000), chapter 1.

people, villages, geographical areas, or languages. This fact is in part responsible for the alternative and irreconcilable ethnological classifications that twentieth-century scholars produced. Finally, these written documents are not neutral windows into the Native world to be taken at face value.<sup>12</sup> Texts were produced in the midst of the usually violent disruptions caused by the Spanish presence and, like any text, they bear the marks of their authors' interests, prejudices, and cultural parameters. Thus, Native peoples enter these narratives only to the extent that Europeans let them. And Europeans were surely more focused on their own survival and their enterprise's success, than on Native ways of life.

With all their shortcomings, these European-produced narratives are all we have to access the first stages of the Spanish colonization of the Pampas. As the Spanish colonization and occupation of the Pampas consolidated during the long seventeenth century, written sources become more abundant and diverse. They increasingly provide alternative viewpoints on the same subject, for instance, military officials versus Jesuits on the worthiness of converting Indians. They also even include some Native voices, or at least traces of them, albeit filtered by the Spanish legal system. But let us begin at the beginning of this new period, that is, at the end of the European-free Pampas.

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<sup>12</sup>Early Argentine historiography uncritically adopted and reproduced the European vision embedded in the written documents. Thus, to the extent that Native peoples appeared at all in historical works, they did so as "savages" thwarting or resisting the Spanish "civilizing" mission. See classic works such as Roberto Marfany, "Fronteras con los indios en el sud y fundación de pueblos," in *Historia de la Nación Argentina (desde los orígenes hasta la organización definitiva en 1862)*, ed. Ricardo Levene (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Universidad, 1938); Walther, *La conquista del desierto*. Benefiting from the cross-pollination of historical and anthropological approaches, recent scholarship has challenged this perspective. See synthetic works such as Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata, eds., *Archeological and Anthropological Perspectives on the Native Peoples of Pampa, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego to the Nineteenth Century* (Westport and London: Bergin & Garvey, 2002); Myriam Tarragó, ed., *Nueva historia argentina. Los pueblos originarios y la conquista*, vol. 1 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000).

## II. FIRST ENCOUNTERS

In the first decades of the sixteenth century European explorers became an intermittent presence in the Rolling Pampas. The first recorded arrival was that of Juan Díaz de Solís, who in 1516 explored the estuary of the River Plate seeking an alternative route from Europe to the Far East. Native peoples killed him and part of his crew and, according to some chroniclers, ate their bodies.<sup>13</sup> Four years later, Indians dressed only in “goat skins” (most likely guanaco pelts) received Ferdinand Magellan on the same river and amiably provided information about silver deposits in exchange for Spanish shirts. These two very short and very different first encounters spawned rumors in Europe about a Silver Mountain (*Sierra de la Plata*) waiting to be claimed in the River Plate.<sup>14</sup> In early 1527, thus, Diego García de Moguer sought to secure exploration permits for the area from the Spanish Crown. But meanwhile, Sebastian Cabot, who was on his way to Cathay on a trip commissioned by the Crown, decided to take an unauthorized detour and explore the River Plate.<sup>15</sup> In August of that year, Cabot

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<sup>13</sup>The practice of cannibalism among Native Americans is a moot point, as the Spaniards used the accusation of cannibalism to justify the enslavement of Indians. Nevertheless, there is some archeological evidence that the Tupí-Guaraní practiced ritualistic cannibalism. Thus some scholars have concluded that Solís encountered the southernmost Guaraní, who inhabited the islands of the Paraná delta. Daniel Conlazo, *Los indios de Buenos Aires (siglos XVI y XVII)* (Buenos Aires: Búsqueda-Yuchán, 1990), 8; Barbara Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*, 22-23.

<sup>14</sup>Fables of a White King residing at the foothill of a Silver Mountain began circulating shortly after Solís’s ill-fated trip to the River Plate in 1516. Historians have suggested that the mythic Silver Mountain was in fact Potosí and that the White King was the Inca. The River Plate (“river of silver”) might owe its name to Portuguese explorers, who thought the river reached all the way up north to Potosí. Martínez Sierra, *El mapa de las Pampas*, vol. 1: 28-31. The Portuguese were not mistaken, as the system Plata-Paraná-Pilcomayo, although not fully navigable, reaches the Potosí area.

<sup>15</sup>A synthetic account of Cabot’s voyage can be found in Miguel Alberto Guérin, “La organización inicial del espacio rioplatense,” in *Nueva historia argentina. La sociedad colonial*, ed. Enrique Tandeter (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000). García de Moguer took Cabot to court in 1530, after both returned to Spain. The resulting legal proceedings constitute the bulk of the available primary sources. Many of

founded the first Spanish settlement in the Pampas, a small fortification on the confluence of the rivers Carcarañá and Paraná that he christened Sancti Spiritus (see Map 1, p. 20, for the location of the two rivers).<sup>16</sup>

Cabot and his crew of about two hundred men were the first Europeans we know of to have engaged in sustained contact with the Native peoples of the Pampas. Their forays up and down the Paraná, and inland to the west, extended from 1527 until 1530. These forays were a smaller-scale version of the more well-known *entradas* that Spanish *adelantados* such as Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and Hernando de Soto would carry out a few years later in southern North America.<sup>17</sup> Using Sancti Spiritus as their base, and alternating bartering (*rescates*) with wanton violence to obtain food, labor, and information from Native peoples, the Spaniards launched exploratory expeditions that followed rumors of gold and silver. Most of their forays took the Spaniards up the river Paraná into the river Paraguay, thus leaving the Pampas behind for the northern

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these documents are printed in Comisión Oficial del IV Centenario de la primera fundación de Buenos Aires, *Documentos históricos y geográficos relativos a la conquista y colonización rioplatense* (Buenos Aires: Casa Jacobo Peuser, 1941). (*DHG* hereafter). Cabot decided to make a detour into the River Plate on account of information about precious metals that two survivors of Solís's expedition, Melchor Ramírez and Enrique Montes, had given him. He became acquainted with Ramírez and Montes in the Santa Catalina port, on the Brazilian coast, where he had to stop for repairs. "Carta de Luis Ramírez, en la que relata minuciosamente el viaje y las ocurrencias de la expedición de Sebastián Caboto al río Paraná... 10 de julio de 1528," *DHG*, vol.1: 94.

<sup>16</sup>There are contrasting descriptions of Sancti Spiritus. Luis Ramírez, a member of Cabot's crew, stated that it was "a very strong fortification that he [Cabot] had built in order to pacify the land." *Ibid.* 98. Cabot's rival Diego García de Moguer, by contrast, described Sancti Spiritus as a humble hut ("a house made of straw") which only Cabot "considered to be a fortification." "Memoria del viaje que hizo el piloto Diego García, desde que salió de la Coruña; anota las ruta que siguió en la travesía, describe las islas y costas; su llegada al río Paraná... [circa 1530]," *DHG*, vol. 1:51.

<sup>17</sup>David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 45-55.

Parklands. According to Spanish survivors of previous voyages and Indian reports, such was the hypothetical road to the Silver Mountain.<sup>18</sup>

An exception to this trend was Francisco César's expedition, which in 1529 departed westward, and reached far into the Inland Pampas. There are no first-hand accounts of César's expedition, but second-hand reports suggest that the group reached as far as the Sierras Centrales, in western Córdoba and San Luis (see Map 1, p. 20). The Spaniards made contact there with the farming Comechingones who, according to the archeological record, were in possession of gold and silver. This encounter became the origin of yet another mythical golden place, the "city of the Caesars," which spawned Spanish expeditions into the Inland Pampas until the late seventeenth century.<sup>19</sup>

Although the mythical Silver Mountain pulled the Spaniards mostly towards the northern Parklands, their presence was fully felt in the Pampas because their headquarters were set at Sancti Spiritus. The available sources suggest that the Spaniards were a wild card in the midst of an intricate Native political landscape. Luis Ramírez, a member of Cabot's crew, enumerated more than a dozen *naciones* or Indian nations living in the lower Paraná area in diverse states of alliance and animosity. Among them, he pointed out, the Guaraní were an increasingly domineering presence—as the archeological record suggests—with a fearsome reputation:

the Guarenis and their other name Chandris are spread out on these lands and others like corsairs, because they are the enemies of all the other nations... they

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<sup>18</sup>The Spaniards showed Native peoples pieces of silver and gold and asked if they had seen those materials before, if they knew peoples who possessed them, and which was the shortest way to reach these peoples. "Declaraciones hechas por diversos indígenas que fueron interrogados por el Capitán Domingo Martínez de Irala... 18 de diciembre de 1542-25 de enero de 1543," *DHG*, vol. 2: 314.

<sup>19</sup>Secondary accounts on César's expedition include Gerónimo de Bibar's *Crónica y Relación Copiosa y Verdadera de los Reinos de Chile* (1558) and Ruy Díaz de Guzmán's *La Argentina* (1612). For the myths spawned by the conquest of the River Plate, see Enrique de Gandía, *Historia crítica de los mitos y leyendas de la conquista americana* (Buenos Aires: Centro Difusor del Libro, 1946).

are very treacherous people, everything they do is treacherous, they are masters of a great part of these Indies, and they border with those who inhabit the Silver Mountain, from where they bring lots of gold and silver in many sheets and ear-spools and axes with which they cut the earth to sow, they eat human flesh.<sup>20</sup>

Evaluating Spanish intent and capabilities, and perhaps trying to win the Spanish favor, was clearly on the mind of Native peoples from the area. In fact, the Spaniards were soon enmeshed in the volatile tribal politics of the region. Ramírez pointed out that members of all the different nations, which were “of many languages,” went to Sancti Spiritus to meet Cabot in person. The news of the Spanish arrival had spread widely, as not only coastal peoples visited Sancti Spiritus but inland peoples as well.

Ramírez’s account provides us with the first written description of the Pampas hunter-gatherers, the Querandí. They were “very quick” hunters who drank “the blood of their kill, whatever their kind, because their land very much lacks water.” In addition to bows and arrows, they sported a novel weapon: “round stone balls as big as a fist, tied with a rope...which they throw with great aim”—that is, the *boleadoras* or bolas, later very well-known to the Spaniards who settled Buenos Aires.<sup>21</sup> Like other Native peoples perhaps trying to impress the Spaniards, the Querandí volunteered information about the region, its peoples, and the Silver Mountain.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>“Carta de Luis Ramírez,” *DHG*, vol. 1: 98.

<sup>21</sup>The archeological record indicates that the use of bolas became widespread in the Pampas two or three millennia before the Spanish arrival. Politis, “Los cazadores,” 94.

<sup>22</sup>Given the Querandí’s inland location, their reports of the Silver Mountain might correspond to the western Sierras Centrales, home of the farming Comechingones. According to archeological findings and pre-contact chronicles, the Comechingones possessed silver, gold, and copper pieces. It is not clear if they worked metals or obtained them through exchange. The Querandí could reach the Comechingones’ area by going west through the Carcarañá and into the Cuarto river, which has its source in the Sierras. See Nores and D’Andrea, *Los aborígenes de la región del Río Cuarto*, 38, 55. By contrast to the Querandí, coastal Native peoples who gave information to the Spaniards about the location of nations that possessed precious metals, usually referred to northern peoples reached through the Paraná and its northern tributaries. See for

Ramírez's account of this information shows the mix of eagerness, distrust, and misunderstanding that permeated these first intercultural encounters. In one breath, Ramírez said that the Querandí gave "a very good report" about the location of the Silver Mountain as well as information about "many other nations deviant from our nature," such as people who had "ostrich legs from the knee down." He eagerly seized the information about the Silver Mountain as it boosted the case for his captain's deviation into the River Plate. Furthermore, the Querandí had added that a sea with mighty tides adjoined the Silver Mountain "on the other side," which Ramírez deduced was the Pacific. Hence, he suggested, Cabot's disobedience to the King's commissioned trip to Cathay was more than justified by the great findings of fabulous riches and the much sought-after overland passage to the Pacific. As quickly as he seized this vague information, however, he discarded the also-vague news on half-ostrich people—perhaps a mistake by the interpreter, or a totemic identification—as "fables" about which he would not expand until he could verify them "with his own eyes."<sup>23</sup>

Native peoples flocked to Sancti Spiritus not only out of sheer curiosity about the newcomers and their intentions, but also out of eagerness to obtain the goods the Spaniards brought with them. On Cabot's trip, rescates seem to have consisted mostly of beads, which are the only bartering goods that the sources mention specifically. The Spaniards offered beads as gifts in first encounters and, more generally, in exchange for food. A once widely accepted Western-centric interpretation held that cunning Europeans gave trinkets to gullible Natives in exchange for truly valuable goods. Research of the last decades has debunked this interpretation by taking Native

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instance "Carta de Luis Ramírez," *DHG*, vol. 1: 97; "Relación anónima en la que se hace referencia al descubrimiento...del Río de la Plata.... Sin fecha, 1573," *DHG*, vol.1: 66.

<sup>23</sup>"Carta de Luis Ramírez," *DHG*, vol. 1: 98.

economies seriously and rooting them in Native cultural parameters.<sup>24</sup> In the case of the early encounters in the Pampas, sources are too thin to allow for a meaningful understanding of Native peoples' culture and economy. Nevertheless, they offer a few hints that warn us not to take at face value the off-handed way in which the Spaniards mention their rescates. Beads seem to have been a valuable currency in the River Plate area, as Ramírez points out that Indians of the upper-Paraná gave beads and canoes to Indians of the river Paraguay in exchange for gold and silver. They also seem to have been an important element in ethnic differentiation, as first accounts state that the men of several nations sported bead-piercing of different types on their faces. Native peoples, furthermore, were not always acquiescing trading parties. The Timbú, for instance, discontented with the quantity and quality of the beads they received in exchange for corn, attempted an attack on Cabot's Indian allies and threatened Cabot himself, saying that they were "very angry and that he would pay [for his deed]."<sup>25</sup>

In what seemed to be a highly competitive political landscape, alliance with the Spaniards proved to be fruitful for some Native peoples but had dire consequences for others. Cabot's closest allies were the Indians who lived on the Carcarañá around the Sancti Spiritus fort. They served as translators, guides, and food suppliers for the Spaniards, and usually traveled in their canoes to accompany the Spanish ships up the Paraná. They soon found ways to make the Spaniards' plans suit their own interests. In

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<sup>24</sup>Examples of this research are, for the case of Africa, Joseph Miller, *Way of Death. Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade 1730-1830* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); John Thornton, *Africa and the Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). For Native American history, see Richter, *Facing East*; White, *The Middle Ground*.

<sup>25</sup>Ulrico Schmidl, *Crónica del viaje a las regiones del Plata, Paraguay, y Brasil. Reproducción y versión paleográfica del manuscrito de Stuttgart traducido al castellano por Edmundo Wernicke*, ed. Comisión Oficial del IV Centenario de la primera fundación de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires: Talleres Peuser, 1948), passim. "Carta de Luis Ramírez," *DHG*, vol. 1: 101, 99.



December 1527, for instance, while on the supposed route to the Silver Mountain, the Carcarañá Indians enlisted the Spaniards in a raid against their enemies, the Timbú. As a result of the raid, Cabot's Native allies obtained so many food supplies and Timbú slaves that they had to carry them to their village down-river before continuing to assist the Spaniards in their upriver quest for precious metals. Even non-allies were able to exploit Spanish ignorance of the area by occasionally directing the Spaniards into their enemies' lands with the promise that there they would find the gold and silver they were so eagerly looking for.<sup>26</sup>

As time passed, however, Native peoples might have concluded that the Spaniards were not so powerful allies. Despite their seemingly unending supply of beads and their effective raids, they were at a disadvantage in a world they did not know. Natives witnessed Cabot's crew almost dying of hunger when their Indian allies were not there to provide them with fish, a provision literally out there for the taking. What was easy for Indians was not so for Spaniards: Ramírez pointed out that the abundant river vegetation and low waters made fishing possible only by harpooning, which he considered a very difficult task.

Native peoples also saw military success sometimes eluding the Spaniards, as upper-Paraná groups were able to route them. The sources are too sparse to allow for an in-depth analysis of how each side waged war, and thus to understand the reasons for their victories or defeats. But they do offer some hints that concur with the recent

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 100,101,103. This strategy was widely used in other parts of the Americas as well. As Daniel Richter has pointed out, Hernando de Soto's encounters with Native peoples in the US southeast soon acquired a discernible pattern:

"No, one set of Native leaders after another tells the invaders, there is no gold and little food here, but if you travel further inland or over the mountains (into what just happens to be the country of my enemies), you might find what you seek."  
Richter, *Facing East*, 21.

scholarship that has revised the image of Spaniards as all-powerful conquerors.<sup>27</sup> The Spaniards had harquebuses, although the relative advantage of these firearms is not clear given their slow and primitive technology. The Spanish crossbows, metal projectiles, and metal blades, on the other hand, were much more lethal than stone arrows and lances, and most likely gave them an edge at the beginning.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps more importantly, Spanish warriors had much less to lose than their Native counterparts, who instead had to make sure they did not put their villages and families at risk. In this regard, it is telling that as time passed, when Native warriors knew in advance that the Spaniards were coming, they either tried to meet them far from their villages or hurriedly hid their families and food supplies, and deserted their homes.

The Spaniards were also able to use intra-indigenous rivalries to their own advantage. Some of the most decisive Spanish military successes, in fact, were based on attacks launched at dawn that took whole sleeping villages by surprise, and which relied heavily on the cooperation of rival Native guides. Native military successes, in turn, increasingly relied on ambushes, into which the vulnerable Spaniards, always pushing north into unknown territory, were prone to fall.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). An insightful, in-depth study of the Spanish conquest of Tenochtitlan, in Inga Clendinnen, "'Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty': Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico," *Representations* 33 (Winter 1991).

<sup>28</sup>Comparative anthropological studies of war suggest that steel cutting implements are three to nine times more effective than stone. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead, "The Violent Edge of Empire," in *War in the Tribal Zone. Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, ed. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 1999), 10.

<sup>29</sup>"Carta de Luis Ramírez," *DHG*, vol. 1: 99-103. A second-hand account, completed in 1612 by Asunción-born Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, describes Cabot's men war techniques and weaponry. Ruy Díaz de Guzmán, *La Argentina*, ed. Enrique de Gandía (Madrid: Historia, 1986), 93-94.

Finally, as in other parts of America, intra-Spanish rivalries plagued the conquest enterprise. A last development that put Cabot and his men at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the Indians was Diego García de Moguer's arrival to Sancti Spiritus in 1528. Armed with his hard-won royal exploration permit, Moguer demanded that Cabot and his men abandon "that conquest which they did not own." Conflict escalated between the two parties, as their respective captains used force to establish their authority and limit each other's access to resources. Moguer bitterly complained, for instance, that Cabot fired artillery to discourage him and his people from exchanging *rescates* for gold and silver with Native peoples. Infighting only worsened the Spanish situation, as Moguer had arrived right after Natives of the river Bermejo had inflicted a major defeat on Cabot's men. By late 1529, Sancti Spiritus lay burned to the ground, and the Spaniards had initiated a hasty retreat to Europe. They brought with them dozens of Indians as slaves, some of whom would return in later expeditions as interpreters.<sup>30</sup>

Heightened Spanish-Portuguese rivalry characterized this early phase of exploration and conquest of the New World. Thus, in 1531, shortly after the Spanish retreat, Alfonso López de Souza took possession of "the Carandins' [Querandi's] lands" in the name of the Portuguese King. In response, in 1534 Charles V of Castille granted a *capitulación* to adelantado Pedro de Mendoza to settle the area.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>"Memoria del viaje que hizo el piloto Diego García," *DHG*, vol. 1: 51; "Información levantada en Sevilla a petición de Diego García... sobre lo que le ocurrió con Sebastián Caboto en el Río de la Plata. 16 de agosto de 1530," *DHG*, vol. 2:23; "Información que los oficiales de Sevilla enviaron de los Indios que se han traído del Río de la Plata. 27 de octubre-3 de diciembre de 1530," *DHG*, vol.2:29-35. "R.C. dirigida a don Pedro de Mendoza, por la que se le autoriza a llevar, en calidad de intérpretes, a los naturales del Río de la Plata y de Santa Catalina que condujo a España Sebastián Caboto, 22 de agosto de 1534," *DHG*, vol.2: 66-67.

<sup>31</sup>"Copia...de la carta que don Luis Sarmiento escribió a S.M. dándole cuenta de la intención de los portugueses de apoderarse del Río de la Plata..., 11 de julio de 1535," *DHG*, vol.2:15-17. "Capitulación concedida a don Pedro de Mendoza para conquistar y poblar las provincias del Río de la Plata, 21 de mayo de 1534," *DHG*, vol.2:41-45.

On January 1536 a large expedition under Mendoza's orders anchored on the western margin of the River Plate, where the city of Buenos Aires stands today. The expedition consisted of more than a dozen ships, around one thousand five hundred male and female settlers, a great variety of animals, supplies, and equipment. Their encampment on the shore became the second Spanish settlement on the Pampas: the Puerto Nuestra Señora Santa María del Buen Aire.<sup>32</sup>

This settlement experiment, which lasted from 1536 to 1541, recapitulated in an enlarged fashion many of the features of Cabot's entrada. As Cabot had done, Mendoza combined exchange of rescates with wanton violence to obtain whatever was needed from Native peoples. Because the expedition had arrived at the height of the Southern Hemisphere summer, it was too late to plant despite the availability of seeds and equipment. Food for the large number of settlers, thus, was the most pressing need from the very beginning.

Ulrich Schmidl, a Bohemian soldier who was part of the expedition, authored the first published account of the trip. He stated that the land where they settled belonged to the Querandí, the "quick hunters" first described by Ramírez. Their dwellings were scarcely four leagues away from the Spanish encampment. The Querandí, Schmidl pointed out, "wandered all over the land, like gypsies do in German countries," drank deer's blood in times of drought, their women covered their "private parts with a cotton cloth," and more importantly, were willing to assist the hungry newcomers with fish and

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<sup>32</sup>A synthetic account of Mendoza's settlement can be found in Miguel Alberto Guérin, "La organización inicial." Scholars do not agree about where exactly Mendoza's expedition encamped, and archeologists have yet to find substantial traces of this first Buenos Aires. Written accounts vary in their descriptions of the settlement. As historical archeologist Daniel Schávelzon summarizes it:

"to some it was a true village with a plaza, streets, churches, and a number of comfortable dwellings... To others, it was just a group of precarious huts made of wood and straw, which were later surrounded by a low earthen wall." Schávelzon, *The Historical Archeology*, 6.

meat.<sup>33</sup> For the Querandí, the arrival of Mendoza's party meant a good trading opportunity right on their doorstep and hence, privileged access to the Spanish rescates. By then, these included the proverbial glass beads as well as sharp iron tools such as axes, knives, and scissors; plus other goods such as shirts, hats, combs, and mirrors.<sup>34</sup>

As the ensuing events show, these first exchanges took place in a context of shared misunderstandings: what the Querandí likely took for an attractive exchange among equals, the Spaniards interpreted as a formal relation of servitude. These shared misunderstandings did not impede but, on the contrary, made a mutually beneficial exchange possible, at least for a while.<sup>35</sup>

Several weeks after the Spanish arrival, the Querandí stopped their daily visits to the Spanish encampment, perhaps their appetite for rescates already satiated, or less intense than the food demands of more than a thousand people. Mendoza's response was to send *alcalde* Juan Pavón with two peons to the Querandí site with haughty demands for more fish and meat. In the Spanish view, a low-ranking authority with no military backup was enough to bring servile Natives to their senses. The Querandí

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<sup>33</sup>Schmidl, *Crónica del viaje*, 37,73,87. Sadly, Schmidl does not describe the Querandí dwellings or social organization. He only refers to a "*lugar de indios*" (an encampment? a village?) and points out that there were approximately three thousand warriors plus women and children. As Rodolfo González Lebrero has pointed out, the Querandí's possession of cotton cloth indicates that they traded with the northeastern Tupí-Guaraní. González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 29.

<sup>34</sup> Schmidl, *Crónica del viaje*, 73,87. Iron tools quickly became the preferred rescue among Native peoples. Capitulaciones for the River Plate dating from the 1550s specifically mentioned that expeditions had to carry iron among the "appropriate goods" for rescates. Guérin, "La organización inicial," 36, 41.

<sup>35</sup>I take the idea of "shared misunderstandings" from Richard White's study of Indian-white relations in the Great Lakes region. White argues that cross-cultural interaction requires, from the parties interacting, an ongoing process of interpreting cultural difference. These interpretations—however misguided—generate expectations about the other's behavior and thus provide the framework for interactions. I expand on this subject on chapter 5. White, *The Middle Ground*, especially chapter 2.

simply beat up the Spanish delegates up and sent them “*bien apaleados*” back to their encampment.

This episode brusquely readjusted each party’s expectations about the other. Mendoza reacted with a full-scale attack of three hundred men and thirty horses. Querandí warriors armed with bows, arrows and bolas were ready to face the reprisal, as shown by the fact that their families had already withdrawn inland with all their belongings. After several days of fighting, the Spaniards succeeded in taking the Querandí encampment, although the fact that they were not able to take any prisoners suggests that Querandí warriors chose to retreat strategically when victory slipped out their reach.

The Spaniards soon realized that theirs had been a Pyrrhic victory. Their predicament worsened as food supplies progressively dwindled, despite the temporary respite provided by the Querandí fishing nets and the encampment’s good fishing waters. As the summer of 1536 gave way to fall, Schmidl reported that Spanish wretchedness and hunger reached such an extreme that the corpses of a few men hanged for killing and eating a horse were, in turn, eaten by desperate settlers. A Royal Cédula issued three years later, in 1539—news and legal decisions traveled very slowly across the Atlantic in this early phase—further revealed the critical state of the settlement. The Cédula was issued to forgive all the Christians “who had eaten human flesh out of necessity,” and to encourage the many who had deserted the Spanish settlement and joined the Indians, to go back and live like Christians again.<sup>36</sup> With the precarious settlement struggling to subsist, Mendoza followed Cabot’s precedent and launched an entrada of almost two

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<sup>36</sup>“R.C. dirigida al gobernador y demás autoridades del Río de la Plata en donde se concede perdón a los cristianos que, por necesidad, comieron carne humana. 1539,” *DHG*, vol.2: 175-176. Schmidl, *Crónica del viaje*, 51.

hundred men up the Paraná, in search of the elusive Silver Mountain and, most pressingly, of Indians willing to supply food.

The Spaniards were no longer unfamiliar traders, however, and Native peoples were well aware of the price to be paid for the goods they brought. Either because news of the Spanish attack on the Querandí had spread up the Paraná, or because of lingering memories of Cabot's recent forays, Native peoples fled as soon as they saw the Spaniards, taking good care first of burning their houses and leaving no food supplies behind. The wretched party finally gave up on the entrada and returned to the settlement, only to face, in June of 1536, a fierce attack by a large army of Querandí and several other nations. Schmidl mentioned the Guaraní, Charrúa, and Chaná-Timbú among them, which suggests a widespread alliance. A major battle took place—the battle of Sancti Spiritus— in which the Native armies used incendiary arrows to set on fire the Spanish huts as well as several of the ships anchored close to the shore. After some days of heavy casualties on both sides, the Spaniards barely gained the upper hand by using their ships' artillery to fire at the Native armies.<sup>37</sup>

Following this major battle on June 1536, the pull of the north and Spanish infighting became the dominant aspects of Mendoza's settlement experiment, just as had happened with Cabot's. In August Mendoza went up the Paraná, founded the small settlement of Corpus Christi very close to where Cabot's Sancti Spiritus had been, and sent one of his lieutenants, Juan de Ayolas, up north to explore the river Paraguay. The shift of focus from the Rolling Pampas coast—that is, the River Plate and lower Paraná area—to the northern Parklands of Paraguay was even stronger after Mendoza, accosted by illness, embarked for Spain in 1537. Following his departure, several of his men

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., 39-63.

fought among each other for the vacant leadership and went out on their own in successive entradas pushing north towards Paraguay and northwest towards Peru.

By late 1537, one of these entradas had turned into a successful settlement, Nuestra Señora de Santa María de Asunción (present-day Asunción del Paraguay) located on the river Paraná in the land of the Cario-Guaraní peoples, more than one thousand miles north of Santa María del Buen Aire. The success of the Asunción settlement resulted from the arrangement reached between the Cario-Guaraní and the Spaniards. In exchange for metal hardware and assistance in defeating their enemies, the Cario-Guaraní offered the Spaniards food and labor. They also spun long-lasting kinship bonds by offering their women as concubines and wives.<sup>38</sup>

Gradually, in the midst of bitter disputes among the competing Spanish leaders as well as among new commanders arrived from Spain, Buenos Aires settlers began to migrate to Asunción. Finally in 1541, in spite of resistance from settlers, who insisted that their port-village was prospering at last, royal envoy Alonso de Cabrera recommended the definite abandonment of the settlement. The remains were burned to the ground, and the Pampas were again free of Europeans.

The existing historiography pins the reasons for the failure of this first Buenos Aires on the personal rivalries among the Spanish leaders, and the regional rivalry that pitted the port against Asunción.<sup>39</sup> Printed primary sources suggest, however, that Native resistance also played a part. A 1538 report by Francisco Ruiz de Galán, whom Mendoza had left in charge before leaving for Spain, revealed that Buenos Aires settlers had to regularly send ships up the Paraná to exchange iron tools for basic food staples such as fish and fish flour with the Parklands Native peoples. This indicates that

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<sup>38</sup>Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*, 23-25.

<sup>39</sup>A synthesis in Guérin, "La organización inicial."



cooperative relations with the neighboring Querandí were never re-established.

Examples from other part of the Americas, meanwhile, suggest that it was practically impossible for Europeans to survive at first in the unknown New World environments without the support of nearby Native peoples.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, Domingo Martínez de Irala, governor of Asunción, stated that the Querandí continued to be “mortal enemies” of the Spaniards. In his instructions on how to navigate the River Plate to reach Asunción, Irala warned ship crews to be particularly careful in the areas where “the river banks went up in ridges,” because these were favorite sites for the Querandí to ambush the passing ships and “shower them with arrows.” Royal envoy Alonso de Cabrera echoed Irala, referring to the increasing threat of enemy Indians as one of the main reasons to abandon the settlement.<sup>41</sup> On the whole, although there were no other epic battles like Sancti Spiritus, Native low-intensity but persistent resistance most certainly played a part in the final dismantling of Buenos Aires.

### III. SETTLEMENT

The European-free Pampas did not last long, however. In 1580, barely forty years after the dismantling of the first Buenos Aires, a small party of men pushing south from Asunción under the leadership of Juan de Garay succeeded at re-settling the mouth of the River Plate, this time for good. By then, the search for the elusive Silver Mountain

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<sup>40</sup>A classic account in William Cronon, *Changes in the Land. Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, 20th Anniversary ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), chapter 2.

<sup>41</sup>“Información levantada en el Puerto Nuestra Señora Santa María del Buen Aire, por el capitán Francisco Ruiz de Galán...para hacer constar como era servido el Rey. 3-14 de junio de 1538,” *DHG*, vol. 2: 201-225. “Expediente relacionado con el requerimiento hecho por Alonso de Cabrera, 10-16 de abril de 1541,” *DHG*, vol. 2: 295-299. “Relación de Martínez de Irala (1541?),” *DHG*, vol. 2: 299-302.

had given way to other priorities, as the Spanish American Empire south of Mexico began to take a discernible shape. The second and definite foundation of Buenos Aires in 1580 was, in fact, a consequence of Spanish imperial consolidation in South America into the Viceroyalty of Peru.

The key developments for this consolidation took place in the mid-sixteenth century. By then, the exploitation of the *cerro rico* of Potosí was turning the myth of the Silver Mountain into a very tangible reality for the Spanish Crown's coffers, and Viceroy Francisco de Toledo's firm grip was stabilizing Spanish rule from Lima. The meteoric growth of Potosí—its population topped 100,000 by 1600<sup>42</sup>—generated a sustaining demand for labor, food staples, textiles, draft animals, and a wide range of supplies essential for mining. Lima became the viceregal capital and commercial center for the vast expanse of Spanish-controlled territory in South America. Potosí and Lima constituted, in the words of historian Carlos Sempat Assadourian, a political-economic axis that stimulated the conquest, settlement, and subsequent growth of an ever-extending range of their surrounding territory.<sup>43</sup>

A first consequence of this ripple effect was that in the second half of the sixteenth century the quintessential sign of Spanish colonization, towns, began to dot the landscape south of Peru. Gradually, tentative administrative jurisdictions took shape: the governorship of Tucumán, which contained the cities of Santiago del Estero, San Miguel, and Córdoba; the Kingdom of Chile with the cities of Santiago, Mendoza, and San Juan; and farthest to the southeast, the governorship of Paraguay with the cities of

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<sup>42</sup>For comparison, the contemporaneous populations of Amsterdam, London, and Seville were, respectively and approximately, of 80,000, 130,000, and 150,000 people. Peter Bakewell, *Silver and Entrepreneurship in Seventeenth-Century Potosí. The Life and Times of Antonio López de Quiroga* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 23.

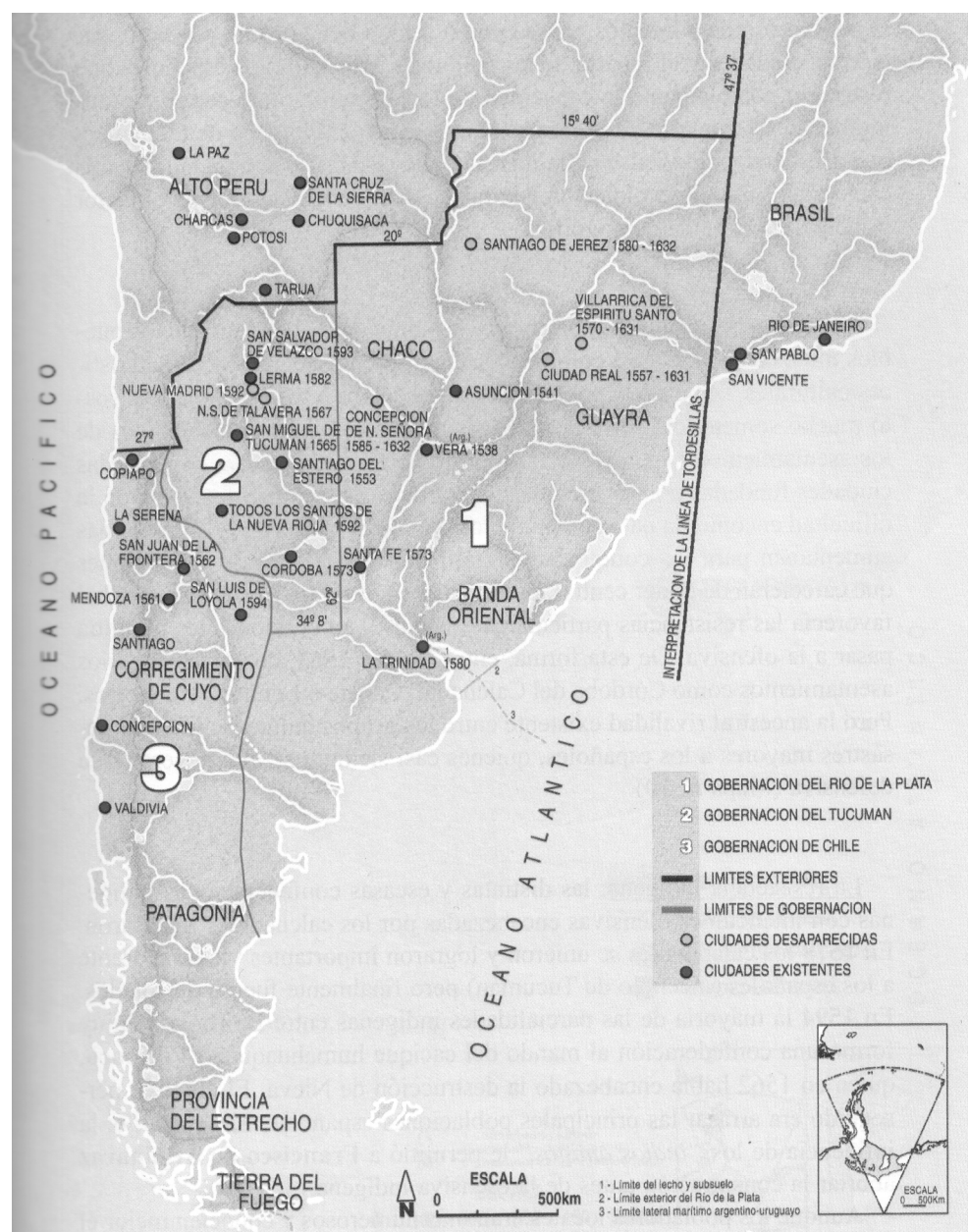
<sup>43</sup>Assadourian, *El sistema de la economía colonial*, 21.

Asunción and Santa Fe (Map 3). Spaniards from these three jurisdictions in turn launched *entradas* on their own, gradually advancing towards the Pampas. Thus, while in the early sixteenth century the River Plate area was supposed to spearhead, from the Atlantic, the exploration and colonization of the continental interior, by 1580 the situation had reversed. It was the continental interior that advanced towards the Atlantic, energized by the Lima-Potosí axis.

In this context, metropolitan authorities began to see the River Plate as a convenient Atlantic outlet to the already colonized interior, rather than as a springboard into it. In the 1560s, Juan de Matienzo, a distinguished jurist and the *oidor* of the Charcas Audiencia, clearly put forward this view.<sup>44</sup> Matienzo stated that the well-being of Peru and its peoples required an Atlantic connection to Spain, to replace the cumbersome and increasingly dangerous existing Pacific route, which went from Lima to Panama and across the isthmus into the pirate-infested Caribbean. Matienzo specifically suggested the re-occupation of the old site of Cabot's fort on the river Carcarañá, and soon *conquistadores* from Tucumán and Paraguay were heading there. In 1573, Córdoba's founder Gerónimo Luis de Cabrera went westward into the Inland Pampas and reached the Carcarañá, only to bump into Juan de Garay coming south from Asunción and recently-founded Santa Fe. As Paraguay had jurisdictional priority over the Plata-Paraná river system, Cabrera yielded to Garay, who finally in 1580 went farther south and re-settled Buenos Aires.

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<sup>44</sup>Guérin, "La organización inicial," 46.



Map 3. Cities and Governorships in the Sixteenth Century<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup>The governorship indicated with the number 1 was the Governorship of Paraguay-Río de la Plata until 1611. In that year, each region became a separate governorship. Map taken from Mirta Zaida Lobato and Juan Suriano, *Atlas Histórico de la Argentina*, Nueva Historia Argentina, vol. 11 (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000).

Eventually, all these South American regions under Spanish domination were firmly linked to the Lima-Potosí core, forming a highly self-sufficient and integrated “Andean economic system.”<sup>46</sup> In the words of Lyman J. Johnson and Susan Migden Socolow, this system was a “network of interregional markets [in which] each region supplied a specialized product to the mineral axis and participated in an economy that extended over 5,000 miles.”<sup>47</sup> As Johnson and Socolow point out, this economic integration depended not only on market forces but also on the coercive power of the colonial state to “construct markets, allocate resources, and redistribute wealth.” Lima, as the viceregal capital and seat of a *consulado* (a merchant guild that monopolized the right to import European goods) sat at the pinnacle of this Andean economic system.

What was the role of Buenos Aires in this system? Lima’s powerful *consulado* soon used its political muscle to thwart Matienzo’s plans for a commercial Atlantic connection to the metropolis, because its merchants privileged the cumbersome but highly profitable—for them—Pacific route. Thus colonial regulations strictly limited Buenos Aires’ port activity and, eventually, after a difficult beginning, the city had the humbler role of purveyor of cattle-on-the-hoof and mules—the heart of Andean transportation—to the system.

But Buenos Aires’ strategic Atlantic location kept interfering with Lima’s designs. In 1586, Martín del Barco Centenera warned King Philip II that the River Plate was “an open doorway to Peru.” Referring to the latest privateer attempts in the area—by Francis Drake’s brother, John—del Barco Centenera vehemently advised the Crown to secure

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<sup>46</sup>“*Espacio peruano*,” in Assadourian’s original formulation. Assadourian, *El sistema de la economía colonial*, 111.

<sup>47</sup>Lyman L. Johnson and Susan Migden Socolow, “Colonial Centers, Colonial Peripheries, and the Economic Agency of the Spanish State,” in *Negotiated Empires. Center and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, ed. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), 64.

Buenos Aires from Spain's enemies.<sup>48</sup> In 1599, when the Great Araucanian Rebellion shook the Spanish dominion over Chile, the usefulness of an Atlantic backdoor to the Pacific became apparent again. The Crown was able to deploy imperial troops across the Atlantic to Buenos Aires, and from there overland across the Andes to Chile. This was a quick route that avoided the perilous Magellan Straits. Hence strategic location gave the port-city an edge within the empire that was independent from the Andean economic system. Gradually, this strategic edge drew extra military and administrative resources from the Crown. And coming full circle, this would in turn have economic repercussions, as during the seventeenth century Buenos Aires was to become one of the main illegal outlets of Peruvian silver and a well-known smuggling center.<sup>49</sup>

As the eighteenth-century maps that for the first time identified the Pampas by their Quechua name make clear, however, Buenos Aires was not solely a peripheral economic region tied to Peruvian mining or a strategic point in Atlantic inter-imperial geopolitics. It was also a tiny settlement on the northeastern edge of the vast and still-unknown Pampas. Despite imperial structures that fastened Buenos Aires northward to Peru and eastward to the Atlantic, the fact of the matter is that Porteños—Buenos Aires dwellers—had to go southward into the plains to obtain many of the key resources they needed on a day-to-day basis. These included wood to burn and build, salt to preserve and flavor food, roads to communicate and trade with other Spanish settlements, water and pasture for a fledgling cattle-ranching industry, feral mares to breed mules, feral horses to ride, feral cattle to replenish domestic herds as well as to secure basic supplies such as meat, tallow, fat, and hides.

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<sup>48</sup>“Carta anónima pero que por su contexto se deduce ser autor el arcedianio Martín del Barco Centenera [circa 1587],” *DHG*, vol. 1:87.

<sup>49</sup>I expand on this subject in chapter 3.

The Pampas that contained all these resources were not empty for the taking but, for the most part, remained under the control of independent Native peoples—the “wandering Indians” of European maps. In the decades following settlement, Porteños began to explore and exploit the plains, timidly at first, reaching as far as the Southern and Inland Pampas by the late seventeenth century. To the extent that they could, Porteños also subjugated Native peoples through typical mechanism of Spanish colonization such as *encomiendas* and *reducciones*. Porteños did so, however, without expanding their territorial control beyond the Rolling Pampas: effective territorial occupation remained confined to a narrow coastal strip for much of the colonial period, and not until the nineteenth century extended south of the river Salado.

## 2. AN UNFINISHED CONQUEST

The conquest and colonization of the Native peoples of the Pampas did not follow the pattern of the core areas of the Spanish Empire (Mexico and the Andean highlands) where conquerors faced peoples organized in socially hierarchical orders who practiced intensive agriculture. In these core areas, the similarities between conquerors and conquered made the former's task easier. The Spaniards were able to replace or co-opt the top tier in the Native social hierarchy, and reutilize the social structures in place to exploit already skilled Indian labor. In addition, the discovery of precious metals not only brought metropolitan attention to these regions but also plenty of resources to consolidate colonial rule.

The situation was very different where Spanish conquerors faced non-state Native peoples who practiced some combination of non-intensive agriculture, hunting, and gathering. In these cases, Native mobility and flexible social structures made conquest difficult as there were neither permanent villages to attack nor fields to burn or rulers holding centralized authority with whom to negotiate. In addition, despite Spanish craving for another Potosí, the quest for mineral riches in the areas that these peoples inhabited was mostly fruitless. They became the empire's peripheries, where effective Spanish dominion was thin and constantly challenged until the very end of the colonial period. As late as the mid-eighteenth century, authorities such as Viceroy of Peru, the Count of Superunda, voiced their impatience at these unyielding peripheries and their dwellers:

The unconquered country is jungle and mountain, difficult to traverse, and plains that are humid, swampy, and hot, and so cannot support Spaniards...The nations that inhabit these places are savages. They do not cover their nakedness and their houses are so poor that they lose nothing when they leave them... To



conquer them by force always has been impossible, considering that they can move from one place to another.<sup>1</sup>

Recent scholarship has shown that, however frozen in their “savagery” these Indians might have seemed to European eyes, they were in fact busily adapting to the changes triggered by the European arrivals. Throughout the Americas, Native peoples creatively adapted to and resisted the diverse European colonial enterprises by selectively incorporating new material goods and techniques and by redrawing ethnic and political boundaries. These changes were so extensive that, some scholars have argued, not just settlers but Indians as well found themselves in a “New World.”<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter, I contribute to this scholarship by focusing on the case of the Pampas. I begin with the lingering effects of the early Spanish predatory entradas and failed settlements that by 1580, when Juan de Garay resettled the mouth of the River Plate for good, had transformed the ecology of the plains and the peoples who lived there in unanticipated ways. Then I turn to the challenges that Porteños faced as they attempted to subdue Indians who, as the Count of Superunda put it, were “savages” constantly moving from one place to another. These “savages” showed remarkable flexibility in adapting to and resisting Porteño attempts to dominate them. Finally, in the last section I tackle the controversial topic of the Pampas’ ethnic makeup during this early period. I argue that the confusing array of Native nations that appear in

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<sup>1</sup>As quoted in Weber, “Bourbons and Bárbaros,” 80. As Weber points out, these peripheral areas controlled by non-conquered Indians constituted, still in the mid-eighteenth century, more than half of the landmass that we think of today as Spanish America.

<sup>2</sup>James Merrel, *The Indians' New World: Catawbas and Their Neighbors from European Contact through the Era of Removal* (New York: Norton, 1989). Daniel Richter offers a masterful synthesis of Indians’ adaptation in eastern North America in Richter, *Facing East*, chapters 1-3. For a recent thorough overview of Native adaptations to the Spanish presence throughout the Empire’s peripheries, including the Pampas, see Weber, *Bárbaros*.

seventeenth-century sources had not always been there but were instead a product of colonial dynamics.

### *I. EARLY TRANSFORMATIONS: THE PAMPAS IN 1580*

In much of the Americas, sporadic and indirect contact in the form of exploratory parties, itinerant traders, entradas, and failed settlements preceded the establishment of permanent European colonies. Thus, by the time Europeans settled for good, powerful forces that these early contacts unleashed (ecological changes, epidemics, expanded trade) had already altered the material and cultural landscape of the New World.

The Pampas were no different. The arrival of Juan de Garay and his companions to the River Plate in 1580 revealed at least two important changes with respect to previous reports on the area. First, there were no Querandí to resist the Spaniards. Second, there were abundant herds of feral horses, an European-introduced species, pasturing on the plains. As Bruce Trigger and William Swagerty have pointed out for the case of North America, making sense of these early transformations requires a good deal of speculation, as the available sources are few, scattered, and difficult to interpret.<sup>3</sup> With this caveat in mind, in this section I explore the Pampas' new features and their plausible relations.

As opposed to Mendoza's experience, in 1580 there was no widespread Native resistance to Spanish settlement. There was nothing comparable to the 1536 battle of Sancti Spiritus, in which the Querandí and their allies had mounted and maintained a

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<sup>3</sup>Bruce Trigger and William Swagerty, "Entertaining Strangers: North America in the Sixteenth Century," in *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas. Volume 1: North America*, ed. Bruce Trigger and Wilcomb Washburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996-2000). There is no comparable synthesis of these early encounters in Spanish South America. For an excellent analysis focusing on Brazil see Alida Metcalf, *Go-betweenes and the Colonization of Brazil. 1500-1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), chapters 1 and 5.

massive attack on the Spaniards for several days. Rather, the sources for 1580 and the immediate following years hint only at scattered skirmishes and raids. The Querandí themselves, those hunters of the Pampas that the Spaniards had considered mortal enemies merely four decades earlier, were barely mentioned amidst the Native peoples whom Garay distributed in *encomienda* among the first “conquerors and settlers” (*conquistadores y pobladores*) in compensation for their “efforts and expense.” Instead of Querandí, these peoples were Guaraní from the islands of the Paraná delta, or Guaraní-influenced peoples from both shores of the Paraná.<sup>4</sup> That is, rather than hunter-gatherers of the Pampas, these were peoples who combined slash-and-burn agriculture with fishing and hunting, moved by canoes, and stayed close to the River Plate-Paraná system that ended on the northern edge of the Rolling Pampas. Given the lack of widespread Native resistance, and the Querandí near-absence from these records, most scholars have concluded that the Querandí had been practically annihilated by the Spanish forces in the 1530s.<sup>5</sup> All in all, this second time around, the Pampas seemed to be practically empty for Spanish takeover.

The lack of first-hand accounts and the scarcity of archeological research for the forty-year period between Mendoza and Garay’s respective arrivals make it difficult to determine with certainty the accuracy of this conclusion. And yet, a re-reading of the

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<sup>4</sup>See “Repartimiento de los indios de esta ciudad hecho por el general Juan de Garay. Año de 1582,” printed in Pedro de Angelis, ed., *Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la historia antigua y moderna de las Provincias del Río de la Plata*, 8 vols. (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1969), 474-480. This *repartimiento* included at least twenty different *naciones* or Indian “nations,” such as Guaraníes, Meguay, Curumeguay, Loaje-Emelaguaé, and Yoto-Serebe. As scholars have suggested, these “nations” most likely corresponded to individual caciques and their subordinates. One of the few instances in which the Querandí are mentioned at all in records of this kind happened in 1597, when Captain Juan Vallejo was granted “the Quirandí people with caciques Totamo and Anisyamo” and “the Singlinton Quirandís people with the caciques who might correspond.” See AGI: ACh. 104, “Autos en testimonio de la merced de encomienda de Indios de nación Tubichaminis hecha a Francisco Maciel del Aguila. 1673-1684.”

<sup>5</sup> González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 32.

post-1580 sources with an eye to the recent advances in Native American history suggest a different interpretation for the empty plains in which Garay and his men settled in 1580.

First, the predominance of Guaraní and Guaraní-influenced peoples in the records dating from Buenos Aires early years makes geographical sense, and does not necessarily imply “empty” plains. Garay and his men had descended along the river Paraná from Santa Fe, barely touching the northern section of the Rolling Pampas, which were a sort of hinge between the Guaraní-dominated Parklands to the north and the plains to the south. Furthermore, during the first years of the fledgling new settlement, Spaniards shuttled continuously up and down the river. Garay’s first distribution of Indians among Buenos Aires dwellers had, in fact, taken place in Santa Fe. It is logical, hence, that during these early years the Spaniards contacted and subdued mostly Guaraní and Guaraní-influenced peoples of the River Plate-Paraná system.

Second, as mentioned in the previous chapter, documents dating from the 1540s suggest that the Querandí were still a threat to the Spanish ships that entered the River Plate on their way to Asunción. In 1541, for instance, Asunción’s governor Martínez de Irala had warned ship crews to be very careful of Querandí ambushes in several strategic locations.<sup>6</sup> Obviously then, the Querandí’s battles with Mendoza’s soldiers in the previous years—the battle of Sancti Spiritus had taken place in 1536—had not annihilated them.

How can we then account for their absence from the written record after 1580?<sup>7</sup> Given what we know about the lively intercultural relations of the pre-contact world, it is

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<sup>6</sup>“Relación de Martínez de Irala (1541),” in *DHG* vol. 2: 300.

<sup>7</sup>A few scholars have argued that the reason is to be found not in Querandí annihilation but in the Spanish ignorance and distortion of Native languages. See

reasonable to pay attention to intra-indigenous dynamics, and not solely to the Spanish impact on the Native world, in order to grasp the Querandí fate. By the time of Buenos Aires' second foundation in 1580, Spaniards had been settled in the midst of the Guaraní-dominated Parklands to the north for four decades: since 1537 in Asunción and since 1573 farther south, in Santa Fe. The archeological record suggests that the Spaniards had arrived and settled precisely at a time of increasing intercultural contact between the peoples of the Parklands and the peoples of the Pampas. Thus, the Spanish conquest and settlement of the Parklands, with the usual duo of warfare and epidemic outbreaks of new diseases, surely did not lack consequences for the Rolling Pampas.<sup>8</sup> As historian Kristen Jones has suggested, the Spanish permanent settlement in Asunción was in the long-term much more damaging for the Querandí than their localized warfare with Mendoza's soldiers had been in the 1530s. As Jones explains, the Spanish conquest and disruption of the Guaraní world resulted in the breakdown of pre-contact trade systems in which the Querandí had enjoyed a particularly advantageous position as mediators between the farming Guaraní to the north and the hunter-gatherers of the Pampas to the south.<sup>9</sup> The disintegration of pre-contact trade networks and the decades of Spanish havoc along the River Plate-Paraná system then, are a more probable cause for the Querandí absence from the Rolling Pampas than their skirmishes with Mendoza's soldiers.

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Conlazo, *Los indios de Buenos Aires*, 21. This argument overlooks, however, that the Spaniards had recorded the ethnonym "Querandí" in the 1530s and 1540s. Furthermore, the likely language of origin for the term "Querandí" is Guaraní, a language familiar to Garay and his men as they were from Asunción, and many of the men themselves were *mestizo* offspring of Spanish men and Guaraní women.

<sup>8</sup>For the effects of the Spanish conquest and settlement on the Parklands peoples, see Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*, chapter 1; Metcalf, *Go-betweenes*, chapter 5.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, "Warfare, Reorganization, and Readaptation," 149-151.

Third and last, the Querandí absence from the narrow coastal area where Buenos Aires was founded was not by any means tantamount to empty Pampas. In 1581 Garay launched an entrada from Buenos Aires in search of the mythical City of the Caesars. Garay followed the River Plate coastline “sometimes entering five or six leagues inland” and reached as far south as where “a branch of cordillera, which comes down from upcountry, ends”—most likely the Tandil Sierras in the Southern Pampas. In his letter to King Phillip II, Garay mentioned, with no introduction and few details, the Native peoples he had encountered there:

these peoples wear the pelts of some animals we saw like hares and wildcats, and they make their tents out of deer hides. We found among these Indians some very good clothing made of wool. They say they bring it from the cordillera at Chile’s back, and that the Indians who have this clothing also have shields with sheets of golden metal that they bring when they fight, and that they get the metal from some streams. They say few peoples live along the coast and many peoples live upcountry towards the cordillera.<sup>10</sup>

Garay’s letter hinted not only at the populated Pampas beyond Spanish control but also at Native long-distance trade networks that connected the Pampas to Chile. These networks, as I fully discuss in chapter four, strengthened in the coming decades. The letter sorely lacks specifics, however. Contact between the Spaniards and Native peoples seems to have been limited to peaceful exchange of information perhaps accompanied by gift-exchange. Garay’s laconic letter does not tell us what these Indians called themselves or what they were doing in the sierras, although their clothes and tents indicate that they were hunters.

Another of Garay’s observations becomes critical at this point. He reported to the King that during this entrada he had come across “some good quantity” of feral horses

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<sup>10</sup>“Juan de Garay a SM. Santa Fe, 20 de abril de 1582” printed in Roberto Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia de la ciudad de Buenos Aires con los Reyes de España*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca del Congreso Argentino, 1915-1918), vol. 1: 424-431.

and mares, which he promptly requested as “common usufruct” for the settlers in compensation for their “efforts and expenses.”<sup>11</sup>

Horses were part of the “portmanteau biota”—Alfred Crosby’s formulation for the animals, plants, seeds, and pathogens that Europeans carried with them—which Spaniards had brought with them to the Pampas. Mendoza’s expedition in the 1530s imported the first pool, and several dozens stayed behind after the Spanish retreat to Asunción in 1541. This first pool was augmented in the following decades by stray horses from the new western settlements of Cuyo, and the northern settlements of Córdoba del Tucumán and Santa Fe. The grassy Pampas suited these European-introduced animals particularly well. In addition, they faced neither significant predators nor extreme competition from native species, as guanacos had retreated south of the Flooding Pampas owing to climatic changes a few centuries before the Spanish arrival.<sup>12</sup> In a typical case of “ungulate irruption,” horses reproduced rapidly. In Crosby’s words, the Pampas were “a paradise for horses,” which multiplied at “what was perhaps an unprecedented rate for large herds.”<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, in a typical symbiotic cycle, horses also altered the Pampas ecology in ways that favored the continuation of the animals’ rapid reproduction. By eating hard grasses when soft and young, spreading the seeds of their preferred tender grasses, and augmenting nitrogen levels with their excrement,

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<sup>11</sup>Idem, 427.

<sup>12</sup> Politis, “The Pampean Foragers.” Other scholars argue that guanacos retreated south *after* the introduction of horses, owing to competition for water and pasture. González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 23.

<sup>13</sup>Alfred W. Jr. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism. The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 185. A classic study of “ungulate irruption” in Latin America is in Elinor Melville, *A Plague of sheep. Environmental Consequences of the Conquest of Mexico* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

horses contributed further to the improvement of the prairie and the expansion of grassy pastures.<sup>14</sup>

In his short letter, Garay did not clarify whether or not the Indians he had encountered in the sierras were hunting horses. We know, however, that the Native peoples of the Pampas were skilled deer- and guanaco-hunters. It was probably a small step for them to use those same skills to take advantage of the “good quantity” of feral horses that grazed in the area. Were these Querandí peoples? Anthropological scholarship about hunter-gatherers shows that they often migrated to marginal lands in reaction to European expansion.<sup>15</sup> In the 1540s, the breakdown of trade networks in the Rolling Pampas was accompanied by the multiplication of horses to the south. Thus, it is plausible that the hunters of the Pampas—Querandí and others—moved south to flee from the havoc the Spaniards had wreaked in the Rolling Pampas, and to take advantage of the availability of a new hunting species. In this regard, archeological evidence suggests that the availability of horses since the sixteenth century allowed Native peoples to populate the Flooding Pampas on a more permanent basis, an area less frequented until then owing to its scarcity of guanacos.<sup>16</sup>

Native peoples fleeing south from the Rolling Pampas were not moving into a void, however. As archeological research for the immediate pre-contact period has shown, local populations of the Southern Pampas were in the process of mixing with

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<sup>14</sup>Osvaldo Barsky and Jorge Gelman, *Historia del agro argentino. Desde la conquista hasta fines del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Grijalbo Mondadori, 2005), 33-34; Garavaglia, *Pastores y labradores de Buenos Aires*, 18-28; Politis, “Los cazadores de la llanura.”

<sup>15</sup> Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, 33.

<sup>16</sup>Rodolfo Casamiquela, *Bosquejo de una etnología de la provincia del Neuquén* (Gobierno de la provincia del Neuquén, 1995), chapter 1; Miguel Palermo, “La innovación agropecuaria entre los indígenas pampeano-patagónicos: génesis y procesos,” *Anuario IEHS* 3 (1988): 163.



peoples from the Northern Patagonia steppes.<sup>17</sup> The arrival of peoples from the Rolling Pampas and the adaptation to the horse most likely accelerated and added new complexities to this process. Future archeological research might shed light on its details. For now, written sources tell us that during the first decades following the second foundation of Buenos Aires in 1580, Spaniards began to contact Native peoples of the Pampas who had readily adapted to the changed environment of the plains: they were expert horse riders and avid consumers of mare flesh.<sup>18</sup>

This increased intercultural contact took place as the initially struggling Spanish settlement grew stronger, and Porteños were able to effectively explore the surrounding areas and try to obtain some use of the resources they found on them. Always hungry for a labor force, Porteños attempted to subdue the peoples of the Pampas through warfare, and tinkered with the typical Spanish institutions of colonization—*encomiendas* and *reducciones*. But soon it became clear that in the Pampas, as in other peripheral areas of the Spanish Empire, the consolidation of colonial rule over Native peoples was not going to be an easy task.

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<sup>17</sup> Politis, "Los cazadores," 93-96.

<sup>18</sup>We can assume that Pampa Indians began to hunt horses as soon as they were available after 1536, as they were used to hunt similar, medium-size mammals like guanacos and deer. The domestication of horses and their use for riding was necessarily a greater step, as it depended as much on access to the horses themselves as on the acquisition of the techniques, equipment, and knowledge of riding and caring for them. Spaniards who deserted Pedro de Mendoza's failed settlement during the 1530s might have initially provided this knowledge, and subsequent contact with Porteños after 1580 likely contributed further. By 1599 there is sure evidence that Indians were superb riders, and that they traded domesticated horses with Porteños. Scattered evidence suggests that Indians acquired Spanish riding equipment gradually. In 1611, Governor Diego Marín Negrón pointed out that Indians riders were so deft that they "do not care about saddle or gear." A 1620 report on *encomiendas*, however, indicates that Indians used wooden stirrups, bites, and blankets as saddles. By the eighteenth century, there is abundant evidence that metal stirrups and other horse gear had become prized symbols of status among Indians

## II. THE SPANISH CONQUEST: A VIEW FROM THE PERIPHERY

A long-standing cliché maintains that the Spanish went to the New World to conquer and plunder, the English to settle, and the French to trade. Historians initially explained these differences in terms of another cliché, the respective “national” character of each group of people. More recently, under the aegis of a renewed Atlantic perspective, historians have emphasized instead the juxtaposition of the ideologies with which each power was equipped to justify political rule and territorial possession (what they “brought” to the New World with them), and the type of Native peoples and resources each power encountered (what they “found” in the New World).<sup>19</sup>

From this perspective, what Anthony Pagden has called the Spanish “culture of conquest” was not some pre-existing, atavistic trait of an Iberian tradition.<sup>20</sup> Instead, it was a culture forged during the “age of Spanish conquest,” which opened with Columbus’ arrival in the Caribbean and closed in the mid-sixteenth century, when Spaniards had secured a foothold in what would become the empire’s cores—the highlands of Mexico, Central America, and the Andean region. The Spanish brought with them institutional and ideological legacies of the Spanish *Reconquista*, which furnished them with the language to define their ventures, and provided the original template for the titles and grants given to settlers in the New World. They also brought the drive to evangelize Indians, which stemmed not only from their conviction that their religious beliefs were superior, but also from the Spanish Crown’s legal justification of territorial possession

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<sup>19</sup>J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World. Britain and Spain in the America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World. Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain, and France c.1500-c.1800* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, chapter 3. See also Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, chapter 1.

over the New World on the basis of papal bulls that required her to propagate the faith.<sup>21</sup> In the New World, the Spanish, and only they, found Indian peoples who practiced permanent intensive agriculture, lived in stable towns and urban centers that were part of larger political structures (“empires”), were accustomed to tribute-extraction mechanisms and social hierarchies, had high population densities, and possessed precious metals.

Out of the juxtaposition of these elements in this particular time period, the Spanish “culture of conquest” was forged. The Crown’s mandate to evangelize was reinforced by the settlers’ pragmatic desire to assert rights to the labor of the numerous Indian peoples who happened to inhabit the newly “discovered” territories, and whose social structures facilitated Spanish rule and economic gain.<sup>22</sup> The Reconquista provided the basis for the institutional arrangement that brought all these strands together, the *encomienda*—titles to Indian labor granted by the Crown to settlers that carried the obligation of providing religious instruction. As a result, only Spanish settlers, within the cast of imperial characters who colonized the New World, defined themselves as conquerors (*conquistadores*). Their duty was to obtain the subjection of Native peoples to the Spanish Crown and to foster their conversion; their reward was settlers’ privileges primarily in the form of titles to Indian labor.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>In their conviction that Christianity was superior to Native beliefs, the Spaniards were no different from other European powers. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra emphasizes this point in his recent Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors. Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006).

<sup>22</sup>“Facilitated” is of course a relative term. There is a vast scholarship about Indian resistance to the Spanish conquest in the core areas. My point is not to dismiss Indian resistance but to highlight the overall patterns: Aztec social structures “facilitated” Spanish rule when compared to, for instance, Apache social structures.

<sup>23</sup>As Pagden puts it, only Spain’s empire in America was fundamentally based upon people, “defeated subjects who could be transformed into a pliant labor force.” Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 65. In comparison, France and England claimed

Cases like that of the Pampas are interesting because they show the deep adjustments that Spanish settlers had to make in the period following the age of conquest, when they probed beyond the cores. What they “found” there, made their duty and their rewards difficult to obtain. The culture of conquest, and the expanding imperial structures, surely framed possibilities and animated choices for them. But in their juxtaposition to the settings and peoples of the peripheries, they produced results that barely fit the normative model of the Spanish American core regions.

The Spaniards who settled the Pampas began their adjustments to the peripheries well before they permanently founded Buenos Aires in 1580. Most of these settlers did not come directly from Spain, but from neighboring Paraguay. As explained in the previous chapter, one result of Pedro de Mendoza’s failed venture in the Pampas was, in 1537, the foundation of Asunción del Paraguay in the lands of the Cario-Guaraní Indians. The Spaniards settled in a tropical lowland that made communications difficult, lacked precious metals, and was inhabited by village-based Native peoples. These peoples had cleverly adapted to the lowland ecology by combining slash-and-burn agriculture with fishing, hunting, and gathering. This adaptation, however, left them with little surplus to spare. The Cario-Guaraní were nevertheless initially willing to share the little that they had with the Spaniards. They saw the newcomers as potentially useful allies against their hunter-gatherer enemies from the adjacent Chaco region, the Guaycuruans, who frequently raided their villages and took women and children captive. Cario-Guaraní village chiefs sought to incorporate the Spaniards by marrying them into

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possession over territory but not over Native peoples. English settlers made Native peoples legally non-existent in order to justify their right to take over the land. They used the Roman Law argument known as *res nullius*, which posits that unoccupied land became the property of the first person who used it, or, in English settlers’ favorite expression, who “improved” it. A classic analysis of English settlers’ use of *res nullius* to justify their legitimate possession, vis-à-vis Indians, of the “unoccupied” New England lands can be found in Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, chapter 4.

their lineages, thus creating kinship obligations. As a result, the Spaniards who settled Asunción rapidly acquired Indian wives and concubines who, together with their relatives, provided food and labor for the Spaniards.<sup>24</sup> In turn, the Spaniards did not disappoint the Cario-Guaraní, although for their own motives. In their continuous search for another Peru, they led several expeditions that included military victories over the Guaycuruans.

The Spaniards construed their kinship relations with the Cario-Guaraní as *encomiendas*. In their view, they were the *encomenderos* of their wives' and concubines' relatives.<sup>25</sup> In the early years of Paraguay, therefore, the *encomienda* morphed into something practically unrecognizable from the model of the core areas. Instead of producing a hierarchical society of Spanish *encomenderos* and Indian laborers, the *encomienda* resulted in an intense process of biological and cultural *mestizaje* (miscegenation).<sup>26</sup> The mestizo offspring of Spanish men and Guaraní women were

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<sup>24</sup>Governor Martínez de Irala, for instance, had at least seven wives who bore him several children. In the Cario-Guaraní gender division of labor, women, not men, were the primary agricultural producers. For the relations between the Guaraní and the Guaycuruans, see James Saeger, *The Chaco Mission Frontier: The Guaycuruan Experience* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000), 3-13.

<sup>25</sup>The cultural misunderstanding at the basis of the arrangement between the Spaniards and the Cario-Guaraní soon resulted in conflicts, as the Spaniards began to make excessive demands on their "relatives." In 1539, for instance, the leaders of a thwarted Guaraní uprising complained that the Spaniards "were treating them as *tapi'i* (inferiors or virtual slaves) instead of as relatives and friends." Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*, 25.

<sup>26</sup>See *Ibid.*, chapter 1. The *encomienda* acquired a more formal character after the two first decades and some prodding by the Spanish Crown. Personal service rather than tribute in kind, however, continued to be dominant. See Elman Service, "The *encomienda* in Paraguay," in *Where Cultures Meet. Frontiers in Latin American History*, ed. David J. Weber and Jane M. Rausch (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1994).

referred to as *hijos de la tierra* (sons of the land) and they enjoyed “Spanish” status, that is, their lack of “blood purity” did not translate to limited rights.<sup>27</sup>

These were the men who re-settled Buenos Aires in 1580. In the original group that accompanied Juan de Garay, *hijos de la tierra* outnumbered those of pure Spanish descent. Garay himself, although born in Spain, had arrived in Paraguay from Peru in 1568, and thus had a long experience in the area. The slow stream of settlers that joined Buenos Aires during the two decades following its second foundation in 1580 came from Asunción and Santa Fe, and hence shared this same background. They came with a very flexible definition of what an encomienda was, and with accumulated experience in dealing with the Guaycuruan hunter-gatherers who alternatively traded with and raided the Paraguay settlements.<sup>28</sup>

As opposed to other peripheral areas, in Buenos Aires there were no powerful missionary orders to monitor settlers’ behavior towards Indians or to compete with them for access to Indian labor. Buenos Aires was founded under the 1573 Royal Ordinances for New Discoveries and Population, which made missionaries the primary agents for exploration and expansion. But the only nod to the missionary requirement was the presence, in Garay’s original expedition and the foundation ceremony of 1580, of two

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<sup>27</sup>For instance, Hernandarias de Saavedra, who was governor of Paraguay-River Plate (they were a single governorship until 1617) three times between 1587 and 1614, was an *hijo de la tierra*. “Blood purity” never became relevant for determining social and economic status in Buenos Aires. See Appendix 1 for a list of River Plate Governors.

<sup>28</sup>Governor Hernandarias de Saavedra’s sister and niece, for instance, were among the captives taken by Guaycuruans in one of their raids against Asunción. Intermittently, there were larger-scale conflicts. In the seventeenth century, Guaycuruan attacks forced Spaniards to abandon the small settlement of Concepción del Bermejo, almost destroyed Santiago del Estero, and forced the relocation of Santa Fe. Saeger, *The Chaco Mission Frontier*, 9.

Franciscan friars on their way back to Spain.<sup>29</sup> Missions, after all, were economically expensive for the Spanish Crown because they were subsidized, and were politically expensive because the crown surrendered much of its authority to the religious order in charge. Hence, despite the Ordinances' lofty objectives, the Spanish Crown only supported missions in areas that had some strategic value. The Pampas were not strategic in a geopolitical sense, as south Florida was; or in an economic sense, as Northern New Spain became after the discovery of silver in Zacatecas. Despite being colonized under the Ordinances, therefore, the Pampas never became a mission frontier.<sup>30</sup>

The task of dealing with the Indians of the Pampas was thus left primarily in the settlers' hands. Facing hunter-gatherers organized in mobile bands, settlers resorted to *malocas*. These were short-term, mounted military expeditions that doubled as slaving raids, and which the Spaniards of Asunción regularly carried out against the Guaycuruans.<sup>31</sup> The Spanish Crown, however, had emphatically forbidden Indian

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<sup>29</sup> On the Ordinances, see Henry Kamen, *Empire. How Spain Became a World Power, 1492-1763* (New York: Perennial, Harper Collins, 2004), chapter 6; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier*, chapter 4.

<sup>30</sup>In the late seventeenth century, the Jesuits showed some interest in expanding their missionizing efforts towards the Magellan Straits, but their interest did not come to fruition. See AGN: Bib. Nac. 181, "Real Cédula al gobernador de Buenos Aires sobre el permiso concedido a los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús para entrar a hacer misiones a los infieles de Magallanes. Madrid, 21 de mayo de 1684." In the mid-eighteenth century, there was a short-lived Jesuit missionary experiment in the Southern Pampas. I expand on this subject in Part III.

<sup>31</sup> Saeger, *The Chaco Mission Frontier*, 10. There are two possible origins for the term "maloca." On the one hand, *maloca* is the Guaraní word for the long houses that were the basic unit of Guaraní villages. Thus some scholars have concluded that the Spanish and Portuguese who colonized the Paraguay-River Plate area took this Guaraní word to refer to their raids against Native villages. González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 45. On the other hand, in the language of Native peoples of south central Chile (the Araucanía) the word *maloca* refers to swift raids carried out by a small number of warriors into enemy territory, with the aim of killing enemies and expropriating goods. In post-contact south central Chile, the war of raids and counter-raids in which Spaniards and Indians engaged after the Great Araucanian Rebellion of 1598-1602 was

slavery in the mid-sixteenth century, after missionaries such as Bartolomé de las Casas decried the abuses committed against Indians during the age of conquest.<sup>32</sup> Settlers at both Asunción and Buenos Aires, thus, distributed in encomiendas the captives taken during malocas. James Saeguer has pointed out that, in Paraguay, encomiendas of Guaycuruans involved personal service in “a lifetime bondage not unlike slavery.”<sup>33</sup> What exactly did an encomienda of Pampa Indians in Buenos Aires involve?

At least from the formal point of view, Porteños tried to replicate the encomiendas granted in the empire’s core areas. Aspiring encomenderos had to present proof of their distinguished service to the King, and hold the status of *vecino*.<sup>34</sup> Encomienda grants were made effective through an elaborate ceremony that included the participation of the Governor, the local authorities, the vecinos of rank, and the potential encomendero as well as a “representative” of the Native group, usually a cacique. The Governor started by reading aloud the text of the grant, a text that exalted the encomendero’s virtues and proclaimed the subject status of the Indians. In 1583, for instance, Captain Juan Ruiz de Ocaña was granted the cacique Telomian and his people in encomienda. The grant emphasized Ocaña’s “noble blood,” and his participation in the “settlement and conquest of the city of Trinidad and port of Buenos Aires.” In

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known as *guerra de la maloca*. Thus other scholars have concluded that the word *maloca* migrated from Chile to the River Plate. See Weber, *Bárbaros*, 62.

<sup>32</sup>An insightful discussion in Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), chapter 1. Indian slavery was only allowed in cases of Indian rebellion, or in cases of heathens (*Indios infieles*) who committed unprovoked attacks on Spanish settlements. Both exceptions were widely abused throughout the peripheral areas. In New Mexico, for instance, Spanish slaving parties regularly provoked Indians to attack. By the seventeenth century, New Mexico had become a net exporter of Indian slaves to the mining regions of northern New Spain. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier*, 128.

<sup>33</sup> Saeger, *The Chaco Mission Frontier*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> *Vecinos* were settlers who owned a house in the city, had political rights in the local government, and had enough means to own horses and weapons.



particular, the grant remarked on Ocaña's military performance in the "great battle" against Telomian and his people, who had been "discovered" a few miles south of the city, "towards the Riachuelo."<sup>35</sup> After reading the text, the Governor put the hand of the cacique in that of the encomendero, as a symbol of Natives' servitude, and announced that the latter had royal possession over the former and his people. Finally, to actualize the possession, the encomendero gave an order for his new subject to follow under everyone's sight, such as going to his home and fetching some personal object like a cape or a hat.<sup>36</sup>

While formally Buenos Aires encomiendas replicated those of the core areas, in practice Porteños imitated their Paraguayan neighbors. In 1610 Governor Diego Marín Negrón, recently arrived to the River Plate, reported to King Philip III that he felt pity "for the suffering these miserable people [the Indians] endure in their personal service."<sup>37</sup> The Spanish Crown was in fact concerned about the ubiquity of Indian personal service in the River Plate, and in that same year had entrusted the *oidor* of the Charcas high court, Don Francisco de Alfaro, with carrying out a *visita* (inspection) of the area. Alfaro's inspection resulted, in 1611, in a series of ordinances specifically for the River Plate, designed to curb encomendero abuse. Among other regulations, the

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<sup>35</sup>AGI: ACh. 104, "Autos en testimonio de la merced de encomienda de Indios de nación Tubichaminis hecha a Francisco Maciel del Aguila. 1673-1684." The fact that Telomian and his people were the "first" Indians that the Spaniards "discovered" to the south of the city suggests that they were Pampa Indians hunters, rather than the Guaraní-influenced peoples that lived along the Paraná-Plata system. See Map 5, p. 105, for the Riachuelo's location.

<sup>36</sup>This ceremony described in Ibid; AGI: ACh. 105, "Autos en testimonio de la merced de encomienda de Indios de nación Tubichaminis y Serranos hecha al Capitán Alonso Guerrero de Ayala. 1673-1687."; AGN: IX 40-8-4, "Expediente de merced de encomienda de indios Velachichis a Sebastián Cabral de Ayala. Buenos Aires, 1678-1684."

<sup>37</sup>AGI: ACh. 27, "El gobernador Diego Marín Negrón al Rey. Buenos Aires, 15 de junio de 1610."

ordinances insisted that Indians should not live with their encomenderos as personal servants, but live in their own towns.<sup>38</sup>

In this context, Governor Marín Negrón founded the first Indian settlements or *reducciones* of Buenos Aires (see Appendix 2). The Indians settled in *reducciones* were still granted in *encomienda*, but they kept together as a group in their own dwellings and under the authority of their cacique. In addition, the Governor and a priest (*cura doctrinero*) assigned for the Indians' religious instruction closely monitored the encomendero's behavior. Governor Marín Negrón argued that this would curb the previous abuses of personal service, which made Christianity repugnant to Indians. As he had explained to King Philip III in 1610, although Indians were "indeed savages," they "rightly say that to be a Christian means to be a captive... and they do not want that."<sup>39</sup>

Transforming the Indians of the Pampas into good Christians involved more than converting them to Catholicism. It also involved converting them from "savage" hunter-gatherers into "civilized" settled farmers. The first step, which the *reducciones*

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<sup>38</sup>The ordinances are known as *Ordenanzas de Alfaro* (Alfaro's Ordinances). See Enrique de Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro y la condición social de los indios. Río de la Plata, Paraguay, Tucumán, y Perú. Siglos XVI y XVII* (Buenos Aires: Librería y Editorial El Ateneo, 1939). The abolition of Indian personal service by these ordinances brought—formally at least—the River Plate in line with the core areas of the empire, where regulations of this sort had already been established in the 1540s.

<sup>39</sup>AGI: ACh. 27, "El gobernador Diego Marín Negrón al Rey. Buenos Aires, 15 de junio de 1610." There are only a few studies on the *reducciones* of Buenos Aires, see Natalia Bitenc and others, "Tres cartas del gobernador Góngora para la contrastación con el registro arqueológico," in *Signos en el tiempo y rastros en la tierra. III Jornadas de Arqueología e Historia de las regiones Pampeana y Patagónica*, ed. Mariano Ramos and Eugenia Néspolo (Luján: Universidad Nacional de Luján, Departamento de Ciencias Sociales, 2003); González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 52-61. The practice of resettling Indians in Spanish-like towns had started in the core areas of the empire, when the original towns were ravaged by war or epidemics, or when it was necessary to break Native resistance. In many cases, *reducciones* were also the initial step in the foundation of missions. See Inga Clendinnen, "Landscape and World View: The Survival of Yucatec Maya Culture Under Spanish Conquest," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 3 (1980); Weber, *The Spanish Frontier*, chapter 4.

accomplished, was to settle them in a fixed place.<sup>40</sup> The second step was to teach them how to farm. Thus, in 1618 Governor Hernandarias de Saavedra assigned “fertile lands” for a *reducción*, and made sure that the *encomendero* gave the Indians oxen, so that they “could make a good living and cultivate their fields.”<sup>41</sup> In this way, moreover, the *encomenderos* could obtain their tribute in the form of agricultural produce, and thus forego the personal service that was against royal laws.

Soon it was clear, however, that converting “savage” hunter-gatherers into “civilized” settled farmers would not be easy. In 1620 Governor Diego de Góngora toured the *reducciones* and reported that most of the Indians were still “heathens,” still lived in their hide tents rather than in proper houses, and that their main sustenance still came from horse-hunting rather than from farming. In the *reducción* of San José, for instance, although the Indians had been given “six oxen, six plows and five hoes,” they still “did not have fields, neither cows or sheep.” They lived in tents made of horse-hides, and their only possession were “some colts and horses” that they had “taken from the Pampas,” and which they rode using wooden stirrups and animal skins as saddles. A few Indians were dressed with “woolen shirts and hats” that, Góngora explained, they had obtained from *Porteños* in exchange for horses. But most of them covered themselves “only with animal skins.”<sup>42</sup> Góngora also reported that the *encomendero* of this

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<sup>40</sup>As other Western Europeans, the Spanish conceived man as a “uniquely city-building and city-dwelling animal.” The antonym for “barbarian” was in the terms “civil” or “politic,” which in turn derive from the Latin and Greek words for “city”—*civis* and *polis*, respectively. See Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man. The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 15.

<sup>41</sup>“Carta del Gobernador del Río de la Plata, Hernandarias de Saavedra, al Rey. 13 de mayo de 1618,” *DHG* vol. 1: 233.

<sup>42</sup>“Diego de Góngora al Rey. Buenos Aires, 2 de enero de 1620,” printed in Ricardo Rodríguez Molas, *Los sometidos de la conquista. Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1985), 233.

reducción, Alonso Muñoz Bejarano, had finally abandoned his hopes to convert the Pampa Indians, and had forgone his encomienda title over them because, he complained, they were “an extremely barbarous people.”<sup>43</sup> As for the priest who was supposed to oversee the Indians’ religious instruction, the post had been vacant for the past two years. Fray Juan Durieta of the Franciscan Order explained that it was difficult to find friars willing to serve in reducciones, because the Indians were very poor, did not farm, and were not able to provide sustenance for their priest.<sup>44</sup>

Porteños noted that the availability of feral horses and cattle, which had proliferated in the Pampas, was the main obstacles to the conversion of the Indians into settled farmers. Already in 1611, Licenciado Francisco de Trejo had explained that Porteños “tried to make the Indians serve,” but they failed because the Indians had “many opportunities to run away” and found “easy sustenance in the many feral mares and cows that abound in the Pampas.”<sup>45</sup> After 1611, this “easy sustenance” constantly undercut the Spanish initiative to settle Indians in reducciones. In 1676, six full decades after the first reducciones were founded, Governor Andrés de Robles echoed Francisco de Trejo. Robles reported that “the abundant sustenance that the Indians find in the feral cows” allowed them to “give in to their natural weakness and wander about, far

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<sup>43</sup>ME: AGI C 7, “El Gobernador Diego de Góngora al Rey. Buenos Aires, 20 de julio de 1619.”

<sup>44</sup>ME: AGI C 9, “Petición de Fray Juan Darieta sobre estipendios a pagarse de la Real Hacienda para la Orden de San Francisco. 1619-1620.” In the first decades of the seventeenth century the Franciscan Order provided most of the priests for reducciones in the region.

<sup>45</sup>“Pedimiento del Procurador de Buenos Aires al Rey para que prorrogue la permisión de navegar los frutos de la tierra, 1611-1617,” printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 1:311.

from the authority of their encomenderos.”<sup>46</sup> Encomiendas in Buenos Aires, thus, originally small, were in addition very unstable, because Indians went into the Pampas and back seemingly at will.<sup>47</sup>

Despite the Spanish insistence on Indians’ “natural weakness” and “barbarism” as the main reason for their coming back and forth, the sources indicate that the deadly viruses that the Spanish brought with them was at least another reason for the reducciones’ instability. Crowded living conditions made the viruses more lethal, a fact that Indians understood rather quickly, because even those who acquiesced to live in reducciones ran away to the Pampas as soon as the first symptoms of sickness appeared. In 1676, Governor Andrés de Robles, who was trying to comply with renewed metropolitan directives to settle “heathen” Indians in reducciones. But, he explained to King Charles II, an epidemic had thwarted his projects. Precisely when Indians had “agreed to build stable huts and to abandon the tents with which they move so easily,” Robles wrote, “a deadly smallpox plague came on them,” and thus they asked his permission to disperse and move away.<sup>48</sup> A few years later, an Indian cacique from the

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<sup>46</sup>ME: AGI F 6, "El Gobernador Andrés de Robles al Rey. Buenos Aires, 24 de mayo de 1676." In their sporadic reports, governors registered individual Indians as “absent in the Pampas.”

<sup>47</sup>See Appendix 2. Primary sources on encomiendas and reducciones of Buenos Aires are limited to sporadic reports, usually by governors. There are no tribute records because Alfaro’s Ordinances established that “savage” Indians recently converted were exempted from paying tribute for ten years, as a way to encourage conversion at the margins of the empire. Royal confirmation of encomiendas are few and far between, as in 1611 Buenos Aires encomenderos asked for an exemption contending they were too poor to pay for the required paperwork and taxes. See “Extracto de las ordenanzas hechas por el licenciado Don Francisco de Alfaro, oidor de la Audiencia de Charcas, para uso de la Gobernación del Paraguay y Río de la Plata. 1611,” printed in Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro*, 441. See also “El Cabildo al Rey pidiéndole se sirva suprimir la confirmación de las encomiendas. Buenos Aires, 5 de julio de 1610,” printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 1:280.

<sup>48</sup> ME: AGI F 6, "El Gobernador Andrés de Robles al Rey. Buenos Aires, 24 de mayo de 1676."

river Cuarto area, in the Inland Pampas, answered a Jesuit priest trying to convince him to bring his people into a *reducción* thus:

Father, if this is going to happen and we are going to gather in a *reducción*, let me tell you what is in my heart and what afflicts me the most. If you give me a good solution to this difficulty, we will not resist and will follow God's law. What we are worried about [broken document] a plague will come and finish off all of us Pampa Indians, or do you not know what happened to us in Areco? As soon as more than three hundred Pampa Indians gathered there, a plague finished all of them off. And what happened to the other towns, all of them devastated and finished off? So why should not the same thing happen to us?<sup>49</sup>

The cacique finally accepted the Jesuit's proposal under the condition that his people would be allowed to abandon the *reducción* and disperse through the Pampas in the case of an epidemic outbreak. He added that this was their practice whenever "they heard that a plague was near, hence we have been spared of getting sick so far."

Given the little profit that *encomiendas* gave to Spaniards and the little subjection they imposed on Indians, what needs to be explained is why *encomiendas* existed at all in Buenos Aires, even in such a diluted form. Despite *Porteños*' constant grumbling about *encomiendas*' worthlessness, *vecinos* regularly applied for them (*hacer oposición*) when they were "vacated" after an *encomendero* died without leaving heirs, or after the two established generations—*encomiendas* legally lasted for *dos vidas*. And despite Indians' frequent fleeing to the Pampas, they kept coming back, or at least there were enough of them to keep the *reducciones* standing for most of the seventeenth century. What kept the institution working?

To answer this question we must go back to *Porteños*' appraisal of the *encomienda*, this time with a skeptical eye. We also need to shift the focus from the

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<sup>49</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Relación de la Misión de los Pampas por el P. Lucas Cavalleza. Córdoba, 1692." The cacique is most likely referring to the *reducción* that Governor Diego Marín Negrón had set up on the river Areco in 1610. See Appendix 2:2.

Spaniards to the Indians, and ask what the latter might have found compelling in the *encomienda*.

Despite Porteños' continuous complaints that the Pampa Indians were "an extreme barbarous people," as Muñoz Bejarano put it in 1620, the evidence indicates that, as time went by, Porteños showed increased eagerness to take advantage of some of the Indians' "barbarous" skills. During the first decades of the seventeenth century, Porteños began to exploit the horses and cattle that were rapidly reproducing in the Pampas. They did so through the development of a hunting industry that targeted feral cattle in order to produce hides, tallow, and lard; an industry that required large quantities of domesticated horses.<sup>50</sup> By then, the Indians of the Pampas had already adopted the Spanish-introduced livestock and learned how to make good use of them. Indians had become superb horse-riders, skilled cattle-hunters and skinners, and their knowledge of the territory made them into excellent guides to find the locations where the herds of wild animals congregated.<sup>51</sup> Porteños were thus very eager to take advantage of these skills. In 1612, for instance, members of the Buenos Aires Cabildo sent Indians from the *reducciones* to the Pampas to produce two thousand bull hides to be shipped and sold in Spain, in order to pay for the expenses of having a solicitor for the city in the King's Court. About two decades later, the Bishop of Buenos Aires accused Governor Francisco de Céspedes of abusing his power by sending Indians from a *reducción* to slaughter feral cattle in the Pampas and produce hides for the Governor's

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<sup>50</sup>I expand on this subject in chapter 3.

<sup>51</sup>We can assume that Pampas Indians began to hunt horses and cattle as soon as they were available—horses after 1536, cattle after 1580—as they were used to hunt similar, medium-size mammals like guanacos and deer. By the first decades of the seventeenth century, Spanish sources consistently point out that Pampas Indians found "sustenance" in feral horses and cattle, that they made their tents or *toldos* out of horse hides, and that they used bull hides to make "armors" (*coletos*) for themselves and their horses.

own profit.<sup>52</sup> Several reports from the 1670s show that it was the custom of most encomenderos to have “their Indians in the nearby countryside... occupied in producing hides for them.”<sup>53</sup> Finally, as Governor Góngora indicated when he toured the reducciones in 1620, not only encomenderos took advantage of the Indians’ skills. Porteños in general approached the reducciones to obtain domesticated horses from the Indians in exchange for articles of clothing (“woolen shirts” and “hats”).<sup>54</sup>

Hence, Spaniards of all walks of life—councilmen, government officials, encomenderos, and common townspeople— showed a willingness to compromise their civilizing influence over the hunter-gatherer Pampas when the skills the latter had from their “savage” way of life proved useful. The flip side, however, was that exploiting this type of Indian labor was not easy. The nature of the job Indians performed made Spanish control over them extremely difficult. Indians spent long periods at a time in the Pampas, riding their own horses, and following feral animals in a territory Porteños did not know very well. In this context, Porteños were forced to negotiate under Native peoples’ own terms in order to obtain some benefit from their labor.

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<sup>52</sup>*Acuerdos del Extinguido Cabildo de Buenos Aires (AECBA hereafter)*, serie 1, vol. 2: session of January 23, 1612. The bishop is quoted in José Torre Revello, “Sociedad colonial. Las clases sociales. La ciudad y la campaña,” in *Historia de la Nación Argentina (desde los orígenes hasta la organización definitiva en 1862)*, ed. Ricardo Levene (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Universidad, 1938), 133.

<sup>53</sup>In “Carta del Cabildo de Buenos Aires en que suplica que para el seguro del puerto se traigan y sitúen 600 familias de Indios del Uruguay. 20 de julio de 1678,” printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 3:113. See also *AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 14: session of December 10, 1675.

<sup>54</sup>“Diego de Góngora al Rey. Buenos Aires, 2 de enero de 1620,” printed in Rodríguez Molas, *Los sometidos de la conquista*, 233. There are records of this intercultural exchange as far back as 1599, when Governor Diego Rodríguez Valdés y de la Banda reported that Pampas Indians would “eagerly trade a horse for a trinket (*cercillo*) or a knife. “Diego Rodríguez Valdés y de la Banda al Rey. Buenos Aires, 20 de mayo de 1599,” in *DHG*, vol. 1: 154.



What were the Indians' terms? What did they find compelling in the encomienda? In 1611 Fray Juan Romero had stated that, whenever Indians worked for their encomenderos, they did so not because of the latter's authority over them but due to their own interest "in the wheat and wool and other articles they obtain in return."<sup>55</sup> Governor Góngora's 1620 report also indicated that Indians expected "payment" for their labor, and that Spaniards risked losing the Indians' labor force altogether if they did not meet the Indians' terms. In the reducción of Tubichaminí, Góngora explained, half of the Indians had left after they had domesticated "about four hundred mares" at Governor Hernandarias de Saavedra's request, and the mares had been "taken from them without any payment."<sup>56</sup> Thirty years later, in 1663, Governor Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta explained that the Indians who "from time to time" provided a "meager service" in the ranches of the city's jurisdictions did so for their own convenience. They did not show "any appreciation" for the Spaniards they worked for, Villacorta elaborated, but rather were interested in the "arms, yerba [mate],<sup>57</sup> tobacco, wine and other alike goods" that they obtained in return. Finally, in 1678 the Cabildo procurador explained that encomenderos had to pay "a good salary" to their own Indians in order to make them produce hides.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>"Pedimiento del Procurador de Buenos Aires al Rey para que prorrogue la permisión de navegar los frutos de la tierra, 1611-1617," printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 1:332.

<sup>56</sup>"Diego de Góngora al Rey. Incluye testimonios de la visita que hizo a tres reducciones de indios de la jurisdicción de Buenos Aires. Buenos Aires, 2 de enero de 1620," printed in Rodríguez Molas, *Los sometidos de la conquista*, 233.

<sup>57</sup>Yerba mate is a green tea leaf widely consumed in South America, original from the Paraguay area. In the pre-contact era, Pampas Indians obtained yerba mate, together with manioc, corn, and cotton cloth, by trading with the Guaraní.

<sup>58</sup>ME: AGI E 4, "El Gobernador Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta al Rey. Buenos Aires, 21 de junio de 1663." The procurador's statement is in "Carta del Cabildo de Buenos Aires en que suplica que para el seguro del Puerto se traigan y sitúen 600

Ultimately, what Spaniards insisted in construing as a relation of subordination modeled after the colonization experience in the core areas of the empire might have looked very different from the Indian side. To their early and deft adoption of European-introduced animals, Native peoples soon added a more sophisticated understanding of Spaniards stemming from contact experience. Indians realized that they could flee with relative ease when captured or, alternatively, that they could stay and negotiate the terms under which they provided labor for the Spaniards. The labor they provided fit within their cultural patterns, allowed them to keep much of their autonomy and mobility and, perhaps most importantly of all, gave them access to goods that their hunter-gatherer life did not provide for them. These included agricultural products and textiles, which before the Spanish arrival peoples of the Pampas had customarily obtained by trading with the farming Guaraní in the Rolling Pampas area. In that sense, from the Indian perspective, *encomiendas* looked very much like an adaptation of a previously existing pattern of necessary trade with farming neighbors.<sup>59</sup> *Porteños* offered, moreover, novel and extremely useful items such as metal objects, which Native peoples were quick to adopt.<sup>60</sup>

Once the limited exploitative potential of *encomiendas* and *reducciones* became evident for Native peoples, “surrendering” to Spanish domination became a plausible strategy to minimize *malocas*’ violent disruption of their communities. The cacique

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familias de Indios del Uruguay. 20 de julio de 1678,” printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 3:113.

<sup>59</sup>Classic anthropological studies have shown that this pattern is common around the world. As Marshall Sahlins explains, “The pastoralist’s relation to settled agriculturalists is like a happy marriage: the nomad can’t stand the farmer, but can’t live without him.” Marshall Sahlins, *Tribesmen* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1968), 35.

<sup>60</sup>Archeological remains found on the sites of several of the *reducciones* show that Indians used European manufactures for their own purposes, as raw material to fashion familiar objects. Metal goods and glass ceramics, for instance, were broken and fashioned into adornments for the dead. Bitenc and others, “Tres cartas del gobernador Góngora,” 133.

Bagual is a case in point. Bagual first appears in the written records in 1604, when he led his people and other Indians subjected to encomiendas into a successful rebellion because, as Porteños put it, “they neither want to be Christians nor serve or be subjected to their encomendero.” Six years later, in 1610, Bagual and his people still remained autonomous from the Spaniards. In that year, Governor Marín Negrón sent a successful *maloca* against them, in which many warriors were killed and most of the women and children were taken as captives. Bagual and “seventy of his vassals” then surrendered by putting their acquired knowledge of the Spaniards to good use, as they approached the soldiers with a cross and asked for peace. Bagual then agreed to relocate with his people to the *reducción* of San José.<sup>61</sup> Nine years later, an inspection of the *reducción* showed that many Indians had fled back to the Pampas, and that those who had stayed still kept their hide tents and lived off hunting, gathering, and bartering with the Spaniards. Indians from the *reducción*, moreover, also maintained fluid communication with their independent relatives from the Southern Pampas. When questioned in 1620, two Indians from the *reducción* said that they had just arrived from the sierras, and that they were coming because “their relatives from the *reducción* had told them that there was a new Governor just arrived from Castile, who treated the Indians well.”<sup>62</sup>

Indians’ familiarity with the Pampas and skills to live off them was the main asset that forced the Spaniards to the negotiating table, and that allowed Indians to preserve much of their autonomy even after being settled in a *reducción*. It is therefore not surprising that relocation became a main point of contention in Indian-Spanish relations. As Governor Francisco de Céspedes explained to King Philip IV in 1629, “any

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<sup>61</sup>AGI: ACh. 27, “El gobernador Diego Marín Negrón al Rey. Buenos Aires, 30 de abril de 1610;” AGN: IX 19-1-4, “Noticia del levantamiento del cacique Bagual. Buenos Aires, 26 de mayo de 1604.” “Bagual” is a Spanish word that means “unbroken horse.”

<sup>62</sup>ME: AGI C 11, “El Gobernador Diego de Góngora al Rey. Buenos Aires, 4 de mayo de 1620.”

given Indian is more afraid of being put on a ship and deported to Brazil than of a death sentence.”<sup>63</sup>

This tension came to full view in 1686, when a maloca came back with a large group of Indian captives. The Cabildo urged Governor Joseph de Herrera y Sotomayor to relocate the Indians in the reducción of Santo Domingo Soriano, on the eastern side of the River Plate (present-day Uruguay). The councilmen reminded the Governor that in the past, whenever the Indians were placed “in sites of their own choosing,” they “promptly fled back to the Pampas, carrying with them large numbers of horses, mules, and mares.”<sup>64</sup> Herrera y Sotomayor granted the Cabildo its wish, only to face a bloody rebellion at Santo Domingo Soriano a mere three months later. The Pampa Indians killed the Spanish overseer, the military guard of fifteen soldiers, and all the reducción Indians who were not able to flee. After ransacking the reducción church, they escaped by enlisting the help of a Guaraní Indian who assured them he could guide them back to the Pampas.<sup>65</sup>

The bloody rebellion at Santo Domingo Soriano showed that the Indians of the Pampas resisted subjection to the Spanish when such status did not offer any advantage to them. By the same token, they tolerated encomiendas and reducciones as long as they could obtain some concrete advantage, such as obtaining Spanish goods or minimizing

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<sup>63</sup>“Francisco de Céspedes al Rey. Buenos Aires, 15 de julio de 1629,” printed in Rodríguez Molas, *Los sometidos de la conquista*, 257. During Céspedes’ term a rebel cacique, Telomian Condé—the cacique who had been granted in encomienda to Juan Ruiz de Ocaña in 1583— was captured and deported to the Santa Catalina island, on the Brazilian coast. See AGI: ACh. 104, “Autos en testimonio de la merced de encomienda de Indios de nación Tubichaminis hecha a Francisco Maciel del Aguila. 1673-1684.”

<sup>64</sup>AECEBA, serie 1, vol. 16: session of April 29, 1686.

<sup>65</sup>AGI: ACh. 283, “Autos en testimonio obrados por el gobernador de Buenos Aires en razón de las muertes que hicieron y causaron los indios indómitos e infieles de nación serranos y pampas a los soldados de la gente pagada de este presidio. 1686.”

malocas' violence; and as long as they could retain much of their autonomy, by choosing their living location, keeping their hide tents, and living of hunting and gathering.

The rebellion also showed that Porteños only had a precarious hold beyond the narrow coastal area where they had settled. The gruesome murders at the *reducción* caused a deep impression in Buenos Aires. The few survivors told how Indians had overpowered an armed military guard simply with lances, bolas, and *desjarretadoras*—hocksing poles used to slaughter feral cattle—how they slit their victims' throats, and scuttled the available boats to impede the escape to Buenos Aires of anyone left alive. The *reducción* priest, who had barely saved himself by hiding among the riverside's tall grasses, recounted with much sadness how he had collected the "many dead bodies" to wrap them in shrouds and bury them. Governor Herrera y Sotomayor, decrying the "atrocious crime" at Santo Domingo Soriano, promptly dispatched troops to hunt down and punish the culprits. As Spanish troops were wholly unfamiliar with the territory, however, they had to rely on the local Native peoples, the Charrúa, some of whose relatives were living in the *reducción* and had been murdered. The Charrúa rejected the Spanish troops' help for the task of finding the culprits. The Spaniards not only had to pay the Charrúa for their services (in heads of cattle), but were also utterly dependent on them. The Spaniards had no other option than to trust the Charrúa when they said they had found the fugitives, killed most of the men, and made captives out of the women and children. They were also forced to ransom the church ornaments that the Charrúa were able to recover. They wanted to ransom the Indian captives as well, because there were some converts among them, but the Charrúa rejected the offer arguing that they were "already owned by different persons."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid. Spaniards were later able to ransom a few Pampa Indians from the Charrúa, see AGN: IX 41-3-8, "Depósito de dos Indias con sus hijos y dos muchachos Indios en el Capitán Francisco de Echague. 1697." On the Charrúa, see Itala Irene

Spanish authorities compensated for their precarious hold beyond the area of settlement with a public show of violent discipline within it. Spanish troops had been able to capture two badly wounded Indians whom the Charrúa had left for dead, as well as the Guaraní Indian who had promised to guide the rebels back to the Pampas. After a trial in which the three of them were found guilty, the Indians were paraded throughout the city on a donkey while the town crier made their crimes public and, finally, they were publicly hanged on the main plaza. The Governor then ordered their bodies to be quartered and put on public display “on the *Caminos Reales* (royal roads) that enter and exit this city.”<sup>67</sup>

From the point of view of the Spanish colonizing enterprise, malocas, encomiendas and reducciones in the Pampas were very close to a failure. Malocas fell short of fully subduing the Indians of the Pampas while encomiendas and reducciones were meager, unstable, and faltering in their task of “civilizing” Indians, extracting labor from them, and instilling in them obedience to their Spanish masters. As frustrated encomendero Alonso Guerrero de Ayala complained in 1683, his Indians had never paid any tribute to him and were almost impossible to “civilize.” Even worse, he had “spent his fortune and risked his life” by going after his Indians as far as the sierras every time they had fled and carried most of Ayala’s horses with them.<sup>68</sup>

Ayala concluded that his encomienda, together with all the others granted in Buenos Aires, were encomiendas “only by name.” “True” encomiendas as they existed in

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Becker, *Os índios Charrua e Minuano na antiga Banda Oriental do Uruguai* (Sao Leopoldo: Editora Unisinos, 2002).

<sup>67</sup>AGI: ACh. 283, "Autos en testimonio obrados por el gobernador de Buenos Aires en razón de las muertes que hicieron y causaron los indios indómitos e infieles de nación serranos y pampas a los soldados de la gente pagada de este presidio. 1686."

<sup>68</sup>AGI: ACh. 105, "Autos en testimonio de la merced de encomienda de Indios de nación Tubichaminis y Serranos hecha al Capitán Alonso Guerrero de Ayala. 1673-1687."

other Spanish dominions, Ayala argued, comprised “Indians subjected to servitude and settled in towns.” Ayala’s complaints echoed other Porteños who, before and after him, bitterly blamed the failure of their colonizing quest on the “savage” nature of the Indians that had fallen to their lot. As Royal Treasurer Simón de Valdés had put it in 1611, these Indians were “peoples lacking civility (*gente que no tiene policía*) who did not live in towns.” They were impossible to subjugate because they would “eat tree roots and hunt wild horses and mares” rather than serve the Spaniards.<sup>69</sup>

Ayala and Valdés’ evaluation of the Indians of the Pampas fit into the increasingly sophisticated distinctions that late-sixteenth-century Spanish scholars made among those peoples previously covered by the blanket-term *bárbaros*, which was generally applied to all non-Christians. Jesuit José de Acosta, whose work dominated Spanish thought on Native American peoples during the seventeenth century, distinguished three categories of “barbarians.”<sup>70</sup> First, there were those who “had the use and knowledge of letters,” such as the Chinese. One step lower in the hierarchy, there were peoples such as the Aztecs or the Inca, who lacked a system of writing but still possessed civil forms of social organization such as laws, cities, and rulers. At the bottom of the human scale were Indians like those of the Pampas, who lived outside all known forms of civil organization and hence were “savages who are close to beasts and in whom there is hardly any human feeling.”<sup>71</sup> Although Acosta posited that ultimately all men were perfectible creatures capable of salvation, he noted that “higher barbarians” could be converted and incorporated into the civilized European social order more easily.

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<sup>69</sup>“Pedimiento del Procurador de Buenos Aires al Rey para que prorrogue la permisión de navegar los frutos de la tierra, 1611-1617,” printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 1:313.

<sup>70</sup>Acosta’s most influential writing was his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590). On Acosta, see Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*.

<sup>71</sup>Quoted in *Ibid.*, 163-164.

Porteños failed to note, however, that Spanish colonization reinforced, rather than progressively eliminated, the “savage” traits that they observed in the “lower barbarians” that had fallen to their lot. Spanish-introduced livestock had expanded Native peoples’ hunting base and increased their mobility. Porteños’ adaptation of encomiendas allowed for the continuation of pre-existing Native social patterns, as Indians kept much of their freedom of movement, and their hunting skills enabled them to obtain agricultural goods and manufactures. Somewhat paradoxically, thus, Porteños’ adaptations of encomiendas encouraged the very same “savage” traits that they disparaged, and which they saw as the main impediment to Indians’ “civilization.”

By fixating on the Indians’ innate and inveterate “savagery,” moreover, Porteños failed to see that while malocas, encomiendas, and reducciones stopped short of “civilizing” the Indians, they did have deep effects on the Pampas Native peoples, effects that extended well beyond Spanish-controlled territory. Malocas penetrated into the Pampas—as far as the sierras, as Ayala pointed out—disrupting Native communities beyond the narrow area where the Spaniards were settled. Indians in encomiendas and reducciones preserved much of their freedom of movement, and thus maintained a fluid communication with the Indians not subjected to the Spaniards, bringing to them their knowledge of Spanish culture and the Spanish goods they obtained in exchange for their labor. By the mid-seventeenth century, these effects had produced a new Native world in the Pampas.

### *III. NATIVE NEW WORLDS*

During the first century after contact, a new Native world that blended old and new elements took shape in the Pampas. As during the pre-contact era, Native peoples still organized their societies in highly mobile and small hunting-gathering bands that had intense intercultural relations with their neighbors. But in the post-contact period



Indians moved on horse rather than on foot, and hunted feral European livestock in addition to native species. They had intercultural relations with a new group, Spaniards, who offered novel trading items and brought novel diseases. The Spaniards also tried to impose new forms of domination, which Native peoples did their best to assimilate into their own cultural patterns.

Recent research on the Native peoples living on the peripheries of the Spanish Empire has emphasized that direct contact with Europeans and the indirect influence of trade goods, livestock, crops, and disease deeply transformed Indian societies. Direct contact and indirect influences, in fact, created the ethnic groups or Indian “nations” that Europeans later identified as if they had always been there.<sup>72</sup> In most cases, moreover, early twentieth-century anthropologists and historians uncritically adopted and fixed these ethnological classifications, thus robbing the Indian world of its fluidity and historicity. Indian peoples who creatively adapted to the Spanish presence, sometimes changing beyond recognition, became the “cold,” “primitive,” and “savage” societies of the peripheries.<sup>73</sup>

In the case of the Pampas, the question of who exactly were the Native peoples whom Porteños so adamantly tried to subjugate during the seventeenth century is still open. For a great part of the twentieth century, a rather sterile debate about the Native peoples of the Pampas’ “ethnic filiation” dominated the field of Argentine anthropology. Scholars imbued in the essentialist and racist conceptions of ethnic identity prevalent

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<sup>72</sup>See Guillaume Boccara, *Guerre et ethnogenèse mapuche dans le Chili Colonial. L'Invention du Soi* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998); Nancy P. Hickerson, “Ethnogenesis in the South Plains: Jumano to Kiowa?,” in *History, Power, & Identity. Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992*, ed. Jonathan Hill (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996); Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, chapter 2; Weber, *Bárbaros*, chapter 2.

<sup>73</sup>For an insightful review of recent anthropological theories about ethnic identity, and how these theories have changed scholars’ understanding of the Native peoples who lived beyond the frontiers of the Spanish Empire, including the Pampas, see Boccara, “Mundos nuevos.”

at the time offered alternative ethnological taxonomies that mostly ignored the historical reality of the human groups they supposedly identified.<sup>74</sup> In the last decade, on the basis of paradigmatic changes with regard to identity in general and ethnic identity in particular, scholars have offered perceptive critiques of the old taxonomies and the assumptions they rested on. These critiques, however, have not yet resulted in a new consensus.<sup>75</sup> In the ensuing pages, I follow clues through the scattered written record to show the gradual emergence, during the seventeenth century, of two Indian “nations,” the Pampa and the Serrano. I also show the shifting reality of the Native groups that these static labels identified.

During the first three decades after settlement, Spanish sources referred to Native peoples beyond Porteños’ reach simply as “heathens” or “warlike Indians.” Native peoples subjected to encomiendas and reducciones, meanwhile, were usually named

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<sup>74</sup>The debate about the “ethnic filiation” of the Native peoples of the Pampas can be traced back to the birth of anthropology as an academic field in Argentina in the 1930s. In part, the various taxonomies stemmed from the different type of evidence (archeological, linguistic, written, oral) that different scholars chose to emphasize. In very general terms, two positions can be distinguished. On the one hand, there were scholars who argued that Native peoples of the Pampas had their own racial, linguistic, and cultural identity, traceable to their Querandí ancestors. On the other hand, there were scholars who argued that in the seventeenth century the Pampas had undergone a process of “Tehuelchization,” as Tehuelche groups from the southern Patagonia region, having already adopted the horse, migrated north. A synthesis of the debate can be found in Hernández, *Los Indios de Argentina*, 38-49.

<sup>75</sup>María T. Boschín, Marcelo Gavirati, and Julio Vezub, *Identidades impuestas e identidades enajenadas. Aportes historiográficos al debate etnológico en Pampa y Patagonia* (Paper presented at the VII Jornadas Interescuelas y Departamento de Historia, Universidad Nacional de Salta, 2001); Mandrini, “Indios y fronteras;” Mandrini and Ortelli, “Repensando viejos problemas;” Lidia Nacuzzi, *Identidades impuestas. Tehuelches, Aucas y Pampas en el norte de la Patagonia* (Buenos Aires: Sociedad Argentina de Antropología, 1998); Nacuzzi, “De la relación arqueología/etnohistoria;” Sara Ortelli, “La “araucanización” de las Pampas: Realidad histórica o construcción de los etnólogos?,” *Anuario IEHS* 11 (1996); Miguel Palermo, “Reflexiones sobre el llamado ‘complejo ecuestre’ en la Argentina,” *Runa* 16 (1986); Julio Vezub, *Redes comerciales del País de las Manzanas (1860-1881). Intercambio intra e interétnico o agentes de mercado?* (Buenos Aires: Paper presented at the Red de Estudios Rurales, Instituto Ravignani, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2003), 1-4.

after their cacique—such as the Bagual or Tubichaminí Indians. In 1635, however, Buenos Aires Governor Pedro Esteban Dávila revealed a changed Spanish perspective when he distinguished between two “nations,” the Pampa and the Serrano.<sup>76</sup> From then on, Spaniards used almost exclusively these two labels. Pampa and Serrano effectively became the given nations of the plains.

To properly understand what these nations were, the starting point is Native peoples’ intercultural adaptation to the Spanish settlement in the Rolling Pampas. This way of thinking runs against much of the historiography on colonial Buenos Aires. Historians have commonly described the narrow coastal strip that Porteños inhabited during the colonial period as a self-contained Spanish world, tied to other realms of the Spanish empire—to the metropolis through the Atlantic, and to the Lima-Potosí axis through overland roads—but isolated from the surrounding Native world.<sup>77</sup> As Osvaldo Barsky and Jorge Gelman point out in a recent scholarly synthesis:

[O]nce established the *Porteño* corridor—a narrow strip of territory nearby the city and on the margins of the river [de la Plata], a territory that yielded an agricultural production sufficient for Buenos Aires’ demand and that allowed the development of trade roads towards the north and towards Cuyo—a stable frontier emerged and there was little contact with the indigenous world extending to the south and southwest.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>“Instrucción de don Pedro Esteban Dávila al Capitán Amador Baz de Alpoin. Buenos Aires, 8 de octubre de 1635,” printed in Helmut Schindler, “Tres documentos del siglo XVII acerca de la población indígena bonaerense y la penetración mapuche,” *Cuadernos del Instituto Nacional de Antropología* 8 (1972-1978). Governor Dávila’s 1635 letter is the first instance I have found of this distinction. There is a reference to the Serrano Indians, with no mentioning of the Pampa, dating from few years earlier, see “Francisco de Céspedes al Rey. Buenos Aires, 15 de julio de 1629,” printed in Rodríguez Molas, *Los sometidos de la conquista*, 256-258.

<sup>77</sup>In the next chapter I expand on the subject of Spanish occupation of the territory and, more generally, of seventeenth-century Spanish society.

<sup>78</sup> Barsky and Gelman, *Historia del agro argentino*, 69.

Malocas, encomiendas, and reducciones belie this assertion. They connected the Spanish world and the Indian world from the moment Buenos Aires was founded. These colonizing institutions made the area of farms and estancias surrounding Buenos Aires not a “stable frontier” separating the Spanish and Indian world, but an area of transition between the two. In fact, the word “frontier” itself is anachronistic for the seventeenth century, as it is practically absent from the written sources of this period. Referring to the area of estancias furthest from Buenos Aires as a “frontier” became prevalent only in the mid-eighteenth century, when Porteños started to build a militarized line of forts.<sup>79</sup>

But in the seventeenth century, when Porteños looked to the south and southwest they saw, rather than a frontier, the Buenos Aires *campaña* (the nearby countryside) unevenly dotted with farms and ranches. The *campaña* melded into the barely explored territory of the *tierra adentro* (the inland territories), which extended until the jurisdiction’s unknown confines. Borrowing from anthropologist Guillaume Boccara, I would argue that Porteños not only saw a physical space but a symbolic one as well. The *campaña* was a transitional space between the city, where “civilized” people lived by the laws of God and the King; and the *tierra adentro*, where “savages” lacked civility and did not live in towns.<sup>80</sup> The transitional character of the *campaña* also implied a forward movement: towards unconquered territory as needs arose and capabilities allowed, and towards bringing civility to the “savages.” Malocas, encomiendas and reducciones, which added direct contact to the indirect impact of the Spanish arrival earlier in the century, were the first step in that forward movement.

The first effect of these institutions of colonization was to organize the Spanish perception of the Native world. By 1635, Porteños had switched from the variegated

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<sup>79</sup>I expand on this subject in Part III.

<sup>80</sup> Boccara, “Mundos nuevos,” 7-8.

nations of the first decades after settlement, to a binary categorization that distinguished “subjected” Indians from those who were still “hostile.” In 1635, Governor Dávila introduced the geographic metaphors that were used to label these different nations: Pampa for the more or less subjected peoples who stayed in reducciones or on the nearby campaña, and Serrano for the “hostile” Indians who remained in the faraway sierras of the tierra adentro.<sup>81</sup> The distinction was not based in perceived cultural differences. Porteños described both Pampa and Serrano as nomadic (*gente sin casa ni asiento*), superb riders and hunters, and people fond of mare meat. The distinction was instead based on each group’s respective political relation to Spanish society (subjection versus hostility), and respective geographical relation to Spanish society (near plains versus remote sierras). As Acarette du Biscay, a perspicacious French traveler who visited the River Plate in the late 1650s succinctly put it:

The savages who live on this land are divided into two groups: those who voluntarily submit to the Spaniards are called Pampistas [sic!] and the rest Serranos; both wear pelts but the latter charge against the Pampistas wherever they run into them as they would against mortal enemies. All of them fight horse-mounted, with spears having iron or sharp-bone points, and with bow and arrows as well. They use a bull hide, shaped as a sleeveless bodice, to protect their bodies.<sup>82</sup>

On the basis of recent anthropological contributions, one could argue that the distinction between Pampa and Serrano were “imposed identities” (*identidades impuestas*) that did not reflect how Native peoples identified themselves.<sup>83</sup> They

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<sup>81</sup>Geographic metaphors were common throughout Spanish America to name *indios bárbaros*. See Weber, *Bárbaros*, 15-16.

<sup>82</sup>Acarette Du Biscay, *Relación de un viaje al Río de la Plata y de allí por tierra al Perú. Con observaciones sobre los habitantes, sean indios o españoles, las ciudades, el comercio, la fertilidad, y las riquezas de esta parte de América*, trans. Francisco Fernández Wallace (Buenos Aires: Alfer & Vays, 1943), 53-54.

<sup>83</sup> Nacuzzi, *Identidades impuestas*, 236-238.

resulted from the Spaniards' need to distinguish friends from enemies, and hence they tell us about Spanish strategic perceptions but not about the Native world.

It would be a mistake, however, to simply discard these nations as simply Spanish constructions that distorted "true," "authentic" Native groups. Porteños carried out their strategic classifying task on societies that were rapidly changing in response to the new ecology of the Pampas and to the permanent Spanish presence in the Rolling Pampas. We only have scattered hints of those changes. As du Biscay aptly summarized, the Pampa and Serrano alike rode Spanish-introduced horses, fought with Spanish-manufactured iron, and protected their bodies with the hides of Spanish-introduced livestock. Furthermore, at least in the case du Biscay observed, Indians defined their relation with each other—enemies—on the basis of their respective relation to the Spaniards—submission or resistance.<sup>84</sup> The new nations thus tell us about Spanish strategic perceptions but *also* about an Indian world rapidly changing in response to the Spanish arrival.

That such an Indian world was a work in progress is best shown by the fact that, by the second half of the seventeenth century, even the tentative distinction that Porteños had made between "subjected" Pampa and "hostile" Serrano began to blur. In the first place, the "hostile" Serrano, who until then had stayed mostly in the tierra adentro, began to approach the campaña with increasing frequency. So much so that on February 6, 1659, a session of the Buenos Aires Cabildo was dedicated to the "damages"

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<sup>84</sup>Beyond du Biscay's general observation that the Serranos "charged" against the Pampas wherever they found them, there are several specific instances where non-reduced Indians attacked reduced Indians. See "El Cabildo al Rey pidiéndole se sirva suprimir la confirmación de las encomiendas. Buenos Aires, 5 de julio de 1610," printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 1:278; "Instrucción de don Pedro Esteban Dávila al Capitán Amador Baz de Alpoin. Buenos Aires, 8 de octubre de 1635," printed in Schindler, "Tres documentos;" *ACEBA*, serie 1, vol. 11: session of May 9, 1663.

that the Serrano Indians were causing in the campaña.<sup>85</sup> Porteños were particularly worried about the Serrano's presence on the nearby campaña because they could easily "communicate" with the Pampa. This communication was problematic for three reasons. First, it endangered the conversion of the Pampa into "civilized" and settled farmers. As explained above, the Spaniards were already finding this conversion frustrating. The communication with the Serrano only compounded the problem further, as the Pampa Indians began to run away from the reducciones to join the "barbarous" life of the Serrano. Even worse, many of these Pampa Indians were already baptized, and thus became apostates.<sup>86</sup> The danger of perdition of the Pampa Indians' souls and their falling back into savagery had a larger symbolic meaning for the Spaniards. The campaña's transitional character was supposed to mean that civilization was advancing and taming the "savagery" of the tierra adentro. Contemporary examples from nearby areas such as the Araucanía and the river Bermejo, where "savage Indians" had obliterated Spanish settlements, showed too well that what Spaniards expected did not always become true.

Second, the Serrano were firmly suspected of communicating with the "enemy Indians from Chile," who had acquired epic fame after expelling the Spanish from the Araucanía in 1599. The Pampa Indians' communication with the Serrano was thus doubly troublesome. Moreover, Father Suárez Cordero explained in 1673 that "the Pampa provide the Serrano with horses, and some weapons such as scimitars and wide

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<sup>85</sup>*AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 11: session of February 6, 1659.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.* See also AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Informe de un celoso de Buenos Aires para la Reina Ntra Sra sobre los Indios Pampas de aquella ciudad y de los Guaraníes del Paraguay, 1 de septiembre de 1673."

swords, as well as other things they buy in this city.” The Serrano, in turn, sold the horses and weapons to the “enemy Indians of Chile.”<sup>87</sup>

Third and finally, by the 1660s the collaboration between the Pampa and the Serrano began to overrun the institutions of colonization that until then had sufficed to keep the campaña nearby Buenos Aires under Porteños’ relative control. In 1662, after several instances of Indian “damages” in the campaña, the Cabildo made a renewed effort to settle the “hostile” Indians into a *reducción*. The Alcalde de la Hermandad was dispatched to the tierra adentro, and came back with two caciques, Don Juan Catu and Don Pedro. Don Pedro, who spoke Spanish, served as interpreter. He said that they were caciques of about “two hundred Serrano subjects,” as well as of a few Pampa Indians that had fled from the *reducción* of Tubichaminí. He added that they were willing to settle themselves into a *reducción* with their subjects, “on the lagoon so-called of Cuculo, twelve leagues from this city.”<sup>88</sup> Yet the new *reducción* did little to reinforce Spanish control on the campaña. Scarcely one year later, in 1663, Native peoples whom the Spaniards identified as Serrano and Pampa not only attacked the new *reducción* but also raided an estancia situated barely eight leagues from the city, and killed two Porteños.

In 1663 Governor Villarcorta responded with another familiar mechanism, a maloca. But the maloca ran into unexpected troubles. It did not catch up with the Indians until well into the unknown territory of the tierra adentro. Once it did, Indians were able to resist the Spanish attack for more than three hours, despite the Spanish

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<sup>87</sup>Ibid. I expand on the networks of trade that connected the Pampas to the Andean zone in chapter 4.

<sup>88</sup> *AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 11: session of March 24, 1662. The Alcalde de la Hermandad was a Cabildo member in charge of judicial and criminal justice for rural areas. The post was given to a vecino well experienced in campaña matters, usually a farm or ranch owner.



advantage of many *bocas de fuego*—firearms. According to Villacorta, Indians successfully resisted for that long thanks to their improved war gear (they wore “leather armors”), war maneuvers (the “careful arrangement of their tents”), and war strategy that reflected their knowledge of the territory (they confronted the Spaniards where a river protected their rear guard).<sup>89</sup> The Serranos were evidently well prepared to face the Spaniards in battle. In addition, the cooperation of Pampa Indians provided them with territorial expertise of the campaña near Buenos Aires. As Governor Andrés de Robles explained a few years later, in 1678, the Pampa Indians who helped the Serrano in their attacks were “experts (*baqueanos*) on the region,” because they used to live in the same estancias that they later helped the Serrano to raid.<sup>90</sup>

Even when the institutions of colonization were seemingly subduing new Indian groups, Indians’ own designs interfered with Spanish objectives. In the last third of the seventeenth century encomiendas began to include Serrano Indians as well as the usual “docile” Pampa. The sources suggest that these Serrano groups were not necessarily defeated and captured in malocas but instead that they voluntarily “went down” to the campaña and asked for the Spaniards’ “protection.” In 1677, for instance, Governor Andrés de Robles reported that a group of Serrano Indians with their cacique had approached a party of Spaniards hunting feral cattle south of the river Salado. Governor Robles’ report was accompanied by an encomienda register (*padrón de indios*) that identified the Serrano as Indians who “had come to us voluntarily and have never been in encomienda before.” This last assertion is evident from the register itself. Serrano individuals were registered only under their Native-language names, such as Nusanach,

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<sup>89</sup> ME: AGI E 4, “El Gobernador Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta al Rey. Buenos Aires, 21 de junio de 1663.”

<sup>90</sup> “Gobernador Andrés de Robles al Rey. 20 de abril de 1678” printed in *DHG* 1: 302.

Quisqueyupel, Guachaquit, and Simistey. All the Pampa Indians of the same register, by contrast, had Christian names added to or replacing their Native-language names, such as Jacinto Xalamec, Juan Guelpelu, or Cristóbal Indio.<sup>91</sup>

The Serrano's acquiescence to encomiendas in the last third of the seventeenth century coincided with Porteños' increasing complaints about Indians in encomienda who took advantage of their status to steal horses, mares, mules and other elements entrusted to them by their encomenderos.<sup>92</sup> A particularly unsettling case took place in 1678, when Serrano Indians subjected to encomienda not only committed robberies of that kind but also killed their encomenderos, the Captains don Ignacio and Don Cristóbal Ponce de León. This was the first time that Indians killed Porteños of rank, and their "treacherous murder" rocked Spanish society.<sup>93</sup>

In sum, during the second half of the seventeenth century the neat distinction between docile and nearby Pampa versus hostile and remote Serrano that Governor

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<sup>91</sup>Seven years earlier, in 1670, two other groups of Serrano Indians who had never been in encomienda had voluntarily gone to the Spaniards. In this case the sources only register the cacique's names, Colcol and Salacata. "Autos y diligencias obradas sobre las encomiendas de indios que hay en este distrito. 1677-1678" printed in Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro*, 551.

<sup>92</sup>AECBA, serie 1, vol. 13: sessions of April 6 and May 10, 1672; vol.15: session of May 16, 1678; vol. 16: session of April 29, 1686.

<sup>93</sup>The case of the Ponce de León brothers was the first time in which victims of Indians attacks were identified by name. The numerous and variegated sources that mention the case—from Cabildo minutes and letters, to Governor's letters, to *autos* de encomienda dating from many years later—suggest that the brothers' death caused a deep impression among Buenos Aires' dwellers. Moreover, the brothers' widowed mother, Doña Isabel de Umanes, took the opportunity of Governor Andrés de Robles's *juicio de residencia*—a customary judicial review conducted at the end of a Spanish official's term in office—to accuse him of having neglected the punishment of the Indians who had murdered her sons. See "El Cabildo de Buenos Aires al Rey. 20 de julio de 1678" printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 3: 113; AECBA, serie 1, vol. 15: session of May 16, 1678; AGN: IX 19-1-6, "Inventario en testimonio de los papeles pertenecientes al juicio de residencia practicado contra el Mtre de Campo Dn. Andrés de Robles. 1682."; AGN: IX 41-4-5, "Autos de las vacantes de los Indios Tubichaminís que se dieron al Cap. Diego López Camelo y los de nación Pampas que tuvo el Cap. Sebastián Flores que se dieron al Cap. Pedro Gutiérrez. 1689."

Dávila had introduced in 1635 had become blurred. As “docile” Pampa Indians participated in attacks to Spanish estancias, and Serrano groups were distributed in encomiendas, there was little left to clearly distinguish one “nation” from the other. Governor Villarcorta, for instance, wrote in 1663 to King Philip IV that “a great number of Serrano and Pampa Indians, who are savages in their way of life,” inhabited the “confines” of the large jurisdiction under his care. Villacorta added that both the Pampa and the Serrano were very “arrogant,” and that they “went down” to the campaña from time to time, with the excuse of “rendering a pitiful service” but with the real objective of obtaining “arms, yerba, tobacco, wine, and other similar goods.” The “true interest” of both nations, Villacorta concluded, was “their own convenience rather than servicing or being useful to the Spaniards.”<sup>94</sup>

The Spanish world was not of one piece, however, and the “Indian question” revealed some of its fault lines. Resentment against both the Pampa and the Serranos was particularly strong among Porteño vecinos. Successive Cabildo meetings blamed them for deaths and robberies on the campaña, and repeatedly asked the corresponding Governors to take prompt measures.<sup>95</sup> At the same time, however, the Crown was showing a rekindled interest for the soul of the still “savage” Indians of the empire’s margins. In this context, a 1673 report by Father Gregorio Suárez Cordero called the Crown’s attention to the fate of the Pampa Indians. Although they fled frequently from their reducciones, Suárez Cordero explained, they were “docile and friendly,” were easily brought back with the help of only a few soldiers and “without bloodshed,” and were used to “help in ranch labor when given payment for it.” The priest concluded that the

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<sup>94</sup>ME: AGI E 4, “El Gobernador Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta al Rey. Buenos Aires, 21 de junio de 1663.”

<sup>95</sup>AECBA, serie 1, vol. 15: session of August 26, 1680; serie 2, vol. 16: session of September 22, 1683, and session of April 25, 1686.

Pampa Indians only needed a firmer hand and, in a implicit jab against the regular orders that usually provided religious services in the reducciones, a more committed group of friars to work on their conversion.<sup>96</sup>

The Crown immediately recommended measures for the prompt salvation of the souls of the Pampa and other “nations,” at the same time that it asked for further information on the Indians’ condition from a variety of officials, local and regional, secular and religious.<sup>97</sup> The ensuing reports painted a mixed portrayal. In 1677 Governor Andrés de Robles, following royal orders recommending the Indians’ salvation, gathered dispersed Pampa Indians and put them back into reducciones. In his report, Robles denied the rumors that the Pampa’s own nature made them “impossible to civilize.” Rather, he explained, the “leisure” and “freedom” they enjoyed, including the freedom of “having as many women as they want,” made conversion difficult. But Robles placed most of the blame on the regular clergy’s lack of effort in cultivating the Indians’ souls, as friars were more worried about obtaining material benefits than about their spiritual mission.<sup>98</sup>

Leaders of the regular clergy quickly negated the charges of negligence, placed the blame on the Indians’ nature, and pointed out that efforts towards conversion only made matters worse as they opened the door to widespread apostasy. Echoing José de Acosta’s classification of Indian societies, in 1679 the Jesuit in charge of the Paraguay

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<sup>96</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Informe de un celoso de Buenos Aires para la Reina Ntra Sra sobre los Indios Pampas de aquella ciudad y de los Guaraníes del Paraguay, 1 de septiembre de 1673."

<sup>97</sup>Royal Cédula of May 22, 1675, quoted in AGN: Bib. Nac. 181, "Real Cédula encargando al gobernador de Buenos Aires la conversión de los Pampas y demás naciones. 13 de enero de 1681."

<sup>98</sup>ME: AGI F 14, "El Rey al Gobernador José de Garro. 16 de agosto de 1679."

province<sup>99</sup> reported that there were two kinds of Indians in the region. On the one hand, those who had “stable dwellings,” such as the Quechua-speaking peoples of Tucumán, and the Guaraní of Asunción. On the other hand, those who “wandered around, lacking sites and cultivated fields, finding sustenance in hunting, mare flesh, fish and other beasts,” and living “without knowing God, the King, or the law.” The Jesuit included the Pampa and Serrano Indians in the latter category, and pointed out that the only way of compelling this type of Indians into living a “civilized” life (*vida política*) was “through the force of arms.”<sup>100</sup>

In spite of the mixed reporting, between 1675 and 1681 the Crown issued a series of letters, cédulas, and provisions commanding the religious and civil authorities of Buenos Aires to make efforts towards the reducción and conversion of the Pampa and Indians of other “nations.”<sup>101</sup>

Disparate opinions reflected, in addition to the internal rivalries among different groups of Spaniards, the fact that the Indian world constituted myriad of communities acting independently—a sociopolitical mosaic.<sup>102</sup> The available sources show some of the

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<sup>99</sup>In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the Jesuit province of Paraguay was a vast region that included the governorships of Paraguay, Tucumán, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and River Plate—that is, all the Spanish territories south of Peru except for Chile, which since 1625 was considered a vice-province under the jurisdiction of Peru. The borders of this vast province were fuzzy at best, since they included mostly unexplored lands such as the Pampas and Patagonia in the south, and the Chaco in the northwest.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Guillermo Furlong Cardiff, *Entre los Pampas de Buenos Aires. Según noticias de los misioneros Jesuitas Matías Strobel, José Cardiel, Tomás Falkner, Jerónimo Rejón, Joaquín Caamaño, Manuel Querini, Manuel García, Pedro Lozano, y José Sánchez Labrador* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos San Pablo, 1938), 16.

<sup>101</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 181, “Real Cédula para que Alonso de Mercado informe sobre el estado de los indios. Buen Retiro, 15 de mayo de 1679.”; AGN: Bib. Nac. 181, “Real Cédula encargando al gobernador de Buenos Aires la conversión de los Pampas y demás naciones. 13 de enero de 1681.”; ME: AGI F 14, “El Rey al Gobernador José de Garro. 16 de agosto de 1679.”; ME: AGI F 16, “El Rey al Obispo de la Catedral de Buenos Aires. 16 de agosto de 1679.”

<sup>102</sup>I expand on this subject in chapter 4.

different strategies these communities adopted in response to the Spanish presence. Some groups “voluntarily” went down to the campaña and asked for the Spaniards’ protection.<sup>103</sup> Others were defeated through malocas and rebelled violently afterwards.<sup>104</sup> Others kept their distance and raided the trade roads that connected Buenos Aires with the neighboring Spanish cities.<sup>105</sup> Finally, others acquiesced to encomiendas and reducciones seeking, as Governor Villacorta had put it in 1663, “their own convenience rather than servicing or being useful to the Spaniards.”<sup>106</sup>

Furthermore, fission and fusion characterized the Indian world during this period, as malocas disrupted Indian communities, and Native peoples moved in and out of the immediate Spanish sphere of influence in the campaña. In 1676, for instance, Spanish soldiers sent to the tierra adentro to “round up” runaways came back with a rather mixed group of Indians. Some belonged to Buenos Aires encomiendas, others to Córdoba encomiendas, and others had “never been in encomienda before.”<sup>107</sup> In sum, Native peoples moved, mixed, and reinvented their societies in the tierra adentro, in spite of the Spanish attempts to pin down defined groups and categorize them into neat and distinctive “nations.”

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<sup>103</sup>“Gobernador Andrés de Robles al Rey. 20 de abril de 1678,” in *DHG* 1: 302-303.

<sup>104</sup>AGI: ACh. 283, “Autos en testimonio obrados por el gobernador de Buenos Aires en razón de las muertes que hicieron y causaron los indios indómitos e infieles de nación serranos y pampas a los soldados de la gente pagada de este presidio. 1686.”

<sup>105</sup>APC: Criminales Capital 1, “Causa y proceso criminal contra los Indios Pampa. Córdoba, 1680-1681.”

<sup>106</sup>ME: AGI E 4, “El Gobernador Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta al Rey. Buenos Aires, 21 de junio de 1663.”

<sup>107</sup>ME: AGI F 6, “El Gobernador Andrés de Robles al Rey. Buenos Aires, 24 de mayo de 1676.”



## **PART II**

### **OLD WORLD ANIMALS IN NEW WORLD SETTINGS.**

#### **LIVESTOCK, SETTLERS AND INDIANS IN THE LONG SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**



### 3. FERAL BUT CLAIMED: SPANISH CATTLE RANCHING IN THE PAMPAS

Alfred Crosby argued long ago that European imperialism had a biological component. Wherever Europeans' portmanteau biota—their animals, plants, seeds, and pathogens—thrived, Europeans had high rates of success at conquering and settling. Pathogens provide the most infamous example, as they became exponentially more lethal in the virgin soil of Native American and Australasian populations. But in the longer run, thriving Old World plants and animals changed New World environments and sustained the growth of European-like societies overseas, to which wave after wave of settlers flocked. As Crosby explained, for the settlers who migrated to Australasia expecting to better their lot and “eat meat three times a day... said meat was not roasted wapiti or kangaroo, but mutton, pork, and beef.”<sup>1</sup>

European livestock adapted with great success to the Pampas, so much so that cattle ranching and its accompanying horse culture are emblematic of the region still today. And yet, the origins and early development of cattle ranching in the Pampas are lost in the “dark ages” of the seventeenth century. As the traditional story goes, Buenos Aires spent the seventeenth century as a struggling hamlet in relative economic isolation. In this context, Porteños took advantage of the wild herds proliferating in the Pampas through rudimentary hunting expeditions or *vaquerías* geared at producing a few hides, which they could export via contraband to Brazil and Europe. Seventeenth-century *vaquerías* were thus the primitive stage of the more “modern” cattle industry based on *estancias* (ranches) and *saladeros* (salting plants) that would develop in the late

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<sup>1</sup> Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*, 300.



eighteenth century, and with fullest force after independence in the early nineteenth century.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter I draw from recent advances in economic, rural, and environmental history to offer an alternative account of the early origins of cattle ranching in the Pampas. In the seventeenth century Buenos Aires was not an isolated hamlet but a commercial hub, thanks to two trade circuits that intersected at the city, one Atlantic and the other Andean. These two trade circuits and their variegated markets provided the economic stimuli for the initial development of cattle ranching. I invert Crosby's original formulation, to emphasize the effects of New World environments on European animals and, more crucially, on European husbandry practices and principles.<sup>3</sup> I show that Buenos Aires settlers responded to the challenges and opportunities of the Pampas by blending Old World cattle-ranching practices with New World innovations. The most obvious innovation was the *vaquería* or hunting expedition, Porteños' adaptive response to both the rapid proliferation of feral cattle in the grassy Pampas, and the opportunities of an expanding Atlantic market for hides. Finally, I argue that changed cattle-ranching practices coexisted with unchanged

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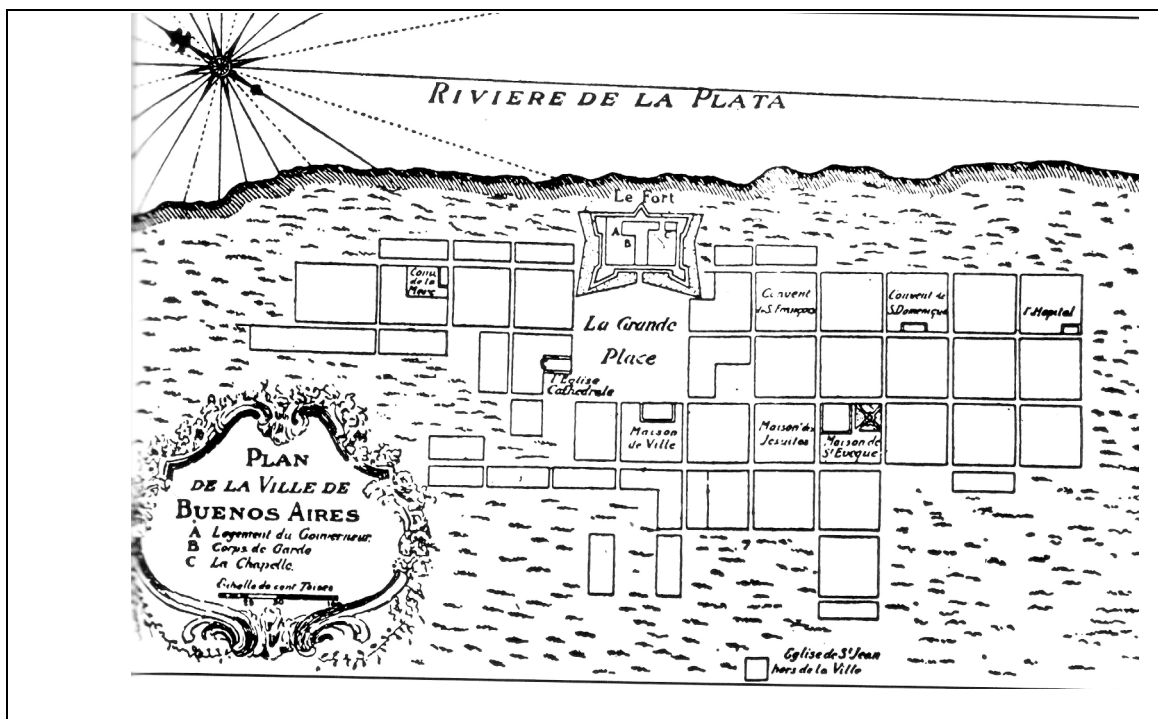
<sup>2</sup>See for instance Barsky and Gelman, *Historia del agro argentino*, 32-45; Rock, *Argentina*, 39-49; Scobie, *Argentina*, chapter 3. An early work on *vaquerías* is Emilio Coni, *Historia de las vaquerías del Río de la Plata, 1555-1750* (Buenos Aires: Librería Editorial Platero, 1979 [1956]).

<sup>3</sup>European settlers throughout the Americas adapted their husbandry practices to the challenges and opportunities of the New World. In her classic study of the introduction of sheep raising in central Mexico, for instance, Elinor Melville showed that the customary regulations that limited common grazing in Spain were ignored in the New World, where the owners of cultivated land, and therefore those who suffered the damages, were mainly Indians. Melville, *A Plague of sheep*. Andrew Sluyter makes a similar case regarding cattle ranching in the Veracruz lowlands, Andrew Sluyter, "The Ecological Origins and Consequences of Cattle Ranching in Sixteenth-Century New Spain," *Geographical Review* 86, no. 2 (1996). For a sophisticated analysis of the effects of the New World setting on English husbandry practices and ideas in New England and the Chesapeake, see Victoria DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chapters 4 and 5.

thinking about cattle as “domestic” animals. As I show in the last section, Porteños insisted on claiming property rights over the feral herds that spread throughout the Pampas. This led to inevitable clashes with Spaniards from the neighboring cities of Córdoba, San Luis, and Mendoza, who believed it was their right as well to take advantage of the feral cattle that proliferated in the Pampas.

#### *I. BUENOS AIRES, AN ENTREPÔT CONNECTING THE ANDES TO THE ATLANTIC*

In the early seventeenth century Buenos Aires was a muddy village at the top of a gentle elevation on the River Plate west bank. Its layout followed the typical Spanish grid pattern: a central square plaza from which perfectly straight streets extended in all directions. Around the plaza converged the metropolitan, local, and religious authorities (Map 4). The metropolitan authorities were on the plaza’s eastern side, housed in a fortress-like building overlooking the River Plate. The Governor was the highest authority in defense matters, had prerogatives such as distributing land grants and encomiendas, and was also the highest authority in matters of civil and criminal justice. His decisions had to be appealed in the Charcas Audiencia—the nearest high court, in Upper Peru—or directly to the Council of the Indies in Spain. The management of the Royal Treasury, strictly separated from the Governor’s office, fell to the Royal Officials, which usually consisted of an accountant and a treasurer. Finally, since the 1630s, when inter-imperial rivalry prompted the Spanish Crown to establish a professional army in Buenos Aires, the fortress also housed military personnel.



Map 4. Buenos Aires in the Early Seventeenth Century<sup>4</sup>

On the plaza's western side and, symbolically, directly opposite the Governor's fortress, stood the Cabildo or city council, which gave Buenos Aires the status of a city. A Spanish colonial settlement, independently of its size, held the title of "city" when it had an autonomous local government. The councilmen (*capitulares*) held the status of *vecinos*, that is, they were men who owned a house in the city, had enough means to own weapons and horses, and had them ready to serve anytime they were required to by the colonial authorities. The city's founder, Juan de Garay, had appointed the first Cabildo, and after that the posts were renewed yearly, with each cadre of councilmen choosing the incoming cadre. This system, which was conducive to securing Cabildo posts in the hands of a few founding families, was undercut in the seventeenth century by the

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<sup>4</sup>Map taken from Ricardo Cicerchia, "Formas y estrategias familiares en la sociedad colonial," in *Nueva historia argentina. La sociedad colonial*, ed. Enrique Tandeter (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000).

practice of the sale of offices. Besides administering criminal and civil justice in the first instance, the Cabildo administered the city's daily affairs. It hence had a wide range of prerogatives. These included securing the supply and establishing the price of staples such as meat, bread, and wine; authorizing artisans to practice their trade; authorizing the opening and functioning of *pulperías* or general stores; lobbying for the city before the Crown; and granting the vecino status to suitable candidates. The Cabildo's basic structure included two *Alcaldes* or first-instance judges for criminal and civil justice, and six *Regidores* or council members. In addition to this basic structure there was a varying number of officials, the most important of which were the *Procurador General* or attorney general for the Cabildo, and the *Alcalde de la Santa Hermandad*, a first-instance judge for rural areas.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, on the plaza's northern side, mediating but also meddling between the imperial and local authorities, stood the Cathedral. The Cathedral was also the parish church for the city's downtown, and so it could claim vecinos of highest rank as its parishioners. But most importantly, the Cathedral housed the bishop of Buenos Aires, who was the head of the River Plate diocese. This diocese was in turn part of the larger ecclesiastical province of Charcas. The bishop was judge, legislator and *magister* in religious matters, which in many cases overlapped with respective spheres of authority of the Cabildo and the Governor, generating endless conflicts.<sup>6</sup>

Beyond this tight nucleus around the plaza, the *casco urbano* extended to the north, west, and south in neat rectangular or square blocks. On the blocks closest to the

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<sup>5</sup>See Zacarias Moutoukias, "Gobierno y sociedad en el Tucumán y el Río de la Plata, 1550-1800," in *Nueva historia argentina. La sociedad colonial*, ed. Enrique Tandeter (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000). For a study of the sale of Cabildo offices during the seventeenth century see Gelman, "Cabildo y elite local."

<sup>6</sup>For a comprehensive study of the colonial church in the River Plate, see Roberto Di Stefano and Loris Zanatta, *Historia de la Iglesia argentina. Desde la conquista hasta fines del siglo XX* (Buenos Aires: Grijalbo Mondadori, 2000), part 1.

plaza were the houses of the vecinos of highest rank, as well as various churches, convents, and monasteries. Going farther from the plaza the blocks were larger, and mixed humbler dwellings with fruit and vegetable gardens. Still farther lay the city's *ejido* or common lands, which were used mainly for pasture. All the buildings of the casco urbano were quite modest, as described by a traveler in 1629:

The churches and houses, without exception, are made of adobe and they have thatched roofs, only a few have roof tiles. None of the streets are paved. Glass panes are unknown, there are not even cloth or paper panes on the windows; there are neither basements nor cellars nor carpentry. Houses lack staircases since they are just one-story high.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the casco urbano, the jurisdiction of colonial cities extended over the surrounding rural area of farms and ranches, an area that was under the Cabildos' authority through the office of the alcalde de la Santa Hermandad. The rural area or *campaña* surrounding Buenos Aires was a narrow and long coastal rectangle. Scholars estimate that up to the mid-seventeenth century, effective territorial occupation of the campaña never extended beyond ten miles from the River Plate coast. The northernmost point of the rectangle, sixty miles from downtown Buenos Aires up the coast, was the Indian reducción of Baradero, on the river Arrecifes. The southernmost point, another sixty miles from downtown Buenos Aires down the coast, was the Indian reducción of Tubichaminí, on the river Samborombón.<sup>8</sup>

The Buenos Aires campaña was unevenly dotted with *chacras* (farms) and *estancias* (ranches), the economic units that organized rural production. Chacras were smaller land grants (about 120 hectares) used for agricultural production, mostly wheat, but also corn and barley, and usually housing horse-drawn mills to process the grain. Estancias were larger land grants (about 1,800 hectares) that mixed agricultural

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<sup>7</sup>Letter by Justo van Suerck, quoted in González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 103.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

production with livestock raising, mostly cattle, but sheep, pigs, oxen and eventually mules as well.<sup>9</sup> Most chacras, and a lower but still significant number of estancias, included living quarters, which indicates that their owners or their workers, in many cases African slaves, lived there permanently. This rural population was of humble means, as indicated by the bishop in 1626:

[O]wing to the poverty of the land and the little [Indian] service, many vecinos stay in their chacras in order to extract some benefit out of them, also because they lack the means they would need to live in the city.<sup>10</sup>

Overall, in the mid-seventeenth century Buenos Aires was a village of approximately three thousand people, plus the professional soldiers housed in its fort who numbered one hundred in the 1630s, and approximately five hundred in the 1670s. In addition, there were approximately one thousand rural dwellers in the campaña.<sup>11</sup>

This seemingly unimpressive Spanish settlement was nevertheless bustling with commercial activity. By the 1700s, the population had more than doubled and, at the same time, brick-buildings with tiled roofs began to replace the humbler adobe houses on the enlarged casco urbano (Map 5). The commercial hustle and bustle resulted from the two trade circuits that during the seventeenth century intersected at Buenos Aires: an Andean circuit the core of which was the Lima-Potosí axis, and an Atlantic circuit that connected Buenos Aires to Europe as well as to Brazil and West Africa.

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<sup>9</sup>Land grants for both chacras and estancias were usually located along watercourses. They were hence shaped as narrow and long rectangles in order to give water access to as many of them as possible. Ibid. A thorough study of chacras and estancias in the Buenos Aires campaña during the seventeenth century is González Lebrero, "Chacras y estancias."

<sup>10</sup>AECEBA, serie 1, vol. 6: session of March 23, 1626.

<sup>11</sup>Population estimates are from Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, 41.



sustained demand for labor, food staples, textiles, draft animals, and a wide range of other supplies.<sup>13</sup> The Lima-Potosí axis rapidly became the core of a broader “Andean economic space,” in historian Carlos Sempat Assadourian’s words. This economic space consisted of a series of interlocking regional markets that extended over five thousand miles and drew goods from all the Spanish possessions in South America, from Quito all the way to Buenos Aires. For instance, Quito’s sheep farms and textile workshops produced cotton and wool textiles that were shipped to Lima, almost nine hundred miles away, for re-distribution. Wheat farmed in Chile’s Central Valley was transported to the port of Valparaíso, and from there shipped to Lima’s port, 1,500 miles to the north. Yerba mate from Paraguay was shipped down the river Paraná to Buenos Aires, transported overland to Chile, and finally shipped to Lima’s port. Mules bred in southern Córdoba del Tucumán reached the Peruvian mining regions through seasonal mule fairs at Salta and Jujuy. All these regions sought, in return for their goods, Potosí silver and European manufactures imported through Lima.<sup>14</sup>

Buenos Aires, permanently founded in 1580, was a latecomer to the Andean economic space, and had initially a difficult time. Part of the power of the Lima-Potosí axis rested on Lima’s monopoly over metropolitan trade. Soon after the conquest of Mexico and Peru, inter-imperial rivalry had forced the Spanish Crown to protect the maritime trade with the American colonies. Hence, in the 1550s, the crown established the fleet system, in which ship convoys with military protection regularly sailed to

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<sup>13</sup>Although Potosí was by far the most important silver mine, the Peruvian mining complex also included the silver mines of Pasco and Castrovirreina and the mercury mine of Huancavelica. Mercury was indispensable for the amalgamation process used to refine silver ore.

<sup>14</sup>For the Andean economic system see Assadourian, *El sistema de la economía colonial*; Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, chapters 1 and 2. Synthetic takes are in Johnson and Socolow, “Colonial Centers;” Vilma Milletich, “El Río de la Plata en la economía colonial,” in *Nueva historia argentina. La sociedad colonial*, ed. Enrique Tandeter (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 2000).



designated American ports only. Portobelo, in present-day Panama, was the designated port for the Viceroyalty of Peru, and the Lima *consulado* or merchant guild monopolized the right to import goods through this port. The regional markets of the Andean economic space chafed at the resulting high transportation costs, and at the Lima merchants' high prices.<sup>15</sup> In this context, Buenos Aires appeared as an alternative and convenient Atlantic port for metropolitan trade. The existence of the fleet system and Lima's political muscle, however, ensured that royal regulations forbade trade through Buenos Aires shortly after the city's permanent foundation.<sup>16</sup> In 1599, Governor Valdés y de la Banda explained that these regulations made life difficult for the fledgling colony, because "all the necessary things to live" cost "between eight hundred and a thousand percent more" than in Spain. Valdés y de la Banda begged King Philip III to open the Buenos Aires port, so that imported goods could arrive there directly from Spain, rather than through the costly Panama-Lima-Potosí route.<sup>17</sup>

In theory, then, the port of Buenos Aires was closed to Atlantic trade, and all the regions of the Viceroyalty of Peru depended on Portobelo and Lima merchants for their supply of European products. In practice, however, regional economic interests combined with the Crown's own strategic interests during the seventeenth century to make Buenos Aires into a busy semi-clandestine port where the Andean and Atlantic trade circuits intersected.

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<sup>15</sup>High transportation costs resulted in part from the cumbersome trade route that went from Portobelo across the isthmus to the Pacific, from there by ship to Lima's port, and from Lima by mule convoys across the Andes to any other destination in South America—except for Chile, reachable by sea.

<sup>16</sup>A 1594 Royal Cédula forbade all trade through Buenos Aires except for ships holding special licenses granted to Sevillian merchants through the House of Trade.

<sup>17</sup>"Diego Rodríguez Valdés y de la Banda al Rey. Buenos Aires, 20 de mayo de 1599," *DHG* vol. 1: 155.

After 1580, with the union of Portugal with the Spanish Crown,<sup>18</sup> Portuguese merchant communities with connections to Brazil and West Africa rapidly settled in Lima, Potosí, and Buenos Aires. In this context, a 1602 Royal Cédula authorized Buenos Aires to carry out very limited inter-colonial trade with Brazil. Porteños could export a certain tonnage of local products such as flour, jerked beef, and tallow in exchange for sugar and European goods—African slaves were explicitly excluded.<sup>19</sup> European goods purchased through Portuguese merchants in Buenos Aires cost a third and sometimes a half than the same goods purchased through Lima. Soon, therefore, demand increased and Portuguese merchants in partnership with regional elites exceeded the limited royal authorization to inter-colonial trade, and undercut Lima merchants by re-distributing cheaper goods throughout the Andean economic space.

Overall, Buenos Aires was an entry point for African slaves, Brazilian sugar, and a variety of goods imported from Europe, such as iron tools and implements, fabrics, clothing, furniture, oil, soap, and spices. Buenos Aires was also an outlet for Peruvian silver, which comprised around eighty percent of exports and was the main magnet for Atlantic traders. Local products such as flour, wool, coarse textiles, tallow, jerked beef, and hides complemented silver exports (see Appendix 3). The re-distribution of these goods to and from Buenos Aires was conducted through diverse trade networks. For instance, Portuguese merchants bought iron manufactures and sugar in Brazil,

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<sup>18</sup>Philip II annexed Portugal in 1580 after King Sebastian of Portugal died prematurely in battle in Africa. J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), chapter 7.

<sup>19</sup>Throughout the seventeenth century there were only three exceptions to this prohibition, granted by the Crown as special contracts or *asientos*. An *asiento* valid between 1594 and 1601 authorized Portuguese Pedro Gómez Reynal to introduce six hundred slaves every year through Buenos Aires. Another *asiento* valid between 1601-1609 was granted to Portuguese Juan Rodríguez Cuitinho. Finally, the Archbishop of Toledo was allowed to introduce up to 1,500 slaves. González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 76.

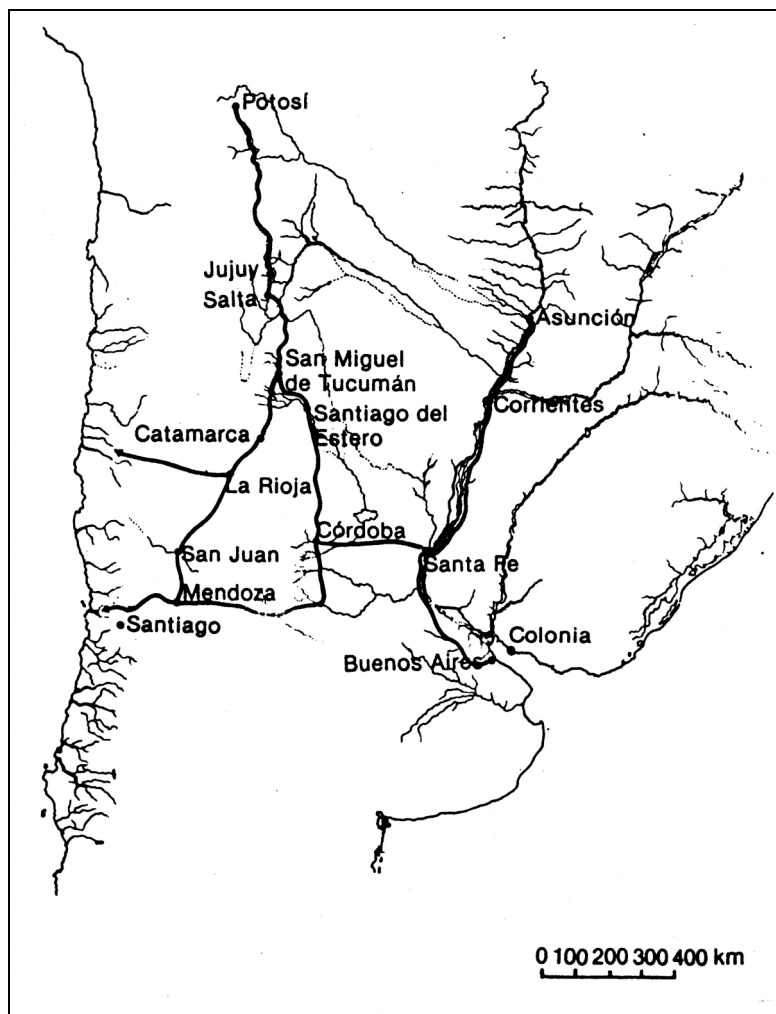
introduced them through Buenos Aires, exchanged them for local products in Tucumán, and sold the local products in Potosí, where they obtained silver with which to start the cycle anew. Or, Portuguese merchants with connections to Angola introduced African slaves through Buenos Aires, Córdoba's local merchants bought them with Peruvian silver, slaves were then transported to Córdoba and from there re-sold in Chile, Córdoba del Tucumán, and Peru.<sup>20</sup>

Buenos Aires hence became a node in a vast and varied trade network that connected the Andean economic space to the Atlantic. This trade network was built on a variegated transportation system. Small ships went back and forth between the Brazilian ports and Buenos Aires. Cart convoys complemented by mule convoys for the Andes crossing traversed the two main overland roads, one connecting Buenos Aires to Potosí via Córdoba, the other connecting Buenos Aires to Santiago de Chile (Map 6).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Trade circuits are described in Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, 56-60. For the role of Córdoba in the Atlantic slave trade, see Carlos Sempat Assadourian, *Tráfico de esclavos en Córdoba. De Angola a Potosí. Siglos XVI-XVII* (Córdoba: 1966).

<sup>21</sup>The road to Potosí took about four months: three months from Buenos Aires to Jujuy by cart convoy, and then from there another two to three weeks by mule convoy to Potosí. Owing to necessary waits for the appropriate season to be on the road, cart convoys usually took a whole year to make a round-trip. The road to Chile took about two months and a half: two months from Buenos Aires to Mendoza by cart convoy, and from there another ten days to Santiago by mule convoy. Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, chapter 1.



*Map 6. Inter-regional trade roads<sup>22</sup>*

As mentioned in chapter one, an Atlantic connection through Buenos Aires was not only convenient for Atlantic merchants, but for the Spanish Crown's strategic interests as well. The River Plate estuary was considered an "open doorway to Peru" and, in a time of heightened inter-imperial rivalry, it was in the Spanish Crown's interest to keep a secure outpost there. But sustaining a secure and well-equipped colony cost money. As a general rule, the Spanish Crown's preference was for the colonies to be

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<sup>22</sup>Map taken from Ibid.

economically self-sufficient and, if anything, to produce revenue for the metropolis. As Governor Valdés y de la Banda had explained, however, it was impossible for Buenos Aires to prosper while under Lima's thumb. Lack of prosperity, in turn, had specifically dire consequences for the defense of the port, as the Governor reported to King Philip III in 1599. The fort, Valdés y de la Banda wrote, was "just a square enclosure made of adobe," with only "three pieces of artillery" that were still uninstalled. Worse still, there was no ammunition because gunpowder imported from Lima had "intolerable prices." The Governor also worried about the lack of manpower, and suggested the King to send married settlers who could be "good soldiers with little effort." He closed his letter by begging the King to "pay attention to the needs of this land," as the Buenos Aires port was one of the only two "doorways to the provinces of Peru"—the other being Portobelo.<sup>23</sup>

The Spanish Crown took its first step towards ensuring that the port would persist and prosper in 1602, by allowing Porteños to trade with Brazil. Subsequently, the Crown began to tap into the expanding Atlantic trade. Eventually, resources coming from this trade allowed the Crown to have a fully equipped military outpost in the River Plate, to regularly send troops to Chile via the Atlantic, to transport military and civil officials, and even to obtain a sizable amount of precious metals in the form of taxes and fees.

The expanding Atlantic trade so beneficial for the Crown had both a legal and an illegal face. The legal face involved Registro ships, that is, unattached ships independent of the fleet system that held a special license or *registro* from the Crown to sail to the

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<sup>23</sup>"Diego Rodríguez Valdés y de la Banda al Rey. Buenos Aires, 20 de mayo de 1599," *DHG* vol. 1: 158.

Americas.<sup>24</sup> The House of Trade granted these licenses to Seville merchants in exchange for a payment based on tonnage. The value of the cargo declared in Seville was usually lower than the cargo actually traded in Buenos Aires, and the exportation of silver, although specifically forbidden, was regularly done. As metropolitan officials could not control this smuggling, they took advantage of it for imperial objectives. They made owners of Registro ships bear part of the cost of the colonial administrative-military apparatus by making them transport military and civil personnel, and by collecting fiscal revenue through permits and fines. Particularly during the second half of the seventeenth century, the transportation services rendered by Registro ships assured the functioning of the colonial government in the River Plate and Chile, and reinforced military defense in southern Chile.<sup>25</sup> Fines on smuggled goods, in turn, were collected with such regularity, in many cases even before legal accusations had been made, that several scholars have argued they can be considered a tax on smuggling.<sup>26</sup>

The illegal face of the Atlantic trade involved *navíos de arribada*, that is, unlicensed ships that called on the port making use of the legal right to seek refuge in inclement weather or when in need of repairs. Hence, besides the semi-legal small ships coming from Brazil and the Registro ships coming from Spain, large *navíos de arribada* arrived directly from Europe. Portuguese ships predominated in the first half of the seventeenth century, and Dutch ships in the second half; but throughout the period there

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<sup>24</sup>Buenos Aires was not a special case in this regard. Unattached ships sailed to ports throughout the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru.

<sup>25</sup>For instance, in 1663 a Registro ship transported all the members of the short-lived Audiencia of Buenos Aires, Jesuit fathers to staff two missions, two hundred soldiers for Chile, and Chile's own Governor. Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, 83.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid. See also Moutoukias, "Power, Corruption, and Commerce."

were also unlicensed ships coming from Spain itself, France, and England.<sup>27</sup> Once the ship was anchored, there was a variety of ways in which the cargo could be sold in Buenos Aires in spite of the prohibition to trade. For instance, some captains obtained authorization from the metropolitan authorities to sell part of the cargo to pay for repairs, and then sold all of it under that cover. Other captains established contact with owners of coastal chacras or estancias (many times a local merchant) where the goods were transported in small barges and kept hidden until safe buyers were found.<sup>28</sup> Another option, which implied a larger-scale collaboration with local and metropolitan officials, involved a fraudulent confiscation of the cargo, and a “public” auction that benefited mostly the officials who carried out the confiscation or their surrogates.

In sum, illegal trade always included, in different degrees, the collaboration of metropolitan officials as well as of local merchants who often doubled as local government officials. Illegal trade also produced revenue for the crown in the form of taxes—auctions, for instance, reserved a percentage of the sales as royal tax—and fines imposed on those “discovered” smuggling. Historian Zacarías Moutoukias has described this illegal trade as a “placid and everyday” transgression to the prohibition to trade, and many scholars actually consider it as a “direct trade” between Buenos Aires and Spain’s

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<sup>27</sup>In 1648 The Spanish Crown signed a peace treaty with the Low Countries. That same year, a Royal Cédula informed Buenos Aires Governor Jacinto de Láriz about the peace treaty and, even though it reminded the Governor about the prohibition to trade, it also recommended good treatment of Dutch ships calling on the port. Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, 102-103.

<sup>28</sup>This type of clandestine landing also included human cargo. A detailed description of how African slaves were clandestinely landed on coastal chacras is in “Testimonio de Juan Gómez, Buenos Aires. 19 de noviembre de 1616,” printed in Raúl Molina, *Hernandarias. El hijo de la tierra* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Lancastremere, 1948), 474-482.

European rivals. More generally, illegal trade was part of the larger phenomenon of foreign penetration of the Spanish American trade.<sup>29</sup>

Despite its formal status as a closed port, therefore, in the seventeenth century semi-legal, legal, and illegal or direct trade transformed Buenos Aires into a busy entrepôt that connected the Andean economic space to the Atlantic. Scholars estimate that in the second half of the century the volume of port activity in Buenos Aires was comparable to that of Portobelo, the designated port for the Viceroyalty of Peru.<sup>30</sup>

Commercial activity did not simply pass through Buenos Aires but shaped the settlement at least in two fundamental ways. First, the profile of the Porteño elites changed as Portuguese merchants settled in Buenos Aires, married into local society, participated in the local government, and diversified their assets in the local economy by acquiring chacras and estancias.<sup>31</sup> Second, rural production, originally geared to the meager local market, developed with the injection of commercial capital and under the impulse of the interregional and Atlantic markets. Rural products such as flour, hides, tallow, and jerked beef found a niche in the trade with Brazil. Registro and arribada ships returning to Europe carried bull hides as part of their cargo. After mid-century, Buenos Aires not only served as point of entry to the Potosí market but also began to export its own rural products in the form of cattle-on-the-hoof and mules. Less directly but perhaps more importantly, products from chacras and estancias provided sustenance

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<sup>29</sup> Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, 98. Carlos Malamud uses the term "direct trade," see Carlos Malamud, "El comercio directo de Europa con América en el siglo XVIII," *Quinto Centenario*, no. 1 (1981). For the increasing foreign penetration of Spanish American trade, see John Lynch, *Spain under the Habsburgs* (New York: New York University Press, 1981), vol. 2: chapter 7.

<sup>30</sup> Moutoukias, "Power, Corruption, and Commerce," 773.

<sup>31</sup>For a study of the subsequent tensions between the "founding families" that arrived with Garay, so-called *beneméritos*, and the new groups, so-called *confederados*, see Gelman, "Economía natural, economía monetaria."



for slaves in-transit to regional markets, supplied the cart convoys that traversed the overland roads, and supplied the many ships that anchored in the port for months at a time.<sup>32</sup>

The growth of a diversified, market-oriented rural economy during the seventeenth century resulted in the gradual occupation of the campaña surrounding Buenos Aires. Many of the early land grants for chacras and estancias that had been idle for decades began to be productive, and new land grants were given farther from the city. In 1636, for instance, Captain Pedro de Rojas received a land grant for an estancia south of Buenos Aires, described as “far away and inhabitable owing to the Indians.” In the same year, Sargento Mayor Francisco Velázquez Menéndez received a land grant for an estancia along the river Todos los Santos, near the Indian reducción of Tubichaminí, that is, the southernmost point of Spanish occupation for most of the seventeenth century.<sup>33</sup> As market opportunities made rural production attractive, land was also accessed through means other than grants such as buying, leasing, and squatting.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>In 1678, for example, a Spanish Registro ship anchored on the Buenos Aires port bought 3,500 pesos worth of rural products including wheat, corn, flour, biscuits, bread, cattle, pigs, lard, candles, soap, a variety of fruits and vegetables (oranges, melons, watermelons, chickpeas, cabbages, chickens, and eggs). Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, 176. An estimation of the share of rural production that supplied this “floating market” (in-transit population such as slaves, ship crews, and cart convoy crews) is in González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 154-167.

<sup>33</sup>Oficina de Estadística General, *Registro Estadístico de Buenos Aires. 1861* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta Argentina de El Nacional, 1862), 14.

<sup>34</sup>For a discussion of the different forms of land access, see González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 111-124. Guillermo Banzato discusses early forms of land access in the south of Buenos Aires (jurisdiction of Magdalena) in Guillermo Banzato, *La expansión de la frontera bonaerense. Posesión y propiedad de la tierra en Chascomús, Ranchos, y Monte, 1780-1880* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, 2005), 45-47. For an analysis of the occupation of different areas of the campaña in relation to different market opportunities during 1583-1640, and of the incipient land market, see Saguier, “The Uneven Incorporation,” 185-193.

With time, a spatial pattern very familiar to economic geographers emerged: agricultural productive units or chacras consolidated close to the city, while ranching units or estancias were pushed to the outlying areas.<sup>35</sup> This spatial pattern began to take shape in the early seventeenth century when the Cabildo, seeking to solve recurrent conflicts stemming from livestock trampling onto cultivated fields, defined areas exclusively for farming and issued regulations that pushed animal-herding to outlying areas.<sup>36</sup> Chacra-owners, moreover, eagerly sought areas close to Buenos Aires and the trade roads going to Córdoba del Tucumán and Chile, in order to supply the city, the port, and the traveling cart convoys easily while keeping transportation costs down. Finally, as watercourses served as natural barriers to keep livestock away from fields, land grants for estancias were increasingly assigned on “the other side” [*la otra banda*] of rivers and streams. This measure was particularly relevant for cattle, which freely fed on open fields as opposed to other livestock like sheep and pigs, kept in corrals or at least under better control.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, as the seventeenth century advanced, rural jurisdictions closest to Buenos Aires such as San Isidro were occupied by chacras geared

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<sup>35</sup>Following Heinrich von Thünen’s spatial land-rent model, economic geographers argue that intensive forms of land-use tend to be located closest to markets, where land values are highest but access to consumers is easiest. Hence, a series of concentrically arranged zones of land-use around a central market results, by which the farther from the central market, the less intensive form of land-use. Terry G. Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers. Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 11-13.

<sup>36</sup>See for instance AECBA, serie 1, vol. 2: session of August 30, 1610; vol. 4: session of September 10, 1618, and session of October 5, 1620. An analysis of the conflicts between chacra-owners and livestock-owners is in González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 137-140.

<sup>37</sup>A 1602 inventory of the estancia of Ana Rodríguez, for instance, yielded twelve oxen, six horses, fifty-eight pigs, fifty goats, and nine hundred sheep. About the cattle, however, it was said that “it had become feral” (*andaba cimarrón*), had not been rounded-up in a while, and it was unknown how many heads there were. Ibid., 127.

to agricultural production while farthest areas such as Luján to the north and Magdalena to the south consisted of estancias that mixed some agriculture with livestock raising.<sup>38</sup>

Borrowing from Frederick Jackson Turner, recent scholarship has described the colonial campaña surrounding Buenos Aires as an “open frontier” with vast amounts of “free land” that kept prices low and thwarted a process of concentration of rural property. A crucial element from Turner’s model, however, was absent in Buenos Aires: there was no “continuous recession” of the area of free land owing to the “advance of the settlement line.” Instead, during the colonial period territorial occupation remained limited to the relatively narrow coastal strip of the Rolling Pampas, north of the river Salado. Scholars have offered several explanations for this rather un-Turnerian motionless frontier: the occupied area’s output met the existing demand for rural products, there was no significant population pressure on the land, and the danger of Indian attacks on the outlying areas of the campaña in fact limited the frontier openness.<sup>39</sup>

And yet, it would be misleading to characterize the Spanish expansion into the Pampas during this period as merely encompassing the rural campaña, the strip of land around Buenos Aires appropriated for chacras and estancias. Even if Porteños did not settle beyond the river Salado, they systematically exploited the area of the tierra adentro that extended to the south and west of that river—an area that was, for practical matters, “outside of empire.”<sup>40</sup> The Turnerian “frontier recession” does not capture this economic expansion because it was an expansion predicated on the appropriation of a

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<sup>38</sup>This pattern became more defined in the eighteenth century. See Garavaglia, *Pastores y labradores*.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 36-41, 361-384; Garavaglia and Gelman, “Rural History of the Río de la Plata.”

<sup>40</sup>Bushnell, “Gates, Patterns, and Peripheries,” 18.

resource distinct from land: mobile livestock. The estancias perched on the outlying areas of the campaña marked the outermost ring of appropriated land, but they were merely the starting point for the cattle industry that emerged in response to Atlantic and Andean demands. This cattle industry combined, in varying degrees at different times, open-range cattle ranching, the rounding up of feral cattle, and the hunting and slaughtering of feral cattle on the spot to produce hides and tallow. The cattle industry therefore propelled Porteños into the Pampas, in search of runaway animals and also in search of the herds of feral animals, as far as the sierras in the Southern Pampas and the westernmost extreme of the Inland Pampas. The Buenos Aires colonial campaña, in sum, was not solely a narrow strip of permanently occupied land. It was also a transitional space into the livestock-rich areas of the tierra adentro.

## II. A NEW WORLD CATTLE-RANCHING MODEL

Shortly after Buenos Aires was settled in 1580, its inhabitants began to take advantage of the surrounding grasslands through open-range cattle ranching. In accordance with Iberian precedents, the Cabildo established brand registration and compulsory “branding seasons” to ensure the property rights of the *señores de ganado* (cattle owners) over their respective animals.<sup>41</sup> Hence, as early as 1589, when Buenos Aires was still a struggling hamlet, Cabildo records show that Francisco de Salas Videla registered the first iron mark (*un fierro de herrar*). All cattle owners were required to

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<sup>41</sup>In southern Iberia, a stockraisers’ guild or *mesta* regulated the cattle industry, which existed in a complex social landscape that included variegated actors such as noble landowners, towns, and villages holding overlapping grazing rights. The *mesta* was transferred to areas of the New World such as central Mexico, which also had high-population densities and complex social arrangements over land use among competing actors—Indian towns versus hacienda-owners being a classic case. In Buenos Aires, low demographic density, lack of social complexity, and land abundance did not warrant the establishment of a specific institution to regulate cattle ranching, and hence that duty fell by default to the Cabildo. For the *mesta* in Southern Spain and central Mexico, see Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 33-34, 103-104.

register their marks with the Cabildo notary, who made sure the design of each mark was unique before approving them.<sup>42</sup> In order to enforce property rights, the Cabildo established fines for those who sold or slaughtered cattle not bearing their own registered mark, as well as for owners of cattle that remained unbranded after periodically established branding seasons. When in 1589 Mercedarian friars petitioned to benefit from stray cattle (*vacas mostrencas*), the Cabildo denied the petition on the basis that there were none. All cattle had identified owners, the Cabildo insisted, and the occasional unbranded animal—surely an oversight of its owner—was given to the city’s hospital.<sup>43</sup>

The Cabildo also mediated when conflicts arose among cattle owners. In 1606, for instance, Martín Alonso was accused of rounding up cattle that did not belong to him. The Cabildo gave Alonso a week to round up all his animals in a corral and brand them in the presence of all the *señores de ganado*, to avoid suspicion that he was “branding a head of cattle belonging to another.” Finally, in order to make sure cattle were kept under control and did not trample onto cultivated fields—an Old World quarrel with a long history—in 1589 the Cabildo opened the post of *guarda ganado* or cattle guard. The appointed guard, who received a yearly payment in wheat, was responsible for making sure the animals fed only on the ejido, and did not do any damage in the nearby chacras. The guard was also given the task of rounding up all cattle every Saturday in a

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<sup>42</sup>AECBA, serie 1, vol. 1: sessions of May 19 and August 21, 1589; session of July 23, 1607. Mark registration most likely started before 1589, but preserved Cabildo records only start in that year. The designs of the first registered marks, as described in the Cabildo minutes (an inverted J, a G with a vertical line in the middle, and a stylized lyre) had the typical Andalusian designs prevalent in most of Spanish America. See Appendix 4. For branding and mark registration in Iberia, see Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 18-42.

<sup>43</sup>AECBA, serie 1, vol. 1: session of October 16, 1589.

common corral, in order to keep the animals tame.<sup>44</sup> All these early regulations were geared towards an identifiable Old World village-based cattle-ranching model based on crop-livestock balance, and involving medium-size herds that pastured in the open but were kept under supervision and were frequently penned.<sup>45</sup>

This cattle-ranching model soon imploded, however, owing to a New World phenomenon: the astounding reproduction of grazing animals when introduced to the friendly American ecosystems.<sup>46</sup> As early as 1590, Procurador Mateo Sánchez formally complained to the Cabildo that the cattle guard frequently neglected to pen all animals in the common corral. Sánchez warned that the “many missing animals could become feral (*cimarrón*),” which would result in “familiar damages.” Scarcely a decade later, Sánchez’s warnings had proved prescient. In 1606 the Mercedarian Order insisted again on benefiting from stray cattle. This time the Cabildo did not deny their existence but ruled in the Order’s favor. At the same time, in response to recurrent complaints from chacra owners about unsupervised cattle trampling on fields, the Cabildo quickly began to limit the number of cattle allowed near the city. By 1618 all cattle, except for penned

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<sup>44</sup>*AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 1: sessions of April 9, April 19, and October 16, 1589; sessions of September 11 and December 11, 1606; session of December 11, 1607. On the basis of tithe records, Emilio Coni estimated that in 1585 the herds of Porteños’ estancias comprised about 685 heads of cattle, about twice as many heads as Juan de Garay had imported from Asunción in 1580. Coni, *Historia de las vaquerías*, 12.

<sup>45</sup>The village-based cattle-ranching strategy that Porteños seemed to favor in the first decades after the Buenos Aires foundation closely resembled the Salamanca and Extremadura models in Iberia. Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 35-42.

<sup>46</sup>For a classic study of the irruption of a different kind of livestock, sheep, in Mexico, see Melville, *A Plague of sheep*. For cattle, see Sluyter, “The Ecological Origins.” For cattle’s rapid reproduction in different areas of Spanish America, see Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 76-77, 88-89.

milk cows, were banished to the “other side” of the rivers immediately to the north and south of the city.<sup>47</sup>

Cattle had evidently reproduced too quickly, and Porteños were not enough in numbers, or were too busy with other endeavors, to be able to keep the animals under close supervision. Hence Porteños left behind the village-based strategy based on crop-livestock balance, and turned to another Old World model: open-range cattle ranching based on extensive land use of outlying areas and minimal livestock supervision.<sup>48</sup>

But the New World environment quickly challenged this model as well. In Buenos Aires, the outlying areas—the outer ring of estancias—were not narrow coastal fringes as in the Iberian Old World. They were instead on the doorstep of succulent, vast, and scarcely populated grasslands. The grasslands were an ideal habitat for cattle, and many animals soon abandoned the estancias and reproduced beyond any kind of Spanish control. By the 1610s, at the same time that the Cabildo started issuing regulations to send all cattle to the “other side” of the rivers, the first reports about large herds of completely feral “cows” roaming on the Pampas began to circulate.<sup>49</sup>

Thus, in addition to practicing Old World-style open-range cattle ranching in the outer ring of estancias, Porteños devised novel strategies to exploit the feral animals that were rapidly reproducing in the tierra adentro. They developed a hunting industry specifically aimed at obtaining hides and tallow from feral cattle, an industry that was divorced from any pretense of herding and completely dissociated from the cattle

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<sup>47</sup>AECBA, serie 1, vol. 1: session of July 23, 1590, and session of October 30, 1606; vol. 2: session of August 30, 1610; vol. 4: session of September 10, 1618.

<sup>48</sup>Such a strategy closely resembled the Andalusian model was favored in other Spanish colonies, such as central Mexico. See Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 19-34, 72-78; Sluyter, “The Ecological Origins.”

<sup>49</sup>See Francisco de Trejo’s statement in “Pedimiento del capitán D. Manuel de Frías. Buenos Aires, 1611-1617” printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 1: 311.

ranching practices brought from the Old World.<sup>50</sup> The centerpiece of these new practices was a hunting expedition, the so-called *vaquerías*, which Jesuit father Cattaneo described as follows:

A horse-mounted troop goes to where they know there are many beasts. When they arrive at the completely cattle-covered *campañas*, they split and ride in between the cattle, armed with an instrument consisting of a half-moon shaped iron blade at the end of a spear. With that instrument they hit the bulls on their rear legs with such dexterity that they cut the nerve on the joint; the leg immediately contracts and the beast, after limping for a while, falls and never gets up again. The riders then continue at high speed, wounding one bull or cow after another... after a while, as the untouched cattle flee, thousands of wounded beasts are left on the ground. The men then apply themselves to slit their throats and get the hides and tallow, or the tongues, abandoning the rest as food for the ravens...<sup>51</sup>

*Vaquerías* struck travelers such as Father Cattaneo as primitive endeavors in which valuable resources were sorely wasted. Historians have echoed these travelers, portraying *vaquerías* as an early, primitive stage of cattle ranching.<sup>52</sup> But there is plenty of evidence that challenges this understanding of *vaquerías*. In the first place, irrational as it might have seemed to outsiders to leave hundreds of pounds of meat for the “ravens,” it was hardly viable to make use of the meat. Besides the small size of the Buenos Aires market, wild cattle were not only scrawny but, as they died tired from running, their bodies underwent a biochemical process that made the meat dark, firm,

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<sup>50</sup>The same type of hunting industry targeting feral cattle developed in other realms of Spanish America where cattle reproduced rapidly, most clearly in the Spanish Antilles during the sixteenth century. As opposed to the Pampas’ case, however, in the Spanish Antilles this hunting industry was only a short-lived phase. Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 76-78.

<sup>51</sup>“P. Cattaneo a su hermano José. Reducción de Santa María en las Misiones del Paraguay, 20 de abril de 1730” printed in Mario Buschiazso, ed., *Córdoba en 1729 según cartas de los Padres C. Cattáneo y C. Gervasoni S.J.* (Buenos Aires: CEPA, 1941), 151-152.

<sup>52</sup>This argument can be found in Hernán Asdrúbal Silva, “El cabildo, el abasto de carne, y la ganadería. Buenos Aires en la primera mitad del siglo XVIII,” *Investigaciones y Ensayos* 3, no. julio-diciembre (1967); Coni, *Historia de las vaquerías*; Scobie, *Argentina*, chapter 3.



dry and prone to decompose rapidly. In addition to that, vaquerías took several days and were carried out several days away from Buenos Aires, mostly in the summer months. Hence, it would have been impossible to transport the meat in good conditions for the city's consumption.<sup>53</sup>

In the second place, despite Cattaneo's lurid images of rotting meat and gushing blood, vaquerías were not primitive endeavors but in fact required many resources, skilled laborers, and a fairly high level of organization. In the preparations for a 1612 vaquería to produce hides for the benefit of the city, for instance, Cabildo members enumerated the following list of needs: "youths" (*mancebos*) to kill the cattle, Indians to produce the hides, ox-carts to transport the hides back to the city, flour and yerba to feed the vaquería troops, knives to slaughter and skin the animals, and copper containers to produce tallow on the spot.<sup>54</sup> The Cabildo sought to obtain all these needed elements through a combination of voluntary donations from the wealthiest vecinos, and direct purchases. Copper containers, together with other essential elements such as the *medialunas* or half-moon shaped spears for the hocking poles, came to Buenos Aires through the Atlantic trade. Besides laborers skilled in killing cattle and producing hides and tallow, every vaquería needed a *baqueano* or guide able to find his way in the tierra adentro, and to find the places where cattle congregated.

Third and finally, vaquerías did not predate but co-existed with the more "modern" open-range cattle ranching. Rather than evolutionary stages in the exploitation of livestock, vaquerías and open-range cattle ranching were alternative responses to different market opportunities. The estancias mostly supplied the local

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<sup>53</sup>González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 186-187.

<sup>54</sup>AECBA, serie 1, vol. 2: session of January 23, 1612. Tallow was used to make candles and soap, and was obtained by melting away the fat from meat trimmings and bones.

market for beef, as the meat from the scrawnier feral animals was not rendered acceptable. In the first half of the seventeenth century, for instance, at least fourteen estancias of the Buenos Aires campaña had herds of between five hundred to three thousand heads of cattle.<sup>55</sup> The Cabildo, which regulated the meat supply through annual contracts that granted monopoly rights to the purveyors, demanded “young” and “fat” cattle, and chided purveyors who brought the cattle from too far away. In 1618, for example, the councilmen reprimanded the purveyors Blas de Mora and Joan de Avila, because they were slaughtering the latter’s cattle, which had recently arrived from Santa Fe and thus were “too skinny.” An inspector was assigned to make sure that Mora slaughtered first the cattle from his own estancia, located in the Buenos Aires campaña, thus giving time to the cattle from Santa Fe to fatten up.<sup>56</sup>

Vaquerías supplied instead the Atlantic market’s demand for hides—and tallow as well.<sup>57</sup> Not coincidentally, shortly after the crown authorized trade between Buenos Aires and Brazil in 1602, there so were “many interested persons” in carrying out

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<sup>55</sup> González Lebrero, “Chacras y estancias,” 83. These herds were under little supervision, and they usually left their respective estancias for months at a time, in search of water and better pastures. In turn, when estancieros went into the Pampas to round up their cattle for the branding season, they rounded up feral animals as well. During the colonial period, therefore, domesticated and feral cattle were not hard and fast categories.

<sup>56</sup> AECBA, serie 1, vol. 4: session of May 14, 1618. For a study of the meat-supply annual contracts—called *carnicerías* or *abasto de carne*—see Asdrúbal Silva, “El cabildo,” 398-406. Cattle from estancias also met local needs for lard (used instead of oil for cooking), tallow (used to make candles and soap), and hides (used to make a variety of products, including furniture, window panes, wheat-sacks, and thongs used in lieu of nails in the building of roofs and carts). Estancia inventories show small stocks of tallow, lard, and hides, as well as elements to make candles. González Lebrero, “Chacras y estancias,” 92-93.

<sup>57</sup> Estimates of hide exports for this early period are very impressionistic. There are no estimates for tallow exports. See Appendix 5.1. Vaquerías also supplied local needs for lard, tallow, and hides, as shown by permits in which the petitioner specified that the vaquería was “to produce lard and tallow for his own consumption (*para el gasto de su casa*).” See for instance AECBA, serie 1, vol. 14: session of September 23, 1676; vol. 15: session of February 6, 1679.

vaquerías that the Cabildo began to regulate them. In 1609 the Cabildo established that the interested persons had to present themselves before the Cabildo and, if found suitable, they were given a permit (*acción de vaquería*) and the status of *accioneros*.<sup>58</sup> Vaquerías did not demand any permanent investment but rather a capacity for marshaling resources that already existed, such as ox-carts, horses, and laborers, at any given time. They were therefore particularly suited to the erratic demands of the Atlantic trade, which depended mostly on port activity, that is, on how many ships in a given year succeeded in obtaining special licenses from the Spanish Crown, or in overcoming the bureaucratic and logistical hurdles involved in direct trade.<sup>59</sup> As Appendix 5.2 shows, the middle decades of the seventeenth century, when the port was particularly busy, concentrated the highest hide exports.<sup>60</sup>

As the seventeenth century advanced and Buenos Aires not only served as a point of entry to the Potosí market but also began to export its own rural products, there was more to vaquerías than slaughtering cattle and producing hides. A careful review of Cabildo records shows that in the second half of the century, in addition to the typical permits “to kill bulls,” other permits were issued to conduct “*recogidas*” (roundups). Even though these roundup permits were allegedly granted to allow cattle owners to

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<sup>58</sup>*AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 2: session of April 22, 1609.

<sup>59</sup>The “placid and everyday” nature of the direct trade did not preclude time-consuming hurdles. For instance, Acarette du Biscay arrived in the 1660s to the Buenos Aires port on an arribada ship. Du Biscay stated that it took the ship’s captain eleven months to obtain authorization from the Governor to trade his cargo for silver and hides. Du Biscay, *Relación de un viaje*, 99-100.

<sup>60</sup>Despite the growth in hide exports, their value was always very small when compared to the value of silver exports, the main reason why the Atlantic trade reached Buenos Aires. Zacarías Moutoukias has estimated that, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the value of an average Registro or arribada ship’s cargo was distributed as follows: 250,000-300,000 pesos in precious metals, about 15,000 pesos in hides (approximately 15,000 hides), 4,500-5,000 pesos in food supplies. Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*, 178.

replenish their herds, the permits' wording indicates that in many cases the animals' final destination was the "upper provinces."<sup>61</sup> In the second half of the seventeenth century, then, feral cattle exploited through *vaquerías* not only supplied hides for the Atlantic market but also cattle-on-the-hoof for the Andean economic space—the Potosí market but also, to a lesser extent, the Chilean market.<sup>62</sup>

While those *vaquerías* intended to produce hides differed fundamentally from open-range cattle ranching, the *vaquerías* intended to round-up feral animals still maintained some resemblance, as cattle had to be tamed, kept rounded-up, and fattened before being driven to their destinations. This took a long time, as shown by guide Cristóbal Juárez who explained that he had been "rounding up cattle" far into the Pampas for nine months.<sup>63</sup> The drive, in turn, was a risky operation that required access to pastures and water along the way. For example, in 1655 Buenos Aires vecino Roque de San Martín handed a large herd over to Captain Pedro de la Fuente, who had agreed to drive it to Chile. De la Fuente's own estancia in San Luis was to be used as resting and fattening grounds before the Andes crossing. While on his way west, however, de la

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<sup>61</sup>See for instance *AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 14: session of January 12, 1674; vol. 17: session of May 12, 1689.

<sup>62</sup>For estimates of cattle-on-the-hoof exports from Buenos Aires to Upper Peru during the second half of the seventeenth century see Appendix 5.3. There are no estimates of cattle exports to Chile. Margarita Gascón has argued that the establishment of a professional army of over 2,000 men following the Great Araucanian Rebellion of 1598-1602 surpassed the productive capacity of Chile's Central Valley, and required the importation of cattle—beef was one of the army's main food staples—from the eastern regions. As this trade was conducted through informal social networks, however, it seldom made it into written sources. Margarita Gascón, "La articulación de Buenos Aires a la frontera sur del Imperio Español," *Anuario IEHS* 13 (1998): 198, 202-205.

<sup>63</sup>APC: Criminales Capital 2, "Causa criminal contra los Indios de nación Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capitán Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. Córdoba, 1707-1708." In 1706 Alcalde Pedro de Jiles explained that at least three months were needed for feral cattle to become domestic and *aquerenciado* ("attached" to a particular area), and that during that time it was necessary to "corral the cattle every night." *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 1: session of September 20, 1706.

Fuente lost many heads of cattle, and by the time he arrived to Valle del Uco, in Mendoza, winter was already underway and the Andean passes were closed by snow. Hence de la Fuente had to rent grasslands—with San Martín’s money—where he could keep the cattle, while waiting for the Andean passes to open in the spring. Needless to say, the business was a fiasco that ended with San Martín taking de la Fuente to court.<sup>64</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century, thus, a cattle-ranching model that combined open-range cattle ranching, the hunting and slaughtering of feral cattle on the spot to produce hides and tallow, and the rounding up of feral cattle was firmly in place in Buenos Aires. This model combined Old World elements with New World innovations. The most obvious New World innovation was the *vaquería*, both to produce hides and to round-up cattle. *Vaquerías* acquired growing importance during the seventeenth century, as can be surmised through the Cabildo records. During the early decades of the century, Cabildo permits stipulated on average, for each *accionero*, between fifty and a two hundred heads of cattle, very rarely reaching three hundred. After the 1660s, by contrast, permits stipulating two or three thousand were the norm, and some even reached six and ten thousand (see Appendix 6). Furthermore, these recorded *vaquerías* were only a fraction of the total. Judging from the frequent Cabildo complaints, many people—from Buenos Aires and from other cities as well, as I show in the next section—ignored Cabildo regulations and carried out *vaquerías* without the required authorization.

One of the results of this exponential increase in the exploitation of feral cattle was that the herds began to move farther into the Pampas, where *vaquerías* followed suit. In January 1661, Cabildo members complained that the feral cattle were “far into the *tierra adentro*, more than fifty leagues from the city,” which added to the *vaquerías*’

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<sup>64</sup> Gascón, “The Southern Frontier of the Spanish Empire,” 143-146.

“ordinary difficulties and cost.” Since 1670, permits for roundups that specified far away places like “the other side of the Saladillo” (the Flooding and Southern Pampas south of the river Salado) and “la Punta” (the area of present-day San Luis, on the westernmost extreme of the Inland Pampas) were common. In 1694 the city’s procurador reported that cattle had withdrawn from the “places and corners” north of the river Salado to “the southern side, towards the coast,” where vaquería troops had followed.<sup>65</sup>

Higher costs were not the only problems accioneros faced as cattle moved farther into the Pampas. Even though Porteños had introduced radical modifications to Iberian ranching practices, including having effectively relinquished the care and feeding of their cattle to nature, they still thought of them as “domestic” animals and insisted on claiming property rights over the feral animals. They were thus very disconcerted, and vexed, when they discovered that such claims were hard to enforce in the tierra adentro. Vecinos from Córdoba, Mendoza, and San Luis, the neighboring cities that bordered the Pampas, thought it was their right as well to enter the tierra adentro and benefit from the feral cattle through vaquerías.

From the Porteño perspective, these other Spaniards were intruding into Buenos Aires’ jurisdiction and stealing Porteños’ cattle. The fact of the matter, however, was that the tierra adentro was, for all practical purposes, outside of empire. Although considered royal property (*tierras realengas*), as theoretically all Spanish America was, the area had been barely explored and was not clearly allocated to any governorship in particular. Vaquerías, furthermore, took place in a legal vacuum, as the Old World mechanisms to ensure property rights over livestock—keeping them rounded-up and branded—were ignored in the exploitation of feral cattle. In the second half of the seventeenth century,

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<sup>65</sup>AECEBA, serie 1, vol. 11: session of January 14, 1661; vol. 14: session of April 6, 1675; vol. 15: session of July 15, 1677; vol. 18: session of April 22, 1694. “Corners” (*rincones*) referred to the confluence of two watercourses, where vaquería troops were able to literally corner the feral animals.

as cattle and their by-products became desirable commodities in the Atlantic and Andean markets, the conflict over who had the right to benefit from the feral animals that roamed in the tierra adentro became acute.

### III. WHOSE PROPERTY? THE CONFLICTS OVER FERAL CATTLE

According to the Buenos Aires Cabildo, the city's vecinos—and more precisely, those who were accioneros<sup>66</sup>—had exclusive property rights over the feral animals that roamed the Pampas. To explain why, the Cabildo invoked two standard fundamentals of property rights, possession and labor:

[T]he cows... were brought by the first conquerors and distributed among those who re-settled this city, to each one according to his merits and possibilities. They fed them in the estancias given to them through the early land grants. They took care of the [cattle's] procreation from father to son, hence the rights of the descendants are indisputable, for they are true accioneros [and have rights] over the cattle that have run away and become feral.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup>In 1609 the Cabildo began to regulate the exploitation of feral cattle by allocating the right to carry out vaquerías exclusively to those approved as accioneros. Initially, the conditions to be approved as accionero were two: to be a known cattle owner (*señor de ganado*), and to formally declare the number of runaway animals. A vaquería permit was then issued for the corresponding number of heads of feral cattle. As the Atlantic and Andean demand made feral cattle into a valuable resource, however, the number of candidates requiring accionero status increased exponentially. For instance, multiple heirs of an original land grant could claim, two generations later, that they were accioneros. In the second half of the seventeenth century, estancia sales began to explicitly include the right to carry out vaquerías, which further enlarged the pool of candidates. The process by which the Cabildo approved candidates hence became much more politicized, as ultimately the decision to grant the status of accionero was made by each cadre of councilmen before whom the petition was presented. This system generated many conflicts, as the existing accioneros—many of whom were Cabildo members—had the right to oppose (*contradecir*) the new candidacies. See for instance AECBA, serie 1, vol. 11: session of January 10, 1663.

<sup>67</sup>AGN: IX 40-8-5, "Diferentes escritos del Cabildo y Regimiento de la ciudad de Córdoba del Tucumán al de ésta, y del gobernador de aquella provincia a este gobernador en primera instancia sobre el derecho que pretenden aquellos vecinos al ganado vacuno cimarrón que pasta en las campañas realengas, y las representaciones sobre este particular y la medición, deslinde y amojonamiento de ambas jurisdicciones. 1707." For Spanish conceptions of rights and property during the early colonial period, see Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism*, chapter 1. A historically and culturally minded approach to property rights theory in Carol M. Rose, *Property and Persuasion. Essays*

Invoking possession over feral animals that neither bore the brand of their putative owners nor were kept rounded-up was, of course, somewhat of a contradiction. The Cabildo hence offered a complementary story that explained how the accioneros, for reasons beyond their will, found themselves in that situation. In 1652, a devastating epidemic had taken so many lives that that all the estancias were left with “no people of service whatsoever.” As a result, cattle, until that moment kept carefully rounded-up, had run wild and spread all over the surrounding campaña, from the River Plate coast “up to the river Carcarañá” to the north, and “down to the river Saladillo” to the south.<sup>68</sup>

The Cabildo’s elaborate argument to explain how Porteños came to legitimately own feral animals was not fortuitous but responded to two inter-related dilemmas. First was the fact that vaquerías clearly deviated from Old World cattle-ranching practices and consequently, from the law and customs upon which those practices rested. The *Sumario de la Recopilación General de Leyes de Indias* (book IV, title IV) established that cattle-owners had to keep animals “under their hand and custody” by roundups and branding, so that the “maintenance of their dominion” would be “known” to everyone. In contrary cases, that is, if owing to the cattle-owners’ carelessness the animals went back to their “fierce nature,” the common law (*derecho de gentes*) established that “the first one who possessed them” acquired dominion over the animals (*el primero que los*

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*on the History, Theory, and Rhetoric of Ownership* (Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford: Westview Press, 1994), chapter 1.

<sup>68</sup>AGN: IX 40-8-5, "Diferentes escritos del Cabildo y Regimiento de la ciudad de Córdoba del Tucumán al de ésta, y del gobernador de aquella provincia a este gobernador en primera instancia sobre el derecho que pretenden aquellos vecinos al ganado vacuno cimarrón que pasta en las campañas realengas, y las representaciones sobre este particular y la medición, deslinde y amojonamiento de ambas jurisdicciones. 1707." See also González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 128.



*ocupase*).<sup>69</sup> The exploitation of feral cattle through *vaquerías* clearly did not fulfill the necessary requirements to show legitimate “dominion” over cattle, that is, branding and roundups. It hence left the door dangerously open for everyone—the first one who “possessed” the animals—to legitimately exploit these cattle through, for example, *vaquerías*. It was precisely this door which the Cabildo attempted to close with the argument, arguably dubious, that feral cattle were in fact runaway cattle which had left their *estancias*, not owing to their owners’ neglect but due to an event so fateful as the “great contagion” of 1652.

The Cabildo’s preoccupation with elaborating an alternative to colonial laws and customs to justify *Porteños*’ exclusive property rights over feral cattle was far from purely legalistic. It addressed a second, very practical, dilemma: the fact that *vaquería* troops from the surrounding governorships of Córdoba del Tucumán and Cuyo had been breaching *Porteños*’ putative rights since the beginning of the seventeenth century. Already in 1616, barely seven years after the Cabildo began to issue *vaquería* permits, there were complaints about Córdoba *vecinos* that went into the “city’s jurisdiction” to “kill the feral cows of the commons.” These reports became more frequent and vitriolic during the second half of the seventeenth century, when cattle and their byproducts became high-demand commodities in the Atlantic and Peruvian markets.<sup>70</sup>

In the second half of the seventeenth century, therefore, the Cabildo began to take measures to enforce *Porteños*’ putatively exclusive rights over feral cattle. At first, these measures included routine actions within the repertoire of Spanish American legal

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<sup>69</sup>Cited in “Vista del fiscal, Consejo de Indias, 17 de noviembre de 1695,” printed in *Correspondencia*, vol. 3: p. 346. See also Rodrigo de Aguiar y Acuña and Rodrigo Montemayor y Córdoba de Cuenca, *Sumarios de la Recopilación General de Leyes de Indias* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994), 716-718.

<sup>70</sup>*AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 3: session of November 24, 1616; vol. 7: session of February 3, 1631; vol. 11: session of November 15, 1659; vol. 14: sessions of November 24 and April 25, 1675.

remedies. Thus, beginning in the 1660s the Buenos Aires Cabildo began sending commissioners to the Córdoba Cabildo to protest the “intrusions” of Córdoba vecinos in the campañas. Formal demands (*exhortos*) followed, and by the 1680s the conflict had escalated into a lawsuit before the Charcas Audiencia.

At the same time, as it became clear the legal actions by themselves were not effective enough, the Cabildo began to experiment with novel mechanisms of enforcement. In 1665, for the first time, Cabildo members dispatched the Alcalde de la Santa Hermandad, who was in charge of civil and criminal justice in rural areas, to “survey” (*registrar*) the campañas and apprehend anyone found carrying out a vaquería without a Cabildo-issued permit. In subsequent instances, in order to reinforce the Alcalde’s authority, the Cabildo began to ask governors, who were in charge of defense matters, to dispatch mounted troops with “arms and ammunition” with the Alcalde. Finally, in order to give these ad hoc patrols a legal sheen, the Cabildo obtained public edicts from several acting Governors that authorized the patrols to apprehend vaquería troops lacking permits, seize their carts, horses, oxen, cattle, and “other implements,” and bring them to Buenos Aires to be legally charged.<sup>71</sup>

The Buenos Aires Cabildo’s aggressiveness, however, soon found opposition from other spheres of the colonial government that became entangled in the enforcing measures. Neither several acting Governors nor the Charcas Audiencia found the

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<sup>71</sup>AGN: IX 40-8-5, "Diferentes escritos del Cabildo y Regimiento de la ciudad de Córdoba del Tucumán al de ésta, y del gobernador de aquella provincia a este gobernador en primera instancia sobre el derecho que pretenden aquellos vecinos al ganado vacuno cimarrón que pasta en las campañas realengas, y las representaciones sobre este particular y la medición, deslinde y amojonamiento de ambas jurisdicciones. 1707." The first apprehensions and seizures took place in 1669.

Cabildo's argument to justify Porteños' property rights over feral cattle persuasive enough.<sup>72</sup>

In 1669 the Alcalde de la Hermandad and the patrol sent by the Cabildo to "survey" the campañas apprehended a vecino from Córdoba, Juan López de Fuisa, whom the Cabildo accused of rounding up eight hundred heads of cattle without a permit. Fuisa argued that he had not rounded them up in the Buenos Aires jurisdiction but in the Río Cuarto area, and added that he held a vaquería permit for that area granted by the Córdoba Cabildo. When Buenos Aires Governor José Martínez de Salazar reviewed the case, he ordered "the seizure to be lifted and the said cows returned." Despite the Buenos Aires Cabildo's objections, which stood its ground and argued that transgressors needed to be properly punished, Governor Salazar maintained his verdict. A few years later, the Governor went even further, posing a direct challenge to the Cabildo argument that Porteños held exclusive property rights over feral cattle. In 1674, Salazar argued that feral cattle had to be considered *mostrenco*, that is, unclaimed property hence belonging to the Crown:

[S]everal years ago, owing to the lack of [people of] service, cattle that belonged to different vecinos ran away from this city's estancias. Taking advantage of the situation, [these vecinos] have started to call themselves *accioneros* and to claim rights over all the cattle that these campañas contain up to a distance of sixty leagues. These animals have multiplied and procreated on royal lands, and hence they should be considered *bienes mostrencos* belonging to His Majesty.<sup>73</sup>

Salazar continued by accusing the Buenos Aires Cabildo members of neglecting the common good to benefit themselves with the vaquería permits. To legitimize the permits (*para honestarlos*), argued the Governor, accioneros began "to pass them through this city's Cabildo, where many accioneros are councilmen, and others are their

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<sup>72</sup>For the role of narrative and persuasion in establishing property rights, see Rose, *Property and Persuasion*, chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>73</sup>AECEBA, serie 1, vol. 14: session of January 12, 1674.

relatives or dependents, and hence they ordinarily rule following their own convenience.” To resolve this conflict of interests, Salazar suggested that the Governor, rather than the Cabildo, grant the permits in the future. He also insisted that vecinos return to the established Old World cattle-ranching practices: to keep “their cattle in their estancias, tame, rounded-up, and branded with their respective marks... and to make use of the cattle only in this manner.”

The granting of vaquería permits, therefore, became another reason for the many conflicts arising between the local elites, represented in the Cabildo, and the acting Governors whom, for one reason or another, took the step of challenging these elites.<sup>74</sup> In the case of Salazar’s 1674 auto, the Cabildo quickly and decisively protected its prerogative to grant vaquería permits, arguing that it had possessed such prerogative “since immemorial times.” Governors, added the Cabildo, owing to their condition of “foreigners” (*forasteros*) and their short stay in the post lacked the necessary “knowledge and understanding of vecinos’ venerable past, their *acciones*, and rights.”<sup>75</sup>

The Charcas Audiencia also mounted resistance to the Buenos Aires Cabildo’s claims, although of a different sort. In the 1680s a lawsuit between Buenos Aires and Córdoba about conflicting vaquería rights was appealed to the Charcas Audiencia. In 1692, rather than upholding the Buenos Aires Cabildo’s claims, the Audiencia dictated that the boundaries between both jurisdictions had to be demarcated and marked

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<sup>74</sup>Studies on the complex issue of the relations between metropolitan and local authorities in colonial Buenos Aires suggest that social networks cut across the colonial government structures (Cabildos, governors, royal officials, and church officials). Hence, conflicts among them resulted from conflicts among different social “factions,” rather than from a clear-cut opposition between metropolitan and local interests. Gelman, “Cabildo y elite local;” Moutoukias, “Power, Corruption, and Commerce;” Zacarias Moutoukias, “Réseaux personnels et autorité coloniale: les négociants de Buenos Aires au XVIIIe siècle,” *Annales ESC* 47, no. 4-5 (1992); Moutoukias, “Gobierno y sociedad.”

<sup>75</sup>*AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 14: session of January 15, 1674.

(*deslindados y amojonados*). After that, the Cabildo of each city could grant vaquería permits valid within the boundaries of their respective jurisdictions.<sup>76</sup>

Neither Buenos Aires nor Córdoba, however, showed much interest in carrying out the demarcation, which was indefinitely postponed. What was really at stake was not control over the territory but access to a movable resource such as feral cattle. From this perspective, the Audiencia's decision was, potentially, very damaging to the Buenos Aires Cabildo's claims. It could result in restrictions to Porteño accioneros' access to cattle in the area of the river Carcarañá, the contested boundary between Córdoba and Buenos Aires. Moreover, it could eventually restrict their access to cattle in other areas of the tierra adentro that Porteños regularly exploited, such as La Punta, close to the Cuyo jurisdiction, or the southern sierras, which were of uncertain jurisdiction.

The Buenos Aires Cabildo's ambitions for unrestricted access to feral cattle, no matter the territory they were on, had already shown in 1674. In that year, the Cabildo authorized Porteño accioneros to carry out vaquerías "in any places where cattle grazed, even if they are granted lands, as long as their owners do not occupy them." In a 1704 report, in the context of the persistent conflicts with Córdoba, the Cabildo made this ambition completely explicit. It stated that Porteño accioneros had "legitimate claims" over the cattle that grazed on the countryside around Buenos Aires, as well as the cattle that grazed on the countryside around Córdoba, because the latter's origin was in the Porteño herds that had run away after the epidemic of 1652.

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<sup>76</sup>AGN: IX 40-8-5, "Diferentes escritos del Cabildo y Regimiento de la ciudad de Córdoba del Tucumán al de ésta, y del gobernador de aquella provincia a este gobernador en primera instancia sobre el derecho que pretenden aquellos vecinos al ganado vacuno cimarrón que pasta en las campañas realengas, y las representaciones sobre este particular y la medición, deslinde y amojonamiento de ambas jurisdicciones. 1707." See also Hebe Judith Blasi, *Los deslindes entre las ciudades de Buenos Aires, Santa Fe y Córdoba durante el período preindependiente*, Separata VI Congreso Internacional de Historia de América (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de la Historia, 1982).

Porteño patrols' apprehensions of Córdoba vecinos on jurisdiction that could have been considered part of Córdoba caused a diplomatic clash between the Governorship of the River Plate and the Governorship of Córdoba del Tucumán, a clash that even included threats of armed violence. In May 1704, the Córdoba Procurador harshly accused Buenos Aires Governor Alonso Juan de Valdés e Inclán of using "his command over the soldiers" to dispatch squads to Córdoba's jurisdiction. These squads had "violently seized" vaquería troops from Córdoba, "with their cattle herds, horses, mules, oxen, and carts loaded with tallow and fat." Even worse, the soldiers had taken troop members to Buenos Aires, jailed them, and auctioned their property. The Procurador curtly reminded Valdés e Inclán that, as the Governor of Buenos Aires, he lacked jurisdiction to punish vecinos from Córdoba without giving notice to Córdoba authorities first. He also warned that, unless the Porteño patrolling ceased, violence could flare up on the campañas. Vaquería troops from Córdoba were tired of the "hassles and humiliations" that the patrols inflicted upon them. They had refrained from defending themselves only owing to the "subjection and loyalty they owed to their superiors." Finally, in a slightly menacing tone, the Procurador reported that Córdoba vecinos were clamoring for reprisals, and that the authorities had suspended the dispatch of troops only because of "the likely consequence of deaths and other perturbations."<sup>77</sup>

The procurador's demand put Governor Valdés e Inclán in the difficult position of having to justify the patrolling, required by the Cabildo but ultimately authorized by him, but at the same time avoiding the escalation of the conflict into armed violence between

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<sup>77</sup>AGN: IX 40-8-5, "Diferentes escritos del Cabildo y Regimiento de la ciudad de Córdoba del Tucumán al de ésta, y del gobernador de aquella provincia a este gobernador en primera instancia sobre el derecho que pretenden aquellos vecinos al ganado vacuno cimarrón que pasta en las campañas realengas, y las representaciones sobre este particular y la medición, deslinde y amojonamiento de ambas jurisdicciones. 1707."

both governorships. Consequently, Valdés e Inclán stood his ground before Córdoba but took prompt measures to limit the zeal with which the Buenos Aires Cabildo patrolled the campañas. Hence, in his response to the Procurador, the Governor made clear that he was not going to allow violence “among the King vassals,” but also defended his decision of sending patrols:

I was only fulfilling my duty. It is outrageous that Your Honor suggests that armed violence could result from these actions, as neither these vecinos will attempt that nor I will allow it, as I am naturally opposed to war among vassals of our King... I am only making sure that justice is served, and if the results are the damages that Your Honor is complaining about, I am very sorry but the blame falls on the one who steals what belongs to another.<sup>78</sup>

Shortly after sending this message to Córdoba, however, Valdés e Inclán took a series of measures to limit the Porteño patrolling that was causing so much acrimony between the two cities. First, as Governor Salazar had done before him, Valdés e Inclán urged the Cabildo to follow the cattle ranching practices established by custom and law. As he had “told the councilmen many times,” the right solution was that for the accioneros to make the effort of keeping all their cattle rounded-up and branded, thus avoiding vaquerías and the subsequent need for controlling “campañas that were so vast.” Second, the Governor began to zealously guard his prerogative of sending armed troops, either garrison soldiers or militias, to patrol the campañas.<sup>79</sup> Thus, when in May 1704 the Cabildo dispatched on its own account a troop of militias with the Alcalde de la Hermandad, Valdés e Inclán quickly sent a formal reprimand reminding the councilmen that “it was the Governor’s exclusive prerogative to dispatch commissions of that sort.”

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Garrison soldiers were professional soldiers sent from the metropolis and paid with funds from the Royal Treasury. Militias were composed by all males residing in the city, who had the duty of providing “service of arms” to the King when required by the authorities. The better-positioned vecinos acted as militia officers. Juan Beverina, *El virreinato de las Provincias del Río de la Plata. Su organización militar* (Buenos Aires: Círculo Militar, Biblioteca del Oficial, 1992 [1930]), chapter 7.

Finally, Valdés e Inclán began to flatly deny the Cabildo's request for troops to patrol the campañas. In 1706 the Cabildo made one such request, in the context of one of the many sieges to the Portuguese settlement of Colonia del Sacramento. The Governor answered that garrison soldiers were in dire straits owing to the recent scarcity of royal funds to pay their salaries. Besides, he added, the crown was paying these salaries for the soldiers to serve "more noble" purposes than patrolling the campañas, purposes dictated not by the local society's narrow interests but by the crown's larger interests—for instance, expelling the Portuguese from Colonia del Sacramento. As for the militias, the auto added, they were showing signs of fatigue from the constant effort of patrolling the campañas, as proved by the fact that most vecinos, except for the officers, "gave many excuses to be exempted" every time a patrolling expedition was organized.<sup>80</sup> On this last point the subtext of Valdés e Inclán's auto was the same of Governor Salazar in 1674. The militias' fatigue stemmed directly from the unjust distribution of vaquería permits, the Governor explained, because "the poorest vecinos contribute to these patrols and only the richest benefit from them"—that is, the accioneros, many of whom were Cabildo members.<sup>81</sup>

By the early eighteenth century, therefore, the Buenos Aires Cabildo's struggle to define and enforce a property regime that would have allocated exclusive rights over feral cattle to Porteño accioneros was severely under siege. The timing could not have been worse, as during that period the Atlantic demand for hides rose as a result of changes in Spanish trade policy, and of the *Asientos* (slave trade contracts) granted to

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<sup>80</sup>*AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 1: session of June 3, 1704; Governor's auto from August 23, 1706.

<sup>81</sup>In 1706, for instance, councilman Diego Pérez Moreno had obtained a permit to "round-up ten thousand heads of cattle." *AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 1: Governor's auto from August 23, 1706.



the French Guinea Company first (1708-1713), and later to the English South Sea Company (1713-1739).<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, not only vaquería troops from other cities threatened Porteños' exploitation of feral livestock. A 1715 petition by the Cabildo procurador revealed that as unarmed vaquería troops penetrated farther into the tierra adentro, they suffered "repeated hostilities" at the hands of the Indians. The petition added an intriguing detail: the "hostile" Indians were not the familiar Pampas or Serranos, but the feared "enemy Indians from Chile."<sup>83</sup> The next chapter explains what these "enemy Indians" were doing in the Pampas, and what their relationship was to the familiar Pampas and Serranos.

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<sup>82</sup>I expand on this subject in chapter 6. See Appendix 5 for hide exports estimates.

<sup>83</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3: session of January 7, 1715.

#### 4. INDIAN ECOLOGICAL AND INTERCULTURAL ADAPTATIONS FROM THE PAMPAS TO THE ANDES

Alfred W. Crosby coined the expression “ecological imperialism” to emphasize the fact that Old World peoples accomplished their conquest of the New World in concert with Old World pathogens, plants, and animals.<sup>1</sup> Particularly regarding the latter, historians have shown that the introduction of Old World livestock helped European imperial expansion in the Americas by disrupting the lives of Native peoples, by reconfiguring New World environments to suit European purposes, and by facilitating the imposition of European concepts of property, land use, and husbandry.<sup>2</sup>

Some Native groups, however, initially thrived on the invasion of Old World livestock. Early on historians noticed that horses remarkably increased the military capabilities of “indomitable” Indians like the Chichimecas of northern Mexico and the Araucanians of southern Chile.<sup>3</sup> In these and other peripheries of the Spanish Empire, Native peoples adopted European livestock while remaining politically sovereign, unlike the Indian pueblos of central Mexico, and spatially segregated, unlike the Indian villages of the North American eastern seaboard, which were in close proximity to English settlements. They thus were able to adopt livestock without having European concepts of husbandry and property forced upon them. Recently, David Weber’s scholarly

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<sup>1</sup> Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*.

<sup>2</sup>For eastern North America, see Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*; Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, chapter 4. For central Mexico, see Melville, *A Plague of sheep*; Sluyter, “The Ecological Origins.”

<sup>3</sup>Louis de Armond, “Frontier Warfare in Colonial Chile,” *Pacific Historical Review* 23, no. 2 (1954); Philipp W. Powell, *La guerra chichimeca (1550-1600)* (Mexico: FCE, 1977).

synthesis on *indios bárbaros* has demonstrated that the adoption of horses by the independent Indians that inhabited southern Chile, the Gran Chaco, the Pampas, and northern New Spain hindered rather than helped Spanish domination. By the mid-eighteenth century, these independent horse-riding Indians who bordered the empire, “more boldly and adeptly than ever before, raided Spanish farms and ranches, destroyed Spanish property, took Spanish lives, and blocked the arteries of commerce.”<sup>4</sup>

Like their counterparts throughout the periphery, the Pampa Indians thoroughly adopted horses—and cattle as well. These new species provided them with extra sources of nourishment (meat and blood), with new raw materials (bones for tools; hides for tents, utensils, clothing and defensive armor), and made mobility easier. As anthropologist Miguel Angel Palermo has explained, however, the Pampa Indians’ most revolutionary adaptation to Old World livestock was not in using and consuming these animals but in exchanging them.<sup>5</sup> During the seventeenth century, the exchange of horses and cattle was at the heart of increased intertribal relations among Indian peoples inhabiting a vast swath of territory that extended from the Pampas across the Andes into south central Chile, the land of the so-called “Araucanians” or “Aucas.” These intensified intertribal relations created a trans-Andean Native world with a volatile political and cultural geography that scholars are just beginning to understand.

Not only intensified intertribal relations gave shape to this wider Native world. As I show in the pages that follow, in its western and eastern extremes—the Araucanía

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<sup>4</sup>Weber, “Bourbons and Bárbaros,” 80. See also his full-length study, Weber, *Bárbaros*, especially chapter 2. Recent scholarship on North America has shown that there were negative undercurrents underlying these success stories, as the adoption of horses eventually had harmful effects on Native peoples’s societies and the environment. See Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Rise and Fall of Plains Indians Horse Culture,” *The Journal of American History* 90, no. 3 (December 2003); Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*; White, *The Roots of Dependency*.

<sup>5</sup> Palermo, “Reflexiones.”

and the Pampas, respectively—Indian peoples had engaged differently with the Spanish world that abutted to the north. These different patterns of intercultural relations proved to have lasting consequences for the ways in which Indian peoples related to each other.

### *I. A WIDER NATIVE WORLD*

As historian Kristen Jones has argued, Spanish imperialism first and Creole nationalism later have enshrined the north-south axis of the Andes as the natural boundary for the southern tip of South America. In Jones' words, this north-south orientation has been "projected in the historical mapping of colonial and national political boundaries, as they were increasingly subdivided and defined over the centuries."<sup>6</sup>

To picture the Indian country that emerged in the seventeenth century we have to momentarily put aside the north-south boundary along the Andes. The task is to imagine instead an east-west boundary extending across the Andes from the Pampas to the Araucanía region in southern Chile, following the line of southernmost Spanish settlements. These settlements were, from east to west, Buenos Aires, Río Cuarto, San Luis, Mendoza, and Concepción (see Map 7).

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<sup>6</sup>Jones, "Warfare, Reorganization, and Readaptation," 139. The sweeping territorial reorganization under the Bourbons in the late eighteenth century established the Andes as the boundary between Chile and the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata. Up until then, Chile had included the Cuyo region, located in present-day western Argentina (see Map 3, p. 46). In the nineteenth century, the Andes were a contested boundary between the emerging and civil-war-enmeshed nation-states of Chile and Argentina. Finally, by the twentieth century the Andes were formally established as the border between both countries—although disagreements continued to exist and mar diplomatic relations from time to time.



Map 7. The East-West trans-Andean boundary<sup>7</sup>

The territory south of this boundary was a wider, trans-Andean Indian country that remained under the control of independent or unconquered Native peoples.

<sup>7</sup>Map adapted from Ibid., 155.

Spanish dominion was not only confined north of the boundary but it was also fragmented into discrete jurisdictions: the governorships of River Plate, Córdoba del Tucumán, and Chile. Each governorship had its own government, priorities, and policies.<sup>8</sup>

During the seventeenth century, the emergence of Native trans-Andean exchange networks linked the different regions of this Indian country, and such country with the territory under Spanish control, north of the boundary. "Exchange network" is a useful simplification because, as I explain in the following two sections, exchange was inseparable from a broader spectrum of social relations that emerged among Indians themselves, and between them and the Spaniards.

Early twentieth-century scholarship reduced these exchange networks to a horse trade between Pampas and Araucanian Indians. The context for this trade, scholars posited, was Indians' ecological adaptation to a major change in the post-contact environments they inhabited: the proliferation of horses. In accordance with the environmental determinism prevalent at the time, scholars argued that the horse "provided the greatest single social and military transformation of the Indian character" during the post-contact era.<sup>9</sup> In the Araucanía, the horse made Indians into "indomitable" warriors who were able to withstand the Spanish conquest.<sup>10</sup> In the

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<sup>8</sup>For the governorships, see Map 3, p. 46. The actual limits between each jurisdiction were fuzzy and the subject of recurrent legal disputes. Until the late eighteenth century, Buenos Aires belonged to the governorship of the Río de la Plata, Río Cuarto belonged to the governorship of Córdoba del Tucumán, while San Luis, Mendoza, Santiago de Chile and Concepción belonged to the Governorship of Chile. In the late eighteenth century these jurisdictions were modified as part of the Bourbon reforms.

<sup>9</sup>Alfred Joseph Tapson, "Indian warfare on the Pampa during the colonial period," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 42, no. 1 (1962): 5.

<sup>10</sup>Armond, "Frontier Warfare;" Robert Charles Padden, "Cultural Adaptation and Military Autonomy among the Araucanians of Chile," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 13, no. 1 (1957).

Pampas, the horse transformed Indians into “predatory equestrian nomads,” that is, peoples who roamed over ill-defined areas in horse-mounted bands, and subsisted mostly by raiding Spanish ranches and their livestock.<sup>11</sup> As the story goes, the “fierce” Araucanians needed horses for their war endeavors against the Spaniards in southern Chile, at the same time that horses were proliferating in the Pampas. Hence a “brisk trade” developed by which Pampas Indians gave horses and the Araucanians gave “textiles or other articles of a higher culture.”<sup>12</sup>

The focus of this scholarship was on each Indian group’s adaptation to the horse, not to each other. When intertribal contact entered the picture, it did so through the prism of the “Araucanization of the Pampas,” the shorthand for a thesis that Argentine ethnologists put forward in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>13</sup> According to this thesis, while Pampas Indians were “primitive” hunter-gatherers, Araucanians shared in the “higher” culture of the Andes, as shown by the fact that they had more “advanced” traits such as (rudimentary slash-and-burn) agriculture and weaving. As Araucanians were the most “dynamic” element, their culture gradually became dominant, and peoples living farther east were “Araucanized.” Eventually, the attraction of the abundant feral herds was too strong for the Araucanians to be resisted, and they themselves migrated east, taking over the greater part of the plains and bringing greater unity and a “more dynamic leadership” to the Indians of the Pampas. By the early 1700s, according to this

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<sup>11</sup>John M. Cooper, “The Patagonian and Pampean Hunters,” in *Handbook of South American Indians*, ed. Julian Steward (Washington: Smithsonian Institution-Bureau of American Ethnology, 1946); Dionisio School Lastra, *El indio del desierto, 1535-1879* (Buenos Aires: Agencia General de Librería y Publicaciones, 1930); Steward and Faron, *Native Peoples of South America*; Tapson, “Indian warfare.”

<sup>12</sup>Tapson, “Indian warfare,” 6.

<sup>13</sup>Salvador Canals Frau, “The Expansion of the Araucanians in Argentina,” in *Handbook of South American Indians*, ed. Julian H. Steward (Washington: Smithsonian Institution-Bureau of American Ethnology, 1946).

scholarship, Araucanian migration had produced the “ethnic replacement” of the original Pampas dwellers. But even the more “advanced” Araucanians could not escape the powerful influence of the Pampas environment: the same heavy grasses that sustained large herds of horses and cattle impeded slash-and-burn agriculture. The plains hence eventually transformed “a settled people with an Andean culture into nomads who lived on cattle and pillage.”<sup>14</sup>

My discussion in the pages that follow is informed by recent anthropological and historical research that has radically revised this early understanding of trans-Andean connections. This revisionist scholarship has particularly targeted the Araucanization thesis, and the environmental determinism that identified the horse as the single factor that explained all changes in Indian societies during the post-contact era.

A first and basic problem with the Araucanization thesis is that it conflated two distinct, if interrelated, processes that had different timing. One process was the Pampas Indians’ incorporation of Araucanian cultural elements. This process harked back to pre-contact times, as the archeological record shows, for instance, that Indians of the Pampas used Araucanian ceramics. But the process intensified in the post-contact era with the consolidation of the trans-Andean networks. By the mid-eighteenth century, for instance, the Araucanian language (Mapudugun) had become a sort of lingua franca throughout the Pampas. The other process was the actual migration of Araucanian groups east of the Andes. Even though hunting parties regularly visited the Pampas since at least the late seventeenth century, Araucanians groups actually migrated and settled for good on the Pampas only during the first decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Tapson, “Indian warfare,” 6.

<sup>15</sup> Axel Lazzari and Diana Lenton, “Araucanization and nation, or how to inscribe foreign Indians upon the Pampas during the last century,” in *Contemporary perspectives on the Native peoples of the Pampa, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego*, ed. Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata (Wesport & London: Bergin & Garvey, 2002);



As recent research shows, the motives for the Araucanian migration to the Pampas during the nineteenth century were far more complex than Indian appetite for feral livestock, and were in fact closely related to the convulsed post-independence Creole politics of Chile and Argentina.<sup>16</sup>

More generally, the Araucanization thesis partook of the racist and evolutionist assumptions of the time that classified Native peoples—craniological measurements included—according to stages of civilization that proceeded from primitive nomad hunter-gatherers to civilized sedentary agriculturalists.<sup>17</sup> It also partook of the

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Mandrini and Ortelli, "Repensando viejos problemas;" Ortelli, "La "araucanización" de las Pampas."

<sup>16</sup> See Bechis, "Fuerzas indígenas;" Martha Bechis, "De hermanos a enemigos: los comienzos del conflicto entre los criollos republicanos y los aborígenes del área araucopampeana, 1814-1818," in *Cruzando la Cordillera... La frontera argentino-chilena como espacio social*, ed. Susana Bandieri (Neuquén: Universidad Nacional del Comahue, 2001); Martha Bechis, "The Last Step in the Process of "Araucanization of the Pampa," 1810-1880: Attempts of Ethnic Ideologization and "Nationalism" among the Mapuche and Araucanized Pampean Aborigines," in *Archeological and Anthropological Perspectives on the Native Peoples of Pampa, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata (Westport and London: Bergin & Garvey, 2002); Ratto, *La frontera bonaerense*; Daniel Villar, "Ni salvajes ni aturdidos. La guerra de los indios comarcanos (y extracomarcanos) contra la Vanguardia de Pincheira, a través del Diario del Cantón de Bahía Blanca," in *Relaciones interétnicas en el sur bonaerense, 1810-1830*, ed. Daniel Villar (Bahía Blanca: Universidad Nacional del Sur - Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1998); Daniel Villar and Juan Francisco Jiménez, "Indios Amigos. El tránsito progresivo desde la autonomía a la dependencia étnica en un sistema de contactos múltiples. El caso de Venancio Coihuepan en sus momentos iniciales (1827, frontera sur de Argentina)," in *Araucanía y Pampas. Un mundo fronterizo en América del Sur*, ed. Jorge Pinto Rodríguez (Temuco: Universidad de la Frontera, 1996); Daniel Villar and Juan Francisco Jiménez, "'Yo mando en este campo.' Conflictos inter-tribales en los andes meridionales y pampas durante los años de la guerra a muerte," in *Cruzando la Cordillera... La frontera argentino-chilena como espacio social*, ed. Susana Bandieri (Neuquén: Universidad Nacional del Comahue, 2001).

<sup>17</sup>According to this evolutionist scheme, anthropologists defined nomadic hunter-gatherers like the Pampa Indians primarily on the basis of what they lacked: "farming, livestock breeding, permanent settlements, multikin social groupings, warfare for conquest, tribute or capture of victims, social classes, civil rule, a priest-temple-idol cult, and such technological knowledge as ceramics, heddle-loom weaving, metallurgy, basketry, and religious and civil architecture." Steward and Faron, *Native Peoples of South America*, 454. For anthropometric data, including craniological measurements,

ethnocentric Spanish, and later Creole, portrayal of the nomadic Pampas Indians as “predators” living off “pillaging” Spanish ranches and livestock.<sup>18</sup>

The Araucanization thesis also held a rather static definition of Araucanian culture. As I show below, however, Araucanian culture was not a fixed entity but a set of practices in dynamic transformation. Intercultural relations with the Spaniards and increased intertribal trans-Andean relations were part and parcel of this transformation, and hence the Araucanians who finally settled in the Pampas in the nineteenth century were very different from their ancestors of two centuries earlier.

Finally, the thesis also contained a good deal of chauvinism that projected twentieth-century national rivalries backwards, as shown in the fact that eighteenth-century “Chilean” Araucanians were repeatedly described as “invading” and “infiltrating” the “Argentine” Pampas.<sup>19</sup> Recent scholarship hence stays clear as much as possible from the thesis of three-century long, continuous and unilateral diffusion of Araucanian culture into the pampas, to focus instead on concrete cases of intertribal contact within specific historical contexts and delimited geographical spaces.

With regard to the role of horses, the revisionist scholarship has provided a more complete perspective of the Spanish ecological invasion and of the Indians’ adaptation to

see Canals Frau, “The Expansion of the Araucanians,” 766. A useful discussion of nomadism is in Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, 8-11; Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, 32-42. For classic re-evaluation of hunter-gatherers, see Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1972).

<sup>18</sup>This portrayal justified the late nineteenth century military campaigns—the so-called “Conquest of the Desert”—that ended Native peoples’ autonomy. For critiques of this portrayal and insightful discussions of the Pampas Indians’ economy, see Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata, “Living on the Edge,” in *Archeological and Anthropological Perspectives on the Native Peoples of Pampa, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata (Westport and London: Bergin & Garvey, 2002); Mandrini, “Procesos de especialización;” Mandrini, “Indios y fronteras;” Mandrini, “Las transformaciones;” Mandrini, “Las fronteras y la sociedad indígena;” Palermo, “Reflexiones.”

<sup>19</sup> Lazzari and Lenton, “Araucanization and nation;” Mandrini and Ortelli, “Repensando viejos problemas;” Ortelli, “La “araucanización” de las Pampas.”

it. The ecological invasion not only included horses but also cattle, sheep, pigs, and disease, among other elements. Indians' adoption of horses, furthermore, did not produce a uniform "horse culture" but had important local variations.<sup>20</sup> Finally, and more importantly, scholars have emphasized that Indians' ecological adaptations to environmental factors are not significant by themselves, but only in connection with Indians' engagement in an intercultural field that included other Native groups as well as Spaniards. In other words, recent research has shifted the focus from Indians' ecological adaptation towards intertribal adaptations (relations among different Indian groups) and intercultural adaptations (relations between Indians and Spaniards).<sup>21</sup>

From this perspective, intercultural war with the Spaniards emerges as a main vector of change within Indian societies. This is particularly evident in the case of the Araucanía, which was engulfed in full-scale war already in the mid-sixteenth century, when the Pampas were not yet permanently settled. Likewise, intercultural war emerges as a main initial impulse behind the intensification of intertribal relations across the Andes. As this impulse came originally from the western territories, the Araucanía is the place to start when attempting to understand the emergence of the wider Native world.

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<sup>20</sup>Anthropologist Carl Wissler coined the term "horse culture" or "horse complex" early in the twentieth century, in reference to the Plains Indians of North America. Anthropologists of that region have long ago rejected the idea of a uniform Plains horse culture. The concept was adapted early on by anthropologists working on the Pampas, and has persisted until recently. For a thorough refutation, see Palermo, "Reflexiones;" Palermo, "La innovación agropecuaria." For an early criticism of the overemphasis of the horse's influence on lowland South American Indians, see Ronald E. Gregson, "The influence of the horse on Indian cultures of lowland South America," *Ethnohistory* 16, no. Winter (1969).

<sup>21</sup>I use "intertribal" for relations between Native groups, and "intercultural" for relations between Natives and Spaniards. I do not imply, however, that all Indian societies of the wider trans-Andean world were organized as "tribes," as opposed to, say, bands or chiefdoms. A discussion of the contested uses of "tribe" in the anthropological literature is in Ferguson and Whitehead, "The Violent Edge of Empire," 12-13.

## II. WEST OF THE ANDES: WAR AND TRIBALIZATION

Archeological evidence suggests that long-distance trade across the Andes, which Native peoples crossed in the summer and fall through low-passes, was in motion well before the European arrival in the Americas.<sup>22</sup> The Spanish conquest of the Araucanía in the 1550s and their prompt expansion into the Cuyo region, east of the Andes, accelerated trans-Andean contact in many ways. Indians from south central Chile ran away to the mountains fleeing the yoke of encomiendas, which were highly exploitative owing to a short-lived gold rush. Encomenderos forcibly removed Indians from the Cuyo region westward across the Andes into Santiago, where opportunities to exploit their labor were more plentiful. Finally, war of resistance waged against the Spanish conquerors from the moment of their arrival encouraged Native trans-Andean alliances.<sup>23</sup>

The Great Araucanian Rebellion of 1598-1602 was a turning point in the post-conquest transformations of the Araucanía and, eventually, in the region's interconnection to the Pampas. Native peoples wiped out all Spanish settlements south of the river Bío-Bío, and forced the Spaniards to retreat north of it, thus effectively liberating the Araucanía from Spanish occupation. The rebellion was followed by a

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<sup>22</sup>Archeologists have uncovered, in sites east of the Andes, ceramics and pipes originally from the Araucanía dating as far back as 1,000 AD. Mandrini and Ortelli, "Repensando viejos problemas," 138-139.

<sup>23</sup>In 1550 adelantado Pedro de Valdivia founded the town of Concepción on the northern bank of the river Bío Bío, from where he launched the conquest of south central Chile. A few years after, however, Native peoples captured and killed Valdivia, and launched a general uprising that lasted four years. Although by 1557 the Spaniards were able to put this uprising off, Native low-intensity resistance continued until 1598. At that point, Indians captured and killed Governor Martín García de Loyola, and launched the Great Araucanian Rebellion. See Angel Barral Gómez, *Rebeliones indígenas en la América Española* (Madrid: Editorial Mapfre, 1992); Padden, "Cultural Adaptation." Already in 1558 there is evidence of Native peoples from the Andes eastern slopes allying with Native peoples of the Araucanía in their resistance against the Spaniards. Leonardo León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores en Araucanía y las pampas, 1700-1800* (Temuco: Ediciones Universidad de la Frontera, 1990), 22.

ceaseless war of raids and counter-raids (the so-called “*guerra de la maloca*”) on the Bío-Bío frontier that lasted until the 1640s, in spite of several peace-making attempts mediated by the Jesuits. At that point, after decades of fruitless and costly warfare, the Spanish Crown finally accepted the river Bío-Bío as the frontier between the Kingdom of Chile and the Araucanía, and diplomacy became the primary means of relations between the two societies. Thus, notwithstanding occasional relapses into warfare, from the mid-seventeenth century on Spaniards and Indians reached economic, military, and political agreements—including the establishment of missions in Indian-controlled territory—through multitudinous parleys that were convened with increasing regularity.<sup>24</sup>

The rebellion and its aftermath had deep effects on the sociopolitical and economic organization of the Native peoples of south central Chile, the Reches, to whom the Spaniards referred to as “Araucanians.” Comparative anthropology has shown the deep effects that war has on non-state societies, particularly when war is waged against an expanding state. In such cases, as Marshall Shalins explained early on, a “countervailing organization... becomes a minimal demand of existence,” and non-state

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<sup>24</sup>The 1642 parley known as the *Paces de Quillín* formalized a frontier compact between the Indians from Araucanía and the Spanish Crown. The former acknowledged the distant Spanish King’s sovereignty, the Spanish Crown acknowledged Indians’ independence from both the Kingdom of Chile and the Viceroyalty of Peru, and the river Bío Bío was established as the formal divide between Spanish and Indian territory. The Quillín parley thus initiated a long era of Spanish-Indian parleys and, more generally, of formal diplomatic relations. For a periodization of Spanish-Indian relations in Araucanía, see Sergio Villalobos and Jorge Pinto Rodríguez, eds., *Araucanía. Temas de historia fronteriza* (Temuco: Universidad de La Frontera, 1988). A detailed study of parleys with emphasis in the eighteenth century is in Luz María Méndez, “La organización de los parlamentos de indios en el siglo XVIII,” in *Relaciones fronterizas en la Araucanía*, ed. Sergio Villalobos et al. (Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 1982). Most scholars see a change in Spanish policy as the main drive behind the switch from war to diplomacy. See Guillaume Boccara, “El poder creador: tipos de poder y estrategias de sujeción en la frontera sur de Chile en la época colonial,” *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 56, no. 1 (1999). Margarita Gascón, however, emphasizes Native-driven dynamics. Gascón points out that the parley of Quillín was preceded by a devastating eruption of the Villarica volcano. Thus Native peoples—who approached the Spaniards first in peace—had much to gain from a cease of hostilities. Gascón, “Fluctuaciones,” 18.

societies usually attempt to do that by “thrusting forward a chief and unifying behind him.” More recently, anthropologists have coined the term “tribalization” (the genesis of new tribes) as shorthand for the ripple effects that war against an expanding state has among non-state peoples. These effects include militarization, the stiffening of previously fluid hierarchies, and the genesis of new sociopolitical formations and ethnic identities.<sup>25</sup>

The Great Araucanian Rebellion and its aftermath triggered a classic case of tribalization among the Reches. They converged in larger sociopolitical units with more rigid hierarchies, more apt to wage war against and negotiate with the Spaniards. Loosely connected *rewe*, a social-territorial unit composed of several groups of hamlets, coalesced into macro-regional and permanent territorial units called *futamapu* or “big lands,” which divided the Araucanía into three longitudinal realms. The “big chiefs” or *apoulmen* of each *futamapu* became the “chief-governors” (*caciques gobernadores*) whom the Spanish authorities recognized and negotiated with. The Reches also developed new economic structures in which Spanish-introduced elements and cross-cultural trade had a prominent place. Finally, these structural transformations went hand in hand with transformations in how the Reches defined themselves. Before the Rebellion, the Reches—an ethnonym that means “real people”—defined their identity on the basis of the *rewe*. By the mid-eighteenth century a new ethnonym had emerged, Mapuche, which means “people of the land.” The “land” on the basis of which the Mapuches defined their identity was each of the three *futamapu* or “big lands” that divided the Araucanía in three longitudinal realms. Although the Mapuches of each *futamapu* considered the other *futamapu*’s members as foreigners (*ca-Mapuche*), they

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<sup>25</sup>R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead, *War in the Tribal Zone. Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 1999); Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, 45.

also considered them as natural allies vis-à-vis the Spaniards, who were the utmost foreigners or, in anthropologist Guillaume Boccara's words, the "maximum Other."<sup>26</sup>

The transformation of the Reches into the Mapuches is a case of ethnic reinvention that anthropologists refer to as ethnogenesis. In this particular case, the ethnogenesis of the Mapuche created a more hierarchical and materially richer society with greater capacity to resist and negotiate with the Spaniards. More importantly for the purposes of this dissertation, the transformation of the Reches into the Mapuches had deep repercussions beyond south central Chile.

Early in the sixteenth century, the demands of war had pushed the Reches to adopt horses. By the late sixteenth century, Spaniards noted with preoccupation, they had a cavalry superior to the Spanish one in terms of mobility.<sup>27</sup> But horses did much more than increasing Reche military capabilities. Horses modified Native peoples' ritual and material culture at all levels, including transportation, war, hunting techniques, nourishment, clothing, housing, ritual offerings. Horses, and later cattle as well, triggered novel social and economic forces, as they became means of exchange and allowed the accumulation of wealth. Finally, horses, and later cattle as well, were major triggers for the intensification of an already existing trans-Andean contact. Reche-Mapuche parties began to head east with increasing frequency, in search of the feral livestock that were proliferating on the Pampas' suitable grassy plains.

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<sup>26</sup>An excellent anthropological study of the transformation of the Reche into the Mapuche is in Boccara, *Guerre et ethnogenèse*. See also Boccara, "El poder creador;" Guillaume Boccara, "Etnogénesis mapuche: resistencia y restructuración entre los indígenas del centro-sur de Chile (siglos XVI-XVIII)," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 70, no. 3 (1999); Carlos Lázaro Avila, *Las fronteras de América y los "Flandes Indianos"* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1997), 84-94; Weber, *Bárbaros*, 54-62.

<sup>27</sup> Padden, "Cultural Adaptation," 79.

At the outset of the Great Araucanian Rebellion, the Reche-Mapuches had deployed swift horse-raids (*malocas*) against Indians allied with the Spaniards. Through this means they had secured extra horse herds as well as metal tools, firearms, gunpowder, and captives. After the 1640s, when diplomacy replaced warfare as the primary means of relations across the Bio-Bio frontier, the military character of *malocas* rapidly subsided. *Malocas* morphed into economic enterprises geared at obtaining horses, goods, and captives for the enrichment of the Native lineage to which the raiders or *maloqueros* belonged.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, as the preeminence of diplomacy reduced the need for warriors on the home front, Reche-Mapuche *maloca* parties began to carry out longer incursions eastward. By the 1660s, they frequently raided Spanish ranches in the Cuyo region, east of the Andes.<sup>29</sup> By the 1680s, Reche-Mapuche parties regularly reached the Inland Pampas and the Southern Pampas as well, attracted by the feral herds that were proliferating beyond Spanish-controlled territory.<sup>30</sup>

As Reche-Mapuche *maloqueros* entered the Pampas, they inevitably engaged with the Native peoples that lived along the way. Anthropologists tell us that, among

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<sup>28</sup>Historian Leonardo León Solís explains that *maloca* parties were part of a larger “institutional framework” at the pinnacle of which was the *ulmen*, or rich man. León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores*, 21-26. Guillaume Boccara has insightfully analyzed the emergence of *ulmenes* in the Araucanía during the seventeenth century, as the Reche warriors gradually became the Mapuche traders. In this context, military feats and oratory powers ceased to be the main factors in determining Native hierarchy. Mapuche *ulmenes*’ leadership rested not only on those customary forms of tribal prestige but also on material possessions (such as horses, cattle, textiles, and women), political clout with the Spanish authorities across the Bio-Bio frontier, and their ability to weave alliances. Boccara, *Guerre et ethnogénèse*, 451-453.

<sup>29</sup>In the 1660s Reche-Mapuche *malocas* against the Jesuit cattle ranches in Valle del Uco and Xaurúa, near Mendoza, were so frequent that the Jesuits finally abandoned the area, moving their ranches to the San Luis area. Gascón, “La articulación de Buenos Aires,” 200.

<sup>30</sup>“Carta de Antonio al Rey. Buenos Aires, 8 de agosto de 1678,” *DHG*, vol. 1: 316; ME: AGI G 31, “Joseph de Herrera y Sotomayor al Rey. Incluye autos sobre el repartimiento de indios pampas sobrevivientes de la matanza hecha por el capitán J. de San Martín en 1680. Buenos Aires, 10 de diciembre de 1686.”



non-state peoples, when different groups of men run into each other, they either move away, resort to arms, or come to terms through exchange.<sup>31</sup> Recent research shows that the wider, trans-Andean Indian country was the stage for all these options, but took durable shape thanks to the last one: the emergence of expanded networks of exchange. By the mid-eighteenth century, these relatively stable networks of exchange had even become visible to the Spaniards thanks to the trans-Andean trails known as *rastrilladas*, after the tracks left by the constant hustle and bustle of rodeos and Native riders dragging their lengthy lances along. The stability of the exchange networks also resulted in seasonal trade fairs that convoked Indians from different ethnic groups in particularly strategic locations.<sup>32</sup>

To understand properly what these trans-Andean networks were, a word on exchange, as anthropologists define it, is needed here. Anthropological economics posits that in non-state kinship-based societies, exchange is never an impersonal one-for-one transaction but it is instead inseparable from the establishment of a broader spectrum of social relations. In short, economics is embedded in “noneconomic” institutions such as

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<sup>31</sup>The classic anthropological perspective on exchange or gift-giving is Marcel Mauss, *The Gift. The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York and London: W.W.Norton, 1990). I have relied on Marshall Sahlins’ also classic elaboration, Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, chapter 5; Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>32</sup>*Rastrillada* comes from the word *rastrillo* (rake). There were at least three *rastrilladas* that are clearly identified in late-eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century sources. The southernmost ran from the area of Valdivia and along the river Negro, to finally cross the river Colorado and end on the sierras of the Southern Pampas. A second one, later known as *rastrillada de los chilenos*, ran from the area of Concepción and along the river Colorado. Finally, a third one had also a starting point in the area of Concepción, but veered northward to end nearby San Luis and Río Cuarto. (See Map 7, p. 143, for landmarks, and for the location of the seasonal trade fairs). A description of *rastrilladas* is in Mandrini, “Procesos de especialización,” 122. A thorough discussion of trans-Andean integration is in Palermo, “La compleja integración.”

kinship and politics.<sup>33</sup> Thus exchange ranges from two poles or extremes: from redistribution between kin, to negative reciprocity (“the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity) between strangers and enemies. In between there is balanced reciprocity, the form of exchange closest to the one-for-one model. Exchange, furthermore, has the potential of transforming strangers and enemies into (fictive) kin, therefore reducing the potential spiraling violence of negative reciprocity. As Marshall Sahlins puts it, “in the absence of a public and sovereign power...groups confront each other not merely as distinct interests but with the possible inclination and certain right to physically prosecute these interests.” In this context, exchange or material flow “underwrites or initiates social relations,” allowing non-state peoples to “transcend the Hobbessian chaos.”<sup>34</sup>

The expanded trans-Andean exchange networks were thus more than simply trade (one-for-one) networks. As anthropologist Miguel Angel Palermo explains, through expanded exchange Native peoples were carving a wider interconnected world that lacked a supra-ethnic authority. They had hence to resort to a variety of strategies in order to moderate conflicts and provide some degree of stability across a wider interconnected world. These strategies ran the gamut from temporary inter-ethnic alliances for specific purposes—such as access to strategically located Andean passes and pastures, or exchange of scarce goods like metal tools—to more permanent alliances cemented with inter-ethnic marriages to the eventual formation of new, ethnically hybrid

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<sup>33</sup>This anthropological perspective on exchange is referred to as “substantivism,” as opposed to “formalism,” which considers the main tenets of classic economics—such as profit-seeking individuals, laws of supply and demand, and market allocation—universally valid. A classic take on substantivism is in Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*. For superb, substantivist-based analyses of the slave trade in Angola and the fur trade in the Great Lakes see, respectively, Miller, *Way of Death*, chapter 2; White, *The Middle Ground*.

<sup>34</sup> Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 186.

groups. Strategies also failed at times, and intensive raiding or full-scale wars engulfed certain areas.<sup>35</sup>

As expanded exchange was embedded in the establishment of these broader relations, the emergence and consolidation of the trans-Andean network modified Native political and cultural geography in ways that scholars are just beginning to investigate. Most of the research focuses on the mid-eighteenth century onwards, as by that time not only Spanish sources are more plentiful but also the networks had consolidated and became more visible to the Spaniards.<sup>36</sup> Archeological research, for instance, suggests that Native population centers of hybrid ethnic makeup and with high demographic densities emerged on strategic points along *rastrilladas*.<sup>37</sup> Ethnohistorical research has shown that Native groups who controlled resources that the consolidation of the trans-Andean trade turned strategic, such as safe passes or well-located pasturelands, specialized their economies around these resources. This specialization gave them leverage vis-à-vis other Native groups, and triggered inner processes of social differentiation.<sup>38</sup> Ethnohistorical research has also shown that, as Reche-Mapuche hierarchies became more rigid and wealth accumulated in fewer lineages, dissatisfied groups migrated east of the Andes and created new multi-ethnic communities.<sup>39</sup> Finally,

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<sup>35</sup>Palermo, "La compleja integración," 175-179.

<sup>36</sup>A synthetic take is in Weber, *Bárbaros*, 62-68.

<sup>37</sup>Mandrini, "Procesos de especialización," 122.

<sup>38</sup> Mandrini, "Las transformaciones;" Gladys Varela, Luz María Font, and Estela Cúneo, "Los Pehuenche del noroeste de Neuquén y sus relaciones fronterizas en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII," *Revista de Historia Indígena* 2, no. Diciembre (1997).

<sup>39</sup>Daniel Villar and Juan Francisco Jiménez, "Un Argel disimulado. Aucan y poder entre los corsarios de Mamil Mapu (segunda mitad del siglo XVIII)," *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos* Nro 3-2003, mis en ligne le 9 février 2005, référence du 12 mai 2005, disponible sur: <http://nuevomundo.revues.org/document656.html> (2003).

historians have also examined how increased interconnection led in some cases to heightened conflict and war.<sup>40</sup>

The Reche-Mapuches were in a very advantageous position as participants in these trans-Andean exchange networks. After the 1640s, when diplomacy stabilized intercultural relations across the Bio-Bio frontier, the Reche-Mapuches obtained regular access to Spanish markets, where many of the goods they could offer were in high demand. Spaniards coveted the excellent horses that the Reche-Mapuches bred. The Spanish army, oversized for the tiny settlements of southern Chile, was frequently forced to resort to Reche-Mapuche middle-men to meet the quota of cattle needed to feed soldiers—beef was one of the army's main food staples.<sup>41</sup> Finally, the ponchos that Reche-Mapuche women wove were also in high demand across the Bio-Bio frontier. As the bishop of Concepción explained, ponchos were “a kind of open cloaks” available in “several color shades” that people of southern Chile wore in lieu of the Spanish cape. Even wealthy Spaniards who did possess capes used ponchos “for travelling and for their

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<sup>40</sup>Leonardo León Solís, "Conflictos de poder y guerras tribales en Araucanía y las Pampas: la batalla de Tromen (1774)," *Historia* 29 (1995-1996); Leonardo León Solís, "Guerras Pehuenche-Huilliche en Araucanía y las Pampas, 1760-1765," *Historia* 31 (1998).

<sup>41</sup>The final destiny of the cattle and horses that the Reche-Mapuches drove from the Pampas across the Andes has recently been the subject of much controversy among historians. Margarita Gascón argues that most of the horses and cattle were sold in the Spanish market. See Gascón, “The Southern Frontier of the Spanish Empire,” 62; Gascón, “La articulación de Buenos Aires,” 198-199. Leonardo León Solís argues instead that the livestock was for the Reche-Mapuches’ own consumption, which increased as a result of demographic growth in the late seventeenth century. See León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores*, 96. Finally, Daniel Villar and Francisco Jiménez concur with León Solís in that most of the livestock was for the Reche-Mapuches’ own consumption, but argue that such increased consumption did not result from demographic pressures but from political pressures. During the eighteenth century, caciques or chiefs cemented their authority and established political alliances through gifts of livestock, and through feasts in which large numbers of livestock were consumed. Daniel Villar and Juan Francisco Jiménez, *Saca de ganados mayores y menores para la tierra de Indios. Convites, consumo y política entre los Indígenas de Araucanía y las pampas (segunda mitad del siglo XVIII)*. (Buenos Aires: Paper presented at the Red de Estudios Rurales, Instituto Ravignani, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2003).

country chores.” In the mid-seventeenth century, Jesuit father Rosales estimated annual sales of 60,000 ponchos on the Bio-Bio frontier.<sup>42</sup>

In exchange for horses, cattle, and ponchos, the Reche-Mapuches obtained a wide array of Spanish manufactures (iron tools, iron pots, riding gear, glass beads, clothing, alcohol) and primary materials (indigo, tobacco, yerba mate).<sup>43</sup> By the late seventeenth century, these goods were not only thoroughly incorporated into the Reche-Mapuche everyday life but were also highly prized across the wider, trans-Andean Indian country. Reche-Mapuche parties going eastward, thus, carried these goods together with the ponchos of their own manufacture to exchange with Native groups they already had relations with, or to initiate relations with strangers.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>The bishop of Concepción is quoted in Boccara, "Etnogénesis mapuche," 445. Originally, Reche textiles were made of llama wool. In the post-conquest era, sheep wool gradually replaced that of llamas, and Spanish-introduced indigo was incorporated as a main source of dye. Father Rosales is cited in Palermo, "La compleja integración," 169.

<sup>43</sup>Firearms, which in other parts of the Americas such as northern New Spain and the Great Lakes were a main object of intercultural trade, did not have a prominent place in the Araucanía, or in the trans-Andean networks of exchange. The Spanish Crown monopolized and strictly controlled the provision of firearms and gunpowder, which stayed mostly in the hands of the imperial army. The rural militias of Buenos Aires, for instance, lacked firearms. Even when the Reche-Mapuche obtained firearms as war booty, they soon ran out of gunpowder, which was imported from Spain at first, and from Peru later. The lack of inter-imperial competition in the area, moreover, meant that there were no rivals of Spain eager to sell firearms to the Indians—as it happened in northern New Spain. See Juan Francisco Jiménez, "De males y armas de fuego. Guerras intra-étnicas y transformaciones en la tecnología bélica en Araucanía y las Pampas (1818-1830)," in *Relaciones interétnicas en el sur bonaerense, 1810-1830*, ed. Daniel Villar (Bahía Blanca: Universidad Nacional del Sur - Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, 1998), 49-54. For the Great Lakes and northern New Spain, see Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," *American Historical Review* June (1999).

<sup>44</sup>Already in 1582 Juan de Garay had noted, during his entrada into the southern Pampas, that the Native peoples he encountered sported some "very good clothing made of wool" original from Chile. "Juan de Garay a SM. Santa Fe, 20 de abril de 1582," printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia*, vol. 1: 424-431. A century later, the bishop of Buenos Aires asserted that Pampas Indians regularly traded horses with the "enemy" Indians of Chile in exchange for "swords, firearms, armors, saddles, bites, ponchos and

The Reche-Mapuches were thus middlemen bringing cattle and horses from the Pampas to the Chilean market, and bringing Spanish goods from the Chilean market to the Pampas. This position of middlemen, already advantageous, gave the Reche-Mapuches an extra advantage. Maloca parties entering the Pampas easily moved from peaceful exchange to raiding (a classic expression of negative reciprocity) when running into strangers, either Indians or Spaniards, furnished with cattle and horses. In these cases, as the Reche-Mapuche maloqueros were neither in their own territory nor encumbered with their families, they were able to flee quickly back to their lands, therefore avoiding potential armed retribution by the aggravated parties.

### *III. EAST OF THE ANDES: A SOCIOPOLITICAL MOSAIC*

The impact that the increased trans-Andean connections had on the Pampas during the period previous to the mid-eighteenth century is still poorly understood. At most, recent scholarship has equated the arrival of Reche-Mapuche maloca parties in the Pampas with an eastward expanding “wave” of raids or *malones* that targeted Spanish ranches. As the argument goes, over-hunting gradually decimated the feral herds and hence the Reche-Mapuche resorted to raiding the Spanish domesticated herds.<sup>45</sup> This argument echoes the ethnocentric and determinist assumptions of the Araucanization thesis. This thesis posited that Indians’ complete dependence on horses forced them to resort to thievery and raids whenever the animals were in short supply. Thus, while at first the “Araucanian visitors” had limited themselves to influence the Pampas Indians and carry off feral cattle, soon after they “attacked the Spanish settlements and

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other goods.” “Carta de Antonio al Rey. Buenos Aires, 8 de agosto de 1678,” *DHG* vol. 1: 316.

<sup>45</sup>Gascón, “La articulación de Buenos Aires;” León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores*, chapter 1. A synthetic take is in Weber, *Bárbaros*, 62.

committed all kind of depredations against stock farmers in the vicinity of Buenos Aires.”<sup>46</sup>

The evidence for this argument, in its old and refashioned form, consists mostly of vague Spanish warnings about imminent attacks by “Aucas,” a common and blanket-label for Indians “from Chile” during this period.<sup>47</sup> Scholars have taken these warnings at face value. In fact, in many cases the attacks never materialized, and at least in a few cases the warnings proved to have deceptive motives behind them. In 1711, for instance, rural dwellers of the Río Cuarto area presented a formal complaint against the Maestre de Campo Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco, who presumably exaggerated the Indian threat in order to draft young men into militia service and thus force them to work on his own estancia.<sup>48</sup> Given Spanish erratic labeling of Indian peoples, furthermore, the classification of potential attackers as “Aucas” should not be taken at face value but carefully contextualized.

The argument also takes too literally Spanish accusations of Indians “stealing” domesticated herds from Spanish cattle ranchers. A close look at these accusations reveals that, at least during the first four decades of the eighteenth century, Indians in fact did not “steal” domesticated animals kept in the estancias nearby Buenos Aires. Rather, as I show in the next chapter, they “stole” feral livestock, or barely domesticated

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<sup>46</sup> Canals Frau, “The Expansion of the Araucanians,” 764. Emilio Coni articulated this argument for historians in 1956, see Coni, *Historia de las vaquerías*. Coni’s argument was repeated in classic, and deeply ethnocentric, works on the “frontier wars,” such as Walther, *La conquista del desierto*, especially chapter 5.

<sup>47</sup>The word “auca” is of Quechwa origin, and was used by the Inca to denominate the peoples of south-central Chile, whom they were unable to conquer. According to one Spanish chronicler, the Inka referred to these peoples as “pomaucaes” or “wild wolves” (*lobos monteses*). After the Spanish conquest of south central Chile, the adjective “auca,” meaning *alzado* or *rebelde* (“rebel”), was applied to the Native groups that rebelled against the Spaniards. See Villar and Jiménez, “Un Argel disimulado,” 10.

<sup>48</sup>See the statement by Juan Pablo Fernández in AAC: Cabrera 15-3200, “Averiguación sobre el estado de la frontera del río Cuarto. 1712.”

animals, from troops carrying out vaquerías in the tierra adentro, in places as far from Buenos Aires as the sierras in the Southern Pampas.

Finally, a last problem with this argument is that it revolves exclusively around the supposed Araucanian or Reche-Mapuche “wave” of raids and its eastward trajectory, a focus that completely ignores the Native peoples who lived alongside that trajectory, on the Pampas. So much so that the territory east of the Andes appears as an “eastern void” where the “accumulated energies” of the western regions could be “released.”<sup>49</sup> Once more, these are echoes of the Araucanization thesis, in which the Pampas Indians were merely empty recipients of “superior” Araucanian cultural traits.

Undoubtedly, there are pragmatic reasons for this focus on the western region of the wider, trans-Andean Indian world, as it is easier to picture and to identify its Native inhabitants. The initial drama of the Spanish conquest in south central Chile followed by shocking defeat focused the Spanish attention on the Araucanía, and ensured the writing of chronicles. The Reche warriors’ practice of ritual cannibalism and their use of Spaniards’ shinbones to make horn-like instruments that they played during battle undoubtedly helped, as well as the immortalizing of the Araucanian rebels in the widely popular epic poem by Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga, *La Araucana*.<sup>50</sup> After the war was over, the establishment of formal diplomatic relations and stable frontier institutions such as missions, parleys, and military go-betweens produced abundant written documents. Tribalization among the Reche-Mapuche, moreover, made them more visible and classifiable to the Spaniards, and therefore more accessible to historians.

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<sup>49</sup>Gascón, “The Southern Frontier of the Spanish Empire,” 2.

<sup>50</sup>Alonso de Ercilla y Zúñiga arrived to Chile in 1557 with the Governor García Hurtado de Mendoza. He published *La Araucana* in three parts, between 1569 and 1589. For Reche-Mapuche war practices, including the cultural meaning of ritual cannibalism, see Boccara, *Guerre et ethnogénèse*.



Going east, as one moves away from the Bio-Bio frontier and enters the Pampas, the picture gets much blurrier. The Spanish conquest did not result in full-scale, localized war but took the shape of intermittent raids launched from the line of settlements that extended along the Pampas' northern border—from west to east, San Luis, Río Cuarto, and Buenos Aires. These raids resulted at most in meager and unstable encomiendas. Native peoples, moreover, had plenty of opportunities to flee to the vast space in-between Spanish centers and to the south of them, that is, to the tierra adentro free of Spanish control.

East of the Andes, hence, the short-term result of the Spanish conquest was not full-scale war of resistance, as it happened in south central Chile, where the geography was more constricted and the Indian population was denser. Instead, the results were flight, scattering, and fragmentation. In the long term, just as it happened in south central Chile, Native peoples did recreate their societies in response to the Spanish presence. But they did not do so by thrusting forward a chief and coalescing in larger units. As Marshall Sahlins explains, sometimes when non-state peoples face powerful neighbors "it may prove the better part of valor to become invisible: to fragment into small, unobtrusive groups in such scattered disarray as to hardly constitute a threat to anyone."<sup>51</sup> East of the Andes, then, the long-term adaptation to the Spanish presence was not tribalization but the formation of a "sociopolitical mosaic:" a multiplicity of small units of mixed ethnic origin that responded to the Spanish presence in various and sometimes conflicting ways.<sup>52</sup> In the eighteenth century Spaniards began to refer to

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<sup>51</sup> Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, 46.

<sup>52</sup>I take the idea of "sociopolitical mosaic" from Michael Brown and Eduardo Fernandez, "Tribe and State in a Frontier Mosaic. The Asháninka of Eastern Peru," in *War in the Tribal Zone. Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, ed. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research Press, 1999).

these units as *parcialidades* or *tolderías*, meaning a group of *toldos* (hide tents) that responded to the authority of a cacique.<sup>53</sup>

There are only shards of evidence for the Pampas sociopolitical mosaic, because our informants, the Spaniards who lived on the line of settlements north of the plains, had a very limited and fragmented perspective.<sup>54</sup> Chapter two presented the Spanish perspective from Buenos Aires. Porteños noticed that Native peoples, including runaways from *encomiendas* and *reducciones*, moved and mixed in the *tierra adentro*, and that the line between previously distinguishable “nations” blurred. Written records provide evidence for the existence of different Indian groups that responded differently to the Spanish presence, in a spectrum that included violent resistance, voluntary submission, strategic accommodation, and intermittent low-risk raiding.

Spaniards from San Luis and Río Cuarto offered, for their respective “portion” of the Pampas sociopolitical mosaic, perspectives that are strikingly similar to those of Porteños. Reports on *encomiendas* in San Luis show that that they were very small, and that Indians supposedly in *encomienda* had ran away and were “*alzados en las Pampas*” or “*vagando en las Pampas*:”

they are living like savages without laws (*sin policía*) or Christian discipline, without towns or fixed sites, dispersed throughout the uncultivated lands of this vast country so-called Pampas, wandering from one site to the other like brutes.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Tolderías continued to be the basic socio-political unit of Native peoples of the Pampas well into the nineteenth century. Historian Silvia Ratto points out that each *toldería* was composed of a variable number of *toldos*, each one inhabited by a family. Above the authority of each family head was the authority of the *toldería*’s cacique. All *toldería* members recognized each other as “kin”—kinship was not necessarily biological, as *tolderías* included adopted refugees and captives. Ratto, *La frontera bonaerense*, 123.

<sup>54</sup>Scholars only recently have begun to critically question this fragmented Spanish vision, instead of reproducing it, and to emphasize the intertribal relations that cut across colonial jurisdictions.

<sup>55</sup>“*Encomienda de Andrés de Toro Mazote en La Estanzuela y el Rosario. 1704,*” quoted in Catalina Teresa Michieli, “Aportes documentales al conocimiento de la conformación étnica y social de los indígenas del sur de San Luis y zonas vecinas (fin del siglo XVII y comienzos del siglo XVIII),” in *Segundas jornadas de investigadores en*

Runways formed new, mixed communities that Spaniards noticed with some alarm. San Luis authorities identified in the late 1690s and early 1700s a Floreal or Florian as the “most insolent among those Indians who have ran away to the Pampas.” Florian was the cacique of a *toldería* that counted more than fifty warriors, and which was composed of “different Indians from this jurisdiction as well as from [Córdoba del] Tucumán and Buenos Aires.” Florian and his *parciales* (warriors), San Luis authorities noted with preoccupation, gave a hard time to Spaniards venturing far into the Pampas.<sup>56</sup>

The situation was similar in Río Cuarto. In the late sixteenth century, Spaniards carrying out *entradas* from recently founded Córdoba wrecked havoc in the area, enslaving those Indians who were not able to flee.<sup>57</sup> When Córdoba vecinos began to set up ranches along the river Cuarto in the early seventeenth century, they also requested Indians in *encomiendas*, which turned out to be as meager, unstable, and mixed as those of San Luis and of the Buenos Aires.<sup>58</sup> Jesuit Lucas Quesa, who in the 1640s went in a

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*arqueología y etnohistoria del centro-oeste del país* (Río Cuarto: Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto, 1995), 195. Similar situations in “Encomiendas del Diamante y Cerro Nevado. 1689-90,” “Vista y matrícula de las encomiendas de indios de la Provincia de Cuyo hecha por el corregidor don Juan de Urdinola. 1695,” “Merced de cuatro mil cuadradas de tierras en San Luis. 1695,” and “Encomiendas de los pueblos del Diamante. 1704,” all printed in Juan Luis Espejo, *La provincia de Cuyo del Reino de Chile*, (Santiago de Chile: Fondo Histórico y Bibliográfico José Toribio Medina, 1954), 363-365, 405-408, 408-409, 546-548.

<sup>56</sup>“Encomiendas del Diamante y Cerro Nevado. 1689-90,” printed in Espejo, *La provincia de Cuyo*, 364. “Encomienda de Jerónimo de Quiroga en El Morro. 1704,” quoted in Michieli, “Aportes documentales,” 195.

<sup>57</sup> Nores and D'Andrea, *Los aborígenes de la región del Río Cuarto*, 64-67.

<sup>58</sup>“Visita de la estancia de Río Cuarto San Esteban de Bolon, Estancia de las Peñas, de San Bartolomé de la Sierra, Estancia del Tambo con más de la Reducción Nueva, de los caciques e indios en ellos contenidos. 1617” printed in Pedro Grenón, *Los Pampas y la frontera del sur. Documentos históricos para la historia de la reducción (Córdoba)* (Córdoba: Imprenta Liendo, 1924), 10-12.

*misión volante* (travelling mission) to Río Cuarto, noted that Indians in encomienda came from different regions, some of them having originally been “baptized in Buenos Aires and Mendoza.”<sup>59</sup> Forty years later Blas de Valladares, a Córdoba vecino, reported that the Indians of Río Cuarto “had never acquiesced to be put in reducciones or to live like [civilized] men.” Rather, they wandered “about the Pampas of this jurisdiction as well as those of the city of Trinidad ... and they communicate with other heathen Indians of different nations.” Another Córdoba vecino, Juan Robledo de Torres, added that these Indians frequently “come out to the [Córdoba-Buenos Aires] road, and ask travelers for yerba, tobacco, and wine, and if the latter refuse sometimes the Indians try to kill them.” Even though many of these Indians “are baptized,” Torres concluded, “they do not observe any rules or laws, living off what they steal and what the Pampas offer them.”<sup>60</sup>

The fragmented and limited Spanish vision of the Pampas sociopolitical mosaic contributes to the confusing universe of “nations” that written sources portray. For instance, when Porteños referred to Indians of the Serrano “nation,” the sierras after which these Indians were named were those of Tandil and Ventana, in the Southern Pampas. When vecinos from Río Cuarto referred to Indians of the Serrano “nation,” instead, the sierras in question were the western Sierras Centrales, where the Pampas give way to the Cuyo region. San Luis authorities labeled Indians of the Sierras Centrales instead as of the Pampa “nation,” a label Porteños reserved for Indians of the campaña nearby Buenos Aires, and Río Cuarto vecinos for Indians of the area around the rivers Cuarto and Quinto. Without a careful contextualization, thus, “nations” are of limited help to approach the Pampas sociopolitical mosaic. Rather, the *tolderías* or

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<sup>59</sup>Quoted in *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>60</sup>See the statements by Juan de Valladares and Juan Robledo Torres, in APC: Criminales Capital 1, “Causa y proceso criminal contra los Indios Pampa. Córdoba, 1680-1681.”

parcialidades are the relevant unit of analysis, although sources do not always identify them in this early period.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the fact that *tolderías* were composed of Indians running away from different jurisdictions—they looked like mixed refugee communities—further undermines the utility of the geographical-area-based “nations” that that Spanish sources identify.

Although the Pampas mosaic was fragmented at the sociopolitical level, the myriad of *tolderías* shared some common traits. First, as explained above, they were ethnically mixed, and each one had at least a few members savvy in the Spanish ways, mostly because they were runaways from *encomiendas* and *reducciones* or had provided labor for the Spaniards at some point. Second, Native peoples across the mosaic had adopted, in different degrees and with different timing, the European-introduced livestock that had proliferated in the Pampas. This did not turn them uniformly into “predatory equestrian nomads,” as earlier scholarship posited. Rather, Indians combined in different degrees herding, hunting, gathering, trading, and raiding.<sup>62</sup> And finally, all *tolderías* were connected to the trans-Andean networks of exchange. By the late seventeenth century, Spaniards from all the settlements along the northern boundary were noticing this connection. Porteños complained that Pampas and Serranos traded horses with the “enemy Indians of Chile.” Vecinos from San Luis reported that *Indios alzados* raided their rodeos to trade the animals across the Andes.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Sources are much better in this regard for the nineteenth century.

<sup>62</sup>More research needs to be done on the specific equestrian adaptations of different groups of Native peoples in the wider Araucanía-Pampas region. As research on the Great Plains of North America has shown, equestrian adaptations varied greatly, depending on ecological constraints, economic-military demands, and cultural imperatives. See Hämäläinen, “The Rise and Fall;” Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, chapter 2.

<sup>63</sup>Catalina Teresa Michieli, *Tráfico transcordillerano de ganado y la acción de los indígenas cuyanos en el siglo XVII* (San Juan: Instituto de Investigaciones Arqueológicas y Museo-Universidad Nacional de San Juan, 1992).

Vecinos from Córdoba worried that the “communication” with the Indians from Chile had resulted in alarming changes among the Indians of Río Cuarto:

...they have recently acquired weapons that were not of the use of their nation before. Their weapons have always been stone balls that they threw from their horses, and now in addition to these bolas they have lances and hide shields, and defensive armor such as hide breastplates and bodices, and some wide swords. This is the result of their communication with the warrior heathen Indians of Chile.<sup>64</sup>

The sources also suggest that, despite sociopolitical fragmentation, a tenuous glue of loose alliances cut across the mosaic, linking *tolderías* from the different sub-regions of the Pampas. The mixed character of *tolderías* surely eased the establishment of these links. Spaniards registered with preoccupation these alliances among Indians that they identified as belonging to different “nations.” As explained in chapter two, Porteños fretted about the “communication” between the “hostile” Serrano and the supposedly “domestic” Pampas. A protracted criminal case in Río Cuarto gives some more clues about these alliances, and shows how widely, though thinly, they spread across the Pampas sociopolitical mosaic.

In 1680 encomendero Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco, a distinguished vecino of Córdoba, filed criminal charges against the Pampas Indians of his encomienda in Río Cuarto. Cabrera y Velasco alleged that he was unable to “administer or concur” to his *estancias* in Río Cuarto because his own Indians had “swore” to kill him. He reported that in October of 1679 he was in the area with a troop of twenty peons “searching for stray cows.” The Indians had attacked his troop, wounding one of the peons as well as his personal slave Miguel. Several witnesses corroborated Cabrera y Velasco’s account,

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<sup>64</sup>See the statement by José Vasan de Pedraza (June 5, 1680) in APC: Criminales Capital 1, “Causa y proceso criminal contra los Indios Pampa. Córdoba, 1680-1681.”

asserting that the Pampas Indians were “so insolent and haughty that they do not recognize encomendero nor pay tribute nor recognize our Holy Faith.”<sup>65</sup>

About three decades later, in 1707, vecinos of Río Cuarto nervously reported to Córdoba authorities that Andrés Liquid, one of the main Pampa caciques of Cabrera y Velasco’s encomienda, had “frequent conversations” with other Indians about killing his encomendero and stealing the livestock of all the estancias of the area. A reconnaissance expedition was rapidly dispatched and found out that Liquid had actually “invited” (*convocado* or *convidado*) Serrano Indians who had never come down to the area before, to do so now. Witnesses from the area of the river Tercero identified these “Serranos” as cacique Florian and his *parciales* (warriors), that is, the same Indians who had San Luis authorities worried during this period.<sup>66</sup>

The fact that witnesses used the word *convidado* is relevant here. Recent work on trans-Andean integration during the second half of the eighteenth century shows that *convites* (*cahuines*, in Mapudugun) were ritualized feasts with three possible purposes: facilitating co-operative economic activities, punctuating rites of passage such as weddings and funerals, and affirming or establishing alliances before going to war.<sup>67</sup> The case of the Río Cuarto clearly fits this last option, suggesting that already in the first half of the eighteenth century convites were the principal political glue linking *tolderías* across the Pampas mosaic.

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<sup>65</sup>See the *auto* by Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco (May 23, 1680) and the statement by Blas de Valladares, both are in *Ibid*.

<sup>66</sup>See the letter by Alonso Zamudio to Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco (December 1707), and the *auto* by Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco from Río Tercero y Valle de Calamuchita (December 1707), both are in APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Autos obrados en el Río Cuarto sobre intentar matar los Indios Pampas al Mtre de Campo Dn. Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco y a toda la gente del Río Cuarto y Tercero. Córdoba, 1707-1708.”

<sup>67</sup> Villar and Jiménez, *Saca de ganados*, 14-15.

To further buttress their case, vecinos of Río Cuarto presented two witnesses from Mendoza, Joseph de Videla and Alonso de Oz, who ran the Cuyo-Buenos Aires trade road. On their way to Córdoba, Videla and Oz had made a stop at Valle de Baurra, in southern Mendoza, close to “a population of Indians friendly to the Spaniards.” While Videla was rounding up his oxen, an Indian named Luis had approached and engaged in conversation with him. When Videla told him that he was going to Buenos Aires, the Indian said, “I wonder how you will fare.” Then he proceeded to explain that the Indians of the Río Cuarto had *convidado* many Indians “to kill Cabrera, all the people of the river Cuarto, and steal all their livestock.” The convite cut a vast swath of the Pampas mosaic, as it included Serranos from the San Luis area like Florian, and Pampas from Buenos Aires or “Muyuluques.” The convite also extended beyond the Pampas mosaic and into the Andean area, as it included Indians from Chile or “Morcoyanes.” News had circulated rapidly and widely across the trans-Andean Native world, as another Indian named Andrés—described as a “Christian” and “friend” of the Spaniards—confirmed that this convite was “a well known fact” among all the Indians of Cuyo.<sup>68</sup>

Notwithstanding the widespread alarm among Córdoba vecinos, the final outcome of Liquid’s convite shows that these feared inter-toldería alliances were much more tenuous than Spaniards chose to believe, and could quickly dissolve to their component parts when subjected to Spanish military pressure. The convite began to crumble when the invited tolderías arrived in Río Cuarto to find no traces of Liquid, because Cabrera y Velasco had him imprisoned as a preventive measure. As Cabrera y Velasco, with a sizable military force, entered the Río Cuarto and questioned the Indians

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<sup>68</sup>See the letter by Alonso Zamudio to Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco (December 1707); the statements by María Pesoa (December 1707), Joseph de Videla (December 24, 1707), and Alonso de Oz (December 24, 1707), all are in APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Autos obrados en el Río Cuarto sobre intentar matar los Indios Pampas al Mtre de Campo Dn. Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco y a toda la gente del Río Cuarto y Tercero. Córdoba, 1707-1708.”



of his encomienda, many caciques grudgingly and guiltily acknowledged that Liquid had “visited” them in regard to the convite, but vehemently asserted that they had refused. They blamed instead other *tolderías* of *Indios bellacos* (rogue Indians) from out of the area, such as Florian and his *parciales*, for accepting Liquid’s convite. Further questioning of a runaway Indian named Francisco found on the river Quinto area, revealed that a cacique from the Southern Pampas called Ereguereyan had attempted to take Liquid’s place as head of the convite once Liquid failed to show up. Ereguereyan had passionately harangued the invited Indians: “Sons and friends, let us enter [the Río Cuarto] for once and all and kill all the Spaniards, and raid their estancias and take all their horses.”<sup>69</sup> But, Francisco added, when news that a large military Spanish force was being assembled under Cabrera y Velasco’s orders, “all of them [the Indians] retreated in haste.” Ereguereyan had then taken refuge in Florian’s *toldería*, located nearby the estancia of the “late Guevara.”<sup>70</sup>

Cabrera y Velasco’s expedition of about two hundred and fifty men reached Florian’s *toldería* approximately ten days after Francisco’s declaration. The Spaniards made their assault by surprise at dawn. They first secured the Indians’ horse herds, and made themselves heard “only after securing each toldo entrance” with a soldier. Through an interpreter, they explained that they had come “under peace,” and requested all the men to surrender their offensive weapons, including “lances, swords, and even bolas.” Finally, they also asked Florian to hand over Ereguereyan. With not many options left, a son of Florian told Cabrera y Velasco that Ereguereyan was in a nearby

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<sup>69</sup>Ereguereyan’s address to other Indians as “sons” indicates that (fictive) kinship relations underwrote convites.

<sup>70</sup>See the statement by the Indio Francisco (Río Quinto, May 17, 1708), in APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Autos obrados en el Río Cuarto sobre intentar matar los Indios Pampas al Mtre de Campo Dn. Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco y a toda la gente del Río Cuarto y Tercero. Córdoba, 1707-1708.”

second camp. Captain Julio Arias de Cabrera was dispatched with a party of soldiers to the second camp. He reported afterwards that Ereguereyan had unsuccessfully tried to muster some resistance by calling his companions to “die fighting” while brandishing a sword and being fully-clad in leather armor. He and three other Pampa Indians were finally handed over to the Spaniards. After that, Florian and his people were able to leave the area unharmed.<sup>71</sup>

The Reche-Mapuche maloca parties that began to make incursions eastward in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, hence, did not enter an “eastern void” but a motley mosaic of *tolderías* with volatile dynamics among them and with the Spanish world to the north. Although this mosaic world was fragmented and tenuously glued, we should not take at face value the Spanish perspective of it as a lawless place populated by “brutes” that wandered aimlessly. Although mobile, *tolderías* occupied a determined if broadly defined territory, which in many cases was reflected in the name of the “nation” they were assigned. For instance, the Indian witnesses of the Río Cuarto stated that among the *convidados* there were five *tolderías* of “Diamantinos” (from the area of the river Diamante, to the west of San Luis) and three *tolderías* of “Serranos” (from the sierras in the Southern Pampas).<sup>72</sup> Moreover, *tolderías* did not move en masse for convites, but sent parties composed mostly of young warriors traveling “light and well-armed” (*ligeros y bien prevenidos*), just like the Reche-Mapuche maloca parties. Thus, soldiers observed that in Florian’s *toldería* there were mostly young men (*mozos*) with many lances, swords, bolas, and extensive horse herds. A soldier calculated about two thousand horses for a group of about sixty warriors. Perhaps more significantly,

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<sup>71</sup>See the *auto* by Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco (Las Lajas, May 26, 1708), and the report by Julio Arias de Cabrera (June 1, 1708), both are in *Ibid*.

<sup>72</sup>See the questioning at the cacique Ucucha’s *toldería* (Paraje de Tegua, Captain Felipe Arballo’s estancia, May 11, 1708), and at the cacique Andrés Liquid’s *toldería* (Paraje de la Punta del Agua, lands of Doña María Sosa, May 12, 1708), both are in *Ibid*.

soldiers added that the Indian toldos had “only the necessary things for the march and the road,” and that there were “very few women” (*poco mujerío*).<sup>73</sup> This suggests a typical gender division of labor for equestrian hunters, by which women stayed behind in the more permanent camps while mostly-male parties went hunting and raiding.<sup>74</sup>

Finally, unusual movements of people across the mosaic were rapidly noticed, and could spell trouble. Strangers entering the area had to “come to terms” with the local peoples. Reche-Mapuche parties entering the Pampas hence had to do so under certain terms agreed to with the peoples who lived there, unless they were willing to risk physical confrontation in a territory they did not know very well and where they lacked allies.<sup>75</sup> The available sources suggest that those terms initially involved mutually beneficial trade, as in the last decades of the seventeenth century Spaniards from San Luis, Córdoba and Buenos Aires asserted that the Indians of their respective jurisdictions exchanged livestock with the “enemy Indians of Chile” for a variety of goods. Cases like that of the Río Cuarto suggest that Reche-Mapuche parties also entered the Pampas through convites or short-term alliances with specific purposes, usually involving raiding, either the Spaniards or other Indian groups.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>See the statements by Alférez Bernardo Ferreira de Aguiar (December 8, 1707), soldier Pascual Zelis (December 8, 1707), and Ignacio de Arballo (December 8, 1707), all are in *Ibid*.

<sup>74</sup>See Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, especially chapter 4.

<sup>75</sup>In the early eighteenth century, Córdoba and San Luis authorities repeatedly reported inter-tribal rivalries and hostilities between “Aucas” and “Pampas.” See APC: Escribanía Primera 256, “Aviso de una invasión de indios. Córdoba, 1726.”; APSL: Corresp. 1, “Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710.”; Gascón, “La articulación de Buenos Aires.”

<sup>76</sup>Warnings and rumors about convites among variously named “nations” abound in sources of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. For an overview, see Gascón, “La articulación de Buenos Aires;” Gascón, “Fluctuaciones;” León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores*, chapter 1.

When comparing the overall position of the Reche-Mapuches in the trans-Andean world to that of the Pampa Indians, the latter appear at a disadvantage. The Pampa Indians' access to Spanish markets—and therefore to the Spanish goods that they had incorporated into their daily life—were much more limited. The Pampa Indians neither had formal diplomatic relations to stabilize trade nor produced goods (like ponchos) that the Spanish coveted. Spaniards from San Luis to Buenos Aires, furthermore, were able to obtain horses and cattle directly, by carrying out *vaquerías* into the Pampas. Thus, unlike their Chilean counterparts, they did not need Indian middlemen. Finally, the Pampa Indians suffered the consequences of living in a “hot zone” that attracted strangers, Indians as well as Spaniards, all competing for the same resources—the feral herds of cattle and horses. In addition to having to deal with these strangers entering their homeland, the Pampa Indians were in the most vulnerable position in case of intertribal or intercultural conflict.

## 5. CATTLE AT THE CROSSROADS: INDIANS AND SPANIARDS IN THE SOUTHERN SIERRAS

During the transitional decades to the eighteenth century, as Spaniards pushed farther into the tierra adentro in pursuit of feral animals, they came into contact with Indians under novel roles. Spaniards and Indians encountered each other not as frustrated conquerors and reluctant (or rebellious) conquered but as hunters competing for the same resource in the same ecological area. This chapter examines the resulting conflicts and accommodations by focusing on a circumscribed site in the Southern Pampas, the Tandil Sierras

Owing to very favorable environmental conditions, feral livestock were particularly abundant in the sierras. The herds attracted Native peoples from all-over the trans-Andean world, as well as Spaniards from Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and Cuyo. Far from the colonial centers and outnumbered, the Spaniards were forced to negotiate with Indians for access to the animals, pastures, and water sources. In an interesting twist that cuts across customary Indian-versus-Spaniards stories, this chapter shows that rivalries within each group pushed some Indians and some Spaniards into intercultural alliances with each other.

### *I. ENCOUNTERS IN THE SIERRAS*

Several reasons made the sierras into a node where Indians and Spaniards converged during the transitional decades to the eighteenth century (see Maps 2 and 9 for the sierras' location). The area had excellent pastures and abundant water sources, which were a spotty resource in the Pampas south of the river Salado. The sierras were therefore an ideal habitat for feral livestock. In addition, the sierras were better suited

than the open plains for human pastoralist activities. The interior valleys, so-called *abras*, provided sheltered enclosures that made easier the task of rounding up and taming feral cattle and horses. Stone deposits, a resource practically absent in the other sub-regions of the Pampas, provided the material for the man-made corrals that both Native peoples and Spaniards used.<sup>1</sup>

These optimal environmental conditions combined with the sierras' strategic location with respect to both the Spanish and Native worlds. The sierras were relatively equidistant and easily accessible from the Spanish settlements of Buenos Aires, Río Cuarto, and San Luis. Up until the late seventeenth century, vaquería troops had stayed close to these settlements, as feral cattle was abundant enough for the Spaniards to avoid the hassle of entering little-explored and likely dangerous territory. However, as the pressure of vaquerías pushed the feral herds south, Spaniards followed behind and eventually reached the sierras. Already in 1677, sources indicate that vaquerías from Buenos Aires crossed the river Salado towards the sierras.<sup>2</sup> And soon after troops from

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<sup>1</sup>Archeologists have discovered remains of stone corrals of different shapes and sizes in the sierras. On the basis of the construction techniques and archeological remains found nearby the corrals, archeologists have suggested that Native peoples built them in the post-conquest period for the tasks of rounding-up and fattening livestock. See Mandrini, "Indios y fronteras," 67-68. Archival sources indicate, however, that the Spaniards used these corrals as well while rounding up cattle in the sierras. Guide Cristóbal Juárez, for instance, stated in 1707 that while in a vaquería in the Tandil sierras, the members of his troop had agreed to meet up at the "so-called Ferreira's corral" (*el corral que llaman de Ferreira*). See the statement by Cristóbal Juárez, in APC: Criminales Capital 2, "Causa criminal contra los Indios de nación Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capitán Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. Córdoba, 1707-1708."

<sup>2</sup>See "Gobernador Andrés de Robles al Rey. 20 de abril de 1678," *DHG* 1: 303. See also *AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 18: session of April 22, 1694. More detailed accounts date from the first decades of the eighteenth century, see AGN: IX 39-8-7, "Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720." Porteños also went through the sierras to gather salt from flats discovered in 1668 immediately west of the Ventana range. See Gabriel Darío Taruselli, "El comercio de la sal en el Río de la Plata

other cities did the same. For instance, Baltasar de Miranda, from San Luis, stated in 1710 that he had regularly visited the sierras since 1680, as a guide for vaquería troops from San Luis, Mendoza, and Córdoba. Lucio Lucero, also from San Luis, asserted he had “entered” the sierras with vaquería troops “eleven times” between 1700 and 1710. Antonio de Garay and his troop, from Córdoba, were “leaving the Tandil sierra” in 1707 with a rodeo of five thousand heads of cattle.<sup>3</sup>

The sierras were also strategically situated with respect to the Indian world. They were at the end point of two of the main trans-Andean trails that connected the Andean region to the Pampas.<sup>4</sup> Porteño sources register that, at least since the late 1600s, Indians from other areas “visited” the sierras to obtain horses and cattle by hunting or trading with the local Native peoples.<sup>5</sup> And as the trans-Andean Indian country

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durante la etapa colonial, siglos XVII y XVIII” (Tesis de Licenciatura en Historia, Universidad Nacional de Luján, 2002), chapter 1.

<sup>3</sup>Statements by Miranda and Lucero are in APSL: Corresp. 1, “Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710.” For Garay, see APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Causa criminal contra los Indios de nación Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capitán Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. Córdoba, 1707-1708.”

<sup>4</sup>One trail started in the area of Valdivia, ran along the river Negro, and finally across the river Colorado into the sierras. The other one, so-called *rastrillada de los chilenos*, started in the area of Concepción and ran along the river Colorado (see Map 7, p. 143). As Raúl Mandrini has shown, by the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the Native peoples that inhabited the sierras had made good use of the sierras ecological and strategic advantages by specializing as full time pastoralist nomads. They raised cattle, horses, and sheep, and sold the animals mostly in the trans-Andean market. They also had an active trade (in pelts, ostrich feathers, as well as Andean textiles that they obtained from the Reche-Mapuche) with Carmen de Patagones, a small settlement that Porteños founded at the mouth of the river Negro in the late 1770s. Raúl Mandrini, “Desarrollo de una sociedad indígena en el area interserrana bonaerense,” *Anuario IEHS* 2 (1987); Mandrini, “Procesos de especialización.”

<sup>5</sup>ME: AGI G 31, “Joseph de Herrera y Sotomayor al Rey. Incluye autos sobre el repartimiento de indios pampas sobrevivientes de la matanza hecha por el capitán J. de San Martín en 1680. Buenos Aires, 10 de diciembre de 1686.”

consolidated, the west-east Indian traffic along the trails became heavier, and the sierras regularly received seasonal visits from Indians living farther west.<sup>6</sup>

By the early decades of the eighteenth century, thus, the sierras had become a “hot zone” where different groups of Spaniards and Indians in search of the same resource—feral herds of horses and cattle—regularly converged, and were forced to interact with each other. While Spanish-Indian interactions were certainly not novel, the conditions under which they interacted in the sierras most definitely were. In the sierras, Spaniards were in a position of vulnerability to which they were not quite accustomed. The sierras were weeks away from the Spanish line of settlements and therefore weeks away from any kind of help or reinforcement. In addition, vaquería troops were at a disadvantage in terms of numbers. Troops consisted at most of two or three dozen individuals, while Indian parties ranged from fifty to several hundred men. Vaquería troops, furthermore, were composed of peons or *troperos* rather than armed soldiers. Troperos carried the proverbial *medialunas* or *desjarretadoras* (hocksing poles), which could double as weapons when necessary, but only rarely they had firearms. As a result, they lacked the technological edge vis-à-vis Indians that Spanish military expeditions had customarily had.<sup>7</sup> Finally, Indians were much more familiar

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<sup>6</sup>Mandrini, "Procesos de especialización;" Palermo, "La compleja integración."

<sup>7</sup>Troperos were generally humble rural dwellers, in many cases of mixed race, among whom firearm ownership was practically non-existent. The Spanish Crown tightly controlled the importation into the colonies of firearms and gunpowder, which tended to remain in the hands of the royal army. See Jiménez, "De males y armas de fuego," 52-56; Juan Monferini, "La historia militar durante los siglos XVII y XVIII," in *Historia de la Nación Argentina (desde los orígenes hasta la organización definitiva en 1862)*, ed. Ricardo Levene (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Universidad, 1938). Militia reports indicate that even rural dwellers who provided the required militia service lacked access to firearms. Their weapons were instead “lances and shields” (*lanzas y adargas*). See “Andrés de Robles a SM, da cuenta del estado en que se hallaban las fortificaciones. Buenos Aires, 20 de octubre de 1674,” printed in Enrique Peña, ed., *Documentos y planos relativos al período edilicio colonial de la ciudad de Buenos Aires*, 6 vols. (Buenos Aires: Talleres Casa Jacobo Peuser, 1910), vol. 1:168.



with the territory than Spaniards, whose troops depended heavily on the skills of a lonely guide or *baqueano*.

The novel setting of the sierras, therefore, changed the balance of power that, for the previous century and a half, had existed between Spaniards and Indians. For the first time, (some) Spaniards and Indians encountered each other on a more leveled playing field. In the sierras, Spaniards could neither dictate to nor ignore Indians. They were forced instead to negotiate with them, in order to secure their own safety as well as their access to herds, pastures, and water sources.

But before delving into the intercultural accommodation and conflict that ensued, it is worth recalling that, as indicated in previous chapters, there were fault lines within each group as well. For analytical purposes, it is helpful to distinguish three possible types of encounters in the sierras: intra-Spanish (among Spaniards from different jurisdictions), intertribal (among different groups of Indians), and intercultural (between Indians and Spaniards). While the last type is the main concern of this chapter, its particular characteristics are best understood in relation to the first two. Furthermore, as I show in the pages that follow, novel intercultural alliances that emerged in this period between Porteños and Pampa Indians from the sierras only make sense when taking into account intra-Spanish tensions (between Porteños and vecinos from other cities) and intertribal tensions (between local Pampa Indians and Indians from the Andean area).

We know the most about intra-Spanish encounters. As explained in chapter three, these encounters mostly resulted in acrimonious disputes over who had rights to make use of the feral herds. These disputes that sometimes ended violently, as when Porteño patrols apprehended troperos from other cities and seized their property. When analyzed vis-à-vis intertribal encounters, the most distinctive trait of intra-Spanish encounters is that the conflicts among vaquería troops were neither necessarily solved

during the face-to-face encounter, nor necessarily solved by those involved in the interaction. A brief example will clarify this point best.

In 1701 three vecinos from Río Tercero (an area in southern Córdoba) were carrying out a *vaquería* on the contested border between Córdoba and Buenos Aires. Shortly after the group of three Cordobans had arrived at their chosen site, a patrol from Buenos Aires approached them, scolded them for being in Porteño territory and, as punishment, took all their horses away. In retaliation and to secure their wellbeing, as it was a long way back to their homes on foot through “barren and uninhabited *campañas*,” the Cordobans stealthily approached a nearby *vaquería* troop from Buenos Aires. When the troop was distracted, the Cordobans rapidly “took some tame horses and mares... about eighty,” and fled back to Río Tercero. Once there, their actions rapidly reached the local authorities, and then the Córdoba authorities. The latter swiftly moved to put the men in jail, under the charge that they had stolen property belonging to vecinos from Buenos Aires. After a month and much pleading, the three men were finally released, on the condition that, “through their own persons or through somebody of their trust they bring the horses and mares... to the Governor of Buenos Aires and bring a receipt back.”<sup>8</sup>

As this brief example shows, troperos did not encounter each other simply as individuals with rights to take matters into their own hands, but as members of a society that had specific institutions to do so. In the Spanish world, political authorities, not individuals, were responsible for establishing order and assigning punishment—in sociological terms, the state and its representatives held the monopoly of legitimate

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<sup>8</sup>APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Causa contra Francisco, Antonio, y Roque Gómez por robo de una tropa de caballos de Antonio Giles, vecino de Buenos Aires. Córdoba, 1701.”

violence.<sup>9</sup> The Cordobans, by taking matters in their own hands, had breached this fundamental societal rule. The course of action that they should have followed was to return to Río Tercero, present a formal complaint about the Porteño patrol to the appropriate authorities, and let them solve the conflict through the appropriate legal channels. The required mediation of political authorities in solving interpersonal conflicts is most clear in the final decision of the Córdoba authorities. The three men were not to return the horses to their original owner, whom they were able to identify as Pedro Giles, but to the Buenos Aires Governor, who presumably would restore them to the said Giles.

Membership in Spanish society, moreover, granted disparate individuals belonging to different jurisdictions a shared identity: all troperos, no matter from which city, were subjects of the same Spanish King, and owed obedience to him and his representatives in America. Although not in the particular case described above, in many other cases this shared identity eased face-to-face encounters and deflected potential violence in case of conflict. As mentioned in chapter three, the Córdoba procurador explained in 1704 that in more than one occasion troperos from that city had refrained from defending themselves against Porteño patrols in spite of their growing resentment, solely owing to the “subjection and loyalty they had to their superiors.”<sup>10</sup> Membership in Spanish society, finally, also provided a shared common corpus of written law to work out differences. As explained in chapter three, during the highest points of the inter-jurisdictional conflict between Córdoba and Buenos Aires, the fact

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<sup>9</sup>This is Max Weber’s classic definition of the state.

<sup>10</sup>In AGN: IX 40-8-5, “Diferentes escritos del Cabildo y Regimiento de la ciudad de Córdoba del Tucumán al de ésta, y del gobernador de aquella provincia a este gobernador en primera instancia sobre el derecho que pretenden aquellos vecinos al ganado vacuno cimarrón que pasta en las campañas realengas, y las representaciones sobre este particular y la medición, deslinde y amojonamiento de ambas jurisdicciones. 1707.”

remained that, despite veiled threats of “deaths and other perturbations,” the former resorted to the Spanish legal repertoire to protest the latter’s patrolling. And Córdoba did so because, to some extent, this course of action paid off: neither the Charcas Audiencia nor all Buenos Aires governors agreed with the Buenos Aires Cabildo policies or ruled in their favor. In fact, the Buenos Aires Cabildo itself complained in 1682 that the costly patrolling of the campañas yielded poor results, as most of the seized troops were shortly after set free “on bail” (*a título de fianza*).<sup>11</sup>

All in all, then, even if intra-Spanish encounters in the tierra adentro, including the sierras, were not exempt from tension and even violence, Spanish political institutions regulated them, and troperos’ shared identity as Spaniards eased them.

By contrast to the Spaniards, the Indians of the larger trans-Andean world who converged in the sierras lacked supra-ethnic authorities or shared identities. During intertribal encounters, therefore, they confronted each other not solely as distinct interests but with the right to physically prosecute those interests. In other words, as opposed to the Spanish world, in the Indian world legitimate violence was not monopolized by a specific institution, the state, but “held in severalty”—in anthropological terms.<sup>12</sup> This feature most clearly differentiated the Spanish and Indian worlds, a difference that Spaniards were quick to apprehend, and quick to interpret as a fundamental marker of Indian inferiority. Spaniards defined “lower barbarians” like the Pampa Indians as peoples *sin fe, sin rey, sin ley* (without Faith, King, or Law), that is, as

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 186. Sahlins emphasizes that the emergence of the state—rather than social features such as writing, urbanity, or kinship—differentiates “civilized” from “primitive” societies. As Pierre Clastres somewhat romantically puts it in his classic work of political anthropology, “the thing whose very absence defines primitive society” is “hierarchical authority, the power relation, the subjugation of men—in a word, the State.” Pierre Clastres, *Society Against the State. Essays in Political Anthropology*, trans. Robert Hurley and Abe Stein (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 203.

peoples lacking basic institutional means to guarantee social order: organized religion, political authority, and a legal system.<sup>13</sup> From the Spanish point of view, the lack of these institutions and the accompanying lack of effective coercive authority were at the heart of Indian savagery. As Porteño Simón de Valdés had succinctly put it in 1611, the *indios bárbaros* that inhabited the Pampas were fundamentally *gente que no tiene policía*.<sup>14</sup>

Spanish perceptions notwithstanding, the absence of institutional means to guarantee social order among Indians did not translate into pre-political, Hobbessian chaos. As explained in chapter four, Indians of the trans-Andean world, like other non-state peoples around the world, resorted to “material flow” or exchange to ease encounters between strangers, and to underwrite or initiate social relations. Intertribal encounters in the sierras followed the same logic. Hence the brisk “horse trade” that, in the late 1600s, Porteños noted between Pampa Indians from the Tandil Sierra and Indians who were “visiting” the area (“*que asistían por aquellas campañas*”), presumably from the Andean region.<sup>15</sup> As time passed, intertribal relations could acquire enough stability to support convites, and even consolidate into formalized

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<sup>13</sup>Boccaro, “Mundos nuevos,” 8.

<sup>14</sup>In its early modern usage, the term “policía” was inextricably tied to the condition of being civil, as opposed to being *bárbaro*. The 1737 *Diccionario de la Academia de Autoridades* defined “policía” as “*La buena orden que se observa y guarda en las Ciudades y Repúblicas, cumpliendo las leyes u ordenanzas, establecidas para su mejor gobierno.*” The example of use the dictionary offers is quite telling: “*En sus costumbres diferían poco de fieras, hasta que la Religión y trato de los Españoles les enseñó la Policía.*” Simón de Valdés’s statement is in “Pedimiento del Procurador de Buenos Aires al Rey para que prorogue la permisión de navegar los frutos de la tierra, 1611-1617,” printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia* vol. 1:313.

<sup>15</sup>ME: AGI G 31, “Joseph de Herrera y Sotomayor al Rey. Incluye autos sobre el repartimiento de indios pampas sobrevivientes de la matanza hecha por el capitán J. de San Martín en 1680. Buenos Aires, 10 de diciembre de 1686.”

kinship ties.<sup>16</sup> When compared to intra-Spanish encounters, however, it is clear that during the face-to-face encounter between different Indian groups much more was at stake right then and there, including lives.

We can now turn our attention to intercultural encounters in the sierras. As with intertribal encounters, in this case there were neither supra-ethnic authorities to resort to, nor shared identities to ease tensions. What did result from these encounters?

According to separate but contemporaneous reports by Spanish authorities from San Luis, Córdoba and Buenos Aires, the result was unfettered violence on the part of savage Indians.<sup>17</sup> In 1710 the Procurador of San Luis initiated a criminal investigation about the “many murders” that Indians had perpetrated against troperos from that city in the *pampas al sur*.<sup>18</sup> Three years earlier, the Maestre de Campo of Córdoba, José de Cabrera y Velasco, had likewise initiated criminal proceedings against “Indians of the Pampa nation” for the gruesome murder, in the Tandil sierra, of several members of a vaquería troop from Córdoba.<sup>19</sup> Finally, in 1714, Procurador Andrés Gómez de la Quintana called the Buenos Aires Cabildo’s attention about the dangers faced by vaquería troops in the tierra adentro—especially in the area of the sierras:

for the last several years there has been continuous disorder in the royal lands of this city’s jurisdiction, a disorder caused by the Auca Indians of the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Chile. They steal the livestock that belongs to the accioneros, and

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<sup>16</sup>As I show in the next chapter, sources conclusively indicate that by the mid-eighteenth century the initially tenuous relations between Native peoples from the Andean region and Pampa Indians from the southern sierras had consolidated into definite kinship ties.

<sup>17</sup>Despite important revisions, recent literature still uncritically echoes this Spanish-centric perspective. See Gascón, “La articulación de Buenos Aires;” León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores*.

<sup>18</sup>APSL: Corresp. 1, “Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710.”

<sup>19</sup>APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Causa criminal contra los Indios de nación Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capitán Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. Córdoba, 1707-1708.”

drive the animals to the Kingdom of Chile; they also perpetrate other insults, crimes, and evil deeds, killing and wounding, whenever they can, vecinos of this and other cities who go [into the Pampas] to carry out their tasks of producing lard and tallow and hides. And the said Indians, to take away the vecinos' horses and supplies, give battle armed with lances, arrows, and other weapons they use, and the wretched defenseless vecinos are forced to retreat, losing their carts, oxen, horses and everything else they carry with them.<sup>20</sup>

The Buenos Aires Cabildo responded with yet another criminal investigation, this one against "Auca Indians," for the "hostilities, robberies, wounds, and deaths" they had perpetrated against Porteños.

At first sight, these lengthy proceedings offer fragmentary evidence of encounters gone awry that seem to confirm the Spanish perspective of the realm beyond their control: chaos and savagery. From the Spanish point of view, the sierras into which vaquería troops ventured appeared as a lawless place, a realm of pre-political chaos where "savage" Indians of diverse "nations" "killed and wounded" whenever they "found the occasion," as procurador Quintana put it.

The proceedings have the potential to tell a different, less Spanish-centric story, however. Their main body consists of sworn statements by troperos of their experience when encountering Indians in the sierras. Unlike the Spanish authorities, which from the comfort of their urban dwellings could off-handedly discard Indians as savage abstractions, the troperos who faced Indian parties in the sierras were hard-pressed to understand why and when Indians "killed and wounded," in order to devise ways to avoid such an outcome. In other words, troperos were forced to understand the logic of

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<sup>20</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3: Procurador's petition in session of September 19, 1714. AGN: IX 39-8-7, "Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720."

that other cultural world that Indians inhabited, at least to the extent that allowed them to save their own skins. Their statements, hence, allow us a glimpse into that world.<sup>21</sup>

But three steps are necessary in order to delve into this less Spanish-centric story of intercultural encounters in the sierras. The first step is to bear in mind the bias in the sample of cases. The encounters between troperos and Indians were informal, took place far from the cities, and involved mostly peoples on the margins of Spanish society (peons and rural dwellers that many times were of mixed-race) or directly outside of it (independent “savage” Indians). Not surprisingly, then, these encounters rarely made it into archives, and when they did it was because something unusual happened. Not surprisingly either, given the fact that Indians did not leave archives behind, that “something” often meant Indian wrongdoing recorded in the guise of Spanish criminal investigations and proceedings. This is a double bias to bear in mind, as a careful reading of these investigations and proceedings suggests that Indian wrongdoing was not necessarily the norm, and that Spanish wrongdoing could have been the trigger. For instance, the San Luis Procurador started his criminal investigation by calling many experienced troperos as witnesses. His first question to them was whether they “had given cause or motive of resentment, or had done any offense to the said Pampa Indians by taking away their women or by harassing them (*inquietándoselas*).”<sup>22</sup> Although this line of his questioning was not fruitful—after all, none of the deponents was an Indian—it offers a rare glimpse of what the Spanish sources leave out.

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<sup>21</sup>My understanding of intercultural encounters owes much to Richard White's study of intercultural accommodation between Algonquians and Europeans in the Great Lakes. White, *The Middle Ground*, especially chapter 2.

<sup>22</sup>Statement by the Procurador General of San Luis (October, 1710), in APSL: Corresp. 1, "Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710."



The second step is to take Indians seriously as social actors with motivations other than what the Spaniards assigned to them. Because Spanish-produced documents are our only source to access these motivations, some conceptual footwork is needed. As exchanges of goods (voluntary and not so much) figure prominently in all encounters, to reconstruct the Indian side of the exchange I have borrowed from anthropological theory on gift-giving.<sup>23</sup> To approach intercultural accommodation, I have borrowed Richard White's idea of "shared misunderstandings." White argues that Indians and Europeans faced each other perfectly comfortable with their own ways of doing things. They tried to understand the world and the reasoning of the other not to celebrate human difference but to "assimilate enough of that reasoning to put it to their own purposes," such as sealing a vital military alliance or obtaining access to needed goods. In doing so, they often misinterpreted and distorted the values and practices of the other but that, White points out, did not matter: "any congruence, no matter how tenuous, can be put to work and can take a life of its own if its accepted by both sides."<sup>24</sup> Intercultural accommodation, therefore, was not a happy midpoint that Indians and Europeans agreed to, but the result of this tenuous, equivocal congruence.

Finally, the third step is to make an effort to supersede the piecemeal nature of the sources. The available criminal proceedings tell very localized stories and come from three different cities. As I show in the pages that follow, the individual encounters in the sierras only begin to make sense when set against the broader context of the trans-Andean Native world. Only when superseding the fragmentary perspective that the Spanish sources offer at first sight, regional patterns begin to emerge, and it is possible to see more than Indian savagery in each individual encounter.

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<sup>23</sup>The classic anthropological perspective on gift-giving is Mauss, *The Gift*. I have relied on Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>24</sup>White, *The Middle Ground*, 52-53.

## II. TRANS-ANDEAN PATTERNS: GIFT-GIVING AND RAIDING IN THE SIERRAS

Troperos facing Indians in the sierras were forced to think outside the Spanish repertoire. They could not resort to Spanish customs and institutions, as when encountering other Spaniards. They neither were able to dictate the terms of the encounter by force, as had been customary for Spaniards during military expeditions. Troperos were fewer than Indians in numbers, lacked firearms, and were less comfortable in the territory. Finally, as opposed to Spaniards writing about Indians from miles away, troperos could not simply dismiss Indians as hostile *bárbaros* and move on. In all cases, troperos were forced to negotiate with Indians to fulfill the routine tasks of gaining access to feral herds, water, and pasture.<sup>25</sup> And in many cases, troperos' own lives were at stake.

Troperos responded to this novel situation by making efforts to gain the Indians' favor. In 1710 Juan Olguín, an experienced tropero who had carried out vaquerías in the sierras for more than a decade, explained how:

whenever running into *tolderías*, the troop owners have regaled the Indians with bites, spurs, copper containers, horses, yerba mate, and tobacco to keep the Indians happy and keep the troops safe.<sup>26</sup>

Unbeknownst to them, Olguín and other troperos like him were doing something more interesting than simply "regaling" the Indians. By engaging in gift-giving, a widespread practice among non-state societies to come to terms with strangers, troperos were

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<sup>25</sup>When possible, troperos chose to change the vaquería site in order to avoid trouble with the Indians. For instance, Baltasar de Quiroga recalled in 1710 that once "the Pampa Indians had taken eight horses with their spurs and bites from the troop's foreman." The troop had thus moved to a different site, in order to avoid "any other problems they might had with said Indians." See statement by Baltasar de Quiroga (Octubre 14, 1710), in APSL: Corresp. 1, "Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710."

<sup>26</sup>Statement by Alférez Juan Olguín (October 13, 1710), in *Ibid.*

opening the possibility of intercultural accommodation. They were engaging in the ways of the Indian world, where—as anthropologists explain—in the absence of public and sovereign power, material flow underwrites or initiates social relations among strangers.<sup>27</sup> Through gifts, troperos hoped to underwrite a social relation as “friends” and to transform a potentially hostile situation in a peaceful one. Thus in many of the troperos’ statements, the expressions “to regale,” “to be under peace” (*estar de paz*) and “to be friends” are used equivalently.<sup>28</sup>

Troperos took the initiative because they were at a strategic disadvantage in the sierras but were required to spend relatively long periods of time there—sometimes several months—in order to make the vaquería worthwhile.<sup>29</sup> They had hence the pressing need to keep “the Indians happy,” as Olguín perceptively put it. The gifts through which they hoped to do so were carefully selected. They were goods such as metal objects, yerba mate, and tobacco, which the Pampa Indians had by then thoroughly incorporated but could only obtain through exchange. They were also items

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<sup>27</sup> Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 175, 186–187.

<sup>28</sup> See the statements by Alférez Juan Olguín (October 13, 1710) and Mauricio de Villegas (October 14, 1710), both are in APSL: Corresp. 1, “Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710.” See also the statements by Diego Barragán (September 3, 1714), Luis Piñero (September 5, 1714) and Marcos Felis (September 1, 1714), in AGN: IX 39-8-7, “Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720.” See also the statement by Joseph Toro, in APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Causa criminal contra los Indios de nación Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capitán Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. Córdoba, 1707-1708.”

<sup>29</sup> Troperos stayed in the sierras for periods that ranged from two to nine months. See statements by Teniente Ambrosio Gil Negrete (January 11, 1715), in AGN: IX 39-8-7, “Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720.” See also the statement by mulatto Cristóbal Juárez, in APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Causa criminal contra los Indios de nación Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capitán Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. Córdoba, 1707-1708.”

like horses and cattle, which by this time had high symbolic and material value not only in the Pampas but in the wider trans-Andean Native world as well.<sup>30</sup>

The framework of gift-giving gave a certain stability or predictability to the intercultural encounters in the sierras by generating expectations within each group. Indians expected to obtain gifts from troperos, and troperos expected in exchange to have access to feral herds, water sources, and sites with good pasture. In sum, they expected to carry out their vaquería “under peace.”

But, as the many cases of encounters gone wrong indicate, this was a fragile stability. And it was so because it resulted, not from a happy and transparent agreement, but from a shared misunderstanding of what the exchange of gifts implied.

Troperos gave gifts expecting to be repaid in personal safety and a free pass to carry out their vaquerías. In anthropological terms, they conceived their “regaling” as a balanced reciprocal exchange, a type of exchange that resembles “trade” the most because it relies on personal relations the least: it is the “exchange of equivalent things in a finite and narrow period of time.”<sup>31</sup> Used to the impersonal relations of the market, troperos were, in a sense, “buying” their safety and their access to livestock with gifts.

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<sup>30</sup>Written sources register evidence for the symbolic and material value of horses and cattle among Native peoples of the Pampas only after the mid-eighteenth century—when recorded cross-cultural contact was more intense. But scholars agree that these trends had started earlier. See Claudia Gotta, “Una aproximación histórica al problema del ganado como moneda en Norpatagonia, siglos XVIII-XIX,” *Anuario IEHS* 8 (1993); Raúl Mandrini, “Sobre el suttee entre los indígenas de las llanuras argentinas. Nuevos datos e interpretaciones sobre su origen y práctica,” *Anales de Antropología* 31 (1994); Raúl Mandrini, “El viaje de la fragata San Antonio, en 1745-1746. Reflexiones sobre los procesos políticos operados entre los indígenas pampeano-patagónicos,” *Revista Española de Antropología Americana* 30 (2000); Palermo, “Reflexiones;” Villar and Jiménez, *Saca de ganados*.

<sup>31</sup>Balanced reciprocity takes place within a finite and narrow period of time and involves the exchange of equivalent goods, because there is no previously existing social relationships that can sustain a one-way material flow. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 195.

The thorny question troperos had difficulty figuring out was how many gifts were equivalent to the Indians' "happiness." Indians' greediness and treachery was the explanation that troperos resorted to when a supposedly reciprocal exchange of gifts for safety went awry. Thus guide Mauricio Villegas, who had worked on the sierras since "he had use of his reason," asserted that troperos were forced to give to Indians whatever they wanted, every time they ran into them. If troperos refused to do so, Indians "followed the troop at a distance, deceivingly trying to find out any weakness... in order to succeed in their mean attempts." Juan Olguín was of the opinion that Indians' greediness only stopped at the bottom line of troperos' "cows and lives:"

I have seen in many occasions that the said Pampa Indians have violently taken away horses, knives, and bites from us troperos, and as we are defenseless we do not dare to reject the Indians, and we are happy to escape with our cows and our lives.<sup>32</sup>

Once and again, troperos complained, Indians took their gifts and then did not respect their side of the (implicit) reciprocal exchange.

The experience of Marcos Felis, a Buenos Aires vecino and troop owner, best illustrates troperos' expectations and frustrations.<sup>33</sup> It was early September of 1714. Felis, his son, and a troop of about ten men had been in the Tandil sierras for several weeks. Felis decided to go ahead of the rest of the troop with the troop guide, Luis Piñero, in order to "search of good pastures and herds to continue with the work [of producing hides]." While scouting the area, they saw "approximately half a league up in the sierra a group of Indians, about two hundred and fifty." Shortly afterwards a small

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<sup>32</sup>Statement by Alférez Juan Olguín (October 13, 1710), in APSL: Corresp. 1, "Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710."

<sup>33</sup>In AGN: IX 39-8-7, "Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720."

group of Indians advanced “to recognize them,” as Piñero put it, and “invited them to dismount by laying a blanket on the ground to sit on it.” Through an interpreter, “one of the same Indians, who understood some Castilian,” they assured Felis and Piñero that they were “friends,” and exchanged information such as how many people each group had, where they were from, and where their respective camps were located. After a while, the Indians politely announced that they would later “pay a visit to the Spanish camp,” and retreated. Felis and Piñero quickly retraced their steps and joined the rest of the troop. According to Juan Gerardo, one of the troop’s peons (an Indian from Tucumán), Felis announced that a group of Indians was to arrive in a short time, but that there was nothing to worry about because “they were friends.” The Indians would “treat them like brothers,” Felis promised, and he asked the troop “not to give them any reason to get angry.” About two hours later, a party of approximately fifty Indians arrived. Felis regaled them with tobacco, yerba mate, and gave them “mate to drink.”<sup>34</sup> A cacique gave Felis two ponchos, Felis repaid with two horses, and they “were conversing for about an hour and a half.”

Having all the features of a peaceful encounter, and one not too dear, Felis was startled when the Indians, after parting in a friendly manner, did a swift maneuver and drove most of his horse herd away with them. So startled was Felis that he rapidly mounted on his horse and went after the Indians, with the support of only his son and Piñero. When he caught up with the Indians, he “gave them to understand,” according to Piñero, “how came they took his horses and left his people on foot when they were under peace and were friends?” A lance-wound on his arm was the response, after which he and his two companions managed to escape while driving part of the horses back with them to their camp. According to peon Miguel Jiles (a *pardo* or mixed blood), Felis told

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<sup>34</sup>Yerba mate is traditionally drunk from a common gourd. There are implicit ties of trust and friendship among those who share the gourd.

his troop upon arriving to “quickly saddle their horses and get lances ready in case the Indians returned.”<sup>35</sup> When the Indians returned, however, they proved to be many times more in number because, as Felis’ son explained, they had had the chance to “gather with other Indians through some smoke signals they had made.” Felis and his troop had no chance to withstand them successfully and thus were forced to retreat rapidly, leaving behind “carts, oxen, and the rest of the implements.”

The initial stages of the encounter between Felis’ troop and the Indians show that the framework of gift-giving provided certain conventions to follow, and hence certain stability, to encounters in the sierras. Both groups followed what seemed to be a conventional etiquette for intercultural encounters: initial mutual reconnaissance by small groups, exchange of information, and visits to the main camps that allowed each side to corroborate the information received.<sup>36</sup> Had Felis thought he did not have the Indians’ friendship secured, he could have taken different steps. He and his troop could have retreated in an organized fashion and without leaving valuable property behind. After all, they had about two full hours before the party of Indians arrived at their camp. He could also have asked his men to get ready for a possible skirmish, saddling horses and preparing lances, as he did later on. Instead, he asked them not to bother the Indians or give them any reason to “get angry.” Even after Indians had clearly broken

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<sup>35</sup>Felis’ troop did not even have lances, as he instructed them to get lances ready by “setting their knives on sticks and canes.”

<sup>36</sup>Similar etiquette described in statements by Alf rez Diego Santana (January 17, 1715) and Cabo de Escuadra Francisco Guti rrez (January 17, 1715), both are in AGN: IX 39-8-7, “Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallar  al folio 13 la petici n del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720.” See also the statement by Joseph de Toro in APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Causa criminal contra los Indios de naci n Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capit n Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. C rdoba, 1707-1708.” See as well the statement by Mauricio Villegas (October 14, 1710), in APSL: Corresp. 1, “Expediente de averiguaci n sobre las vaquer as e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710.”

Felis' expectations by driving away his horses, Felis still behaved within the parameters of a "friendly" encounter. He ran after fifty Indians with only two other men and no weapons except for two swords and a *desjarretadora*, to require an explanation. Only physical violence, a wound in his arm, convinced him otherwise.

What are we to make of the Indians' "greediness" and "treachery"?

Anthropologists tell us that in non-state, kinship-based societies, kinship distance determines the nature of exchange between two peoples. Exchange hence ranges between two extremes or poles: from redistribution between kinspeople and fellow villagers, to negative reciprocity between non-kin, a word that is often the synonym for "stranger" and "enemy."<sup>37</sup> Kinship distance determines the "morality" of the exchange as well. Thus, as Marshall Sahlins sums up, "The appropriation of another man's goods or his woman, which is a sin ... in the bosom of one's community, may be not merely condoned but positively rewarded with the admiration of one's fellows—if perpetrated on an outsider."<sup>38</sup>

The Spaniards, facing a generic category of "Indians," tried the same recipe of gift-giving and expected to obtain the same results. Used to the impersonal relations of the market, for troperos the exchange itself was relevant, not the particular individuals they were exchanging with.

For the Indians, by contrast, the final meaning of the exchange fundamentally depended on the relation (or lack thereof) with the other party. Felis and the Indians he ran into were complete strangers. Experienced guide Piñero deduced at first sight that the Indians were not local Indians but "Aucas" coming from afar: their riding gear was of

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<sup>37</sup>Negative reciprocity is defined as "the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity," an attempt that "ranges through various degrees of cunning, guile, stealth, and violence to the finesse of a well-conducted horse raid." Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 195.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 199.



a different style, and their horses were “skinny and tired,” presumably from a long march. The Indians themselves confirmed all of Piñero’s observations when approaching the Spaniards for the first time. They greeted them saying “mari mari” (a Mapudugun greeting) and their interpreter explained that they were coming from “some villages beyond the Maypu,”<sup>39</sup> on the other side of the Andes, in “search of a few cows to bring back to their lands.” They did not have any previous relation to the Spaniards—the Spaniards were non-kin to them—which made the perpetration of an act of guile perfectly “moral.” The Aucas thus followed all the conventions of a peaceful encounter, because such conventions allowed them to visit the Spanish camp, confirm the number of men and weapons, and assess the risk of a raid. As anthropological studies show, moreover, raiding and counter-raiding are “endemic” to equestrian peoples because breeding herds back to full strength after disease, lack of pastures or lack of water has affected them, is “a slow business” that can compromise the well-being of the group.<sup>40</sup> As Piñero noted, the Aucas’ horses were “skinny and tired” after the long Andes crossing. The Aucas quickly needed horses in full strength in order to hunt for their daily sustenance, as well as to begin the slow process of rounding-up and taming the “few cows” they wanted, and had them ready for the long way back home before cold weather closed the Andes passes.

The case of Mauricio Villegas, another guide very experienced in the sierras, contrasts with that of Felis and provides us with an example of Indians’ behavior during encounters in which they did not face complete strangers. In 1710 Villegas went into the sierras as a guide of a troop not from Buenos Aires but from San Luis, a city that belonged to the Kingdom of Chile (via the Cuyo province). In Chile, formal diplomatic

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<sup>39</sup>Most likely the river Maipo, in Chile.

<sup>40</sup> Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, 37. For raiding among the Plains nomads, see Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, chapters 2 and 3.

relations with the Reche-Mapuche had a history of at least half a century. Spanish authorities regularly met with the Reche-Mapuche in parleys, and negotiated with individual caciques.<sup>41</sup> When the troop ran into a party of Auca Indians, Villegas was able to identify the party's cacique by name: he was a "friendly" cacique named "Hillalauquen in their Auca tongue and Don Joseph Morales in the Spanish one." Hillalauquen presented "a saddle and some lances" to Villegas, who corresponded with "some spurs and thirty cows." After the gift exchange and some polite talking, the two groups parted "under peace." Villegas added that, according to his long experience in the sierras, the Aucas "had never caused any damage to the Spaniards when they ran into them." Rather, Villegas said, in these cases Spaniards and Indians simply "made their presents to each other" and continued with their own affairs.<sup>42</sup>

The very different cases of Felis and Villegas suggest an alternative reading of what Spaniards perceived as Indians' greediness and treachery.<sup>43</sup> Troperos thought that they were simply "buying" their safety every time they engaged in gift-giving, no matter with whom. Indians faced a more complex range of options, fundamentally determined by the "kinship distance" with the opposing party. Felis and his troop were strangers (non-kin) to the Aucas, which made negative reciprocity a perfectly "moral" option for Indians in need of fresh horses. Villegas and his troop, by contrast, were known to the

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<sup>41</sup> Méndez, "La organización de los parlamentos."

<sup>42</sup>Statement by Mauricio Villegas (October 14, 1710), in APSL: Corresp. 1, "Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710."

<sup>43</sup>Troperos' image of Indians as greedy and *pedigüeños* ("beggar-like") anticipated Porteño perceptions during the nineteenth-century, when gift-giving was institutionalized as part of the diplomatic relations between the Buenos Aires government and several *tolderías* that inhabited the Pampas. An insightful analysis is in Ratto, *La frontera bonaerense*, 131-133.

Aucas, they were (fictive) kin to them thanks to the ties created by the existence of intercultural diplomacy in the Cuyo province.

Even in the extreme of negative reciprocity towards strangers, it is worth pointing out, Indians did not “kill and wound” whenever “they found the occasion,” as Procurador Quintana asserted. It would not have been difficult for about two hundred and fifty Indians to kill and wound Felis’ unarmed troop of ten men. Instead, Indians used guile to obtain what they wanted, which was horses, not Spanish lives. They only resorted to physical violence when pressed—when Felis went after them and tried to recover some of his horses. The point here is not to replace the image of Indians as savage killers with one of Indians as pacifists. The point is to underscore that Quintana’s image of Indians as killers tells us more about the Spaniards and their fears, than about the Indians and their motives.

The cases of Felis and Villegas also indicate that the outcomes of Indian-Spanish encounters in the sierras were determined, at least in part, by the larger dynamics of the trans-Andean Native world. The existence of diplomatic relations between the Reche-Mapuches and the Kingdom of Chile meant that Auca parties encountering troops from San Luis tended to make “presents to each other,” and continue on their way peacefully. By the same token, the lack of diplomatic relations between the Reche-Mapuches and Buenos Aires meant that when Auca parties encountered Porteño troops, they did not hesitate to use guile and even violence against them.<sup>44</sup> It is no wonder then that, during

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<sup>44</sup>The initial reconnaissance by small groups also served to distinguish “friends” from “enemies.” For instance, in 1720 a Porteño vaquería troop ran into a group of Aucas in the sierras. When the latter asked the former, “in the Castilian tongue, where they were from,” Porteños responded that they were “from Buenos Aires, and friends.” The Aucas retorted that “those from Buenos Aires were not friends (*los de Buenos Aires no eran amigos*),” and that they “were ready to fight.” See the statement by Pedro Santos (October 2, 1720), in AGN: IX 39-8-7, “Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las

their respective criminal investigations, the San Luis Procurador referred to Auca parties as friendly, while Buenos Aires Procurador squarely blamed them for all the damages suffered by Porteño troops.

But Aucas and Spaniards were not the only players in the sierras. There were also the local Pampa *tolderías* that formed part of the eastern sociopolitical mosaic. Sources indicate that the agitated early-eighteenth-century climate of the sierras pushed these local Pampa *tolderías* into a new type of intercultural relation with the Spaniards: a diplomatic alliance with the Buenos Aires government, the first ever-recorded in written sources.

### *III. HESITANT BEGINNINGS: INTERCULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN THE PAMPAS*

In February of 1717 the Buenos Aires Cabildo took an unprecedented decision. During a discussion about the best way to stop vecinos from other jurisdictions from “extracting” cattle from the Pampas, Cabildo member Joseph Ruiz de Arellano proposed appointing two “genteel Pampa caciques” as *Guardas Mayores* (main guardians) of the *campaña*. These caciques, named Mayupiquiyan and Yati, lived with their people in “the sierras far away from this city.” From there, Ruiz de Arellano argued, they could easily and regularly scout the *tierra adentro*, and thus collaborate with the Cabildo in making sure that *vaquería* troops from the neighboring cities of Córdoba, San Luis, and Mendoza did not “enter” the *campañas*. Ruiz de Arellano reported that Captain Juan Cabral had volunteered to carry out the negotiations, which involved going with a small number of men into the caciques’ territory to “regale” them. After a long discussion, Cabildo

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hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720.”

members agreed that the proposal was “very convenient,” and offered eighty pesos from the city’s funds to cover expenses.<sup>45</sup>

As explained in chapter three, by 1717, the Buenos Aires Cabildo’s struggle to define and enforce a property regime to allocate exclusive rights over feral cattle to Porteño accioneros was severely under siege. The Cabildo had run into the opposition of the Charcas Audiencia, as well as the opposition of several successive governors who were not willing to risk conflicts with the neighboring jurisdiction of Córdoba del Tucumán. At the same time, during the 1710s, changes in Spanish trade policy and the beginning of the English *asiento* dramatically increased the Atlantic demand for hides.<sup>46</sup>

In this context, the “appointment” of the Pampa caciques that Ruiz de Arellano and Juan Cabral suggested appeared as a good alternative option. The Cabildo seemed to have found a new way of patrolling the campañas that did not require the approval of the governor in charge.

Ruiz de Arellano’s proposal appears in the minutes rather unexpectedly and without background: Who were these caciques? Why did the Spaniards trust them? Perhaps more importantly, why were the Indians interested in collaborating with the Spaniards? Information scattered in archives of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, and San Luis provides answers to these questions. It also indicates that the sudden alliance between Porteños and Pampa Indians was tied to the Reche-Mapuche arrival in the sierras. Let us examine this information.

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<sup>45</sup>AECEBA, Serie 2, vol. 3: session of February 17, 1717. Diplomatic alliances between Indians and the Buenos Aires government augmented progressively in the following decades, and became firmly institutionalized in the nineteenth century—especially under Juan Manuel de Rosas. See Néspolo, “La sociedad indígena;” Ratto, *La frontera bonaerense*, chapter 3.

<sup>46</sup>See Appendix 5 for hide exports estimates. I expand on this subject in chapter 6.

Although the names of the “genteel caciques” from the sierras, Mayupilquiyan and Yati, appear in the Cabildo records for the first and last time in 1717, the relations between these caciques and Porteños went farther back in time. At some point before 1708 the Buenos Aires governor had banished cacique Mayupilquiyan to the Banda Oriental, as punishment for the murder “of some Spaniards.” By 1708 the cacique had succeeded in escaping and crossing the Río de la Plata with the “help of a Spaniard,” and was “back in the Pampas.” Among Indians related to the cacique, it was rumored that he had “a Spanish master in the said port ,” who had proposed that Mayupilquiyan “gather all his people and settle in his estancia, with him.”<sup>47</sup> Finally, Captain Juan Cabral was already well acquainted with the caciques, as he was willing to stay in the Indian camp as a hostage in case the caciques wanted to go to Buenos Aires to confirm the alliance in person. Cabral had likely become acquainted with them while patrolling the campaña, a task that he had carried out under the Cabildo’s orders at least since 1702.<sup>48</sup>

Clearly, caciques Mayupilquiyan and Yati were part of the Pampa Indians that had regular relations with Porteño society but at the same time kept their autonomy. What else do we know about these caciques? In the 1740s there was a short-lived Jesuit missionary experience in the Pampas, which I examine in more detail in Part III.

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<sup>47</sup>See the questioning at the *tolderías* of Dn. Andrés Liquid y Dn. Luis Matara. (Paraje de la Punta del Agua, May 12, 1708), and the questioning at the *tolderías* of Cacique Caunsino (Paraje de la Punta del Agua, May 12, 1708), both are in APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Autos obrados en el Río Cuarto sobre intentar matar los Indios Pampas al Mtre de Campo Dn. Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco y a toda la gente del Río Cuarto y Tercero. Córdoba, 1707-1708.” See also the confessions by Ignacio or Sacabeque (Córdoba, July 12, 1708) and by Milandequl (Córdoba, July 13, 1708), both are in APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Indios Pampas. 1708.”

<sup>48</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 1: Governor’s auto of August 23, 1706; vol. 3: session of February 17, 1717. In the 1740s Juan Cabral’s son, Cristóbal Cabral de Melo, was one of the main mediators between the Buenos Aires government and the Pampa Indians. Cabral de Melo explained in 1744 that his experience in dealing with the Indians came from having accompanied his father to the tierra adentro from an early age. I expand on this subject in chapter 6.

Thomas Falkner, one of the Jesuit fathers involved in the missionary work, wrote an account of his experience.<sup>49</sup> In this account, Falkner identified a cacique Mayu-Pilqui-Ya, of the Taluhet “nation,” and a cacique Yahati, of the Diuhet “nation.” Both “nations,” pointed out Falkner, were known as “Pampas” among the Spaniards of Buenos Aires. These caciques had been important at some point before but not too removed from the Jesuit’s stay in the Pampas during the 1740s. Falkner indicates, for both the Taluhet and Diuhet “nations,” a larger territory than the sierras. He pointed out that the Taluhet “ran” from the sierras deep into the Inland Pampas towards Río Cuarto, San Luis, and even reaching the river Desaguadero (a northern affluent of the river Colorado). The Diuhet “ran” from the sierras deep into the Southern Pampas, and even farther, to the south and west of the river Colorado.<sup>50</sup>

Information from Córdoba complements Falkner’s data. In 1707 the Alcalde Mayor of Córdoba, Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco, described Mayupilquiyan and Yati as the main caciques “of the heathen Pampas Indians who... inhabit the Tandil sierras, immediately to the south.” But “owing to their fickle nature,” the Alcalde added, these Indians did not stay put in one place. Owing to their mobility, their sphere of influence reached beyond the sierras—recall that the eastern mosaic was composed of mobile *tolderías* linked by a tenuous glue of alliances. The Alcalde pointed out that both caciques were very well known among the Native peoples of Río Cuarto, and could “invite” (*podían convidar*) whenever they wanted the “diamantinos,” Native groups from

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<sup>49</sup>Thomas Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia and the Adjoining Parts of South America* (Chicago: Armann and Armann, 1935 [facsimile ed. of 1744 ed.]).

<sup>50</sup>See Map 7, p. 143, for geographical landmarks. A useful guide to situate Falkner’s geographic landmarks in modern-day maps in Juan María Veniard, “Las informaciones geográficas de los indígenas de la Patagonia en sus comunicaciones con los españoles. Siglo XVIII. Análisis y comentarios,” *Investigaciones y Ensayos* 47, no. Enero-Diciembre (1997).

the area of the river Diamante (an affluent of the river Desaguadero).<sup>51</sup> Even through these caciques “inhabited” the sierra, Córdoba’s authorities noted that their movement and alliances reached the south of Córdoba and the river Diamante, a sphere of influence very similar to the one Falkner indicated.

Finally, a relevant last piece of information, by 1710 both the authorities of Córdoba and San Luis specifically blamed these two caciques and their followers for “crimes and *destrozos*” perpetrated against vaquería troops from their respective cities while the troops were in the southern sierras. Thus in November of 1707 Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco, Maestre de Campo of Córdoba, initiated criminal proceedings against Mayupilquiyán and Yati, accusing them of the murder of Captain Antonio de Garay and his troop, which had taken place the previous month in the Tandil sierras. Three years later, in 1710, the procurador of the San Luis Cabildo initiated legal proceedings to find out which Indians were to blame for the “damages” perpetrated against vaquería troops in the sierras. After calling many troperos as witnesses, the alcalde Baltasar de Miranda concluded that the culprits were caciques Mayupilquiyán and Yati and their *parciales* (warriors), “all together about eighty to ninety Indians.”<sup>52</sup>

With this information in mind, let us go back to the Buenos Aires Cabildo’s decision, in 1717, of obtaining Mayupilquiyán and Yati’s collaboration to control the movements of vaquería troops from the neighboring cities so that they did not “enter”

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<sup>51</sup>APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Autos obrados en el Río Cuarto sobre intentar matar los Indios Pampas al Mtre de Campo Dn. Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco y a toda la gente del Río Cuarto y Tercero. Córdoba, 1707-1708.” The “diamantinos” were likely the very first Native groups that settled in the area later known as Mamil Mapu, and that by the mid-eighteenth century were well-known to the Spaniards. See Villar and Jiménez, “Un Argel disimulado.”

<sup>52</sup>APC: Criminales Capital 2, “Causa criminal contra los Indios de nación Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capitán Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. Córdoba, 1707-1708;” APSL: Corresp. 1, “Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710.”



the campañas. In the context of the acrimonious dispute for the access to feral cattle and the difficulties in enforcing Porteños' exclusive rights through regular patrolling, the Cabildo resorted to two caciques who commanded a respectable number of *parciales*, at least vis-à-vis a *vaquería* troop. These caciques, moreover, had a fearsome reputation among the *troperos* from Córdoba and San Luis. Finally, through their allies these two caciques had a sphere of influence that went beyond the sierras to cover other cattle-rich areas (such as southern Córdoba), where Porteños were used to carry out *vaquerías*.

By gaining Mayupilquiyan and Yati as allies, thus, the Cabildo accomplished two tasks. First, it granted a measure of safety for the *vaquería* troops from Buenos Aires that, sooner or later, were going to run into these caciques while in the *tierra adentro*. A diplomatic alliance created (fictive) kinship ties between the peoples involved; Porteños and Pampa Indians would become "brothers." Second, the Cabildo also hoped to benefit from these caciques' reputation among *troperos* from San Luis and Córdoba. Such reputation had the potential of keeping *vaquería* troops from neighboring cities away from the cattle-rich areas to which the Porteños wanted exclusive access.

What were the advantages for Mayupilquiyan and Yati, however? The gifts they received from Captain Juan Cabral, the value of which barely reached nineteen pesos, seemed to have been important only symbolically, as a tangible proof of the alliance.<sup>53</sup> More likely, the caciques were interested in Buenos Aires' protection, as they were accused of "crimes and *destrozos*" by Córdoba and San Luis authorities. There is no evidence of the measures that San Luis authorities might have taken, but Córdoba authorities had concluded the 1707 criminal proceedings against these two caciques with armed expeditions in search of both. Although neither of them was found, one of the

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<sup>53</sup>Cabral reported the expenses of "regaling" the Indians in May 1717. *AECBA AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3: session of May 22, 1717.

expeditions was able to capture a group of Mayupilquiyan's relatives—an uncle and his three sons—all of whom were gruesomely murdered in Córdoba in 1711.<sup>54</sup>

The legal proceeding from San Luis indicates that the arrival of Reche-Mapuche parties (the "Auca") also played a role in pushing Mayupilquiyan and Yati into an alliance with Porteños. Most troperos called as witnesses asserted that the Pampa and the Auca Indians were "rabid enemies" that were constantly "harming each other," and that the former usually stole horses from the latter. Baltasar de Miranda elaborated further:

He neither knows nor has heard that the Pampa Indians have any friendship with the Aucas. Rather, he knows that the said Pampa Indians stay away from the Aucas, because they are fearful of the latter's strength and large numbers. The damages they [the Pampa Indians] have inflicted on the [Auca Indians'] horse herds, by stealing them, have been done through guile (*con mucha astucia*) in moments of distraction. And it is well known that, to avenge these offenses, the Aucas had caused several deaths among the Pampa Indians, and the latter in turn among Aucas whom they have found in small numbers and on foot.<sup>55</sup>

In his statement, Miranda registered the intertribal tensions that resulted from Reche-Mapuche parties that arrived to the sierras without establishing relations with local peoples, but taking advantage instead of their larger numbers. Mayu and Yati commanded about eighty Indians, while the Reche-Mapuche parties, at least judging from the "Aucas" that Marcos Felis and other Porteños encountered, were in the hundreds. Overpowered in numbers, the Pampa Indians resorted to guile to hit the

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<sup>54</sup>AAC: Cabrera 16-3362, "Despacho sobre las muertes de los indios pampas. Córdoba, 1711;" AAC: Cabrera 16-3363, "Información sobre la muerte de los Indios infieles. Córdoba, 1711;" APC: Criminales Capital 2, "Proceso contra los Indios Pampas presos en esta ciudad, y contra los caciques Yahati y Queleliano, ausentes en rebeldía. Córdoba, 1708-1709."

<sup>55</sup>Statement by Baltasar de Miranda (October 14, 1710) in APSL: Corresp. 1, "Expediente de averiguación sobre las vaquerías e indios de las pampas al sur. San Luis de Loyola, 1710."

Aucas in their weakest spot: their horse herds, which were weakened after the Andean crossing and were essential for hunting, rounding up cattle, and defense.

Who exactly were these Aucas? There were several trans-Andean trails that connected the sierras to different regions of south central Chile, the inhabitants of which could be indistinctly labeled as “Aucas” from the Spanish perspective. The troperos from San Luis reported that the Aucas did not inhabit the sierras but came “from the other side of the cordillera” in order to “round-up a few cows to bring back to their lands and hence had some sustenance.” They added that the Aucas had “communication” with the “friendly Indians” from the Cuyo frontier.<sup>56</sup> This information suggests that the Reche-Mapuche who were “rabid enemies” of Mayupilquiyan and Yati came from the northern Andean region, or Pehuenche territory (see Map 7, p. 143).<sup>57</sup>

Captain Lucio Lucero added some more information. He reported about a cacique Pateque, “an Auca who had many followers,” who had “access to the Governor Lieutenant of this Kingdom [of Chile],” and who “communicated” with the San Luis authorities through “friendly Indians” living on the frontier. In 1710 this cacique had requested permission from the San Luis authorities to “destroy” Mayupilquiyan and Yati.

In the 1710s, thus, Mayupilquiyan and Yati not only were sought by Córdoba and San Luis authorities but were also threatened by Reche-Mapuche parties who were allied to the Spaniards west of the Andes, and had diplomatic relations with the government of

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<sup>56</sup>Statements by Captain Lucio Lucero (October 13, 1710), Alférez Juan Olguín (October 13, 1710), Mauricio Villegas (October 14, 1710), and Captain Baltasar de Miranda (October 14, 1710), all in *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup>Many recent studies on the Pehuenche emphasize their diplomatic relations with the Chilean government. The Pehuenche territory was connected with the Pampas through the so-called *rastrillada de los chilenos* that started in the area of Concepción and ran along the river Colorado. On the Pehuenche, see Osvaldo Silva Galdames and Eduardo Téllez Lúgaro, “Los Pewenche: Identidad y configuración de un mosaico étnico colonial,” *Cuadernos de Historia* 13, no. Diciembre (1993); Varela, Font, and Cúneo, “Los Pehuenche;” Sergio Villalobos, *Los Pehuenches en la vida fronteriza* (Santiago: Universidad Católica de Chile, 1989).

San Luis. It is in this context that an alliance with Buenos Aires might have seemed convenient.

Furthermore, the caciques and Porteños had common enemies in the Aucas. As explained above, while San Luis and Córdoba authorities accused the Pampa caciques Mayupilquiyán and Yait as perpetrators of the “crimes and *destrozos*” committed against vaquería troops, the Buenos Aires Cabildo instead accused the “Aucas.” And the Cabildo did so on the basis of the many statements by Porteño troperos. In 1714, Marcos Felis and his men had identified their attackers as Aucas. The following year, Ambrosio Gil Negrete was with his vaquería troop in the sierras when a group of Indians “armed with lances and bolas” suddenly appeared. Shouting “Auca Auca,” the Indians scared away the troperos who were taking care of the herds, and carried almost all the horses with them. The same year, Diego Santana was in the area of the sierras with fourteen troperos, and about a hundred horses. They were approached by a large group of Indians, whom Santana identified as “Aucas” on the basis of their “apparel” (*vestiduras*). The Aucas said they had arrived “under peace,” only to “buy some horses in exchange for ponchos.” Like in Felis’s case, however, after the seemingly peaceful encounter the Indians did a swift maneuver and carried away most of Santana’s horses with them.<sup>58</sup>

In 1717, therefore, intra-Spanish and inter-tribal tensions pushed Porteños and Pampa Indians into a novel form of intercultural relations: a formal diplomatic arrangement. For the first time, the informal intercultural accommodation that for at least two decades had prevailed between Indians and Spaniards in the faraway sierras reached the center of Spanish society. A formal diplomatic arrangement involved not marginal Spanish types like troperos, but the Spanish political authorities.

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<sup>58</sup>AGN: IX 39-8-7, “Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720.”

The arrangement was short-lived, however. On September 15, 1717—only a few months after Captain Cabral formally sealed the alliance by “regaling” the caciques—the Cabildo received an urgent request from Mayupilquiyan for prompt military help to withstand an imminent Auca attack. Cabildo members, however, argued that before making any decision they needed to corroborate Mayupilquiyan’s information. To do so, they decided to commission Captain Juan Cabral, who was already in the tierra adentro, to scout the countryside.<sup>59</sup> At this critical point, the story vanishes from the sources. Two days after Mayupilquiyan’s request, a devastating smallpox epidemic was declared in Buenos Aires, and absorbed all the Cabildo’s attention for several months. The epidemic was widespread, its effects reaching as far as Córdoba.<sup>60</sup> When the epidemic began to subside, in February 1718, the Cabildo proceedings offer neither trace of the “genteel Pampa” caciques nor of their role in guarding the campaña against Spanish intruders.

In addition to being short-lived, the diplomatic arrangement was, as intercultural accommodations generally were, based on shared misunderstandings. From the Cabildo’s perspective, the alliance simply “enlisted” the caciques as *Guardas Mayores* in exchange for a few gifts. From Mayupilquiyan’s perspective, the alliance implied a relation of greater reciprocity, which included military help that was urgently needed. As Baltasar de Miranda had observed, the Pampa Indians who inhabited the sierras, especially Mayupilquiyan and his people, were hard-pressed by Auca parties arriving in large numbers. Mayupilquiyan, on his part, had reasons for expecting Spanish military

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<sup>59</sup>AECBA, Serie 2, vol. 3: session of September 15, 1717. Captain Juan Cabral reported the expenses of the gifts in May, see AECBA, Serie 2, vol. 3: sessions of May 22, 1717.

<sup>60</sup>AECBA, Serie 2, vol. 3, session of September 17, 1717. For the effects of the epidemic in Córdoba, see Aníbal Arcondo, *El ocaso de una sociedad estamental. Córdoba entre 1700 y 1760* (Córdoba: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 1992), 184-185.

reinforcements. Between 1714 and 1716, in response to the accusations by Procurador Andrés Gómez de la Quintana against the Aucas, the Buenos Aires Cabildo had deployed several times small troops of armed men into the tierra adentro, in search of the Aucas.<sup>61</sup> But in 1717 the urgency of Mayupilquiyan was not matched by Porteño authorities, and even less so when smallpox hit the city.

What the sources let us discern about Mayupilquiyan's fate after 1717 indicate that his urgent request had a sound basis. Jesuit Thomas Falkner points out that sometime before the decade of 1740, "Serrano" Indians attacked and killed a "famous" cacique allied to the Spaniards, Don Gregorio Mayu-pilqui-ya. Immediately afterwards, the Serrano suffered a devastating smallpox epidemic, because among the booty they took from Mayu-pilqui-ya's people there was clothing recently bought in Buenos Aires (part of Cabral's gifts?) that was "tainted" with the sickness.

According to Falkner, these "Serranos" inhabited the area of the rivers Limay and Negro, and could reach Valdivia in only six days.<sup>62</sup> If these were the "Aucas" against whom Mayupilquiyan was getting ready, they were Aucas coming from the southern Andean regions (Huilliche territory, see Map 7, p. 143). This in turn would indicate that the situation of the cacique was more critical than what the Spaniards perceived, as he was threatened by Aucas coming from the northern Andean areas (Pehuenche territory) as well as from the southern ones (Huilliche territory).

The smallpox epidemics of 1717 closed the small window that allowed us to get a closer look at the sierras' intercultural landscape. Furthermore, after the epidemic subsided, many Porteños responded to the increasing obstacles to vaquerías in the Pampas by redirecting their endeavors to the cattle-rich plains of the Banda Oriental—

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<sup>61</sup>*AECBA*, Serie 2, vol. 3, sessions of December 14, 1714; February 21, 1715; and September 9, 1716.

<sup>62</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 102-103.

the “eastern band” of the Río de la Plata, present-day Uruguay. For the next two decades, the Pampas ranked very low on Porteños’ priorities, and barely made it into the written record.



### **PART III**

## **THE BIRTH OF THE FRONTIER**





## 6. INTERCULTURAL VIOLENCE AND INTERCULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS

### IN THE EARLY 1740S

In the few years between 1739 and 1742, intercultural relations acquired a new urgency in the Pampas. Porteños and Indians engaged in levels of unprecedented violence against each other, and then tried to contain this violence through new forms of intercultural negotiation and interaction. Thus, Indian groups of the Pampas, which had always resisted Spanish conversion attempts, suddenly were enthusiastic to receive Jesuit fathers and to settle in a mission town. The Buenos Aires government, which until then had remained relatively oblivious to what happened in the Pampas, suddenly found itself negotiating a peace treaty with a group of caciques from the tierra adentro.

The rapidly succeeding events of 1739-742 left few and confusing records, which undoubtedly accounts for the little attention they have received in the existing scholarship. In the pages that follow, I examine these events against the backdrop of the changes that had taken place during the preceding decade in both the Spanish and Indian worlds. I also supersede the myopic Porteño perspective, by placing these events against the larger, trans-Andean context from which they actually sprung. Finally, I analyze closely the intercultural diplomatic negotiations of 1741-1742, showing that they took place in a context of “shared misunderstandings.” The negotiations culminated in a peace treaty that brought novel elements to Spanish-Indian relations. Most conspicuously, the treaty established the river Salado as the official limit or *lindero* separating Spanish territory from Indian territory, and identified the cacique Bravo as the highest Indian authority.

### *I. PORTEÑOS AND THE PAMPAS DURING THE 1720S-1730S*

The contentious succession of the Bourbon dynasty to the Spanish throne during the first half of the eighteenth century, and the subsequent imperial readjustments, affected even the remotest corners of the empire.<sup>1</sup> In Buenos Aires, an incidental consequence of these readjustments was the frenzy of *vaquerías* that in the early 1700s pushed Porteños far into the *tierra adentro*.

The Bourbon arrival in Madrid in 1701 was shortly followed with a series of colonial reforms. These reforms included the adjudication of the slave trade to America (*Asiento de Negros*) to a French consortium, the Guinea Company. After Spain's defeat in the War of Spanish Succession ("Queen Anne's War" of 1702-1713), England acquired the *Asiento* contract through the Treaty of Utrecht. By 1714, the South Sea Company had already opened a branch in the River Plate.<sup>2</sup> In addition, in 1720 the new Bourbon administration tried to shore up the languishing colonial trade. Among other measures, the Crown made it easier for *Registro* ships to obtain authorization to sail to Buenos Aires, independently from the *galeones* that sailed to Portobelo.<sup>3</sup> These various reforms resulted in a marked increase in the maritime traffic calling on the Buenos Aires port, a traffic that in turn generated a sustained and robust demand for hides, as both *Asiento*

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<sup>1</sup>See Kamen, *Empire*, chapter 10.

<sup>2</sup>The South Sea Company's slave trade contract provided legal cover for a vigorous illegal importation of goods that from Buenos Aires reached all corners of the Viceroyalty of Peru. By the early 1720s, this contraband was undermining the monopoly of Lima merchants to such an extent that they earnestly asked the Crown to close the Buenos Aires port to all shipping. Geoffrey Walker, *Spanish Politics and Imperial Trade, 1700-1789* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979), 139-148.

<sup>3</sup>The ensuing volume of trade was such that in 1722 the arrival of two well-provisioned ships at the River Plate created an unofficial rival to the official Portobelo fair. The South Sea Company, moreover, readily used the opportunity as a cover to release on to the market a considerable amount of illegal goods. *Ibid.*

and Registro ships sought them in exchange for their cargo.<sup>4</sup> Porteños responded by carrying out vaquerías with renewed vigor, reaching into the tierra adentro as far as the sierras.

The Buenos Aires Cabildo was particularly invested in this heightened Atlantic trade in hides, as it had a key mediating role. Atlantic buyers (the captains of the Registro ships and the president of the English Asiento) were under the obligation to negotiate wholesale quantities and prices with the Cabildo. For instance, in 1718 the Asiento president offered to buy 25,000 hides at ten *reales* each.<sup>5</sup> Once an agreement was reached, the Cabildo “distributed” (in a *repartimiento*) the agreed number of hides among the accioneros of its choice, who had the obligation of producing the hides and delivering them after a certain number of months.<sup>6</sup> Finally, in compensation for its mediating role, the Cabildo kept a percentage of the value of the transaction—a hide tax or *tercio de corambre*.

The Cabildo was invested in the hide trade not only as a corporation but also at the individual level of the councilmen. Already in 1674, Governor José Martínez de Salazar had chided the councilmen for abusing the Cabildo’s prerogative of granting the status of accionero by obtaining such a status for themselves, their relatives, and their dependants.<sup>7</sup> Four decades later, circumstances had not changed. Vecinos regularly complained to the governor in charge that the councilmen abused the Cabildo’s

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<sup>4</sup>The European market for leather goods expanded during the eighteenth century. In the first half of the century, the annual media of exported hides through the Buenos Aires port increased tenfold with respect to the late seventeenth century (see Appendix 5). As before, however, when considering the value of the cargo of ships returning to Europe, hides were a distant second to Peruvian silver, which was the main reason why Asiento and Registro ships did business in the Buenos Aires port.

<sup>5</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3: session of September 19, 1718.

<sup>6</sup>This on-demand system ensured the hides’ good condition, as they were prone to be damaged by moths (*apolillarse*) when stockpiled for long periods.

<sup>7</sup>*AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 14: session of January 12, 1674.

mediation prerogatives by favoring themselves, their relatives, and their acquaintances (*protegidos*) with higher hide quotas during the *repartimientos*.<sup>8</sup>

As the hide trade boomed in the early decades of the eighteenth century, the Cabildo began to take extra measures to ensure that its prerogatives were not infringed. These extra measures were implemented vis-à-vis four groups that had the potential of threatening, in different ways, the hide trade and the benefits that the Cabildo—and its members—obtained from it.

One group was made up of Porteños whom the Cabildo deemed lacking legitimate rights to benefit from the trade. The Cabildo sought first to distinguish “legitimate *accioneros*” from those holding dubious claims. By the early eighteenth century, a broad section of the Porteño population claimed *accionero* status on the basis of the confusing multiplication of the original *acciones de vaquería* through successive generations, by means of inheritance, marriage, and sale. The confusion was such that in many cases there were overlapping claims over the same original *acción*.<sup>9</sup> In 1719, thus, the Cabildo set out to update the original roster of beneficiaries, which had been created

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<sup>8</sup>The councilmen retorted that, as they did not receive any monetary compensation for their work, they considered their right to set for themselves a certain percentage of the hides to be made. The conflicts around the hide *repartimientos* are best seen in “La ciudad de Buenos Aires da advitrio a VM para la obra de Casa Capitular y Cárcel por no tenerla. Buenos Aires, 19 de octubre de 1719,” and “Informes del Fiscal y Contaduría de Indias respecto a los arbitrios e impuestos propuestos para allegar caudales a fin de ejecutar obras en las Casas Capitulares y construir una Cárcel en la ciudad de Buenos Aires. Madrid, 13 de enero de 1722,” both printed in Peña, ed., *Documentos y planos*, vol. 2: 7-15, 25-34.

<sup>9</sup> For instance, in 1719 Baltasar de Quintana Gody “justified” his status of *accionero legítimo* before the Cabildo as follows: “*se declara lejittimo ausionero por la que compro de Juan Quintero y las que eredo de su hermana d.<sup>a</sup> leonor de Quintana la que era de P.<sup>o</sup> Gutierrez de Pas su marido Y la que era de d.<sup>a</sup> Catalina ruiz melgarejo y avia recaido en d.<sup>a</sup> Anasttacia de Quinttana quien la eredo de su marido d.<sup>n</sup> fran.<sup>co</sup> de La camara y este de la dha. d.<sup>a</sup> Cathalina; en el memorial de d.<sup>a</sup> Ana, cathalan se proveio que se declarava por acsionero a Domingo moreno de Santtana.* AECBA, serie 2, vol. 4: session of October 21, 1719.

in 1609, more than a hundred years earlier. The Cabildo required purported accioneros to “justify” their status by presenting written evidence.<sup>10</sup>

The Cabildo also tried, with less success, to prevent humbler Porteños, mostly rural dwellers, from meddling in the Atlantic hide trade. Beginning in the early eighteenth century, the Cabildo minutes register the councilmen’s recurrent preoccupation with the great “disorders” on the campaña. In 1706, for instance, it was reported that “the vecinos of Luján and beyond” took advantage of their remote location “to round up cattle and produce hides, tallow and lard without permits.” Ten years later the situation had not improved, as it was reported that there were many “Indians, mulattos, and mestizos” who produced hides without permits and sold them at lower prices to the Asiento.<sup>11</sup> These and other reports reflected the difficulties that the Cabildo faced when trying to keep control over a growing rural population spread out over an expanding campaña.<sup>12</sup> By 1733, the Cabildo had requested permission from the Crown to create two new posts of Alcaldes de la Hermandad, with the argument that the two existing ones could not “repair all the wrongdoings committed” in a rural jurisdiction that extended for “over seventy leagues.” While waiting for the Crown’s approval, the Cabildo appointed temporary *comisionados* who were in charge of specific tasks such as

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<sup>10</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 4: session of October 21, 1719.

<sup>11</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 1: session of August 23, 1706; vol. 3: session of March 2, 1716.

<sup>12</sup>Rural population had grown from approximately one thousand inhabitants in the late mid-seventeenth century to approximately six thousand inhabitants in 1744. Its growth was mostly owed to migrations from the surrounding jurisdictions of Paraguay, Córdoba del Tucumán, and Cuyo. For a study of population trends in the campaña, see Garavaglia, *Pastores y labradores*, chapter 2. For the *pagos* or rural jurisdictions, see Map 8, p. 224. Continuing seventeenth-century patterns, agriculture predominated over livestock raising in the pagos closest to Buenos Aires.

supervising ranching activities, carrying Cabildo dispatches, and mediating in “verbal demands up to twenty pesos.”<sup>13</sup>

A second group that the Cabildo confronted consisted of vecinos from other jurisdictions that regularly entered the Pampas to carry out vaquerías. These vaquería troops not only challenged Porteños’ putatively exclusive rights over the feral herds but also were suspected of selling hides to Atlantic buyers at lower prices and without paying the hide tax. As examined in chapter three, the Cabildo responded with a host of measures that ranged from formal demands and lawsuits to armed patrolling of the campaña.

The Cabildo also spent considerable energy in protecting its mediating role vis-à-vis a third group, the Atlantic buyers. These buyers chafed at the Cabildo’s intervention, as they could obtain lower prices by negotiating with individual sellers—which they did behind the Cabildo’s back. In addition, Registro captains were occasionally able to circumvent the Cabildo by obtaining specific royal authorizations, usually in exchange for the provision of services such as the transportation of royal troops and officials. The Cabildo responded with appeals to the Crown against such authorizations, and active lobbying through a procurador sent to Madrid especially for this task.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 182, “El Rey al Gobernador de Buenos Aires sobre que informe en la instancia que hace aquella ciudad en orden a crear mas Alcaldes de la Hermandad. Aranjuez, 15 de mayo de 1735.” *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 7: session of February 26, 1735, and session of January 13, 1736. The new posts were not authorized until 1766. By then, a mix of ad-hoc *comisionados* (appointed by the Cabildo) and “assistants” (appointed by the Alcaldes de la Hermandad themselves) with overlapping jurisdictions were responsible for keeping order in the campaña. See Carlos María Birocco, “La estructuración de un espacio de poder local en la campaña bonaerense: las Alcaldías de la Santa Hermandad de los partidos de Areco y la Cañada de la Cruz (1700-1790),” in *Tierra, poder y sociedad en la campaña rioplatense colonial*, ed. Gabriela Gresores and Carlos María Birocco (Buenos Aires: PIEA-IIHES, 1998).

<sup>14</sup>Registro captains had been able to obtain royal exemptions beginning in the late 1670s. For this type of conflict between the Cabildo and two particularly powerful Registro captains (Miguel de Vergara and Francisco de Alzáybar) see “Información levantada en la ciudad de Buenos Aires... que llevó a España el procurador de ella,

Finally, the fourth group the Cabildo had to confront were the “heathen Indians” that, as Procurador Andrés Gómez de la Quintana reported in 1714, continuously perpetrated “insults, crimes, and evil deeds” against the vaquería troops who dared to go into the tierra adentro.<sup>15</sup> The councilmen soon realized that the Indian threat disrupted the Atlantic trade by causing delays in the production of hides, and by raising the vaquería costs for the accioneros. In 1718, for instance, the councilmen worried that an agreement reached with the Asiento was not going to be fulfilled on time because the troperos “did not work with the necessary diligence for fear of being attacked.” Five years later, in 1723, when a Registro captain formally complained that the delivery of his cargo of bull hides was past due, the Cabildo lamely responded that the feral herds were “at least 150 leagues inland, in an area full of Serrano, Pehuenche, and Auca Indians.” And in 1726, the councilmen grumbled that the price offered by the Asiento—eleven reales per hide—was not nearly enough to cover the rising expenses of accioneros forced to send their troops deep into the tierra adentro.<sup>16</sup>

A “punishing expedition” (*expedición de castigo*), which Procurador Gómez de la Quintana had called for in 1714, appeared at first as the most obvious solution. Thus,

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Capitán Bernardino Antonio de Acosta. 1693,” “Memorial del procurador de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, Don Gabriel de Aldunate y Rada al Rey. 1695,” and “Expediente formado a raíz de un memorial del procurador de las Provincias del Río de la Plata, Don Gabriel Aldunate y Rada. Año 1695-1696,” all are printed in Levillier, ed., *Correspondencia* vol. 3: 213-241, 343-369, 445-452. *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 1: session of June 12, 1703; vol. 3: session of April 27, 1717; vol. 7: session of May 21, 1734, sessions of July 15 and November 15, 1737. AGN: IX 19-2-3, “Autos obrados a representacion del Sindico Procurado de la Ciudad sobre que se prohiba que los Capitanes y sobrecargas de los Rexistros compren cueros, ni los vecinos u otras personas se los vendan sin expresa licencia o conocimiento del Cabildo, para precaver los robos y matanzas de ganados, 1749.”

<sup>15</sup>AGN: IX 39-8-7, “Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720.”

<sup>16</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3: session of September 19, 1718; vol. 5: sessions of September 23, 1723, September 12, 1725, and December 17, 1726.

when in January of 1715 Governor José Bermúdez de Castro asked for the Cabildo's input, the councilmen unanimously suggested an expedition for the following month. The councilmen even offered as a precedent several seventeenth-century *malocas de Indios*—by Juan Arias de Saavedra in 1663, Juan de San Martín in 1680, and Francisco Duque Navarro in 1686—that had effectively “pacified” the tierra adentro.<sup>17</sup>

Notwithstanding the seemingly unanimous support for a quick military solution, the Cabildo minutes show that the expedition kept being postponed year after year. The councilmen offered diverse reasons for the postponement, such as drought, ranging fires in the campaña and, during 1717-1718, a devastating smallpox epidemic.

On a second, more careful examination, however, the minutes suggest a different set of reasons. During negotiations in 1717 with a Registro captain, the councilmen made explicit that the accioneros could deliver the agreed number of hides in due time only if at least half of them were obtained in the Banda Oriental—the “eastern band” of the River Plate. Then, in 1725, when the Asiento president made a request for eighty thousand hides, the Cabildo agreed on the condition that all of them were produced in the Banda Oriental. By the late 1720s, in fact, most Cabildo permits for vaquerías specified the “*campos de San Gabriel*,” in the Banda Oriental, as the vaquería site.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, during the 1720s and 1730s, instead of investing scarce resources in a military expedition to confront the “heathen Indians” of the tierra adentro, the Cabildo let the Pampas be. It could do so because Porteño accioneros, many of them councilmen

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<sup>17</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3: session of January 26, 1715.

<sup>18</sup>See *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3: session of September 11, 1717; vol. 5: sessions of September 12 and December 5, 1725. For individual vaquería permits, see *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3 and vol. 4, *passim*. For a study of vaquerías in the Banda Oriental, see Asdrúbal Silva, “El cabildo,” 430-552. With emphasis on the second half of the eighteenth century, see Osvaldo Pérez, “Tipos de producción ganadera en el Río de la Plata colonial. La estancia de alzados,” in *Poder terrateniente, relaciones de producción, y orden colonial*, ed. Eduardo Azcuy Ameghino et al. (Buenos Aires: Fernando García Cambeiro, 1996).



themselves, gradually re-oriented their vaquerías towards the cattle-rich plains of the Banda Oriental.<sup>19</sup>

The re-orientation of vaquerías to the eastern band, moreover, dovetailed with a renewed royal interest in the area. The Banda Oriental had been a contested zone between Spain and Portugal since the late seventeenth century, and especially after 1680, when the Portuguese settled Colonia do Sacramento by the River Plate, opposite to Buenos Aires. In 1714, under the Treaty of Utrecht, Spain was forced to return Colonia do Sacramento—which she had seized in wartime—to Portugal. After that, policing the fuzzy border with Portuguese Brazil became a strategic priority for the Spanish Crown. Hence, during the 1720s and 1730s, the Crown recurrently instructed Buenos Aires governors to lay siege to Colonia do Sacramento, and in 1724 it ordered the foundation and fortification of Montevideo.<sup>20</sup> As a result of these initiatives, royal officials were continuously funneling resources from Buenos Aires to the Banda Oriental.<sup>21</sup> These

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<sup>19</sup>Carrying out vaquerías in the Banda Oriental was not exempted of troubles, however. Porteños were forced to share the animal bounty of the “eastern band” with the city of Santa Fe and the Jesuit Guaraní missions, not to mention the growing Portuguese settlement of Colonia do Sacramento and the Native peoples of the area (the Charrúa and Minuano Indians). During the 1720s, Buenos Aires, Santa Fe, and the Jesuit missions tried, rather unsuccessfully, to solve their many conflicts around access to feral cattle through a legal agreement or *concordia*. See Blasi, *Los deslindes*; Carlos Mario Storni, *Investigaciones sobre la historia del derecho rural argentino. Españoles, criollos, indios y gauderíos en la llanura pampeana* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Investigaciones de Historia del Derecho, 1997), 135-166.

<sup>20</sup>The border dispute between Spain and Portugal was settled only in 1750, through the Treaty of Madrid. On the Banda Oriental, see Francisco Bauzá, *Historia de la dominación española en el Uruguay* (Montevideo: Tip. de Marella Hnos, 1880); Pedro Vives Azancot, “La fachada sud-atlántica de América. Siglos XVI a XVIII,” in *Puertos y Fortificaciones en América y Filipinas*, ed. Comisión de Estudios Históricos de Obras Públicas y Urbanismo (1985).

<sup>21</sup>For instance, in the 1720s the Spanish Crown ordered the hide tax or *tercio de corambre* to be used for the fortification of Montevideo. The royal troops stationed in the Buenos Aires fort, as well as the militias of Buenos Aires, were periodically sent to the Banda Oriental. Finally, the Buenos Aires Governor himself, as commander of the royal troops, spent periods at a time in the Banda Oriental.

resources, incidentally, could benefit the accioneros who re-oriented their vaquerías there.

The personal trajectory of Captain Juan de San Martín, whom we will meet again in the next section of this chapter, provides a good example of this symbiosis between vaquerías and royal strategic interests in the Banda Oriental. San Martín was the third generation of a family established in Buenos Aires during the 1630s, and a prominent member of Porteño society. He occupied Cabildo posts during the early eighteenth century, played an important ceremonial role when Buenos Aires celebrated the crowning of Ferdinand VI in 1747, and provided the funds for the construction of a Franciscan church. In addition to his house in Buenos Aires, San Martín owned several chacras and estancias in the jurisdictions of Areco and Luján.<sup>22</sup> In 1714, San Martín was among the councilmen who resolutely endorsed a military expedition against the Auca Indians. Moreover, a ruthless 1680 *maloca de Indios* carried out by his father, also named Juan de San Martín, was given as a precedent to Governor José Bermúdez de Castro when he requested the Cabildo's input regarding a solution to the "Auca threat" in the Pampas.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Félix de San Martín, "Los maestros de campo San Martín," *Boletín de la Junta de Historia y Numismática* 3 (1926); "Descripción de las fiestas reales con que la M.N. y M.L ciudad de la Santísima Trinidad, puerto de Santa María de Buenos Aires... celebró con universal regocijo... la festiva coronación del Sr. D. Fernando VI. 1747," *Revista del Río de la Plata. Periódico mensual de historia y literatura de América* 1 (1870): 93; Hugo Fernández de Burzaco, *Aportes biogenealógicos para un padrón de habitantes del Río de la Plata*, 6 vols. (Buenos Aires: 1986-1991), vol. 6: 39-40; Enrique Udaondo, *Crónica histórica de la venerable Orden Tercera de San Francisco en la República Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Sebastián de Amorrortu, 1920), 48. Carlos A. Mayo, "Landed but not powerful: the colonial estancieros of Buenos Aires (1750-1810)," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, no. 4 (1991): 766. There is no relation between this family and that of José de San Martín, the General of the Wars of Independence.

<sup>23</sup>For the 1680 *maloca*, see ME: AGI G 31, "Joseph de Herrera y Sotomayor al Rey. Incluye autos sobre el repartimiento de indios pampas sobrevivientes de la matanza hecha por el capitán J. de San Martín en 1680. Buenos Aires, 10 de diciembre de 1686."

Soon after 1714, however, San Martín re-oriented his attention away from the Pampas and into the “eastern band.” Beginning in 1716, and for the next two decades, San Martín was involved in the Banda Oriental at many levels. He carried out large-scale *vaquerías* to produce hides for Atlantic buyers, as well as large-scale *recogidas* to replenish the herds of his *estancias*.<sup>24</sup> San Martín also commanded the Buenos Aires militias in the skirmishes against the Portuguese, and in expeditions against the Native peoples of the Banda Oriental, the Charrua and Minuano Indians.<sup>25</sup> Finally, he also acted as a deputy for the Buenos Aires Cabildo in Colonia do Sacramento during a period in which the settlement was under Spanish authority.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, during the 1720s and 1730s, the re-orientation to the Banda Oriental allowed Porteños to keep pace with the booming Atlantic hide trade, and at the same time, to have a part in Spain’s imperial policy for the area. On the flip side, the re-orientation to the Banda Oriental also allowed Porteños to turn a blind eye on the Pampas and on the “heathen Indians,” at least momentarily. So feeble was the Cabildo’s interest in the Pampas after the mid-1710s that, when in 1720 Governor Bruno de Zavala finally organized the much-spoken-of military expedition against the Auca Indians, the

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<sup>24</sup>The *recogidas* allowed San Martín to bid for the *matadero*—the contract for the city of Buenos Aires’ meat-supply, which the Cabildo allocated through annual bids that gave a monopoly contract to one purveyor. On the meat-supply, see Asdrúbal Silva, “El cabildo.”

<sup>25</sup>On the Native peoples of the Banda Oriental see Eduardo Acosta y Lara, *La guerra de los Charrúas en la Banda Oriental (período hispánico)* (Montevideo: Monteverde y Cía, 1961); Becker, *Os índios Charrua e Minuano*.

<sup>26</sup>For San Martín’s variegated activity in the Banda Oriental, see *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 3: sessions of December 2, 1716 and August 19, 1717; vol. 4: sessions of February 8, 1721 and February 20, 1722; vol. 5: session of January 8, 1725; vol. 6: session of March 29, 1730; vol. 7: session of July 10, 1736.

expedition's departure was barely mentioned in the Cabildo minutes and its return completely ignored.<sup>27</sup>

And yet, a report by the expedition's commander suggested that to ignore the Pampas was not the wisest choice in the long run, as the "Indian threat" was far from subsiding. The expedition's commander, Captain Juan Cabral, was someone well acquainted with the Indians, as he had brokered the 1717 treaty with cacique Mayupilquiyan. Cabral reported that his troops had been able to prevail in an initial skirmish against a *toldería* of Auca Indians. But they had been forced to retreat precipitously shortly afterwards because, as Cabral put it, "it came to my knowledge that three leagues from the site there was a large group of enemies who were on their way to fight against us."<sup>28</sup> And Cabral's troops were far from negligible: a hundred men, including militias and twenty professional armed cavalymen, plus an unspecified number of "Pampa Indians"—perhaps Mayupilquiyan's people.

In the late 1730s, after years of frenzied exploitation, the seemingly endless feral herds of the Banda Oriental began to dwindle, and Porteños were forced to return to the western band of the River Plate. They would soon discover some drastic changes in those Pampas that they had chosen to ignore for two decades.

## II. "A DEVASTATION NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE:" THE RAID OF 1740

Beginning in the late 1730s, the Buenos Aires Cabildo showed an increasing preoccupation with the dwindling numbers in the feral herds of the Banda Oriental. In

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<sup>27</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 4: session of October 7, 1720.

<sup>28</sup> See the letter by Juan Cabral de Melo al Gobernador Bruno de Zavala (Saladillo, November 2, 1720), in AGN: IX 39-8-7, "Sumaria hecha contra los Indios Aucaes en que se hallará al folio 13 la petición del Procurador de la Ciudad sobre las hostilidades, robos, y heridas que han ejecutado con los vecinos de esta ciudad y muerte en los de las comarcas. Buenos Aires, 1714-1720."

1742, finally, procurador Antonio Felix Saravia categorically reported that the campañas of the “eastern band” were totally “exhausted” of feral animals.<sup>29</sup> Since the late 1730s, therefore, Porteños involved in the hide trade were gradually forced back to the Pampas.

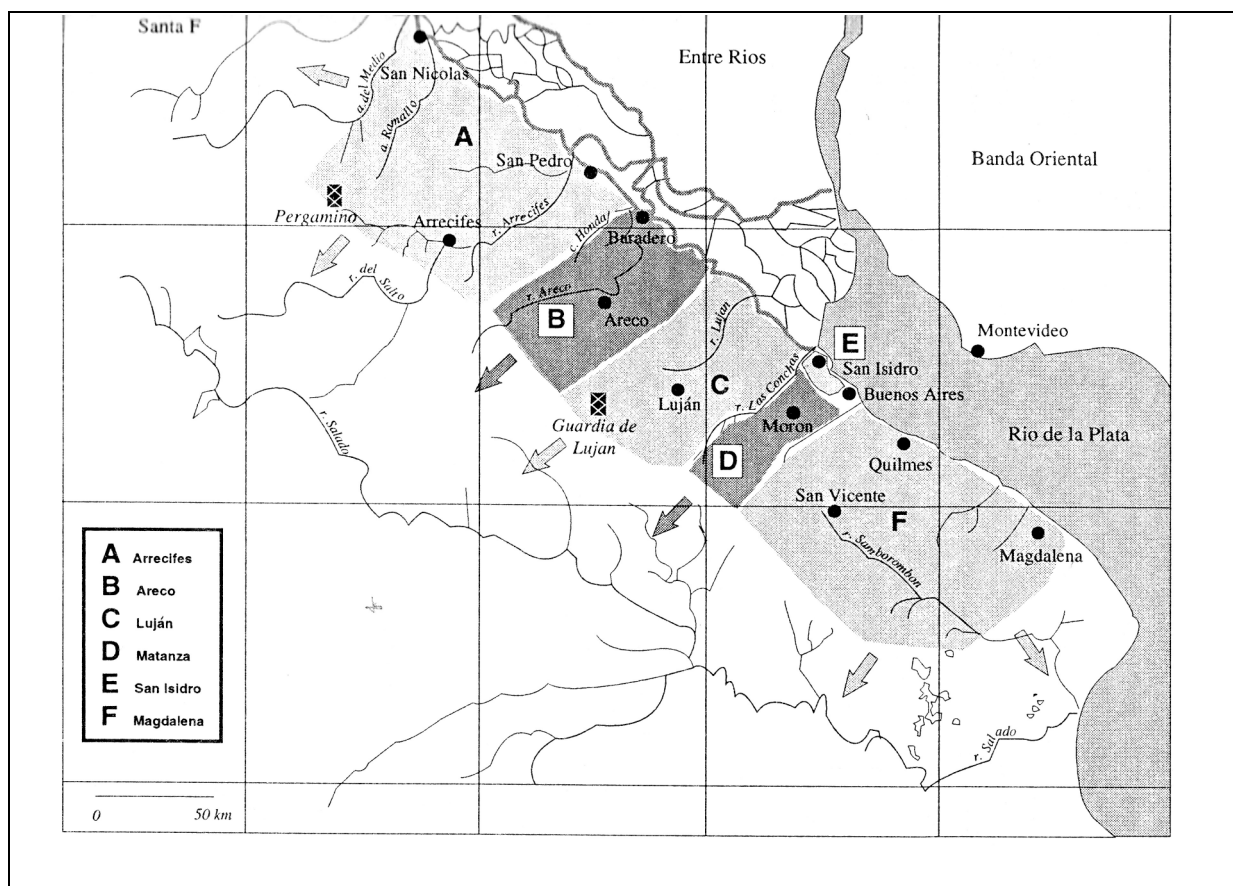
As they did so, the Buenos Aires Cabildo picked up where it had left off two decades earlier. Beginning in 1737, the councilmen went back to discussing the need for a military expedition to confront the “heathen Indians.” This time, the Indians were not accused of attacking vaquería troops in the tierra adentro, as in fact the tierra adentro had been for several decades relatively free of vaquería troops. Perhaps more worrying, the “heathen Indians” were accused of carrying out attacks on the outskirts of the Buenos Aires campaña. In August of 1737, for instance, the councilmen reported that the “heathen Indians” had attacked Salto del Arrecife, on the northern edge of the campaña (see Map 8), and had wounded several people and stolen horses and cattle.<sup>30</sup> The Indians were also accused of raiding with renewed vigor the cart convoys that traversed the roads connecting Buenos Aires to the Cuyo province and to Chile. As the councilmen put it in 1739, “if some solution is not found, the trade roads to the said cities of Mendoza and San Juan will be lost, and so will be the commerce with Santiago de Chile.” They concluded that a prompt expedition was needed, so that Buenos Aires could “enjoy the peace it used to have.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>The “exhaustion” of feral cattle in the Banda Oriental is a moot point. Scholars argue that the issue was not the extinction of feral cattle but the expansion of private landholding in the form of large estancias where cattle still roamed free. The expansion of these estancias greatly diminished the free-for-all access to cattle. See Pérez, “Tipos de producción.”

<sup>30</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 7: session of August 31, 1737.

<sup>31</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of June 8, 1739.



Map 8. The Buenos Aires Campaña in the Mid-Eighteenth Century<sup>32</sup>

A military expedition, moreover, had a second advantage. In 1668, Buenos Aires vecino Domingo de Izarra had discovered “a salt lagoon more than one league long” that was located “fifty or sixty leagues” south of the city, well into the tierra adentro.<sup>33</sup> The Cabildo celebrated the discovery of the salt flats—the *salinas*— because salt was a main

<sup>32</sup>Map taken from Garavaglia, *Pastores y labradores*, 99.

<sup>33</sup>*AECBA*, serie 1: vol. 13. The salt flats, later known as Salinas Grandes, were located in the Southern Pampas, to the west of the Ventana sierras (see Map 9, p. 266). In the nineteenth century, the area of the flats was the headquarters of two powerful caciques, Calfucurá and his son Namuncurá. See Kristine L. Jones, “Calfucurá and Namuncurá: Nation Builders of the Pampas,” in *The Human Tradition in Latin America*, ed. Judith Ewell and William Beezeley (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1989).

staple that Porteños had been forced to import at high prices, originally from Spain and later from Córdoba. Very little is known about the early exploitation of the flats, which seems to have been carried out privately by vecinos who could marshal the required resources, such as ox-carts, horses, peons, and a guide.<sup>34</sup> Beginning in the 1720s, however, the Buenos Aires Cabildo tried to ensure a steady supply of salt through the organization of regular trips to the flats. Ideally, each spring or fall the Cabildo published an edict calling all the interested parties to converge in a certain place, so that they could march together to the flats. The Cabildo provided an armed escort for the convoy, as well as the services of a priest and a surgeon.<sup>35</sup> In practice, during the 1720s and 1730s the salinas trips were so frequently suspended due to draught, epidemics, and lack of interested parties, that in 1738 the councilmen bemoaned the scarcity of salt in a city blessed with nearby flats.<sup>36</sup>

The “prompt expedition” that the councilmen wanted to launch in 1739, therefore, was to have the double task of “punishing” the Indians and escorting a cart convoy to the salt flats. The latter task would provide much-needed funds, as the Cabildo planned to levy two *fanegas* of salt from every cart in order to pay for the expedition’s expenses. In the end, eighty-five carts departed on late August of 1739 with

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<sup>34</sup>The round-trip took at least two months: two weeks to reach the flats, another two weeks to harvest the salt, and four to five weeks to return with the loaded ox-carts. Taruselli, “El comercio de la sal,” 35.

<sup>35</sup>For a thorough study on the Salinas, see Ibid. Taruselli points out that Domingo de Izarra had found the salt flats with the help of a Pampa Indian from his encomienda.

<sup>36</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 7: session of January 15, 1738.

a large escort of militias.<sup>37</sup> Captain Juan de San Martín was the chosen *Maestre de Campo*, or commander of the militias.<sup>38</sup>

San Martín, back from his long involvement in the Banda Oriental, had been among the most vocal councilmen asking for the expedition, especially after the corpses of two Porteños with their heads smashed ("*hechas pedazos las cabezas a alfanjazos*") were found in the outskirts of the campaña earlier in 1739.<sup>39</sup> Perhaps learning from the lesson of the 1720 expedition under Captain Juan Cabral, San Martín made sure that the forces under his command were numerous and well-provided. He requested six hundred militiamen, and asked the Cabildo for four cannons, three hundred pounds of gunpowder, two hundred and fifty lances, one hundred and fifty rifles, and a hundred carbines—among other supplies. The Cabildo also provided biscuits, tobacco, yerba mate, and fifteen hundred heads of cattle for the militias' daily rations through the duration of the expedition.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> AECBA, serie 2, vol. 8: sessions of June 8, June 18, July 1, July 18, and August 29, 1739. One *fanega* was approximately 300 kilos, or 660 pounds.

<sup>38</sup> Until 1704, the *Maestre de Campo* was a post in the professional army held by all Governors, who acted as the highest military authority in their respective governorships. In 1704, after a military reorganization in the River Plate, the post of *Maestre de Campo* was given to the highest officer in command of militias, whenever the militias were summoned in large numbers for specific purposes such as an expedition. Finally, in 1767 the River Plate militias were formally organized into permanent units. The officers of each regional unit were given the title of *Maestre de Campo*. Beverina, *El virreinato*, 55, 263; Monferini, "La historia militar," 377.

<sup>39</sup> AECBA, serie 2, vol. 8: session of June 8, 1739.

<sup>40</sup> AGN: IX 19-2-2, "Recibo del Cabildo contra el Guarda Almacén del Presidio, 26 de agosto de 1739;" AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Razón del dinero que ha suplido Antonio de Larrazábal, Alcalde Ordinario de Primer Voto...para la entrada que se hace a estas campañas al castigo de los Indios enemigos Infieles y va por cabo de la gente el Maestre de Campo Dn. Juan de Samartín nombrado por el Sr. Gobernador General. Aprobado en el Acuerdo del 12 de septiembre de 1739;" AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Documentos relativos a la expedición para el castigo de los Indios Infieles Serranos, al comando de Dn. Juan de Samartín. 1740." AECBA, serie 2, vol. 8: sessions of June 8 and July 1, 1739.



There are no first-hand accounts of this expedition, but dramatic events took place shortly after its return in late November of 1739. In early February of 1740, the Cabildo reported that San Martín's actions had "achieved the special glory of getting the Infidel Pampa Indians of this jurisdiction to spontaneously come and request fathers to convert to our Holy Catholic Faith and to know Our Creator and Savior Jesus Christ."<sup>41</sup> Governor Miguel de Salcedo, several councilmen, and the Jesuit Order reacted with great enthusiasm. The mission, they argued, held the double promise of finally converting the Pampa Indians after decades of frustrated attempts, and of preventing them from causing "depredations" in the outlying estancias thereby providing a measure of safety to the Buenos Aires campaña. The *provincial* of the Jesuit province of Paraguay, father Pedro Lozano, eagerly received a delegation of Pampa Indians and, after examining them "on the reasons why they wanted to be baptized," he was very satisfied with the sincerity of their motives. The Indians were given a tour of the Jesuit College and church, and were given "some small presents." As they were leaving, Lozano pointed out with delight, "they again insisted that they wanted Jesuit fathers as soon as possible." One of the caciques even confessed that he had been "a Christian convert for some time," but had not dared to admit that before his people.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>AECEBA, serie 2, vol. 8: session of February 9, 1740.

<sup>42</sup>Pedro Lozano, "Cartas Anuas de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús del Paraguay. 1735-1743," in *Historia de un pueblo desaparecido a orillas del río Salado bonaerense. Reducción jesuítica de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de los Pampas 1740-1753*, ed. Carlos Antonio Moncaut (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Economía, 1983), 37. In the eighteenth century the Jesuit Paraguay province (*Paracuaria*) was a vast region that included the governorships of Paraguay, Tucumán, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and Río de la Plata—that is, all the Spanish territories south of Peru except for Chile, which since 1625 was considered a vice-province under the jurisdiction of Peru. The borders of this vast province were fuzzy at best, since they were mostly unexplored lands such as the Pampas and Patagonia in the south, and the Chaco in the northwest. As the Jesuit Provincial (1735-1749), Lozano was in charge of elaborating annual reports or *Cartas Anuas* about his province for his superiors in Rome. His report was thus based on the letters and documents sent to him by the missionaries working on the ground. Unfortunately, Lozano's *Cartas Anuas* covering the years 1744-1749 have yet to be

Donations in specie, mostly cattle and sheep, were collected from willing Porteños, and by May everything was ready. Captain Juan de San Martín and sixty soldiers escorted Jesuit fathers Matías Strobel and Manuel Querini into the tierra adentro to establish the mission. By the end of May, the mission of *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción* (Concepción hereafter) officially rose south of the river Salado.<sup>43</sup>

Spanish self-satisfaction with the success of the mission and the prospect of a pacified tierra adentro did not last long, however. Scarcely five months later, in November of 1740, a *malón* or Indian raid of unprecedented magnitude devastated the Buenos Aires campaña, from Arrecifes in the north to Magdalena in the south (see Map 8, p. 224). Previously, Indian raids had taken place far into the tierra adentro or at most in the outskirts of the campaña. They had affected mostly people on the margins of Spanish society—troperos, humble rural dwellers, peons—and barely echoed in downtown Buenos Aires. This time, Indian parties were only a few leagues from the city itself, and the consequences of the raid were fully felt even in the main plaza. Procurador Miguel Antonio de Merlo gave a chilling description of the raid before the Cabildo. The Indians had destroyed the fields and stolen livestock, Merlo said, but the “greatest calamity” was their “fierce slaughter” of Spaniards as they advanced towards the city. In Buenos Aires, all was “great trouble and confusion.” As the population braced itself for the entry of the “savages,” women and children “clamored on the streets” and scrambled to seek refuge in churches. Although Indians did not finally enter the city, there was the grim sight of carts “loaded with the dead bodies of known and established persons” that

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found, only those for the years 1735-1743 are available. I have relied on Carlos Antonio Moncaut’s complete transcription of Father Carlos Leonhardt’s unpublished translation to Spanish of Lozano’s Latin originals.

<sup>43</sup>See Ibid., 37-39. *AECBA*, Serie 2, vol. 8: sessions of February 9, February 15, March 18, March 29, and May 28, 1740. I expand on the Jesuit missions in chapter 7. See Map 9, p. 266, for the mission’s location.

came from different parts of the campaña. Merlo had certain knowledge of “over seventy deaths, without counting the many poor people and peons, or the many captives of all ages that they [the Indians] have taken away with them.” The Procurador ended his statement by blaming the “savage and sanguinary” Serrano Indians, who had carried out the raid for no apparent reason other than their “horrendous fierceness.”<sup>44</sup>

The quick succession of events between 1739 and 1740 left few and fragmented records, which makes difficult the task of reconstructing a cogent story. The confusing labeling of Indian groups in Spanish sources, furthermore, adds to the difficulty of the task. These sources tell us is that the expedition was launched against the Auca Indians, but somehow its main result was the conversion of the Pampa Indians, and then, suddenly and for apparent no reason, the Serrano Indians fell on Buenos Aires.

Recently, scholars have suggested that the 1740 raid was the culmination of a “wave” of Reche-Mapuche *maloqueros* or raiders that had progressively expanded from the Andean zone eastwards. As the argument goes, over-hunting gradually decimated the feral herds that had originally pulled the Indian raiders across the Andes. Thus, they switched from hunting to raiding as they advanced eastwards, targeting Spanish ranches of the Cuyo region first, south of Córdoba later, and eventually, of the Buenos Aires campaña.<sup>45</sup>

This explanation, however, holds a rather simplistic view of the Reche-Mapuche eastward expansion, which did not result merely from Indians’ covetousness for horses but from changed intercultural and intertribal dynamics. It also over-emphasizes the

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<sup>44</sup>See the Procurador’s statement of December 5, 1740, in AGN: IX 19-8-2, “Copia de los autos que siguió el Procurador General en el Tribunal de los señores Gobernador y Oficiales Reales sobre que de Real Hacienda se sacase dinero para la defensa de esta ciudad del enemigo bárbaro. Año de 1740.”

<sup>45</sup>Gascón, “La articulación;” León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores*, chapter 1; Weber, *Bárbaros*, 62.

dynamics of the western side of the trans-Andean Indian world, to the detriment of those of the eastern side. While the increasing presence of Reche-Mapuche Indians in the Pampas is unquestionable, they did not pour into an “eastern void.” Instead, as shown in previous chapters, they entered into a motley mosaic of *tolderías* with volatile relations among themselves, and with the Spanish world abutting to the north. In the remainder of this section, I offer a more complete and accurate explanation for the 1740 raid that is different from Indian “horrendous fierceness” or Reche-Mapuche covetousness for horses.

The 1740 raid was the first of its kind, and it was preceded by two other first-of-a-kind events that reached deep into the Indian world: the unusually large military expedition of August–November of 1739, and the foundation of a Jesuit mission south of the river Salado in May of 1740. Drawing from a variety of sources—Cabildo records, Jesuit documents, the account of an English sailor shipwrecked in the Pampas in the 1740s, and recent ethnohistorical research—I situate these first-of-a-kind events in their proper, trans-Andean context, and I reconstruct their mutual connections. It is in these connections that the explanation for the raid resides.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>The few articles on the Jesuit missions of the Pampas overlook the fact that the foundation of the Concepción mission was shortly succeeded by the 1740 raid. See Susana Aguirre, “Una alternativa al sistema de reducciones en la Pampa a mediados del siglo XVIII,” in *Congreso nacional de historia sobre la conquista del desierto, realizado en la ciudad de General Roca del 6 al 10 de noviembre de 1979*, ed. Academia Nacional de Historia (Buenos Aires: 1980); Raúl Hernández Asensio, “Caciques, jesuitas y chamanes en la frontera sur de Buenos Aires (1740-1753),” *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 60, no. 1 (2003); Carmen Martínez Martín, “Las reducciones de los pampas (1740-1753): aportaciones etnogeográficas al sur de Buenos Aires,” *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 20 (1994); Marcela Viviana Tejerina, “El gobierno español y las reducciones jesuitas al sur de Buenos Aires: el caso del fracaso de “Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de los Pampas” (1751-1753),” *Revista de Historia de América* 12, no. enero-diciembre (1996). Meanwhile, traditional scholarship on the “frontier wars”—with its focus on the escalation of Indian “depredations” from the eighteenth century on—overlooks the fact that the 1740 raid was shortly preceded by the foundation of Concepción. See for instance, Walther, *La conquista del desierto*, 92-93.

Porteños reacted to the raid of November of 1740 with great surprise and disbelief. The Cabildo minutes, however, show that a few months earlier, in July of 1740, the councilmen had received warnings from Cuyo about a possible “Auca invasion.” During the 1730s, in fact, the Spanish settlements to the west (Córdoba, San Luis, and Mendoza) had from time to time issued warnings about “Auca armies” that were about to cross the Andes to raid Spanish cities and ranches. These warnings usually arrived during the (southern-hemisphere) late winter or early spring, when the melting snows opened the Andean passes and made the crossing possible. But the much-announced Auca attacks either came to nothing or turned out to be isolated incidents in the tierra adentro that did not strike a nerve in Porteño society.<sup>47</sup> Thus, when in July of 1740 news arrived from Cuyo that a cacique Pedro Ayllapil had given notice about a possible “Auca invasion,” the Buenos Aires Cabildo and the Governor took only perfunctory measures.<sup>48</sup> So lightly did Porteños take the potential “Auca invasion,” that when the raid materialized four months later, it caught the captain of the Magdalena militias “asleep in his bed, with the weapons given to him from the Royal Armory for his militia unit still in his house.”<sup>49</sup>

The lightness with which Porteño authorities took the warnings about an “Auca invasions” contrasted markedly with the zeal with which the Indians and the Jesuits had worked to fortify their humble mission town. The Indians, reported Father Strobel,

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<sup>47</sup>In 1738, for instance, Mendoza and Córdoba warned that an army of 2,000 Aucas was about to cross the Andes. The “massive” attack ended up being a raid against a cart convoy from Mendoza. AGN: IX 19-2-1, “Autos en testimonio de la sumaria información producida sobre la imputación hecha a varios vecinos soldados que fueron dicho año en la expedición contra los Indios Infieles. Año de 1738.”

<sup>48</sup>AECBA, serie 2, vol. 8: session of July 30, 1740.

<sup>49</sup>See the Governor’s *auto* of December 5, 1740, in AGN: IX 19-8-2, “Copia de los autos que siguió el Procurador General en el Tribunal de los señores Gobernador y Oficiales Reales sobre que de Real Hacienda se sacase dinero para la defensa de esta ciudad del enemigo bárbaro. Año de 1740.”

eagerly dug an all-around defensive ditch as soon as the mission was set up. Father Manuel Querini, meanwhile, requested from the Cabildo two cannons, plus twenty-four cannon balls and thirty lances. Finally, in early August, shortly after the Cabildo received the warning from Cuyo, the Jesuit fathers asked the Governor to send a picket of a hundred and thirty soldiers, to protect the mission from possible attacks by “heathen Indians.”<sup>50</sup>

The Indians’ and the missionaries’ defensive zeal proved to be effective. The mission was located immediately south of Magdalena, the jurisdiction that suffered the most casualties in human lives and stolen livestock during the raid.<sup>51</sup> The mission, however, weathered the storm untouched. Father Pedro Lozano explained that “the barbarians had intended to attack the new mission,” but they recoiled when “they found out that there was a very high palisade defended by two cannons,” which the mission sentinels made sure to fire repeatedly.<sup>52</sup>

When read against this successful use of Spanish armed protection, the Pampa Indians’ rapid conversion to the Holy Catholic Faith, after a century and a half of repeatedly rejecting it, acquires a decidedly strategic, rather than religious, bent. Recall that the caciques whom Father Lozano interviewed in Buenos Aires during February had insisted several times that they wanted Jesuit fathers “as soon as possible.” In order to expedite the process, while the Governor and the Cabildo collected funds and supplies,

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<sup>50</sup>“Carta de Matías Stobel. Concepción 3 de octubre de 1740,” printed in Carlos Antonio Moncaut, *Historia de un pueblo desaparecido a orillas del río Salado bonaerense. Reducción jesuítica de Nuestra Señora de la Concepción de los Pampas 1740-1753* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Economía, 1983), 47. AGN: IX 7-1-2, “Relación de los pertrechos y municiones de guerra que se han entregado para la nueva reducción de los Pampas [1740].” *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of August 8, 1740.

<sup>51</sup>AGN: IX 19-8-2, “Copia de los autos que siguió el Procurador General en el Tribunal de los señores Gobernador y Oficiales Reales sobre que de Real Hacienda se sacase dinero para la defensa de esta ciudad del enemigo bárbaro. Año de 1740.”

<sup>52</sup> Lozano, “Cartas Anuas,” 52.

an eager group of Indians had gone ahead with Father Strobel “to search for the most appropriate site where to found the new mission.”<sup>53</sup> In a letter dated October of 1740, Father Strobel provided a final tip that confirms the strategic bent of the Pampa Indians’ hurry. Strobel mentioned in passing that the Pampa Indians were “at war with another tribe and under pressure, that was the reason of their urgent requests.”<sup>54</sup> Strobel did not explain what “tribe” the Pampa Indians were at war with, but scattered evidence strongly indicates that the Pampa Indians’ enemies were Reche-Mapuches from Huilliche territory. These were the same Reche-Mapuches, in fact, who in 1717 had besieged Mayupilquiyan and his people.

Spanish sources identify by the name of Don Felipe Mayu one of the Pampa caciques who had urgently requested Jesuit fathers in 1740.<sup>55</sup> Don Felipe Mayu was most likely a relative of Mayupilquiyan—also known as Don Gregorio Mayu-pilqui-yan—the cacique from the southern sierras with whom the Spaniards had brokered the first diplomatic arrangement in 1717. As explained in chapter five, at that time Mayupilquiyan and his people were under serious threats resulting from the incursions of “Auca” parties into the sierras. The events of 1739-1740 indicate that the Auca threat against this (Pampa) Mayu lineage had not gone away after 1717, during the decades in which the Spaniards had busied themselves in the Banda Oriental. On the contrary, the predicament of the Mayu lineage seemed to have worsened. By 1739, they did not merely seek a military alliance with Porteños but were willing to sacrifice their cherished

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., 40.

<sup>54</sup>“Carta del Padre Matías Strobel. Concepción, 3 de octubre de 1740,” in Moncaut, *Historia de un pueblo*, 47.

<sup>55</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, “Elección de Alcaldes en el Pueblo de los Pampas, y la confirmación del Sr. Gobernador. 21 de enero de 1741.”

freedom and autonomy from the Spaniards in exchange for safety in a mission town.<sup>56</sup> In this context, their initial rush to do so makes perfect sense when taking into account the seasonal pattern of the marching “Auca armies.” The Pampa Indians wanted to have their mission town ready and fortified by the beginning of the spring in September.

Thus, the wider, trans-Andean, context for the 1740 raid was the exacerbation of a long-standing intertribal conflict between incoming Reche-Mapuche parties and Pampa Indians of the southern sierras. This wider context, crystal-clear for the beleaguered Pampa Indians and, by extension, for the Jesuit fathers who lived with them, was completely missed by Porteños.

What were the reasons for the sudden exacerbation of the long-standing conflict between the Reche-Mapuches and the Pampa Indians? Perhaps more importantly, why did this intertribal conflict result in intercultural violence? The 1740 raid, after all, targeted the estancias and chacras of the Buenos Aires campaña to an extent that was completely unprecedented. A close reading of the sources indicates that Spanish actions were to blame, more precisely, those of Captain Juan de San Martín’ during the expedition of 1739.

As mentioned above, after having spent the previous two decades involved in the Banda Oriental, in 1739 San Martín was among the most vocal advocates for prompt and forceful military action against the “heathen Indians.” San Martín did not—or could not—know, however, that drastic changes had taken place in the Pampas while his attention had been focused elsewhere. As I will show in the paragraphs that follow, while some *tolderías* of Pampa Indians, such as the Mayu lineage, had chosen to seek Spanish protection to face the Auca intruders, other *tolderías* had chosen instead to ally

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<sup>56</sup>As recent research has shown, this was a common pattern among Indians who “voluntarily” submitted to mission life. Erick Langer and Robert H. Jackson, eds., *The New Latin American Mission History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995).



with the Aucas. Thus, during the 1720s and 1730s, the Indians of the eastern mosaic had become more integrated to Indians of the Andean zone through political alliances and intermarriage. In other words, the Reche-Mapuches had ceased to be mere intruders by weaving long-lasting relations with—at least some of—the Pampa *tolderías* to the east. Spanish military action in the Pampas, therefore, was bound to have ripple effects across the eastern mosaic and into the Andean zone, to an extent that San Martín, savvy on the realities of the Banda Oriental but not on those of the Pampas, was completely unable to anticipate. Let us now turn to the evidence.

There are only second-hand accounts of the 1739 expedition, produced by two Jesuit fathers, Thomas Falkner and Pedro Lozano.<sup>57</sup> Given the confusing labeling of Indian groups typical by Spanish sources, it is not surprising that these accounts are not fully congruent. Both Falkner and Lozano emphasize, however, that San Martín deployed unwarranted and excessive violence against random *tolderías* found in the sierras, and against caciques who lived on the outskirts of the *campaña* and were known to have friendly relations with *Porteños*. Thus, according to Falkner, the expedition reached the Tandil Sierras, where San Martín had a party of “friendly Huilliches... cut to pieces.” On the way back to Buenos Aires San Martín ordered his men to attack the *toldería* of cacique Tolmichi-ya, who lived by the river Salado “under the protection of Governor Salcedo.” San Martín shot the cacique “through the head,” had all the Indian

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<sup>57</sup>Thomas Falkner became involved in the missionary effort in the Pampas in 1744. In 1746 he was in charge of founding a second mission in the Tandil Sierras. Falkner published his account in London in 1774, less than a decade after he and his fellow Jesuits were expelled from Spanish territories. The publication of Falkner’s account in London caused great consternation to the secretive Spanish Crown, because it provided detailed geographical information on the River Plate, and because the book was considered a “how to” manual for the English to secure a basis in the southern Atlantic. For Pedro Lozano see note 42 above. I discuss the Jesuit missionary effort in more detail in the next chapter.

warriors killed, and took all the women and children as captives.<sup>58</sup> In Lozano's version, the expedition reached farther south, into the Ventana Sierras, where San Martín attacked a few *tolderías*. During the return to Buenos Aires, San Martín ordered an attack against "cacique Maximiliano and his people," who lived by the river Salado with the express permission of the Governor. The cacique was murdered in cold blood, and sixty of his warriors were killed.<sup>59</sup>

Whatever the exact identity of the murdered cacique who lived by the river Salado, both Falkner and Lozano agreed that he was a close relative of a powerful cacique from the Andean zone. The Jesuit fathers explained that in retaliation for San Martín's actions, this cacique, who had the power of convoking (*convidar*) many *tolderías*, had assembled the large army that in November of 1740 devastated the Buenos Aires campaña.<sup>60</sup>

Who exactly was this cacique? Lozano simply referred to him as the cacique Bravo.<sup>61</sup> Falkner clarified further that Porteños indistinctly used the name of Bravo for

<sup>58</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 105-107.

<sup>59</sup>Lozano, "Cartas Anuas," 32-33. San Martín's actions in 1739 were eerily similar to those of his father—also named Juan de San Martín—during the 1680 maloca. San Martín Sr. had "slit the throats" (*pasó a cuchillo*) of the first group of Indians he ran into. He also ordered his men to shoot two caciques, whom several of his officers recognized as belonging to Porteño encomiendas, and who explained—to no avail—that they were hunting feral cattle in the tierra adentro with the Governor's permission. San Martín Sr. was ultimately accused before the Council of the Indies for his behavior, but the slow Spanish legal system did not catch up with him until after his death. AGN: IX 24-7-6, "Real Cédula desaprobando lo que Dn. Juan de Samartín ejecutó con los Indios Pampa. Madrid, 2 de diciembre de 1716;" ME: AGI G 17, "Expediente sobre matanza de indios pampas por el Capitán Juan de Samartín. 1683-1690."

<sup>60</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 105-107; Lozano, "Cartas Anuas," 32-33, 51-52. As explained in chapter four, *convites* (*cahuines*, in Mapudugun) were ritualized feasts with three possible purposes: facilitating co-operative economic activities, punctuating rites of passage such as weddings and funerals, and affirming or establishing alliances before going to war.

<sup>61</sup>Since the seventeenth century, Porteños had recurrently given the name "Bravo"—a word that means fierce as well as brave—to rebellious caciques. See for

two caciques, father and son, who in their own language were respectively named Cacapol and Cangapol. In Falkner's account, Cacapol was in fact the same "Serrano" cacique who had attacked Mayupilquian in 1717. At the time of the 1740 raid, the Jesuit explained, Cacapol was already "near seventy years of age." Cacapol and Cangapol's headquarters, Huichin, was located hundreds of miles away from the Pampas, at the source of the river Negro on the eastern slopes of the Andes.<sup>62</sup>

Although the ethnic identity of Cacapol and his people is a matter of contention, they inhabited what scholars define today as the territory of the Huilliche (see Map 7, p. 143).<sup>63</sup> Recent scholarship has shown that, as the trans-Andean exchange network consolidated during the eighteenth century, Native peoples from Huilliche territory benefited from their strategic location that allowed them to control key Andean passes.<sup>64</sup>

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instance, *AECBA*, serie 1, vol. 13: session of April 6, 1672; "Gobernador Andrés de Robles al Rey. 20 de abril de 1678" printed in *DHG* 1: 302; AGI: ACh. 283, "Autos en testimonio obrados por el gobernador de Buenos Aires en razón de las muertes que hicieron y causaron los indios indómitos e infieles de nación serranos y pampas a los soldados de la gente pagada de este presidio. 1686."

<sup>62</sup>Falkner pointed out that Huichin was only a six-day journey to Valdivia, and very close to the "great lake Heuchun Lavquen"—the present-day lake Huechulafquen, in the Argentine province of Neuquén, on the border with Chile. Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 102-107. See Map 7, p. 143, for the locations of the river Negro and of Valdivia.

<sup>63</sup>In Falkner's classification, Cacapol and his people were Patagons or Tehuelchus according to Europeans, and Serrano according to Porteños. The Jesuit added that their true "nation" was Leuvuche ("People of the River"), which was a "subdivision" of the larger Tehuelhet nation—called "Vuta-Huilliche" by their neighbors to the west, the Moluches (Reche-Mapuche?). Falkner's rather baroque classification reflects the dynamism of ethnic identities, and the fact that they resulted from how people identified themselves as well as how others identified them. Falkner's classification of Native peoples of the Pampas, Andean zone, and northern Patagonia engendered many (unresolved) debates and controversies among ethnologists during the twentieth century. Different authors classify Cacapol or Bravo as Serrano, Pampa-Serrano, Puelche-Serrano, and Tehuelche. See for instance, Meinrado Hux, *Caciques Puelches, Pampas y Serranos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Marymar, 1993), 53-55.

<sup>64</sup>Still today, the Tromen pass—located a few miles north of the lake Huechulafquen—is one of the most used Andean passes between Chile and Argentina. The peoples who inhabited this area, owing to their location, early on increased their

The ensuing economic prosperity led eventually to the formation of larger and relatively stable sociopolitical units, which scholars have mostly documented for the late eighteenth century and afterwards.<sup>65</sup> Falkner's writings, however, indicate that this process was already underway in the first half of the eighteenth century, as the Jesuit described Cacapol and Cangapol as "a kind of petty monarchs." Whenever they declared war, Falkner elaborated, they "were immediately joined" by the different "nations" of a vast strip of land that went, along the rivers Colorado and Negro, all the way from Huilliche territory on the west to the Atlantic coast on the east.<sup>66</sup>

The narrative of Isaac Morris, an English sailor shipwrecked in the Pampas during this period, offers unique insights into the seasonal movement of peoples that connected this vast strip of land. In late 1742, Morris was left stranded on the Southern

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contact with the Reche-Mapuche from farther west. Next to nothing is known, however, about the dynamics and effects of this heightened intertribal contact. A similar situation involving a northernmost group, the Pehuenche (see Map 7, p. 143) has been better studied. See Silva Galdames, "Los Pewenche;" Varela, Font, and Cúneo, "Los Pehuenche;" Villalobos, *Los Pehuenches*.

<sup>65</sup>By the nineteenth century, the area was dominated by the so-called Manzanero Indians (after the name with which Creoles knew their homeland, *El País de las Manzanas* or the Apple Country, owing to the abundance of apple trees). Manzanero society had had a confederate structure and powerful caciques who were allied to the Buenos Aires government. Gladys Varela and Ana María Biset, "Entre guerras, alianzas, arreos y caravanas: Los Indios de Neuquén en la etapa colonial," in *Historia de Neuquén*, ed. Susana Bandieri, Orietta Favaro, and Marta Morinelli (Buenos Aires: Plus Ultra, 1993); Gladys Varela and others, *Los hijos de la tierra. Algunos capítulos de la historia indígena del Neuquén* (San Martín de los Andes: Dirección Municipal de Cultura de San Martín de los Andes, 1998), chapter 2; Gladys Varela and Carla Manara, "Tiempos de transición en las fronteras surandinas. De la colonia a la república," in *Cruzando la Cordillera... La frontera argentino-chilena como espacio social*, ed. Susana Bandieri (Neuquén: Universidad Nacional del Comahue, 2001); María Lydia Varela, "La sociedad Manzanera: su desarrollo histórico-social. Patagonia noroccidental: siglos XVIII-XIX," *Anuario IEHS* 11 (1996); Vezub, *Redes comerciales*."

<sup>66</sup>See Map 7, p. 143. The different "nations" that joined Cacapol and Cangapol were, according to Falkner, Huilliche, Tehuelhet, and Chechehet.

Pampas coast, and subsequently he spent about a year as a captive among Indians.<sup>67</sup>

Although Morris did not identify the “nation” of his captors, his narrative leaves little doubt that they were Native peoples from Huilliche territory who captured him while on a seasonal migration to the Southern Pampas.

Morris had spent several months on the Southern Pampas coast without sight of Native peoples, when one day in early January of 1743 he suddenly ran into a small party of horse-riding Indians. The Indians took him captive, and carried him “a few miles in from the seashore to the southwest,” where they joined about “a dozen of their companions.” The Indians had been hunting horses for some time, as Morris noted that they had a troop of over four hundred with them. After a few days of rest, they kept travelling southwest for about “two hundred miles,” to “a valley between two very high mountains where there was fine pasture for their horses and several small rivers of fresh water.” In all likelihood, this was one of the interior valleys of the Ventana Sierras. At that site there were about “a dozen Indian huts, built with poles and the skin of horses inhabited by another party of Indians with their wives and children.” The enlarged group stayed in the Ventana Sierras for several weeks, during which new groups of Indians kept arriving, and all the males kept busy hunting horses. Throughout this time, Morris was treated “with great humanity,” fed meals of roasted horsemeat, and given “a piece of blanket”—most likely a poncho—to cover his “nakedness.” Morris also realized he was considered a slave, as he was bought and sold several times in exchange for “spurs, brass pans, ostrich feathers,” and sometimes merely “played away at dice.” At

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<sup>67</sup>Isaac Morris, *A Narrative of the Dangers and Difficulties which befel Isaac Morris and Seven More of the Crew, Belonging to the Wager Store-Ship, which attended Commodore Anson, in his Voyage to the South Sea* (London: 1750). Morris’s ship, the *Wager*, was part of Admiral Lord George Anson’s fleet, which in 1740 England dispatched to the Pacific to harass the Spanish forces and possessions, in the context of the so-called “war of Jenkins’ Ear.” For a full narrative of the shipwreck, see Peter Shankland, *Byron of the Wager* (New York: CM&G, 1975).

the end of the summer (mid-March), the Indians celebrated with a “grand feasting that lasted a day,” after which they parted to their respective homes. The party of Morris’ latest master set off on a long southwestward journey, towards the “chief town where their King live[d],” with “fifteen hundred string of horses in our cavalcade.” For about three months, they marched during the day and “reposed” at night in the Indians’ “movable huts.”<sup>68</sup>

These details in Morris’ account indicate that Indians were in the midst of a seasonal migration to the Pampas’ hunting grounds, rather than carrying out a maloca or responding to an “invite.” In the latter cases, only adult males participated, they carried very little baggage, and made a faster journey back and forth.<sup>69</sup> Morris’ captors, by contrast, moved slowly with their families, spent a great part of the summer—at least since early January—in the sierras, and dedicated time to feasting and celebratory rituals.

Morris’s account also indicates that the Indians were well integrated into the trans-Andean exchange network, as they had everyday life items of Spanish origin such as spurs and brass pans. Morris later added that the Indians obtained “trifles such as these” together with others like knives, beads, and brass bells from their “trafficking” with the Spaniards “when at peace with them.”<sup>70</sup> The main hunting camp in the sierras must have doubled as a trading fair where *tolderías* from different places congregated and exchanged the many items that circulated through the trans-Andean network.

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<sup>68</sup>Morris, *A Narrative*, 44-49.

<sup>69</sup> León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores*, 25-26. Falkner, who described whole areas of the Pampas’ geography solely based on relations given to him by Native informants, specified when assessing marching distances between landmarks whether the march was done with or without tents. This indicates his Native informants were familiar with both types of travelling. See for instance Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 73.

<sup>70</sup> Morris, *A Narrative*, 61.

Slaves such as Morris and, more generally, captives of either Spanish or Indian origin, were included among these trade items, and they tended to circulate from the eastern territories to the west.<sup>71</sup>

The length of the journey back, plus the fact that the “chief town” got snow “five or six feet deep” in mid-winter, indicate that the Indians’ home was in the Andean area. The southwestward direction of the journey indicates that it was Huilliche territory. Morris’ captors were wealthy in horses, and farther south horses became scarcer to eventually be even unavailable.<sup>72</sup>

The “chief town” must have been Cacapol and Cangapol’s headquarters at Huichin. As Morris described it, it was composed of about thirty “huts” built with poles and horse skins, and surrounded with a palisade, altogether housing approximately four hundred people.<sup>73</sup> Those who did not live in the chief town lived in small units that Morris called “towns” or “parties,” and described as a “few huts together” under the authority of a “chief”—what historians refer today as a *toldería*. Morris pointed out that the “chief town” had “three times the number of dwellings as any of the rest,” which suggests that the average *toldería* was composed of about ten *toldos*. While the chief town was more of a permanent settlement, these smaller *tolderías* were moved around in a pattern common to pastoralist nomads around the world. As Morris explained, “when their horses have eat [sic] up the pasture in one place, they remove their town and all

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<sup>71</sup>In the second half of the eighteenth century Spaniards noted the annual fairs that took place in the sierras, see Jones, “Warfare, Reorganization, and Readaptation,” 156. For the captives/slaves, see Carlos A. Mayo, “El cautiverio y sus funciones en una sociedad de frontera: el caso de Buenos Aires (1750-1810),” *Revista de Indias* 175 (1985).

<sup>72</sup>Palermo, “La compleja integración,” 164.

<sup>73</sup>See Appendix 7 for Falkner’s illustration of one of the “long tents” of cacique Cacapol’s headquarters.

their goods.” Indians did that “several times in a year,” and thus had “scattered habitations all over the country.”<sup>74</sup>

These scattered *tolderías* were part of a larger sociopolitical unit, at the center of which was the chief town and the “King.” Morris’ last master, for instance, lived two hundred miles “beyond the town where the King resided.” He nevertheless quickly surrendered Morris when the “King” claimed the Englishman as his property. Every spring, Morris explained, the “King” sent out to the Pampas “several different parties...from every different town under his government, who take different routes, and sometimes join one another accidentally on their return.”<sup>75</sup> Although the Indians traded with the Spaniards when at peace, the “King” told Morris (in Spanish) that he considered the Spaniards “great enemies [who] had taken away their country from them, and drove them to the mountains.” Morris noted that there were four Spanish women living in the chief town, whom the Indians had taken captives “near Buenos Aires” in their latest skirmish with the Spaniards—in all likelihood, the 1740 raid. But at the time of Morris’ captivity they were at peace, as demonstrated by the fact that the following spring (1744) the “King” himself “went down” to Buenos Aires to see the Governor, and to exchange Morris for a “handsome ransom.”<sup>76</sup>

Morris’ description of the “King” and his “realm” concurs with Falkner’s descriptions of Cacapol as “a kind of petty monarch,” and offers additional insights into the annual movements of peoples that kept the Pampas firmly connected to the Andean

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<sup>74</sup>Morris, *A Narrative*, 56.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>76</sup>The director of the English Asiento paid for Morris’ ransom, which consisted of a gold-laced waistcoat, “ninety dollars and a few trifles.” After spending almost a year in Buenos Aires as a prisoner of war, in 1745 Morris was finally sent back to Europe together with the other members of the Wager’s crew who had been taken prisoners in Chile.



territory. The account of another Jesuit, Father Sánchez Labrador, adds that the cacique Bravo had “vassals,” “allies,” and “relatives” throughout the Pampas. Through *convites*, Bravo could summon all these vassals, allies, and relatives at any given moment. As Sánchez Labrador explained, Bravo was able to form “formidable armies” by “sending presents to the other caciques, and exhorting them to take up arms with all their people to help him to avenge his grievances.”<sup>77</sup>

Thus, when San Martín ventured into the tierra adentro in late August of 1739 as the commander of an unusually large expedition, he was entering an Indian world that, unbeknownst to him and to Porteños in general, had changed greatly during the past few decades. The intercultural violence that San Martín unleashed in the Pampas had repercussions across a trans-Andean Indian world that was more firmly integrated than before. It was also a world that could marshal the resources to respond in kind, as indeed it did, by unleashing the intercultural violence of the 1740 raid.

### III. A PRECARIOUS PEACE: THE TREATY OF 1742

The extent of the destruction caused by the raid of 1740 left Porteños dumbfounded and scrambling for an adequate response. Initially, the Cabildo wanted to respond with an immediate “punishing” expedition. As a councilman put it in a special Cabildo session in early December, the sooner the expedition was launched the easier it

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<sup>77</sup>Joseph Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico en sus principales provincias reducidas a la Santa Fe y vasallaje del Rey de España por la predicación de los misioneros zelosos de la Compañía de Jesús. Año de 1772,” in *Paraguay Catholico. Los Indios Pampas, Puelches, Patagones según Joseph Sánchez Labrador, S.J.*, ed. Guillermo Furlong Cardiff (Buenos Aires: Vial y Zona, 1936), 129-131. Father Sánchez Labrador arrived to the Río de la Plata in the early 1730s. After spending several years in Córdoba, he moved to Buenos Aires in the early 1740s, then to the Guaraní missions, and finally to the Chaco missions. He wrote his account in Italy, after the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spanish territories. The practice of cementing alliances through gifts is widely documented for Native peoples throughout the Americas. For the role of gifts in the *convites* of the trans-Andean area, see Villar and Jiménez, *Saca de ganados*.

would be to “recover the captives and cattle stolen by the Indians, because waiting will only make things more difficult.”<sup>78</sup> Juan de San Martín, called in to give his advice on the matter, suggested an expedition of at least eight hundred well-armed militiamen, which had to be ready for the following February.<sup>79</sup>

But the Cabildo’s plan soon ran into difficulties. In the first place, December was the beginning of the wheat harvest, which occupied for the rest of the summer most of the rural dwellers that formed the militias. In the second place, the raid had hit many of those rural dwellers the hardest, and hence they were not particularly eager or able to abandon their ravaged homes to embark on a possibly dangerous expedition. Thus, when in mid-December San Martín did a preliminary review of the militia troops in the pago of Matanza, he was not satisfied with the results. He reported to the Cabildo that the turnout was much lower than expected, and that many of the men were “not fully able,” or had gone “on foot,” expecting to obtain horses from him.<sup>80</sup> Finally, the preparations for the expedition triggered a bitter dispute between the Cabildo and the royal officials over who exactly was responsible for providing the necessary funds for the long list of supplies that San Martín had submitted.<sup>81</sup>

The Cabildo had initially requested Governor Miguel de Salcedo to use royal funds earmarked for defense matters. But, as Governor Salcedo reported, the Royal Treasury was empty because all the funds had been funneled to the Banda Oriental, and

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<sup>78</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of December 8, 1740.

<sup>79</sup>AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Documentos relativos a la expedición para el castigo de los Indios Infieles Serranos, al comando de Dn. Juan de Samartín. 1740."

<sup>80</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: sessions of December 17 and 18, 1740.

<sup>81</sup>These supplies included three hundred firearms, five hundred lances, ammunition, gunpowder, 2 tents, biscuits, tobacco, yerba mate, wine, sugar, and the salaries for a surgeon and a chaplain. AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Documentos relativos a la expedición para el castigo de los Indios Infieles Serranos, al comando de Dn. Juan de Samartín. 1740."

used for the fortification of Montevideo, and for a recent blockade of Colonia do Sacramento. The Cabildo then proposed to levy new taxes in order to build a defense fund (*ramo de guerra*). The councilmen cited the example of the neighboring city of Santa Fe, which in 1724 had established new taxes for a defense fund that paid for two militia companies fully dedicated to defend the city's Indian frontier.<sup>82</sup> Royal Officials, however, rejected the proposal on the basis that the Crown's approval was required before the population might be burdened with any new taxes. The Cabildo angrily retorted that His Majesty would surely understand the urgency and soundness of the request. Buenos Aires was "the backdoor to the Kingdom of Peru," and thus it was not "proper of the Royal mind" to leave the city "at the mercy of its enemies, so that they can attack, ruin and destroy it."<sup>83</sup> Finally, a compromise was grudgingly reached by late February of 1741. Governor Salcedo offered a monetary contribution from his own pocket, the vecinos of means would contribute with livestock and horses, and the Cabildo was allowed to establish a series of "emergency" taxes subjected to review and final approval by the Crown. The Governor also borrowed weapons from the Royal Armory which were earmarked for Chile.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>On Santa Fe, see Clementina Battock, Claudia Gotta, and Analía Manavella, "Nuevas o viejas prácticas? Pensar la frontera como instrumento de control político en la Santa Fe del siglo XVIII," in *Signos en el tiempo y rastros en la tierra. III Jornadas de Arqueología e Historia de las regiones Pampeana y Patagónica*, ed. Mariano Ramos and Eugenia Néspolo (Luján: Universidad Nacional de Luján, Departamento de Ciencias Sociales, 2003); Guillermo Palombo and Ismael Pozzi Albornoz, *La organización militar en el Plata Indiano. La Guarnición de Buenos Aires, 1680-1810* (Buenos Aires: Instituto de Historia Militar Argentina, 2005), 62.

<sup>83</sup>AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Copia de los autos que siguió el Procurador General en el Tribunal de los señores Gobernador y Oficiales Reales sobre que de Real Hacienda se sacase dinero para la defensa de esta ciudad del enemigo bárbaro. Año de 1740."

<sup>84</sup>AGI: ABA 42, "Miguel de Salcedo a Dn. Joseph de la Quintana, Buenos Aires, 17 de diciembre de 1740;" AGI: ABA 523, "Miguel de Salcedo a Joseph de la Quintana, Buenos Aires, 19 de octubre de 1741;" AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Copia de los autos que siguió el Procurador General en el Tribunal de los señores Gobernador y Oficiales Reales sobre

By the time the compromise was reached, however, it was too late. Fall was rapidly approaching, and heavy rains would make large areas of the plains impassable to a large expedition. The councilmen thus decided to postpone the expedition until the following spring. But beyond this temporary postponement, the fact of the matter was that the prospect of an enlarged replica of the 1739 expedition was making some Porteños uneasy. Several councilmen noted that the Cabildo still owed most of the expenses incurred in 1739, and showed reluctance about embarking on another costly venture with very uncertain chances of success.<sup>85</sup> Falkner's account indicates that some Porteños, "humbled" by the force of the 1740 raid, doubted the wisdom of another expedition under San Martín's command.<sup>86</sup>

Eventually, during the late fall and winter of 1741, the tide began to turn against a "punishing" expedition. The first sign was a sudden "indisposition" that relieved San Martín from his post of commander. Less diplomatically, Falkner writes that San Martín was "deprived of his commission." A few years later, in 1744, the Buenos Aires Procurador offered an alternative explanation, when he said that San Martín had chosen to resign from his post, because he disagreed with Governor Salcedo's decision of dealing diplomatically with the Indians instead of "punishing" them.<sup>87</sup>

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que de Real Hacienda se sacase dinero para la defensa de esta ciudad del enemigo bárbaro. Año de 1740." *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of February 27, 1741

<sup>85</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8, session of February 27, 1741.

<sup>86</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 106.

<sup>87</sup>AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Copia de los autos que siguió el Procurador General en el Tribunal de los señores Gobernador y Oficiales Reales sobre que de Real Hacienda se sacase dinero para la defensa de esta ciudad del enemigo bárbaro. Año de 1740." Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 106. See the Procurador General's statement in AGN: IX 19-2-2, "Expediente seguido para esclarecer si el Cacique Calelián y sus parciales han sido cómplices en el robo de haciendas, despojo de casas, muertes y cautiverios que ejecutaron los Indios en el Pago de Luján, por el mes de julio de 1744. Año de 1744."

The second sign was Governor Salcedo's choice for new commander, Captain Cristóbal Cabral de Melo. As the son of the late Captain Juan Cabral—who had brokered the alliance with caciques Mayupilquiyan and Yati in 1717—Cabral de Melo putatively had extensive intercultural experience with the Pampa Indians. According to Cabral de Melo's own account, it was precisely such experience that moved "all the vecinos" to demand his appointment to the Governor. Cabral de Melo explained that he had assisted his father since he was "sixteen years of age," during which time he had obtained "the friendship and esteem of all the Indians." This was grandiose claim for sure, but one that highlights how much Porteños suddenly valued "friendship" with the Indians. He also attributed his experience in dealing with the Indians to the fact that he had escorted cart convoys to the salt flats in numerous occasions.<sup>88</sup> As recent research shows, these convoys operated as intercultural travelling fairs of sorts, as they included petty traders (*pulperos* and *mercachifles*) who sold their wares to the soldiers and peons as well as to the Indians who approached the convoy while on the road. During the weeks spent at the flats gathering salt, small groups of Indians regularly arrived to offer pelts, hides, feathers, textiles, horses and other elements in exchange for Spanish goods.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, the last factor that turned the tide against a "punishing" expedition came in the July of 1741, when news arrived from Mendoza that a large army of Indians was getting ready to cross the Andes. According to Falkner, it was "young cacique Cangapol," who "had raised another army, from all the different nations, consisting of near four

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<sup>88</sup>AECBA, serie 2, vol. 8: session of July 3, 1741. AGN: IX 19-2-2, "Representación de Cristóbal Cabral al Gobernador y al Cabildo de Justicia y Regimiento, Buenos Aires, 22 de febrero de 1744." "Presentación del Padre Predicador Jubilado Fr. Juan de Leguisamo al Gobernador. Buenos Aires, 19 de junio de 1742," printed in Fray Eudoxio de J. Palacio, *Los Mercedarios en la Argentina. Documentos para su historia (1535-1754)* (Buenos Aires: Ministerio de Cultura y Educación, 1971), 461.

<sup>89</sup>This research focuses on the late eighteenth century. Taruselli, "El comercio de la sal," 52-56.

thousand men.” Fearing a reiteration of the calamity of 1740, the Cabildo frantically called a special meeting that included Governor Salcedo, Juan de San Martín, and Cristóbal Cabral de Melo. San Martín alone was confident in the Spanish ability to withstand an Indian attack; he proposed suspending the expedition and deploying instead small groups of militiamen throughout the campaña, where they could “wait for the enemies.” The rest agreed that the expedition had to be carried out but, as Falkner put it, “not to renew the war, but to sue for peace.”<sup>90</sup>

Cabral de Melo and approximately six hundred militias departed in late September of 1741. Three months later, the Cabildo minutes recorded that “Don Cristóbal Cabral has returned from his commission to the campaña, having proposed and admitted the peace with the heathens.”<sup>91</sup> The Cabildo minutes’ laconic entry belied the significance of the event, and concealed the elaborate diplomatic maneuvering that Porteños were forced to carry out in order to achieve “peace with the heathens.” Diplomatic negotiations in fact extended for another full year, as the peace was formally settled through a written treaty only in August of 1742.

The diplomatic maneuvering of 1741-1742, although scantily documented, offers unique insights into the evolution of intercultural negotiations in the Pampas following the 1740 Indian raid. After the devastation of that raid, Porteño authorities for the first time became painfully aware of the vulnerability of the Spanish population, and of their own inability to dictate to Indians. They were thus forced to find a way to gain the Indians’ cooperation. While such a predicament might not have been novel for the marginal social types that manned the vaquería troops at the beginning of the century, it was certainly novel for the Porteño authorities—including the Cabildo and the

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<sup>90</sup>AECBA, serie 2, vol. 8: session of August 12, 1741; Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 107.

<sup>91</sup>AECBA, serie 2, vol. 8: session of December 23, 1741.

Governor—who were at the center of the lengthy negotiation process during 1741-1742. In other words, in only four decades, intercultural negotiation in the Pampas went from informal and random arrangements between troperos and Indians, to more formalized diplomatic relations that involved the Spanish authorities.

The formalized diplomatic relations of 1741-1742 were left in the hands of intercultural mediators, that is, individuals who negotiated in the name of their cultural group as a whole. As there were no established rules and very limited past experiences, intercultural mediators had to resort to their skills and imagination to improvise the right response at the right time. Much of this improvisation took place in a context of shared misunderstandings. Spanish society and Indian society did not operate under the same rules, but intercultural mediators had to pretend that they did in order to accomplish their mission and reach an agreement. Paraphrasing Richard White, they had to seize any congruence, no matter how equivocal or uncertain.<sup>92</sup> The fact that Spaniards held conflicting ideas of what was proper in negotiating with the “heathens,” particularly about the sensitive matter of how to recover captives, added an extra degree of uncertainty. As I will show below, Indians found themselves negotiating with competing Spanish mediators who quarreled among themselves about the terms of the negotiation.

Cabral de Melo proved to be the Spanish mediator most eager, and most able, to negotiate in Indian terms. His own reputation depended on achieving the peace, not to mention his own survival and that of the militiamen who under his orders had carried the expedition to the sierras. Although the expedition’s diary is missing from the Cabildo records, there are partial accounts that allow us to peer into what happened in the tierra adentro during the spring of 1741.

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<sup>92</sup>White, *The Middle Ground*, 52.

Anticipating that the march of a large number of Spanish troops into the tierra adentro would raise the Indians' mistrust and put them on the alert, Cabral de Melo sent in advance an Indian from the Jesuit mission, Francisco. Francisco was given the task of letting caciques know that the Spaniards were "entering" on peaceful terms. The initial overtures between Spaniards and Indians were very cautious, with small groups of Native delegates of increasing rank approaching the Spaniards to determine what exactly their intentions were. The Maestre de Campo carefully followed the practices that had guaranteed safety to many vaquería troops earlier in the century. He "regaled" the Indian delegates who came to see him and, before marching onwards, he asked these delegates to spread word farther inland about his peaceful intentions. Once the Spanish troops were close to the Ventana Sierras, Cabral de Melo received a message that a group of seven caciques were waiting for him farther ahead. He decided to advance alone because, as he explained later, he knew that the Indians were testing his courage, as they "faithfully believe that a brave man does not deceive."<sup>93</sup>

The composition of this first group of Indian mediators confirms the role of the 1739 expedition in triggering the 1740 raid, as well as the integration of the eastern mosaic into the trans-Andean Native world under the leadership of the caciques Bravos (Cacapol and Cangapol). Within the group of seven caciques, Cabral de Melo reported, there was a "brother of the cacique whom San Martín killed in the river Salado." The remainder of the group was composed of three kinsmen of Bravo (a grandson and two nephews), an Auca cacique, and two caciques with Hispanicized names (Agustín Mayu and Juan Gallo) who were local Pampa allies of Bravo.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>AGN: IX 19-2-2, "Representación de Cristóbal Cabral al Gobernador y al Cabildo de Justicia y Regimiento, Buenos Aires, 22 de febrero de 1744."

<sup>94</sup>AGI: ABA 302, "Christobal Cabral a Miguel de Salcedo, Sierra del Cairú, 2 de noviembre de 1741." The presence of Agustín Mayu among Bravo allies indicates that even the Mayu lineage had broken apart under the Reche-Mapuche pressure. While



The group accepted the Maestre de Campo's gifts, manifested that they had "good memories" of Cabral de Melo's father, and agreed to visit the Spanish camp. Once again, this was part of an etiquette for intercultural encounters that would have been familiar to any tropero going into the sierras two decades earlier. In the Spanish camp, the caciques were "regaled" again, as Cabral de Melo had ordered "under penalty of death" to all his men "not to offend them [the Indians] in the least but rather to gratify them and to present them with gifts, and so they did." The caciques accepted Cabral de Melo's proposal of "going down" to Buenos Aires to formally settle the peace with the Governor. But, they manifested, they first had "to go to their *tolderías*, to fetch fresh horses, and to give instructions to the Indians of the *tierra adentro*." Cabral de Melo feared that the trust he had obtained from the caciques would crumble without his presence, and that the caciques might change their minds once in the *tierra adentro*. Quick on his feet, he offered to accompany them with a small group of his men, under the excuse that he wanted to gather some salt from the flats.

Once on the road to the *tolderías*, there were new signs of the agitation that the approach of the Spanish troops had caused throughout the Indian world. One of the caciques went ahead, in order to warn the *tolderías* farther inland that they were coming with a party of Spaniards. The next day he sent a message to Cabral de Melo, that three caciques from the *tierra adentro*—two were Aucas, and the third was another of Bravo's kin—had just arrived with about two hundred warriors and uncertain purposes. It was Cabral de Melo's delicate job to persuade them about his peaceful intentions. As he reported to the Governor:

I decided to go ahead by myself, leaving my people approximately three leagues behind, with orders to advance slowly. After arriving to the place where the Indians were, they formed a squadron, all of them in one line, and they came

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some *tolderías* followed Felipe Mayu into the Concepción mission, others followed Agustín Mayu in their alliance with Bravo.

forward as if to attack me [*salieron a escaramuzarme*]. Those with arrows aimed them at my chest and then went back to their line, and those with lances did the same demonstration. After all of them behaved in that way, the three caciques came to shake my hand, and told me that they believed I was there under peace because I had arrived alone with no fear, and that I was brave and had a good heart.<sup>95</sup>

A skilled navigator of intercultural rituals thanks to his past experience in the campaña with his father, Cabral de Melo carefully followed what he understood were Indian practices by advancing alone. When Indians received him with what evidently was a ritualized mock skirmish, Cabral de Melo stayed put to demonstrate, in the Indian way, that he was there in good faith. Shortly after the caciques had shaken the Maestre de Campo's hand, the Indians spotted the Spanish militiamen approaching, and a wave of uneasiness shook their ranks. The Maestre de Campo then engaged in the constant invention and hybrid practices that characterize intercultural diplomacy:

I asked them [the Indians] not to be suspicious, I reminded them that I had trusted them, and told them that I wanted them to trust me in return. As my men arrived, I ordered them to form squadron, all in one line, facing the Indians who were also formed in this manner... I called the officers and I made them stand in between the two squadrons, and then I called the caciques and I made them shake hands with the captains and other officers.<sup>96</sup>

Cabral de Melo ended this account, which was a letter to the Governor, with a terse, "and the peace was arranged." This ending in fact concealed—for good reasons, as we will see—the agreement that he had made with regard to the exchange of captives. As Jesuit Thomas Falkner explained, Cabral was very "fearful of a fresh rupture," and thus he offered "to deliver up all the Indian captives without any consideration whatsoever, and that the Spanish captives should be ransomed."<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 108.

Ransoming captives from “Infidel” hands was a well-established Spanish practice that harked back to the Reconquista, but more specifically to the corsair “little wars” that dominated the western Mediterranean during the early modern era.<sup>98</sup> The Mercedarian Order, chartered in Spain in the thirteenth century specifically to redeem Christian captives, had a powerful presence in Buenos Aires. It also had a devotee in Cabral de Melo, who had specifically requested a Mercedarian friar, Pablo Enriquez Nuño del Aguila, as a chaplain for the expedition.<sup>99</sup> The Mercedarian Order was not officially involved in redeeming captives in Spanish America. The Order instead collected alms, and shipped them to Spain. But Fray Aguila, whose redeeming zeal was perhaps above average, had organized the redemption of a group of captives in Tucumán in the 1730s.<sup>100</sup> This suggests that Cabral de Melo, in addition to being a Mercedarian devotee, had reached to Fray Aguila in order to have a powerful ally in the Mercedarian Order, for a redeeming mission that, although he thought vital for the peace, he knew lacked the Governor’s favor.

Governor Miguel de Salcedo was a professional military man with extensive experience in Spain’s imperial wars. As such, Governor Salcedo shared in the “enlightened” set of martial conventions of Bourbon Spain, and of Western Europe more generally, which no longer favored the purchase or ransom of prisoners.<sup>101</sup> Salcedo

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<sup>98</sup>Ellen G. Friedman, *Spanish Captives in North Africa in the Early Modern Age* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983).

<sup>99</sup>“Cristóbal Cabral de Melo al M.R.Padre Maestro Fr. Juan Silberio Pavón. Buenos Aires, 29 de enero de 1742,” printed in Palacio, *Los Mercedarios*, 451. The full name of the order was *Orden de la Merced y Redención de Cautivos*. For the role of the Mercedarian Order in the corsair “little wars” of the Mediterranean, see Friedman, *Spanish Captives*, 105-110.

<sup>100</sup>Severo Aparicio, “Los mercedarios de América y la redención de cautivos. Siglos XVI-XIX,” *Analecta Mercedaria* 1 (1982); Palacio, *Los Mercedarios*.

<sup>101</sup>French aristocratic officers in the Crown’s service pioneered a new set of elaborate martial conventions that spread throughout Western Europe after the mid-

opposed ransoming with the argument that it would only encourage Indians to take more captives in the future. He only reluctantly allowed Cabral de Melo to engage in “regaling” the caciques during the 1741 expedition, with the understanding that through these means, once the peace was arranged, the caciques would “force their vassals to surrender all the persons held under their power.” Salcedo did not contemplate an ulterior ransoming, but rather a mutual exchange of captives.<sup>102</sup> He thus observed with alarm the inclusion of Fray Aguila as the expedition’s chaplain, and appointed Jesuit father Matías Strobel—one of the founders of the Concepción mission—to go as chaplain as well.<sup>103</sup>

During the negotiations in the tierra adentro, Father Strobel emerged as a competing intercultural mediator to Cabral de Melo. According to the Jesuit accounts, the Governor had actually entrusted father Strobel, rather than Cabral de Melo, with negotiating the terms of the peace, because he appreciated “how much respect the

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seventeenth century. The French “enlightened” military reforms reached Spain with full force in 1701, with the arrival of Bourbon Philip V to Madrid. See Kamen, *Empire*, 441-442; Fernando Puell de la Villa, *Historia del ejército en España* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2000), chapter 1. For an insightful analysis of the collision of Amerindian, colonial, and imperial values around the taking and treating of captives, see Ian K. Steele, *A Captive's Right to Life? The Interaction of Amerindian, Colonial and European Values* (The Lawrence F. Brewster Lecture in History. East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, 1995). For Governor Miguel de Salcedo y Sierralta, see José Torre Revello, “Los gobernadores de Buenos Aires (1617-1777),” in *Historia de la Nación Argentina (desde los orígenes hasta la organización definitiva en 1862)*, ed. Ricardo Levene (Buenos Aires: Imprenta de la Universidad, 1937), 509.

<sup>102</sup>“Certificación del Maestre de Campo Don Cristóbal Cabral de Melo y demás Capitanes. Buenos Aires, 20 de septiembre de 1743;” and “Presentación del Padre Predicador Jubilado Fr. Juan de Leguisamo al Gobernador. Buenos Aires, 19 de junio de 1742,” both printed in Palacio, *Los Mercedarios*, 452.

<sup>103</sup>As Fray Aguila put it, Governor Salcedo “resisted” (*hizo resistencia*) his appointment as chaplain, and ordered him not to meddle in the recovery of captives (*que dicha redención no se hiciese por mi mano*). “Autos e información sobre los procedimientos del P. Predicador Jubilado Fray Pablo Enríques Nuño del Aguila, en cuanto a la redención que hizo de 13 cuativos, 1713,” printed in *Ibid.*, 457.

Southern Indians had for the Jesuits.”<sup>104</sup> Although these Jesuit accounts are obviously self-serving, they indicate that Governor Salcedo did not fully trust Cabral de Melo. The reaction of the Maestre de Campo to Strobel’s appointment, in turn, confirms that he saw in the Jesuit a troublesome rival. Cabral de Melo represented that the militiamen “did not want *teatinos*”—a disparaging designation for the Jesuits—and set out to the sierras without waiting for Strobel, who only caught up with the expedition the following day, in Luján.<sup>105</sup> The role of Strobel as a spokesman for Governor Salcedo came to the open during the negotiations with the caciques. According to Falkner, when Cabral de Melo offered that the Spanish captives should be ransomed, Strobel had “strongly represented the indignity of this condition,” and proposed instead “a mutual exchange of prisoners.”<sup>106</sup>

What the caciques made of the contradicting Spanish proposals, or how exactly the proposals were presented to them, we do not know. We do know that, when in January of 1742 a delegation of Indian caciques met in Buenos Aires with Governor Salcedo and a group of councilmen to seal the peace, Salcedo acted as if a mutual exchange of captives had been arranged. By the Governor’s orders, “all the Indian

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<sup>104</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Católico,” 93. Falkner stated that only thanks to Strobel’s mediation “the Indians were prevailed upon to spare the Spanish army.” Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 108. Ladislao Orosz, the Procurador General of the Jesuit province of Paraguay, explained that Cabral de Melo’s troops were merely “an escort” to father Strobel, whom the Governor had chosen to negotiate with the Indians. See “Ladislao Orosz al Padre Juan Bautista Urbani. Córdoba, 30 de diciembre de 1742,” printed in Ladislao Szabó, *El húngaro Ladislao Orosz en tierras argentinas, 1729-1767* (Buenos Aires: FECIC, 1984), 75.

<sup>105</sup>“Cristóbal Cabral de Melo al M.R. Padre Maestro Fr. Juan Silberio Pavón. Buenos Aires, 29 de enero de 1742,” printed in Palacio, *Los Mercedarios*, 451. Ladislao Orosz added melodrama to the tension between Strobel and the militiamen—presumably under Cabral de Melo’s leadership—as he pointed out that the Spanish soldiers “secretly plotted” to kill the Jesuit. “Ladislao Orosz al Padre Juan Bautista Urbani. Córdoba, 30 de diciembre de 1742,” printed in Szabó, *El húngaro*, 75.

<sup>106</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 108.

captives who had been distributed (*repartidas*) among the vecinos were returned.”

There is no specific information about these captives but they must have been the Indians that, according to the Jesuit accounts, San Martín had brought back from the Pampas in 1739, after his brutal expedition. It was a large group: over a hundred people, mostly women and children. In exchange, according to the Spanish accounts, the caciques promised to bring, “after three moons,” all the Spanish captives they had in their hands to the sierras, in order to settle the peace for good.<sup>107</sup> We also know that, a little over three months later, a large number of caciques (about twenty-six, including the famous cacique Bravo) went to the sierras, where they met with a delegation of Spaniards that included Cabral de Melo and Fray Aguila. But the Indians only brought a paltry number of captives and, moreover, requested ransoms for them.

A few years later, in the context of another intercultural crisis—a raid of smaller proportions, which I examine in the next chapter—Porteños remembered the events of 1742 as just one more instance of the Indians’ duplicity, and as just one more proof that they could not be trusted.<sup>108</sup> An alternative reading, however, suggests that intercultural misunderstandings plagued the 1741-1742 negotiations, and at the same time allowed the peace to be settled.

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<sup>107</sup>See the Procurador General’s verdict, and the statements by Captain Pedro Leguizamo and Lieutenant Roque Romero, in AGN: IX 19-2-2, “Expediente seguido para esclarecer si el Cacique Calelián y sus parciales han sido cómplices en el robo de haciendas, despojo de casas, muertes y cautiverios que ejecutaron los Indios en el Pago de Luján, por el mes de julio de 1744. Año de 1744.” Falkner explains that “The Moluches indeed went to Buenos-Ayres, and recovered all the Indian prisoners, as well as those of the Tehuelhets, without returning the captives they had taken from the Spaniards.” Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 108.

<sup>108</sup>AGN: IX 19-2-2, “Expediente seguido para esclarecer si el Cacique Calelián y sus parciales han sido cómplices en el robo de haciendas, despojo de casas, muertes y cautiverios que ejecutaron los Indios en el Pago de Luján, por el mes de julio de 1744. Año de 1744.”

It is very unlikely that the caciques who went to Buenos Aires in January of 1742 committed to bring “all the Spanish captives” to the sierras, at least under the scheme of the “mutual exchange” that Governor Salcedo had in mind. While the Governor had the authority to order Porteños to “return” the Indian captives in their possession, caciques lacked an equivalent authority over what Spaniards called their “vassals.” Falkner himself hinted at this when explaining the Indians’ style of government:

It is not an easy matter to trace any regular form of government, or civil constitution, among these Indians: what little they have, seems to consist in a small degree of subjection to their Caciques...The Cacique has the power of protecting as many as apply to him, of composing or silencing any difference, or delivering over the offending party to be punished with death...the Caciques nevertheless have not the power to raise taxes, *nor to take away any thing from their vassals*; nor can they oblige them to serve in the least employment, without paying them.<sup>109</sup>

In modern anthropological terms, the caciques had weak coercive authority—and therefore, to contemporary European eyes, they had little “civil constitution.” Caciques had no right to take captives away from their “vassals,” because captives were incorporated into *tolderías* as their masters’ property (slaves). In many cases, moreover, the masters might have not even taken the captive personally but bought he or she from other Indians. Sources suggest, in fact, that captives taken in the Pampas were rapidly sold westwards. In 1744, for instance, Sister María Margarita de San Joaquín, from a monastery in Concepción (southern Chile), urged the Buenos Aires Cabildo to do something about the many enslaved Porteños that were in the hands of the *Reche-Mapuches* who lived in the area.<sup>110</sup>

Thus, when the caciques said that they were willing to bring captives to the sierras “as a sign of peace”, as Cabral de Melo put it, they were not committing to

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<sup>109</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 121, 122. Emphasis mine.

<sup>110</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of August 3, 1744. On captives, see Mayo, “El cautiverio.”

Salcedo's "mutual exchange" terms. They were simply offering a proof of political goodwill on their part. They could very well persuade their "vassals" to go to the sierras. But after that, it was in Porteños' hands to negotiate each captive's retrieval with his or her respective master. As Cabral de Melo explained:

[the caciques said that] even though they were masters of the Indians who had apprehended the Christians and owned them as slaves, they [the caciques] lacked the authority to take away their vassals' own property. Even more taking into account that many [Indians] owned the said Christians because they had bought them from other Indians. They said, however, that we could come to an agreement with the said Indians, and buy their slaves from them.<sup>111</sup>

Porteños later complained about Indian duplicity, but the fact of the matter is that during the 1741 meeting in the sierras Cabral de Melo had explicitly offered to ransom the Spanish captives. And, during the final 1742 meeting, Indians found an eager buyer for their slaves in Fray Aguila. The Mercedarian had spent the months previous to the 1742 meeting diligently collecting alms in the estancias of Santa Fe and Buenos Aires. Governor Salcedo had actively opposed Fray Aguila's collecting endeavors in particular, and the Mercedarian intervention in general, with the argument that the Spaniards held in the Indians' hands were not "captives" but prisoners of war. But this semantic change did not convince the Order's authorities. The Mercedarian Provincial, Fray Leguisamo, readily reminded the Governor that the Order counted with the Spanish Crown's protection, and that there was a long list of canonical and royal legislation that established the redemption of Christian captives as the Mercedarians' specific task and

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<sup>111</sup>"Certificación del Maestre de Campo Don Cristóbal Cabral de Melo y demás Capitanes. Buenos Aires, 20 de septiembre de 1743," printed in Palacio, *Los Mercedarios*, 453. For Indians' use of captives to start diplomatic negotiations with Porteños during the second half of the eighteenth century, see Mayo, "El cautiverio," 238.



exclusive right.<sup>112</sup> Meanwhile, Fray Aguila's alms-raising efforts had resulted in a hundred and sixty cows, two hundred horses, and an assortment of goods that "Indians appreciate greatly," such as glass beads, metal pans, spurs, bites, hats, shirts, and red fabric. Once in the sierras, during the final 1742 meeting, he was able to use these goods to redeem a total of fourteen captives. For instance, he redeemed María Teresa Labayen and her infant daughter in exchange for ten cows, twenty-five horses, a hat, several yards of cloth, and ten metal pots. Witnesses stated that Fray Aguila's redeeming zeal was so pronounced that he even took off his own shirt and vest, and handed the garments to an Indian with whom he was negotiating for a captive. The Mercedarian friar also offered some "incentives" to the cacique Bravo (a packet of metal bells, two shirts, twenty-five horses, and a pair of bronze spurs) so that he would facilitate the return of "the one hundred and thirty two captives still in the tierra adentro."<sup>113</sup>

In addition to the controversial ransoming of captives, this second meeting in the sierras produced the first written peace treaty between Porteños and Indians.<sup>114</sup> The treaty took the form of a concise list of *capitulaciones* or clauses—a rather frustrating source for a momentous event—which were presumably written by Governor Salcedo.

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<sup>112</sup>"Presentación del Padre Predicador Jubilado Fr. Juan de Leguisamo al Goberndor. Buenos Aires, 19 de junio de 1742," printed in Palacio, *Los Mercedarios*, 462-463.

<sup>113</sup>"Autos e información sobre los procedimientos del P. Predicaodr Jubilado Fray Pablo Enriques Nuño del Aguila en cuanto a la redención que hizo de 13 cautivos, 1743," printed in Ibid., 459. "Cuenta y relación de la redención hecha por el mes de agosto de 1742 por Fr. Pablo Enriques Nuño del Aguila. Buenos Aires, 18 de septiembre de 1742," printed in Ibid., 456.

<sup>114</sup>"Capitulaciones de las paces hechas entre los indios Pampas de la Reducción de Ntra. Sra de la Concepción, y los Serranos, Aucas, y Peguenches, que se han de publicar en presencia del cacique Bravo, y de otros caciques, por orden del Sr. D. Miguel de Salcedo, gobernador y capitán general de la provincia del Río de la Plata. 1742," printed in *Paz en la frontera. Historia de las relaciones diplomáticas con las comunidades indígenas en la Argentina (siglos XVI-XIX)*, ed. Abelardo Levaggi (Buenos Aires: Universidad del Museo Social Argentino, 2000), 107-108.

The written record does not allow any insights into the reaction of the caciques who attended the meeting, and before whom the clauses were “published” or made public. The Spanish witnesses simply assumed the caciques’ agreement.<sup>115</sup>

Significantly enough, neither Cabral de Melo nor Fray Aguila refer to the treaty in the documents they left on the 1741-1742 events. By contrast, the treaty has a prominent role in the Jesuit accounts, which attribute it to father Strobel’s ascendancy over the Indians and, more generally, to the Jesuits’ incipient but abnegated missionary labor in the Pampas. As father Ladislao Orosz explained, during the meeting the caciques “did not hesitate to manifest that they did not fear the Spaniards but hated them.” If they were willing to negotiate the peace, it was “solely owing to their friendship with the fathers, as the latter were the only ones who cared about the Indians’ well being.”<sup>116</sup>

Leaving aside Orosz’s bias, the treaty did have a heavy Jesuit imprint. About a third of the clauses aimed at ensuring the safety of the Concepción mission, and the continuation of the missionaries’ evangelizing endeavors. For instance, clause nine established that caciques had to allow any Indian who wanted to move into the mission to do so. Once an Indian had joined the mission, clause five stated, he or she could not be taken away by the caciques or their family members. Clause ten ensured that the missionaries “could freely go into the sierras whenever they wanted,” that all the

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<sup>115</sup>The Jesuit accounts suggest that the Indian caciques made speeches during the meeting, which is very likely because eloquence and oratory powers were very important attributes of Indian leaders. These speeches, however, did not enter the written record. For the importance of eloquence in Indian leaders, see Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 121. For fascinating cultural analysis of Indian speeches during diplomatic encounters in other areas of the Americas, see Richter, *Facing East*, 129-149. In the Pampas, Indian voices enter the written record in substantial ways only in the nineteenth century, usually in the form of letters that caciques dictated in Spanish to scribes, and that were addressed to Creole authorities. See for instance Ratto, *La frontera bonaerense*, passim.

<sup>116</sup>“Ladislao Orosz al Padre Juan Bautista Urbani. Córdoba, 30 de diciembre de 1742,” printed in Szabó, *El húngaro*, 76. See also Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 107-108; Lozano, “Cartas Anuas,” 53; Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Católico,” 95-96.

caciques were to give their permission for the fathers “to preach the Holy Gospel to all their vassals,” and that all the Indians were to have “great veneration for the Missionary Fathers,” as persons sent by God and the Spanish King “to teach them the way to Heaven.”

The text of the treaty also provides insight into the agitated intertribal and intercultural climate of the mid-eighteenth century Pampas, insight that is consistent with the interpretations put forward in the preceeding pages. Clause one confirms the long-standing conflict between the Pampa Indians of the Mayu lineage and the Reche-Mapuche of Huilliche territory. This clause stated that the Indians would “forget the past conflicts between the cacique Bravo and the cacique Mayupilquia’s house” (*la casa del cacique Mayupilquia*). The treaty also defined the Pampa Indians of the Concepción mission as the “King’s vassals,” thus making official their loss of autonomy and subordination to the Spaniards. It was thanks to such subordinated status that they were able to enjoy the benefits of a peace settled between the Spaniards and the “Serranos, Aucas, and Pehuenches.” The treaty put all the latter into a loose category of allied or “friendly Indians” (*Indios amigos*).

But the most significant aspect of the 1742 treaty was the scenario it outlined for the future intercultural relations between Indians and Porteños. This scenario was concisely encapsulated in clause number three. In order to avoid “great disorders and the possibility of new wars,” clause three established the river Salado as the official limit (*lindero*) between Spanish territory and Indian territory. This deceptively short statement introduced a radical change in what can be called Porteños’ territorial imagination. From the time they had settled Buenos Aires, Porteños had conceived the campaña as seamlessly melding into the tierra adentro, and the latter as part of the Buenos Aires jurisdiction, which theoretically extended as far as the Magellan Straits. They had also made these claims patent in legal actions, both against vecinos from

Córdoba and Cuyo (as explained in chapter three) and against Indian themselves (as explained in chapter five). With a stroke of a pen, the 1742 treaty was intended to end the campaña boundlessness: now it did not seamlessly meld but terminated where the tierra adentro started, at the *lindero* of the river Salado.

An equally momentous consequence, clause three created two territories, one on each side of the river Salado, which did not exist before. It also gave them political existence, by assigning an authority to each. Rather predictably, the Governor of Buenos Aires was the maximum authority assigned to the Spanish territory. The equivalent post for the Indian territory fell on the cacique Bravo, whom clause three referred to as the *Maestre de Campo de toda la sierra*. This choice indicates that, after the 1740 raid, Porteños had clearly taken good note of Bravo's power to convoke (*convidar*) *tolderías* from the Andes to the Pampas. Bravo's responsibilities as Maestre de Campo involved punishing any friendly Indian who violated the terms of the treaty, and making sure that the friendly Indians remained on their own side of the river Salado. To "go down" to Buenos Aires or the campaña, Indians had to request a special permit (*licencia expresa*) from the Governor. Finally, the cacique Bravo had the right to reclaim any friendly Indian taken prisoner by the Spaniards, unless the prisoner's crime merited a death sentence, in which case the Buenos Aires Governor had precedence.

The treaty outlined a future of orderly intercultural relations, in which the members of each group remained quietly in their respective territories, under the control of their respective authorities—the Governor and the cacique Bravo. In that orderly future, the only anticipated crossover was that of Indians becoming civilized Christians, through the mediation of the Jesuit fathers. As the next two chapters show, the future came soon, and it was not what either the Spanish authorities, the Jesuit fathers or even the cacique Bravo might have preferred it to be.

## 7. THE JESUIT EXPERIMENT

The Jesuit missionary effort in the Pampas started with great expectations. In a 1743 letter to a superior, Jesuit Procurador Ladislao Orosz expressed his hope that Concepción would “be the door to the conversion of the numerous people that inhabit the vast open country in between the Strait of Magellan and the cities of Mendoza and Buenos Aires.” In only a few years and with God’s mediation, Orosz anticipated, the Order would have as many converts in those parts as it had “in the well-known missions of Paraguay.”<sup>1</sup>

Orosz’s hopes for a replica south of Buenos Aires of the renowned “Guaraní thirty towns,” however, never came true. Only ten years later, in 1752, Concepción was chaotically dismantled, and so were two short-lived offshoot missions that had been established in the Tandil sierras. During the missions’ existence, moreover, the same Jesuits who served in them doubted about their efficacy. In 1747, for instance, father José Cardiel gloomily mused from Tandil about the real prospects of converting “the most barbarous Indians to be found in America.”<sup>2</sup> The few existing studies on the missions have echoed the Jesuits’ mood, emphasizing the “intractability” of horse-riding Indians as the main reason for the missions’ “failure.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>AGI: ABA 302, "Ladislao Oros al Reverendo Pe. Confesor, Buenos Aires, Noviembre 28 de 1743."

<sup>2</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 289, "Dificultades que suele haber en la conversión de los Infieles y medios para vencerlas, por el Padre José Cardiel. Sierras del Volcán, 20 de agosto de 1747."

<sup>3</sup>Aguirre, "Una alternativa;" Martínez Martín, "Las reducciones;" Tejerina, "El gobierno español." For a different and more recent ethnohistorical perspective that places emphasis in intra-indigenous dynamics, see Hernández Asensio, "Caciques, jesuitas y chamanes."

And yet, few scholars would agree today with the traditional Boltonian perspective that defined missions as isolated frontier institutions to be judged according to the extent to which they spread European mores and Christianity among Native peoples.<sup>4</sup> In the last decades, scholars combining social, cultural, and ethnohistorical approaches have radically challenged this perspective, to produce instead narratives that focus on the Indians' vantage point, and pay attention to the larger political and economic contexts in which missions existed.<sup>5</sup> From this new perspective, missions were key institutions not because they spread European mores and Christianity, but because they provided the context for sustained intercultural relations. In Cynthia Radding's words, missions were not merely "an instrument of Iberian expansion" but sites of "cultural and political confrontation."<sup>6</sup>

The missions of the Pampas are a case in point. For a number of reasons, including the Jesuits' lack of coercive means and their conversion methods, Indians were able to redefine the missionary experience in significant ways. Particularly in the arenas of labor and material exchange, Indian cultural parameters and social practices shaped common action at the missions to an extent that the fathers truly did not expect. Much likely to the disappointment of father Orosz, who expected the missions to become beacons of Christianity in the Pampas, Indians transformed them into beacons of intertribal and intercultural trade.

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<sup>4</sup>Herbert Eugene Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish American Colonies," *American Historical Review* 23, no. 1 (1917).

<sup>5</sup>Langer and Jackson, eds., *The New Latin American Mission History*. For a recent review on works responding to the call for a "new mission history," see Susan M. Deeds, "Pushing the Borders of Latin American Mission History," *Latin American Research Review* 39, no. 2 (2004).

<sup>6</sup>Radding, *Wandering Peoples*, xv.

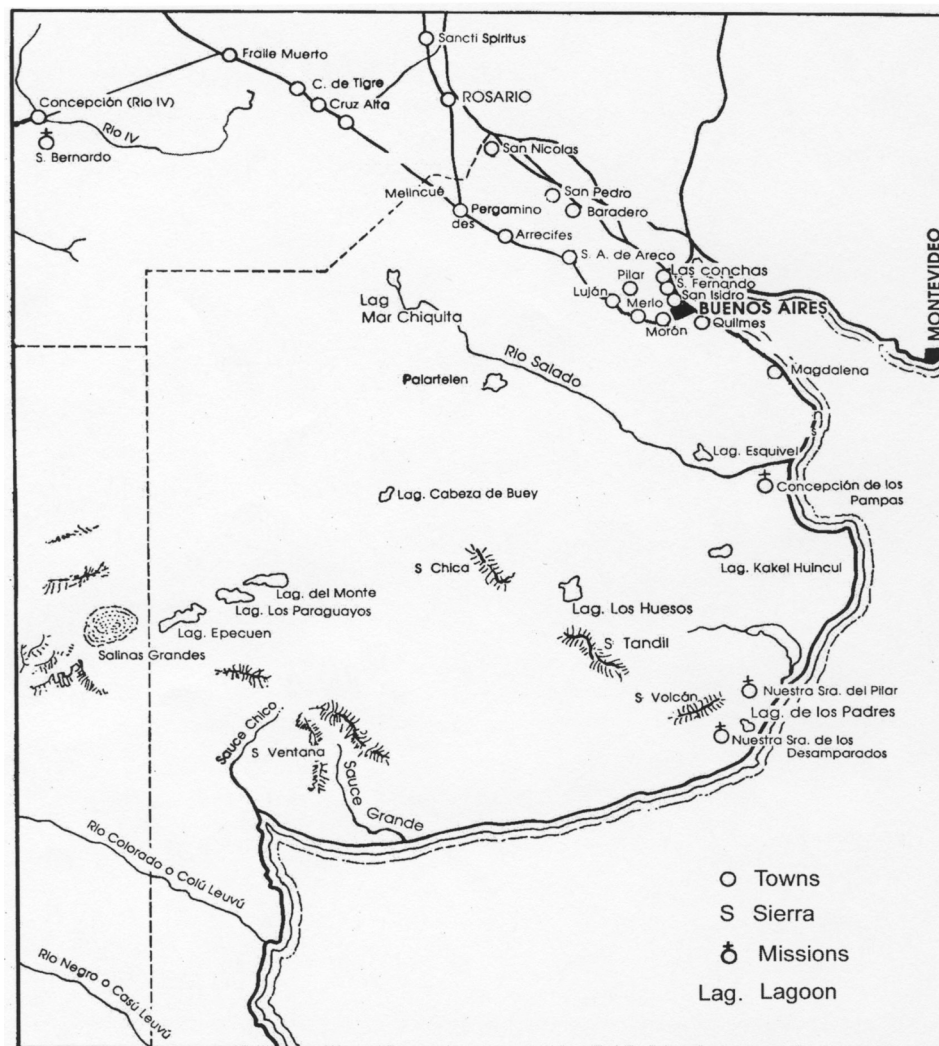
The missions also facilitated and intensified intercultural relations between Indians and Porteños. To the fathers' frustration and the Cabildo's growing concern, a continuous stream of *pulperos* or petty traders entered the Pampas, and a continuous stream of Indians entered the campaña or the city itself. From this perspective, the missions' ultimate demise did not result so much from their "failure" as converting institutions, but from their success as engines for intertribal and intercultural relations that neither the Jesuits nor the Porteño government was able to control.

### *I. THE MISSIONS AT A GLANCE*

As Procurador Orosz explained, the Jesuits thought of Concepción—founded in 1740 south of the river Salado, on the Atlantic coast—as a first outpost from where to spearhead their evangelizing effort farther into the tierra adentro. Thus, after a few failed attempts, in 1746, fathers José Cardiel and Thomas Falkner advanced to the Tandil Sierras, where they founded a second mission, *Nuestra Señora del Pilar del Volcán* (Pilar hereafter). Finally, four years later, in 1750, the Jesuits founded the third and last mission of the Pampas, *Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados* (Desamparados hereafter), also in the Tandil Sierras (see Map 9).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>One of the main beach resorts of present-day Argentina, Mar del Plata, is located where Pilar and Desamparados used to be. The most important published Jesuit accounts on the Pampas missions are Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*; "José Cardiel a Pedro de Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747," printed in *José Cardiel, S.J., y su Carta-Relación (1747)*, ed. Guillermo Furlong (Buenos Aires: Librería del Plata, 1953); Lozano, "Cartas Anuas;" Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Catholico." Guillermo Furlong Cardiff has compiled—and heavily edited—variegated reports in Furlong Cardiff, *Entre los Pampas de Buenos Aires*; Guillermo Furlong Cardiff, *Entre los Tehuelches de la Patagonia. Según noticias de los misioneros historiadores Jesuitas* (Buenos Aires: Talleres Gráficos San Pablo, 1943).



Map 9. The missions of the Pampas<sup>8</sup>

The Jesuit expansion into the Pampas between 1740 and 1752 seems an oddity within the larger Spanish American context. Such expansion not only took place relatively late, but also under a Bourbon administration that was increasingly hostile to the Society of Jesus. After all, in 1750, the Spanish Crown signed the Treaty of Madrid,

<sup>8</sup>The sierras Chica, Tandil, and Volcán, as marked in the map, are all part of the Tandil Sierras –*sistema Tandilia*, or Tandil low-mountain range. Map adapted from Diana Mazzanti and others, "El poblamiento inicial de la región," in *Mar del Plata. Una historia urbana*, ed. Adriana Alvarez et al. (Buenos Aires: Fundación Banco de Boston, 1991).



which surrendered to Portugal most of the territory where the “Guaraní thirty towns” stood. And in 1767, finally, the Jesuits were expelled from all Spanish domains.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1740s, however, the Bourbon administration still had use for the Society of Jesus in that southernmost corner of its American Empire. The Jesuits’ willingness to penetrate into the unexplored and vast stretch of land south of Buenos Aires dovetailed with the Spanish Crown’s strategic interests in the area. In the eighteenth-century context of inter-imperial naval wars and commercial rivalry, the Crown worried that the empty Southern Atlantic coast was an open invitation to any of its European competitors (England particularly) to settle in, and from there perhaps even threaten Spanish dominion over all of South America. As a Royal Cédula succinctly put it in 1744, the benefits of establishing Jesuit missions on the coast south of Buenos Aires were not only spiritual but also worldly (*temporales*). Thanks to these missions, it would be possible “to obtain prompt news if any foreign nation tries to establish a settlement on the said coast,” which had remained “unoccupied” and had “good ports and inlets.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*, 89-91, 118-125; Magnus Morner, "Introduction," in *The Expulsion of the Jesuits from Latin America*, ed. Magnus Morner (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965).

<sup>10</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 183, "Cédula original dirigida al Provincial de las Misiones de los Indios Pampas y Serranos por la que SM le participa lo que ha determinado en cuanto al reconocimiento de la costa de Buenos Aires. San Ildefonso, 23 de julio de 1744." For the place of the Southern Atlantic in Spanish imperial policy, see Vives Azancot, "La fachada sud-atlántica." In 1745, the Crown sent the Spanish frigate *San Antonio* to explore the Atlantic coast, from the River Plate down to the Magellan Straits. Three Jesuit fathers were on board—José Quiroga, Matías Strobel, and José Cardiel—with orders to map the coast as well as “to find out about the Savages” and assess the possibility of founding a mission. For a study of the trip, see Mandrini, "El viaje de la fragata." The Crown finally established settlements on the southern Atlantic coasts (on the Patagonia region) in the 1770s. See Carlos María Gorla, *Los establecimientos españoles en la Patagonia: Estudio institucional* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1984); Pedro Navarro Floria, "Ciencia y política en la región Norpatagónica: del abordaje ilustrado a la ocupación militar (1779-1789)," in *Araucanía y Pampas. Un mundo fronterizo en América del Sur*, ed. Jorge Pinto Rodríguez (Temuco: Universidad de la Frontera, 1996).

Thus, in the early 1740s King Philip V readily approved the establishment of missions in the Pampas. He also committed to support the missionaries with an annual monetary subsidy and gave, for Concepción, an in-kind donation consisting of a church bell, a silver chalice, and religious ornaments. Finally, the King also urged the Porteño government to fully assist the fathers in their endeavors. As part of this assistance, a small detachment of Dragoons (professional soldiers paid by the Crown) was stationed at Concepción from the beginning.<sup>11</sup>

The Indian population involved in each of the three missions provides interesting insights into the geographical re-accommodation of Native peoples that had taken place during the previous half-century, as a result of the Pampas' firmer integration into the wider trans-Andean world. At Concepción, as explained in the previous chapter, there were mostly "local" Pampa Indians who belonged, in the wording of the 1742 peace treaty, to *la casa del cacique Mayupilquia*—what I have loosely referred to as the Mayu lineage. At least until around 1717, these Indians had had their homeland in the southern sierras.<sup>12</sup> But the seasonal pressure of Reche-Mapuche ("Auca") parties coming

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<sup>11</sup>AGI: ACh. 221, "Joseph de Andonaegui al Marques de la Ensenada, Buenos Aires, 28 de octubre de 1752;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 183, "Cédula de SM a favor de los Padres Misioneros de los Indios Pampas y Serranos. Buen Retiro, 5 de noviembre de 1741;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 183, "Cédula para que informe sobre los Indios Pampas que están al cargo de los Padres de la Compañía en el nuevo Pueblo del Salado y los arbitrios para su subsistencia. Buen Retiro, 11 de diciembre de 1741;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 183, "Cédula original dirigida a Dn. Domingo Ortiz de Rosas por la que SM le manda que atienda a los Padres Misioneros de la Compañía que se ocupan en la conversión de los Indios Pampas y Serranos. San Lorenzo, 24 de agosto de 1743;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 183, "Copia de cédula de el Rey nuestro Señor, dando gracias a los Padres de la Compañía de Jesús, a cuyo cargo corren las Misiones del Paraguay y Buenos Aires, por su distinguido celo en la asistencia de las Iglesias que tiene en aquellos pueblos para el culto divino. Buen Retiro, 28 de diciembre de 1743;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 188, "Manuel Querini al Gobernador Salcedo, 15 de octubre de 1740."

<sup>12</sup>As Joseph de Cabrera y Velasco wrote in 1707, Mayupilquiyan was one of the main caciques "of the heathen Pampa Indians who... inhabit the Tandil Sierras, immediately to the south, although they do not stay put in any site as they are, by nature, fickle [*hijos de la novedad*])." APC: Criminales Capital 2, "Causa criminal contra los

into the area had gradually pushed these Pampa Indians northwards, towards Buenos Aires. They initially tried to withstand the Reche-Mapuche pressure by seeking the support of the Porteño government, in a first and hesitant diplomatic overture during 1717. This strategy was frustrated, however, by a severe smallpox epidemic that struck the area, and by Porteños' subsequent re-orientation of their economic interests away from the Pampas and towards the Banda Oriental. Finally, in 1739-1740, caught in the midst of a wave of intercultural violence that was shaking their homeland, the beleaguered Pampa sought a measure of physical safety by settling at Concepción. In doing so, the Pampa Indians abandoned their homeland in the sierras for a new location that was closer to Buenos Aires, immediately south of the river Salado.

The southern sierras were thus left to the Native peoples who had chased the Pampa Indians of the Mayu lineage away. Other Pampa Indians, as explained in the previous chapter, chose to ally with the newcomers instead of resisting them.<sup>13</sup> In 1746, the Jesuits founded the Pilar mission in the Tandil Sierras for these Indians, whom they referred to as the Serrano. From the Jesuit accounts, it is clear that the Serrano were Native peoples who moved seasonally along the vast strip of land between the rivers Colorado and Negro (see Map 9, p. 266) and from the sierras all the way into the Andean zone to the west—more precisely, into Huilliche territory. These Indians were also allies or subordinates to the cacique Bravo. They were, in other words, the kind of Indians that

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Indios de nación Pampa por las muertes que dieron y ejecutaron en el Capitán Antonio de Garay y en toda la gente de su tropa. Córdoba, 1707-1708."

<sup>13</sup>As anthropologist Guillaume Boccara points out, fission, fusion, and the formation of new, mixed communities—and new ethnic identities—were common to many frontier zones. Boccara, "Mundos nuevos." Insightful analyses of this kind of processes are in Hickerson, "Ethnogenesis in the South Plains;" White, *The Middle Ground*, chapter 1.

had taken English sailor Isaac Morris captive in the early 1740s.<sup>14</sup> A significant difference with the case of the Pampa Indians, the Serrano did not obtain the Pilar mission by asking for it and relocating away from their homeland. Instead, the mission resulted from the initiative of the Jesuits, who advanced inland from Concepción, made several false starts, and finally felt safe enough to stay permanently in the Tandil sierras.

Owing to its location, Pilar also attracted a southernmost Indian group that until then had had little contact with Spaniards. The Jesuits indistinctly referred to them as Toelches, Toelchús, Tehuelchus, Tehuelhets, or Patagones. Their homeland was to the south of the river Negro, from the Atlantic coast to the Andes, and they also were allies of the cacique Bravo. They made seasonal trips to the Ventana and Tandil Sierras to hunt feral horses, which had not expanded south of the geographical barrier of the river Negro.<sup>15</sup> The abortive Desamparados mission was an offshoot of Pilar that the Jesuits founded exclusively for the Tehuelche, to separate them from the Serrano. Desamparados had barely gained ground in 1750 when was dismantled in 1751.

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<sup>14</sup> Father José Cardiel, explained that the Serranos' homeland "was about two hundred leagues to the west of the sierras, at the source of the River of the Sauces [the river Negro], close to the cordillera of Chile." Cardiel added that such a place was "where their main cacique, whom the Spaniards call Bravo, lives." "José Cardiel a Pedro de Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747," in Furlong, ed., *José Cardiel*, 207. Father Sánchez Labrador and the Cabildo Eclesiástico of Buenos Aires, identified one of the main caciques at Pilar, Marique, as "one of the five caciques immediately subordinated to Bravo." Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Catholico," 101. "Acuerdo del V. Dean y C.E. de Buenos Aires. Septiembre de 1747," quoted in Pablo Cabrera, *La conquista espiritual del desierto* (Córdoba: Imprenta Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 1934), 36.

<sup>15</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*; 102; "José Cardiel a Pedro de Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747," in Furlong, ed., *José Cardiel*, 206-207; Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Catholico," 118. Anthropologists refer to these peoples as the Tehuelche, who occupied a border zone between the Pampas and the Patagonia region. For recent ethnohistorical advances on the Tehuelche, see Nacuzzi, *Identidades impuestas*; Nacuzzi, "De la relación arqueología/ethnohistoria;" Lidia Nacuzzi, "Social Strategies in a Situation of Interethnic Contact: The Fort del Carmen, Río Negro, Case Study," in *Archeological and Anthropological Perspectives on the Native Peoples of Pampa, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata (Westport and London: Bergin & Garvey, 2002).

Throughout the twelve years of Jesuit efforts in the Pampas, Concepción was the most substantial of the three missions. Yearly reports indicate that the Indian population hovered around two hundred people, which is not a negligible number for a mission set up in a sparsely populated area such as the Pampas. The population fluctuations resulted from epidemics as well as from Indians' periodic comings and goings.<sup>16</sup> For example, in 1742 a smallpox epidemic killed about a fourth of the population. Fathers Querini and Strobel reported that many families had left the mission, promising to return when the epidemic was over. Later, in 1744, population suddenly increased as a result of the many Indians who took refuge in Concepción, as a safeguard against a military expedition that Porteños were about to launch.<sup>17</sup>

There is practically no demographic information for short-lived Desamparados, and minimal information for Pilar. In the latter, population fluctuations were much greater than in Concepción. For instance, father Strobel reported nine *toldos* (tents, each holding a family) in 1748, and thirty-six toldos in 1749. This abrupt change and the

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<sup>16</sup>The impact of epidemic disease on mission Indians has caused some controversy within the so-called new mission history. While some authors see missions as "genocidal instruments" that provoked demographic collapse, others argue instead that Indians exercised more choice, and were able to take advantage of the material benefits of missions, such as food and safety, in their own terms. See Deeds, "Pushing the Borders."

<sup>17</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Copia de la certificación de los Padres Manuel Querini y Matías Estrobel de la Comp. de Jesús sobre fundación de Reducción en los Pampas y que se les asignen los signados dispuestos por SM, Reducción de la Concepción, 20 de noviembre de 1742;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Numeración anual del Pueblo de la Concepción de los Indios Pampas, año de 1743;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Numeración Anual del Pueblo de la Concepción de Ntra Sra de los Indios Pampas, año de 1745;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Numeración Anual del Pueblo de la Concepción de Ntra Sra de los Indios Pampas, año de 1746;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Certificación del Padre Gerónimo Rejón del número de Indios bautizados, comuniones y muertos en su Reducción de los Pampas según orden de SM para la asignación de los doscientos p. para cada doctrinero. Concepción, 4 de mayo de 1750;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Certificación del Padre Gerónimo Rejón del número de Indios bautizados, comuniones y muertos en su Reducción de los Pampas según orden de SM para la asignación de los doscientos p. para cada doctrinero. Concepción, 4 de mayo de 1752;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 289, "Numeración anual del Pueblo de la Concepción de los Indios Pampas, año de 1744."

counting of toldos instead of individuals indicates that Strobel was counting tolderías that temporarily set up camp near the mission, rather than Indians who lived permanently there.<sup>18</sup>

Reports also indicate that Concepción developed fairly quickly into a typical, albeit very modest, Jesuit town. By the end of 1742 there were twenty-six adobe houses plus a house for the fathers and a chapel, also made of adobe and with a thatched roof. All the buildings were arranged around a central plaza. There were also fields of wheat, corn, pumpkin, and beans; as well as fruit orchards, including peaches, apples, and quinces. As fathers Manuel Querini and Matías Strobel saw it, the waters of the Holy Gospels had transformed a barren land that used to be the abode of “mares, tigers and other wild animals,” into a “fertile field that yielded spiritual and worldly fruits.”<sup>19</sup> A subsequent report shows that the worldly fruits included domesticated animals as well, as the mission had oxen, chickens, horses, and relatively large herds of cattle. Cattle ranching, in fact, became the most important economic activity. Concepción records show that the yearly number of branded calves increased from five hundred in 1745 to about two thousand in 1751. Finally, Concepción also included a mill (*noria*) and a brickyard.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathias Estrobel a Gerónimo Rixon, padre de la Concepción. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 23 de junio de 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathias Estrobel a Geronimo Rixon, Cura de la Concepcion. Ntra Sra del Pilar, Mayo 26 de 1749."

<sup>19</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Copia de la certificación de los Padres Manuel Querini y Matías Estrobel de la Comp. de Jesús sobre fundación de Reducción en los Pampas y que se les asignen los signados dispuestos por SM, Reducción de la Concepción, 20 de noviembre de 1742."

<sup>20</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Estado de la Estancia del Pueblo de la Concepción de los Indios Pampas presentado por el Padre Provincial Joseph Barreda, 16 de septiembre de 1752;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Gerónimo Rixon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 20 de [blank] 1748."

Information about the layout of Pilar is minimal, and suggests that the Jesuits had a rather precarious foothold in the sierras. By 1749, three years after its foundation, Pilar had only an adobe house for the fathers, and a few other “huts” (*ranchos*) for the Guaraní peons that accompanied them. But, consonant with its location in the cattle-rich area of the Tandil Sierras, Pilar had substantial herds of livestock, which were the mission’s “main industry.”<sup>21</sup> Desamparados, meanwhile, seemed to have been more precarious than Pilar.

At least from the economic point of view, the Jesuits conceived of their missions not as self-contained islands but as production units linked to the Buenos Aires market and integrated into the larger Jesuit enterprise. Despite the long distances, difficult terrain, and unfavorable weather—droughts are a constant problem in the fathers’ correspondence—ox-carts were continuously shuttling from one mission to another, and from the Pampas to Buenos Aires. The carts brought into the Pampas yerba, cotton cloth, and linseed oil from the Guaraní missions; as well as an assortment of goods bought in Buenos Aires, including sugar, biscuits, raisins, dried figs, ink, paper, clothing and fabric, tools, beads, and jingle bells (*cascabeles*). The carts returned to Buenos Aires loaded with cattle and horse by-products (hides, reins, cinches, saddlebags, boots, tallow, and lard), corn, chickens, ponchos, dusters made of ñandú feathers, pelts, bezoares,<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Matías Estróbel al Padre Procurador Andrés Carranza, Ntra Sra del Pilar, 17 de septiembre de 1749;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathias Estrobel a Gerónimo Rejón, padre de la Concepción. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 14 de enero de 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathias Estrobel a Gerónimo Rixon, padre de la Concepción. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 23 de junio de 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Matías Estrobel a Gerónimo Rejon. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 20 de noviembre de 1748."

<sup>22</sup>Bezoares (*piedras bezoares*, *bezares*, or *vesares*) were calculi or stones that formed in the stomach of guanacos, and which were believed to have medicinal properties. Thomas Falkner explained that bezoares promoted “diaphoresis,” and that they were very effective in relieving “heartburns, fainting &c., the dose consisting of a dram or two scruples, taken in any thing; though it might be given in larger quantity with great safety.” Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 89.

and even stone chunks from the sierras to make baptismal fonts.<sup>23</sup> Part of the products from the Pampas missions stayed within Jesuit circuits, as they were shipped, for instance, to the Guaraní missions. Other part went into the Buenos Aires market through the offices of *pulperos* or petty traders.<sup>24</sup> The liaison in Buenos Aires, father Manuel García, readily gave market-attuned advice to the missionaries. In 1747, for instance, García recommended to father Gerónimo Rejón, in charge of Concepción, to “sow plenty of chickpeas,” as Porteños were paying for them twice and even three times the price of beans. García also suggested to Rejón to manufacture shoe soles, as they “sold very well” and made use of “any type of hides, even if they are small or come from cows.”<sup>25</sup> He offered to send, in the next cart, the “recipe” to make the soles, the instructions to build a mill, and a shipment of lime. Finally, García discouraged Rejón from his plan of producing coal. The high overland transportation costs, García explained, would make the venture unprofitable.<sup>26</sup>

The missions’ connection to Buenos Aires was nevertheless a double-edged sword. While the Jesuits knew that such a connection was essential for the material survival of the missions, they wished their “neophytes” to be spared of any contact whatsoever with Porteños. As missionaries in other times and places of Spanish

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<sup>23</sup>AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Gerónimo Rejon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 20 de [blank] 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Gerónimo Rejon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 7 de septiembre de 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Gerónimo Rejon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 2 de octubre de 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Geronimo Rejon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 2 de noviembre de 1748."

<sup>24</sup>See for instance AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Cuenta simple de varios efectos pertenecientes al Pueblo de los Pampas puestos a vender a un Pulpero llamado Juan Molas, 6 de febrero de 1747."

<sup>25</sup>The hides exported to the Atlantic had to have a minimum size (*cueros de ley*), and thus generally came from bulls.

<sup>26</sup>AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Gerónimo Rejon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 31 de diciembre de 1747."



America, the Jesuits decried the bad example that sinful and greedy Spaniards set for the Indians whom they were hoping to convert.<sup>27</sup> In the case of the Pampas, the Jesuits' wish proved to be impossible to obtain from the very beginning. As father Cardiel explained in 1747, the greatest obstacle to the conversion of the "horse-riding nations" of the Pampas was "the communication" that all of them already had with the Spaniards.<sup>28</sup>

## II. THE MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE REDEFINED

Communication with Porteños, in fact, had emerged as a point of friction between Indians and Jesuits during the negotiations that led to the foundation of Concepción in 1740. Father Lozano recounted that the Pampa caciques who asked for the mission wanted "to be settled close to the city," by the outer ring of estancias. The fathers recoiled because, as Lozano put it, "it was convenient that they [the Indians] could not communicate too much with the Spaniards, because we have seen that such communication impedes, most of the time, their correct understanding of Christian morals." The Governor thus met with the caciques and informed them that he "could not donate any of the lands that were close to the estancias for the mission, because they already had owners." According to Lozano, the caciques did not dare reply to the Governor's benevolent but assertive tone, and hence they accepted the chosen site immediately south of the river Salado.<sup>29</sup> Less benevolent, according to father Cardiel,

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<sup>27</sup>See for instance Ganson, *The Guaraní under Spanish Rule*; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier*, chapter 4.

<sup>28</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 289, "Dificultades que suele haber en la conversión de los Infieles y medios para vencerlas, por el Padre José Cardiel. Sierras del Volcán, 20 de agosto de 1747."

<sup>29</sup>Lozano, "Cartas Anuas," 37.

was Captain Juan de San Martín's tone, who threatened all the Indians with "slitting their throats" if they did not set their mission town farther away.<sup>30</sup>

The mission's location was only the first of many points of friction that would arise in Concepción between Jesuits and Indians. And, the fathers realized with disheartenment, their "neophytes" turned out to be not so malleable in subsequent occasions. In the context of 1739-40, the Jesuits had the upper hand. The violence that Captain Juan de San Martín had unleashed on the Pampas was still fresh. Indians knew that a large raid from the Andean zone was approaching, and hence they were anxious to find refuge in a fortified mission town. But once the mission had been established, and Indians and Porteños had made formal peace in 1742, the balance of power between Indians and Jesuits changed drastically. The threat of immediate violence was over, and in any case the mission now provided a shield against it. Although the fathers counted with the armed support of the Dragoons, the latter were at most a dozen individuals—not a particularly threatening force in opposition to about two hundred Indians. The mission, moreover, was at least a few days away from reinforcements from Buenos Aires.

The Jesuits, furthermore, depended on their "neophytes" at a very fundamental level, and this applied not only to Concepción but to the other two missions created later as well. The Jesuits needed the Indians' physical presence—their bodies—to justify the continued existence of their missionary efforts before the Crown.<sup>31</sup> In addition, the

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<sup>30</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 289, "Dificultades que suele haber en la conversión de los Infieles y medios para vencerlas, por el Padre José Cardiel. Sierras del Volcán, 20 de agosto de 1747."

<sup>31</sup>The fathers were required, for instance, to send annual reports and population counts in order to receive the Crown's yearly subsidy. The Crown made sure to check these reports against information sent by officials in Buenos Aires, see AGI: ACh. 378, "Cabildo Eclesiástico de Buenos Aires al [Consejo de Indias], Buenos Aires, 26 de abril de 1751;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Domingo Ortiz de Rosas al Rey, Buenos Aires, 29 de octubre de 1744;" ME: Doc. AGI Carpeta I, "El Gobernador Ortiz de Rosas al Rey. Buenos Aires, 25 de diciembre de 1743;" ME: Doc. AGI Carpeta I, "Gobernador Domingo Ortiz de Rosas al Rey. Buenos Aires, 30 de agosto de 1745."

Jesuits needed the Indians' consent—their hearts and their minds—to eventually attain the final prize of their conversion to Christianity. For the Indians' heart and minds, the fathers were willing to wait, and make concessions. This is not to fall back to a sanitized view of the Jesuits as benevolent and understanding early champions of multiculturalism.<sup>32</sup> It is clear from the record that the fathers never accepted the Indians' choices and customs, and that they always understood them in terms of sins in need of eventual uprooting. But the keyword here is "eventual." In his recommendations for how to convert the "horse-riding barbarians" of the Paraguay province, father Cardiel explained that the missionary, during the initial stages of his assignment, had to shut his eyes to the Indians' "drinking bouts, their sorcery & etc., without bothering them or insisting that they abandon these vices." If the missionary went "too fast because of his zeal," Cardiel warned, he would "lose everything."<sup>33</sup> As long as the fathers were concerned not to "lose everything," the Indians had leverage to redefine the mission experience. In David Sweet words, they could be "more actors than acted on."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>The questions of whether the missions were refuges from conquest or instruments for it, and whether the missionaries were benevolent protectors of the Indians or perpetrators of genocide (either biological or cultural), are still very much alive in the new mission history. See Deeds, "Pushing the Borders," 217-218.

<sup>33</sup>"José Cardiel a Pedro de Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747," in Furlong, ed., *José Cardiel*, 197. On a more pragmatic note, the Jesuits were few, their missions were under-funded, and they counted with little military support. As a result, even if they would have favored more forceful conversion methods, they had little means to implement them. This became clear in the later years of the missions. By 1752, the Jesuit Provincial father Joseph Barreda begged Governor Andonaegui to send a sizeable number of troops to assist the fathers, and to set a permanent *presidio* or fort next to the mission. See the letter of Joseph Barreda to Governor Andonaegui (September 11, 1752), in AGI: ACh. 221, "Informes sobre la reducción de los Indios Pampas, 1752."

<sup>34</sup>David Sweet, "The Ibero-American Frontier Mission in Native American History," in *The New Latin American Mission History*, ed. Erick Langer and Robert H. Jackson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995). 43.

Indians redefined the missionary experience of the Pampas in many areas, including that most dear to the Jesuits, spirituality.<sup>35</sup> But for our purposes, two interrelated arenas are particularly relevant, labor and material exchange. The Jesuit accounts—our main source—testify to the centrality of labor and material exchange in the everyday interactions between fathers and Indians, as complaints about the latter's idleness, greediness, and selfishness fill page after page. The same accounts, however, give us a glimpse at what lay underneath these complaints. Each side had a different understanding of what labor and material exchange entailed. To the Jesuits' simmering frustration, their own "civilized" ideas many times had to take the back seat, and let the Indians' "barbarous" ways shape common action at the missions.

A centerpiece of the Jesuit plan in the Pampas was that Indian labor would support the missions. Docile and won-over neophytes would build the mission church, as well as dwelling houses for the fathers and for themselves. They would also cultivate the land, the fruits of which the fathers would carefully commercialize, thereby obtaining

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<sup>35</sup> Only a small number of Indians at Concepción seemed to have genuinely embraced the new spiritual path of Catholicism. Dragoons stationed there agreed that there were only a few families—"Pablito Maciel," the "Manchados," and the "Aucaes"—who lived like "true Christians:" they attended mass on their own will, and had religious images and shrines in their adobe houses. See statements by Blas de Espinosa, Agustín Melo, and Antonio Cabral in AGI: ACh. 221, "Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752]." The Jesuit accounts (see note 7 above) indicate, meanwhile, that the most general Indian response to the introduction of Catholicism was active resistance. Dragoons had to force Indians into the religious services, and once there many individuals remained with their backs to the main altar, or openly laughing at what the fathers were saying. Despite the Jesuits' disapproval, Indians kept practicing their funerary rituals and their seasonal festivities. They also continued to respect and seek the advice of their spiritual leaders or *chamanes*. At most, some Indians selectively incorporated a few Christian elements in their spiritual practices. For instance, they adopted the cross as a protection against bad spirits. For an insightful discussion of some of these topics, see Hernández Asensio, "Caciques, jesuitas y chamanes."

profits to re-invest in the missions.<sup>36</sup> This basic plan soon began to crumble at Concepción. The Jesuits reported that after the initial fear for their safety had dissipated, Indians refused to do any of the needed work. Instead of dutifully working in the mission buildings or in the fields, Indians spent weeks at a time hunting in the tierra adentro. Threats to summon the Governor, initially effective, became futile as time passed. And, if the fathers tried to coerce any Indian into laboring by ordering the Dragoons to put him in the stocks, all the rest revolted (*se alborotaban*) until the accused was freed.<sup>37</sup> At Pilar, meanwhile, the fathers did not even enjoy an initial period of dutiful labor from their neophytes. The Serrano Indians' "restless and wandering nature," Sánchez Labrador explained, prevented them even from helping the fathers in laying out the most basic element in any mission, a church.<sup>38</sup>

The Jesuits blamed the Indians' reluctance to work on their sinful nature. As Cardiel explained, "horse-riding barbarians" like those of the Pampas missions suffered not only from the vices of sorcery, drunkenness, and polygamy—which were common to all Indians—but from the vice of idleness as well. They hence had "a great horror to working, even in the needed labor for their fields and houses."<sup>39</sup> Sánchez Labrador added that Indians refused "to take up on the most necessary tasks needed to live under a minimum of rationality" because "laboring, they say, is the exercise of slaves." They

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<sup>36</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 289, "Dificultades que suele haber en la conversión de los Infieles y medios para vencerlas, por el Padre José Cardiel. Sierras del Volcán, 20 de agosto de 1747." This was of course true of missions everywhere in Latin America.

<sup>37</sup>Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Catholico," 87. See also the statements by Dragoons Leandro de Sosa, Joaquín Marín, Joaquín Melo, Juan Galeano, and Blas de Espinosa in AGI: ACh. 221, "Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752]."

<sup>38</sup>Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Catholico," 103-105.

<sup>39</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 289, "Dificultades que suele haber en la conversión de los Infieles y medios para vencerlas, por el Padre José Cardiel. Sierras del Volcán, 20 de agosto de 1747."

thus spent their days “laying down under the sun or in the shade, depending on their desire for warmth or coolness.” And if they decided to take up any task at all, Sánchez Labrador concluded, it was “mere fun matching their haughty spirit,” such as the hunting of feral horses or other wild animals.<sup>40</sup>

The Jesuits accounts themselves show, however, that this portrait of the “horse-riding barbarians” of the Pampas was far from complete. A partial list of their activities, culled from different Jesuit reports, shows that for idle people, these Indians were remarkably industrious. They not only had “fun” hunting wild animals but also domesticated feral horses, as each Indian had a good herd of them. Indians also used horse skins to make labor-intensive garments; the hides had to be scrapped, cleaned, dried, softened with grease, and made pliable by wringing, before being cut into the appropriate shapes. After that, they were painted and richly embroidered with glass beads, jingle bells and metal bits. Horse skins were also used for tents, each one taking up at least twenty-six hides laboriously sewn together with thread made of horse nerves and veins, and decorated with paintings in the inside. Horse hides were not the only primary material the Indians worked with. For the decoration of garments, tents, and their own bodies, Indians collected minerals of various colors (white, red, black, yellow, blue, and green) in different areas of the Pampas. They also made mantles of guanaco, otter, and fox fur. They hunted feral cows, and produced tallow for candles and cooking. They gathered edible roots, wild artichokes, wild berries, and carob. With carob beans, they made flour and “strong drinks” (*brebajes fuertes*). To protect their bodies when going into battle, Indians used deer hides to make layered armor (*coletos de cuero*) that was “almost impenetrable.” They also made lances out of thick canes, and bolas with carefully picked round stones and hide thongs. The mastery of the bolas that astonished

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<sup>40</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 33.

so many a Spaniard, meanwhile, required great diligence and much training, which started as early as children could wield light bolas made especially for them. Finally—and this applied mostly to the Serrano Indians—far from spending their days “laying down,” Indians moved frequently their campsites and hence they were continuously setting up and taking down their tents, “with indescribable effort.”<sup>41</sup>

As this long list of activities suggests, the problem was not that the Indians were idle. The problem was that the Jesuits, in trying to understand Indians through their own cultural categories, emphasized the aspects that made Indians seem merely an idle group of settled farmers, instead of mobile peoples following an entirely different social logic.

For the Jesuits, “work” meant primarily agricultural labor and the building of solid houses, the kind of labor that afforded “rational” living in stable farming communities. But the Indians were hunter-gatherers for whom mobility was key, and thus did not have much use for non-portable, “rational” houses, or for fields that demanded permanent care. Even the Indians who acquiesced to settle at Concepción did not entirely abandon their mobile life. They continued to spend weeks at a time hunting in the tierra adentro and, when necessary—during epidemics, for instance—they left the mission altogether for longer periods. By holding onto their hunting-gathering life, moreover, Indians were able to keep their material dependence on the fathers and on the missions to a bare minimum. They could always pick up their tents and leave, assured that they were abandoning nothing of much value behind. Sánchez Labrador reported that at least twenty families did so a few years after Concepción was founded, either

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<sup>41</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 31, 129; “José Cardiel a Pedro de Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747,” in Furlong, ed., *José Cardiel*, 207; Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 34-39, 44-45, 47-49, 74.

“tired of being held at the same site” or “exasperated at the teachings of the [Christian] doctrine...which is contrary to their brutish life.”<sup>42</sup>

The Jesuits were particularly irked at the “idleness” of Indian men, from whom they demanded the “rational” and “necessary” work in fields and houses. But on this point, cultural differences again obfuscated interaction. As many other Native Americans, the Indians of the Pampas structured their societies around a gender division of labor by which men took care of hunting and war, and women took care of all the campsite jobs, which were more compatible with simultaneous child-rearing.<sup>43</sup> Falkner indicated that much when he pointed out that the Indian women “do every thing, except hunting and fighting.” They nursed and brought up the children, fetched wood and water, cooked, made and mended tents and clothing, and packed everything whenever Indians moved their campsite. So rigid was this division of labor that, Falkner said, “no excuse of sickness, or being big with child, will relieve them of the appointed labor.” Their husbands “could not help them on any occasion, or in the greatest distress, without incurring the highest ignominy.”<sup>44</sup>

The Jesuits, hence, were not only asking “rational” and “necessary” labor from the wrong people, but also from the wrong gender. Building houses and harvesting crops

<sup>42</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 90.

<sup>43</sup>William Cronon, writing about Native Americans from the New England region, explains that women performed tasks that “were generally repetitive, which could be easily interrupted, which did not require travel too far from home, and which did not suffer if one performed them while giving most of one’s attention to the children.” Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 44.

<sup>44</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 125. The Jesuits were incapable of seeing hunting as anything but a leisurely activity, and war as anything but a barbarous one. Sánchez Labrador explained that the cause for Indian wars was merely their propensity to steal horses from each other. Thus, Indian men struck the Jesuits as particularly lazy, and Indian women as “drudges.” See also Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 44. For the significance of war and livestock-raiding among pastoral nomads, see Sahlins, *Tribesmen*, 32-39. For similar perceptions of Native American males as “idle” and “lazy,” in contrast to the “overworked” women, see Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, 52-53.



looked very similar to making tents and gathering edible plants, and these were female tasks that would bring “ignominy” to any men who performed them.<sup>45</sup>

While the arena of labor took Jesuits and Indians into so many dead-ends, material exchange provided a way out of them. Once more, this did not take place in the manner that the Jesuits had anticipated. Material exchange, in the form of “regaling” the Indians, figured prominently in the Jesuit conversion technique in the Pampas. As father Sánchez Labrador put it, “*Prius quod animale, deinde quod spiritale*” or, first the animal needs and then the spiritual needs.<sup>46</sup> When father Cardiel sketched the steps that a missionary ideally followed to convert “horse-riding barbarians,” the first and foremost was entering the Indians’ lands loaded with “trinkets.” This was in fact a deceptive name for a long list of goods that, in the case of the Pampas, included European imports (glass beads, jingle bells, metal pots and tools), regional imports (wine, raisins, and dried figs from the Cuyo region; cloth from Tucumán; sugar from Brazil), and local products (yerba mate, corn, tobacco, biscuits). Once the missionary had gained the Indians’ goodwill by regaling them with these goods, Cardiel continued, he would be able to “little by little inculcate Christianity in them, and eradicate sorcery, drunkenness, and polygamy, which are their worst vices.”<sup>47</sup>

While Indians were not very eager to abandon what Cardiel described as “sorcery, drunkenness, and polygamy,” they definitely welcomed the goods the Jesuits offered. As explained in chapter two, peoples of the Pampas had supplemented hunting and

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<sup>45</sup> Falkner pointed out that women with enough social standing, such as caciques’ wives, were also able to avoid the “most laborious part of their work” because they “were permitted to have slaves.” Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 125.

<sup>46</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 86.

<sup>47</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 289, “Dificultades que suele haber en la conversión de los Infieles y medios para vencerlas, por el Padre José Cardiel. Sierras del Volcán, 20 de agosto de 1747.”

gathering with intertribal exchange well before the Spanish arrived to the region. In this way, they had customarily obtained agricultural products such as corn and cotton cloth. The Spanish settlement of the Rolling Pampas in the late sixteenth century had drastically expanded the range of goods that Indians could obtain through exchange. These eventually included goods that enhanced their diets (sugar and dried fruits), made daily tasks easier (metal pots and tools), and made life aesthetically richer (glass beads, jingle bells, cloth). Falkner hinted at the deeper changes that, in the long run, the access to this wider assortment of goods had brought to Indians. When describing the tasks proper to the men, Falkner indicated that in addition to providing food, the “husband” supplied his wife with “skins for the tent, and for clothing.” But in recent times, the Jesuit added, “they often purchase for them cloths or mantles of European goods, of the Spaniards; and also brass-earings, cascabels, and large glass beads of a sky-blue colour, for which they have great preference.”<sup>48</sup>

Falkner was describing what historians have discovered was a familiar pattern throughout the Americas, by which imports that Indians obtained through trade with Europeans gradually replaced native items. In other words, rather than merely *supplementing* the foodstuffs and raw materials that they obtained through hunting and gathering, Indians began to *replace* some of them with items that they obtained through intercultural trade—European cloth for skins, imported glass beads for local stones. These imported items, furthermore, became deeply interwoven in the fabric of Indian life. In the case of the Pampas, for instance, the sky-blue glass beads that the Jesuits saw as valueless trinkets were ubiquitous in all kind of transactions among Indians, and a must-have in important ritual occasions.<sup>49</sup> Indians used them to pay the female

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<sup>48</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 126.

<sup>49</sup>Falkner scornfully pointed out that he had seen Indians exchange “a mantle of their little foxes skins, which are as fine and as beautiful as ermine, worth from five to

mourners (*plañideras*) who were a required presence in every funeral. Together with other valuable goods such as horses, beads were used to pay for the bride price. More generally, beads were important markers of social rank when embroidered in beautiful patterns onto elaborate headdresses, garments made of horse-skin, and horse-gear. Caciques, Sánchez Labrador indicated, made sure to have their saddles well embellished in this manner.<sup>50</sup> Little by little, thus, as they incorporated imported items into quotidian and momentous practices alike, Indians became increasingly dependent on intercultural trade. As Daniel Richter has pointed out for the case of eastern North America, there was irony in the fact that “to continue to live as ‘Indians,’ Native peoples needed to trade with Europeans.”<sup>51</sup>

The “trinkets” that the Jesuits brought to the Pampas, therefore, carried more weight than what the fathers thought. They might not have convinced Indians to become Christians and abandon their “vices,” but they did provide a way out of the stalemate that fathers and Indians at Concepción had reached with regard to labor. Goods were prized enough that, in exchange for them, Indian men were willing to engage in female or female-like tasks that otherwise would have brought “ignominy” to them. Thus, the Dragoons at Concepción recounted that, in exchange for a “good payment,” Indians could be induced to do some work, such as fixing the church and other buildings,

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seven dollars each, for four strings of these beads, which are worth about fourpence.” Ibid., 126.

<sup>50</sup>For Indians’ use of beads, see Ibid., 118, 124; Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 36-37, 60-63. For the importance of portable wealth, such as embellished garments and horse-gear, among mobile hunter-gatherers, see Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 9-14.

<sup>51</sup>Richter, *Facing East*, 51. On this topic, see Richard White’s seminal study, *The Roots of Dependency*. See also Cronon, *Changes in the Land*, chapter 5; Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, 52-55.

harvesting crops, making bricks, and rounding up cattle.<sup>52</sup> But the extent of Indians' dependence on the imports that the Jesuits offered should not be exaggerated. To the fathers' continuous frustration, Indians still chose what tasks to perform and when, and asked a high price for their labor. Eventually, in order to ensure the existence of a reliable and affordable labor force in the missions, the fathers had to hire workers from outside, so-called *conchabados*, usually Guaraní Indians.<sup>53</sup>

The Jesuits exchanged goods for Indian labor and, eventually, for native goods as well. Trading with their own "neophytes" was definitely a development that the Jesuits had not anticipated. It was also a development that the Jesuit superiors never approved. As late as 1752, Father Provincial Joseph Barreda explained that he had "strictly forbidden" the missionaries to buy anything, "not even one feather," from the Indians, either with silver or "through exchange." Missionaries were only allowed to give goods to Indians in reward for their labor, or for their "good behavior and signs of being good Christians."<sup>54</sup> But the fathers found out that trading was the only way in which they could obtain the native goods (such as pelts, bezoares, and feathers) that they later

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<sup>52</sup>See the statements by Dragoons Leandro de Sosa, Joaquín Marín, Joaquín Melo, Juan Galeano, and Blas de Espinosa in AGI: ACh. 221, "Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752]." Father Manuel García sent extra "packs of blue beads" to Concepción during harvest time, see AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Gerónimo Rejon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 31 de diciembre de 1747."

<sup>53</sup>Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Católico," 87. Population counts from Concepción consistently listed *conchabados*. In 1743, for instance, there were nine Guaraní peons—five of them married—at the mission. The following year, there were twenty-six peons "including Spaniards and *Tapes* [Guaraní]." For a short time, while the fathers' house was built, the number of peons reached "more than forty." AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Numeración anual del Pueblo de la Concepción de los Indios Pampas, año de 1743;" AGN: Bib. Nac. 289, "Numeración anual del Pueblo de la Concepción de los Indios Pampas, año de 1744."

<sup>54</sup>See the letter by Joseph de Barreda to Governor Joseph de Andonaegui (September 11, 1752), in AGI: ACh. 221, "Informes sobre la reducción de los Indios Pampas, 1752."

commercialized through father García in Buenos Aires, thus obtaining the always necessary funds for the continuation of the missionary endeavor.<sup>55</sup>

From the Indians' perspective, hence, the Jesuits were rather accommodating trading partners who brought desired goods right to their doorstep. This was particularly true for the Indians of Pilar, the Serrano. They were located farther from Buenos Aires, and lacked the familiarity with Porteños that the Indians of Concepción had. For them, therefore, the Jesuits really opened opportunities for reliable and riskless intercultural exchange where previously there was none. Indians might have realized this as soon as the fathers set foot in the sierras. Sánchez Labrador recounted that one of the first problems that the Jesuits had to tackle at Tandil was the "plague of American lions and tigers" that infested the chosen place for the mission. The fathers thus offered the Indians yerba mate and tobacco in exchange for the "lions and tigers" pelts. The Indians' response was so enthusiastic that "in a short time, countless [animals] were dead and those that had escaped from the Indians' hands had hurriedly ran off, and hence the site was free of such a plague." The Jesuits sent the pelts to Buenos Aires, where father García sold them and used the proceeds to buy "useful items for the mission."<sup>56</sup>

Most instances of material exchange with the Indians, however, did not leave such sense of even-handedness in the Jesuits' minds. The fathers' most common reaction, in fact, was disbelief at the Indians' "selfish" nature, which was yet another of their "vices." Indians, Sánchez Labrador pointed out, were not only lazy but also selfish hagglers "as prone to trade as Gypsies," who charged for what they should have given

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<sup>55</sup>Scarcity of funds is a constant topic in the missionaries' correspondence. In 1748, father Strobel even chided father Rejón for "wasting so much paper" in the cover for his letters. AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathías Estrobel a Gerónimo Rejón, padre de la Concepción. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 14 de enero de 1748."

<sup>56</sup>Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Catholico," 106.

away to their benefactors.<sup>57</sup> The fact that Indians were actually aggressive sellers and picky consumers did not help their case. Father Cardiel, for instance, bitterly described the Indians' behavior during exchanges at Pilar:

They are so mean, such filchers, such hagglers, and their dealings are so vile that in addition to bringing the worst [native items] they are very difficult at the time of closing the deal. It is necessary to show them all the supply of jingle bells, metal trimmings (*vainillas de latón*) and glass beads so that they can choose. They check one by one... and discard some because of their color, others because of their sound or workmanship, others because they are too thin, etc."<sup>58</sup>

In Buenos Aires, meanwhile, father García agonized over buying jingle bells made of tin (*cascabeles de estaño*) to send to Concepción, as he feared "that the Indians might not like them." And his suspicion was correct. Indians, Falkner clarified, had great preference for "cascabels of cast brass."<sup>59</sup>

Independently from the Jesuits' designs when they entered the Pampas, therefore, Indians gradually redefined the missions as de-facto intercultural trading posts. This became particularly obvious when the fathers extended their effort into the southern sierras where, as mentioned before, Indians did not have the pressing safety issues that had originally pushed the Pampa Indians into settling at Concepción during the violent period of 1739-1740. Thus, at Pilar, Indians did not even settle as permanently as was needed for the mission to acquire a minimum, town-like infrastructure. Still three years after its foundation, Pilar was only an adobe house for the fathers, and temporary Indian encampments that came and went according to the possibilities of trading. In Sánchez Labrador's writings, this appeared as Indians'

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 80.

<sup>58</sup>"José Cardiel a Pedro de Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747," in Furlong, ed., *José Cardiel*, 209.

<sup>59</sup>AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Gerónimo Rejon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 7 de septiembre de 1748." Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 86.

“selfish fickleness” (*veleidades interesadas*). The Jesuit recounted the cases of caciques Marique and Chuyantuya who, to the delight of father Cardiel, joined Pilar in 1747 with twenty-four toldos “of their vassals.” Cardiel’s satisfaction was short-lived, however, as the Indians only stayed while there were provisions of yerba, tobacco, and “other goods,” which they eagerly exchanged for “dusters made of ñandú feathers, ponchos, sea-lion pelts, and horse reins.” By February of 1748, when the fathers ran out of provisions, all the Indians simply “picked their toldos up, and left the fathers with no more company than a few Guaraní peons and other Indians brought from Buenos Aires.” In April of the same year, when the Jesuits received a cartload of provisions, cacique Chuyantuya came back with nine toldos, and stayed for four months, “until he saw the missionaries did not have anything left to give.”<sup>60</sup>

One step farther from cases like those of caciques Marique and Chuyantuya, were the many Indians who regularly converged at the missions overtly to trade with Jesuits and “neophytes” alike, without any pretense of wanting to join in. The Jesuits most commonly referred to them as “Indians of the tierra adentro,” but sometimes as “Aucas” or “Serranos” as well. By that, they meant Indians of the wider trans-Andean world, not directly associated with the missions, and who fit the loose category of “friendly Indians” (*Indios amigos*) created by the 1742 treaty. Many but not all of these Indians were allies or subordinates to the cacique Bravo.

The Jesuits traded with the Indians of the tierra adentro as a way to maintain good neighborly relations, and perhaps to win them as neophytes. But there were more pragmatic reasons as well. These Indians usually brought from the Andean zone woven ponchos and mantles of beautiful quality and bright colors, which were appreciated greatly and equally by Indians and Spaniards throughout the Pampas. As Sánchez

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<sup>60</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Católico,” 101.

Labrador explained, ponchos were not only worn by Indians but were also the garments of choice of the rural population that inhabited the Buenos Aires campaña.<sup>61</sup>

The available sources provide ample evidence showing that the trade in Andean textiles with the Indians of the tierra adentro became an important activity at both Pilar and Concepción, and for both Jesuits and mission Indians. Father Strobel's correspondence from Pilar indicates that the cacique Bravo and his emissaries regularly visited the mission to sell ponchos. Concepción records, meanwhile, have entries in several years for the sale of cattle to the "Serrano Indians," presumably in exchange for textiles. Cartloads that the Jesuits sent to father Manuel García in Buenos Aires always included ponchos, which sold very well in pulperías. The fathers also used ponchos as payment for the Guaraní peons who worked on the missions. Finally, Dragoons stationed at Concepción unanimously stated that Indians of the tierra adentro routinely went to the mission to sell ponchos. They also explained that mission Indians traded behind the fathers' backs, either during their hunting trips, or by meeting the Indians of the tierra adentro in the woodlands nearby the mission.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 37. As explained in chapter four, the Reche had originally woven these ponchos and mantles with llama wool, and then switched to sheep wool once the Spaniards introduced these animals into southern Chile. Woven textiles had circulated eastwards across the Andes at least since the late sixteenth century. Raúl Hernández Asensio points out that ponchos were the Indian manufacture with most demand in Buenos Aires, where they could be sold for as much as twenty pesos. Hernández Asensio, "Caciques, jesuitas y chamanes," 92. Dragoons stationed at Concepción pointed out that, although ponchos came from the tierra adentro, there were a few Indian women in the mission who wove *valadranes* (mantles) in modest numbers. See the statements by Ramón de Aparicio and Blas de Espinosa, in AGI: ACh. 221, "Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752]."

<sup>62</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Estado de la Estancia del Pueblo de la Concepción de los Indios Pampas presentado por el Padre Provincial Joseph Barreda, 16 de septiembre de 1752;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Cuenta simple de varios efectos pertenecientes al Pueblo de los Pampas puestos a vender a un Pulpero llamado Juan Molas, 6 de febrero de 1747;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathias Estrobel a Gerónimo Raxon, padre de la Concepción. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 23 de junio de 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathias Estrobel a Geronimo Raxon, Cura de la Concepcion. Ntra Sra del Pilar, Julio 16 de 1749;" "José Cardiel a Pedro de



In a development that the Jesuits most likely did not anticipate, Indians thus transformed the missions of the Pampas into nodes in the Native exchange networks that extended from the Andes to the Pampas. In the wide map of the trans-Andean Native world, missions became geographical points where trading intensified, thanks to the convergence of different Native peoples, and the periodic availability of imports that, via the Jesuits, came from the Spanish world.

There was another side to the missions that did not come forth as the Jesuits expected either. As mentioned above, the fathers had tried to impede, or at least diminish, the communication between their “neophytes” and Porteños by settling their first mission, Concepción, not in the campaña as Indians wanted but in the tierra adentro, immediately south of the river Salado. To the fathers’ growing frustration, and the Cabildo’s increasing concern, soon after the peace of 1742 an unsupervised stream of peoples, Indians and Spaniards, was regularly connecting the missions to Buenos Aires and its campaña, paying no heed to the official *lindero* of the river Salado.

### III. THE PERILS OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

For the Jesuits, it was simple: sinfulness, in the form of Spanish greediness and Indian drunkenness, was at the root of the increased traffic of peoples and goods across the river Salado. As Sánchez Labrador explained, Spanish *pulperos* or petty traders sold cheap hard liquor (*aguardiente*) to the Indians, in exchange for their valuable Andean ponchos and blankets, as well as for “other articles they [the Indians] produce with horse

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Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747,” in Furlong, ed., *José Cardiel*, 207. Statements by Dragoons Ramón de Aparicio, Juan Galeano, Agustín Melo, Joaquín Marín, Blas de Espinosa, and Gregorio Velázquez, are in AGI: ACh. 221, “Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752].”

and sea-lion hides, such as reins, boots, and saddlebags.”<sup>63</sup> The traders either went into the tierra adentro with itinerant taverns set on ox-carts, or eagerly sought the Indians who ventured into Buenos Aires and its surrounding campaña.

The Jesuits deplored this intensified traffic of peoples and goods that escaped their control, and which put alcohol within Indians’ easy reach. The Jesuits blamed alcohol for the minimal success of their conversion efforts, as well as for the evils of poverty and violence that they claimed plagued Indian life. To the extent that they could, therefore, the Jesuits sought to thwart the sale of alcohol to Indians. They repeatedly obtained edicts from the Buenos Aires Governor forbidding Porteños from selling wine and liquor to the Indians, under penalty of confiscation of the goods and banishment from the city.<sup>64</sup> They also got the Ecclesiastical Cabildo to issue *censuras* or orders of excommunication to any Christian caught selling liquor to the Indians.<sup>65</sup>

Whatever the Jesuits intended, the missions actually facilitated intercultural communication between Indians and Porteños in several ways, and thus made it easier for the former to acquire liquor from the latter. On the one hand, the missions provided Porteño traders with a fixed and relatively safe place in the tierra adentro where they

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<sup>63</sup>Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Católico," 40.

<sup>64</sup>AGN: IX 8-10-1, "Bando del Gobernador Domingo Ortiz de Rosas. Buenos Aires, 27 de octubre de 1742;" AGN: IX 8-10-1, "Bando del Gobernador Domingo Ortiz de Rosas. Buenos Aires, 10 de Julio de 1744;" AGN: IX 8-10-1, "Bando del Gobernador José de Andonaegui. Buenos Aires, 6 de diciembre de 1745;" AGN: IX 8-10-1, "Bando del Gobernador José de Andonaegui. Buenos Aires, 12 de junio de 1747."

<sup>65</sup>See "Acuerdo del V. Dean y C.E. de Buenos Aires. 15 de julio de 1747," quoted in Cabrera, *La conquista espiritual*, 28-30. In that occasion, the members of the Ecclesiastical Cabildo discussed orders of excommunication that had already been issued—the exact date, however, is not provided. The Ecclesiastical Cabildo was a corporation of clergymen that assisted the bishop in the governance of the diocese. In case of absence, illness, or death of the bishop, the Ecclesiastical Cabildo became the diocese’s main authority until the arrival of a new prelate to the post, and therefore could issue *censuras*, as in this case. Di Stefano and Zanatta, *Historia de la Iglesia argentina*, 53.

could find a large enough number of Indian trading partners that would justify the expense of the trip from Buenos Aires. This was particularly true in the case of Pilar. Despite its distant location, Pilar provided direct access to the Indians of the *tierra adentro*, and therefore to the prized textiles of the Andean zone. Otherwise, Porteño traders had to buy the textiles through the Jesuits or the Indians of Concepción. Thus, Sánchez Labrador noted that shortly after Pilar was founded, several *pulperos* “set up their taverns” at about three leagues distance. These *pulperos*, moreover, concocted all kinds of schemes to circumvent the fathers’ vigilance, and contacted the Indians. One of them, for instance, arrived at the mission pretending to have come all the way from Buenos Aires to ask for the fathers’ intercession in the ransoming of a captive from the *tierra adentro*. While distracting the missionaries with this story, he convinced two caciques and their people “to leave the mission” and go with him. A few days later, one of the fathers found the Indians that had left with the *pulpero* miles away from the mission, by the river Salado, and “completely drunk.”<sup>66</sup>

On the other hand, life at the missions also equipped individual Indians with skills and tools that facilitated intercultural communication, and therefore trade, with Porteños. One skill was Spanish, which was the language of choice for intercultural communication because most Porteños did not speak any of the Native languages.<sup>67</sup> Given the long history of relations between Pampas and Porteños, the Jesuits were surprised to find out that, in Concepción, the Indians who “did not understand what they

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<sup>66</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 104-105.

<sup>67</sup>Hernández Asensio makes this point in “Caciques, jesuitas y chamanes,” 104. The Jesuit missionaries noted that the Indians of the Pampas spoke a variety of languages, and that the *lengua Aucae* (Mapudugun or the Mapuche language) was the “most widely understood” and the “most polished.” Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 132; “José Cardiel a Pedro de Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747,” in Furlong, ed., *José Cardiel*, 207.

were being told” in Spanish were many more than those who did.<sup>68</sup> The Jesuits were also initially puzzled at the Indians’ resolute refusal to learn the Christian doctrine in their own language, which the Jesuits were trying to master, and their insistence in learning it in Spanish instead. After a while, Sánchez Labrador explained, the missionaries “finally understood that the Devil was behind” the Indians’ decision, as by learning Spanish they were able to communicate with Porteños and buy alcohol from pulperos without the need of an interpreter.<sup>69</sup>

The missions also gave Indians access to permits or passes, written by the missionaries, that gave them a certain measure of safety when “going down” to the Buenos Aires campaña or to the city itself. By showing these passes at the request of any civil or military authority, Indians identified themselves as mission or “friendly” Indians, who, as per the 1742 treaty, were entitled to trade with the Spaniards. Although the Jesuits attempted to restrict the use of these passes to Indians whom they trusted, there is evidence that they were not successful. In 1747, for instance, the cacique Marique was found in Buenos Aires getting ready to return to the Tandil Sierras with an *odre* (wineskin) full of liquor, and with a pass from father Strobel. Even Indians who never obtained a pass took advantage of the measure of safety that a connection (true or not) to the missions afforded. Behind the fathers’ back, they joined the escort of the carts that

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<sup>68</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 86.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 108. While Indians had practical reasons for learning the Christian doctrine in Spanish, the Jesuit accounts suggest that there were cultural reasons as well. Sánchez Labrador explained that the Indians of Pilar had a “savage law” that forbade anyone who had a dead father or son to pronounce either word. As both words occur with frequency during prayers, the Indians refused to learn them in their own language. When pressed by one of the missionaries, who insisted that there was nothing wrong with the words “father” and “son,” an enraged Indian answered, “Be quiet father! You do not know the offense you are giving. We have the inviolable law of taking the life of anyone who pronounces those words in our presence.” Ibid.

frequently went from the missions to Buenos Aires. Or, when asked, they simply swore that they were in Buenos Aires with the permission of the fathers.<sup>70</sup>

Finally, life at the missions also allowed individual Indians to build personal relations with Porteños. This was particularly true in the case of Concepción, owing to the Dragoons that, for months at a time, lived in the town and shared their everyday life with the Indians. For instance, Dragoon Blas de Espinosa, who was regularly deployed to Concepción between 1742 and 1749, stated that throughout these years he had made several Indian friends. The Jesuits saw the friendship between Indians and soldiers with little sympathy. They asserted that the Dragoons “destroyed with their bad behavior and example any good effects that the doctrine” might have had on Indians.<sup>71</sup> The Dragoons brought liquor from Buenos Aires to sell in the mission, and played dice and cards with the Indian men. They also had “illicit dealings” (*tratos ilícitos*) with Indian women, and in some cases they even set up house (*se amancebaron*) with them.<sup>72</sup> The fathers did not mention that, thanks to their relations with the soldiers, Indians were able to open venues of intercultural trade with Porteños that competed with those of the Jesuits. But, in December of 1747, an exasperated father Manuel García wrote to the missionaries at Concepción that they should stop sending feather dusters. García explained that the demand for them had suddenly dried up because “the Indians and the soldiers have filled

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<sup>70</sup>For Marique, see “Acuerdo del V. Dean y C.E. de Buenos Aires. Septiembre de 1747,” quoted in Cabrera, *La conquista espiritual*, 36. For other examples, see the statements by Ramón de Aparicio, Bentura Chavarría and Gregorio Velázquez in AGI: ACh. 221, “Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752].” See also AGN: IX 6-10-1, “Mathias Estrobel a Gerónimo Raxon, padre de la Concepción. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 23 de junio de 1748.” The use of passes by missionaries to try to control Indians’ movements was a common pattern throughout Spanish America, see David J. Weber, *Bárbaros*, 100.

<sup>71</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Católico,” 89.

<sup>72</sup>See the letters by Joseph Barreda to Governor Joseph de Andonaegui (August 17, 1752, and September 11, 1752), in AGI: ACh. 221, “Informes sobre la reducción de los Indios Pampas, 1752.”

the *pulperías* [general stores] with feather dusters, selling them for only two and three reales.”<sup>73</sup>

As this last example suggests, Indians not always were the helpless and drunken victims of greedy *pulperos* that the Jesuits liked to portray. Even when looking exclusively at the liquor trade, the Jesuit accounts themselves indicate that, in fact, Indians took an active part in the sale of liquor, and not only in its consumption. In his correspondence from Pilar, father Strobel decried the ascendance of “*pulperos Pampas*,” that is, Pampa Indians who took up the role of liquor traders.<sup>74</sup> Sánchez Labrador described how these *pulperos* operated:

Once he [the Indian *pulpero*] arrives, he informs everyone of the kind of merchandise he is bringing. All of them immediately get together, like a cloud of mosquitoes, and fill the *toldo* that doubles as tavern, some even waiting outside for their turn to enter that shrine to Bacchus. The liquor’s owner fills a gourd... which serves as a measuring cup. He presents it to the main *cacique*, saying: “Receive this liquor and give me that poncho, that horse, or that mantle etc., or so many bells, or so many string of beads.” The funny thing is that whatever he requests, he immediately gets; and as these peoples are not shy about making requests, he gets the best things in the *toldería*.<sup>75</sup>

In this way, Sánchez Labrador explained, Indian *pulperos* were able to make great profits. Liquor that they bought at five *pesos* in Buenos Aires and paid with a single poncho, was worth a hundred *pesos* in all kind of goods (ponchos, mantles, horses, bells, string of beads) when sold in the missions.

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<sup>73</sup>AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Manuel García a Gerónimo Rejon, padre de la Concepción. Buenos Aires, 31 de diciembre de 1747."

<sup>74</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Matías Estróbel al Padre Procurador Andrés Carranza, Ntra Sra del Pilar, 17 de septiembre de 1749;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Matías Estrobel a Gerónimo Rejon. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 20 de noviembre de 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathias Estrobel a Geronimo Rexon, Cura de la Concepcion. Ntra Sra del Pilar, Abril 18 de 1749."

<sup>75</sup>Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Catholico," 41.

Whatever the consequences of the liquor trade for Indians as a social group, which in any case are documented only impressionistically and by far-from-neutral witnesses like the Jesuits, it is clear that the trade allowed individual Indians to improve their status. Some were individuals who previously did not have a position of power, and who hence made deft use of the tools that the missions put at their disposal to climb the social ladder. Strobel mentioned by name two Indian pulperos, Juancho Patricio and Juancho Manchado, who clearly belonged to this group. Others individuals, instead, were caciques who took advantage of the trade to further cement their power. Such was the case of the cacique Marique, who was one of the five caciques immediately subordinated to the cacique Bravo.<sup>76</sup>

Despite evidence to the contrary, the Jesuits continued to insist on their story of greedy Porteños and gullible Indians in order to withstand the escalating criticism by the Buenos Aires Cabildo, which had quite a different take on the increased traffic in goods and people across the river Salado. For the Cabildo, Indians' access to liquor was far from being the most deleterious consequence of this traffic. The main danger, the councilmen argued, was not in drunken Indians, but in sober Indians over whom the Jesuits had no visible control.

The councilmen complained that the missions were not fulfilling the role that the 1742 treaty had entrusted in them. As explained in the previous chapter, the treaty defined for the first time a geographical landmark, the river Salado, as the *lindero* or limit separating Indian and Spanish territories, and established regulations for the movement of peoples between the two. In the aftermath of the raid of 1740, the main interest of the Porteño government was to ensure a measure of order and safety in the

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<sup>76</sup>See AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Matías Estrobel a Gerónimo Rejon. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 20 de noviembre de 1748;" AGN: IX 6-10-1, "Mathias Estrobel a Geronimo Rexon, Cura de la Concepcion. Ntra Sra del Pilar, Abril 18 de 1749." "Acuerdo del V. Dean y C.E. de Buenos Aires. Septiembre de 1747," quoted in Cabrera, *La conquista espiritual*, 36.

Buenos Aires campaña. Not surprisingly, thus, such regulations were particularly geared to impeding the unsupervised flow of people from the tierra adentro (Indian territory) towards the Buenos Aires campaña (Spanish territory).

Concepción was located in a sort of buffer zone, immediately south of the river Salado. By virtue of this location, the Porteño government conceived of the mission as a gateway from one territory to another, and the Jesuits as the gatekeepers. This was manifested in clauses of the 1742 treaty such as the second, which established that Indians wishing to trade ponchos with Porteños had to send word to Buenos Aires through the fathers. It was also manifested in how other clauses operated in practice. The third clause, for instance, established that no Indian could cross the river Salado without the Governor's "specific permit" (*licencia expresa*). In reality, however, the Jesuits took up the task of issuing these permits. As explained above, they issued written passes that Indians, once north of the river Salado, had to produce before civil or military authorities.<sup>77</sup>

The councilmen argued that the Jesuits had little control over the Indians, and thus were failing in their role as gatekeepers. The Indians went to the campaña or to Buenos Aires not when the fathers authorized them, but whenever they wanted. Worse still, the Indians of the tierra adentro took advantage of the Jesuits' lack of discipline and control, and went frequently to Spanish territory mixed with the "neophytes." Once there, they were able to buy weapons, spy on the estancias and chacras, and find out everything about the city's defense plans and preparedness.

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<sup>77</sup>"Capitulaciones de las paces hechas entre los indios Pampas de la Reducción de Ntra. Sra de la Concepción, y los Serranos, Aucas, y Peguenches, que se han de publicar en presencia del cacique Bravo, y de otros caciques, por orden del Sr. D. Miguel de Salcedo, gobernador y capitán general de la provincia del Río de la Plata. 1742," in *Paz en la frontera*, ed. Abelardo Levaggi, 107-108. For examples of the Jesuit-issued passes, see note 70 above.



The Cabildo formally articulated these complaints for the first time in 1744, when an Indian raid in the jurisdiction of Luján broke the 1742 treaty's promise of peace. After 1744, the Cabildo took the position that, in order to ensure the safety of the campaña, the *lindero* of the river Salado did not need Jesuit gates but fortified walls.

## 8. A MILITARIZED FRONTIER

The existing historiography associates the formation of a frontier in the Pampas with the wide-ranging reforms that the Bourbons implemented in the region beginning in 1776, when Buenos Aires was made into the capital of the freshly minted Viceroyalty of the River Plate. As in other areas deemed strategic where independent Indians threatened Spanish control—like the Comandancia de las Provincias Internas of New Spain, also created in 1776—Bourbon officials implemented military reforms that privileged professional troops and fortifications to protect the so-called “interior frontiers” (*fronteras interiores*). The association between the frontier and the Bourbon reforms is so marked that, for the colonial period, the line of forts that marked the frontier is also referred to as “Vértiz’s line,” an allusion to Viceroy Juan José de Vértiz, the most prominent Bourbon representative in the River Plate.<sup>1</sup>

Recently, scholars have pointed out that seemingly top-down Bourbon policies, and especially frontier policies, were in fact significantly shaped by local conditions and actors.<sup>2</sup> Drawing from this insight, in this chapter I show that the militarized frontier line in the River Plate was the product of repeated intercultural blunders, inter-tribal readjustments, and contested intra-Spanish politics during the decade and a half following the 1742 treaty. In 1776, Viceroy Vértiz simply built upon pre-existing arrangements in order to set the line of forts that would carry his name.

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<sup>1</sup>Fernando Barba, *Frontera ganadera y guerra con el indio* (La Plata: ADAI - AHPBA, 2003); Diana Duarte, “Cien años de vaivenes. La frontera bonaerense (1776-1870),” in *Vivir en la frontera. La casa, la dieta, la pulpería, la escuela*, ed. Carlos A. Mayo (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2000).

<sup>2</sup>Weber, “Bourbons and Bárbaros.”

*I. FROM FRIENDS TO ENEMIES: THE RAID OF 1744*

The Cabildo grew increasingly uneasy towards the intensified traffic of Indians into the Buenos Aires campaña that followed the 1742 treaty. As explained in the previous chapter, the councilmen found this traffic troubling because, they argued, Indians were able to exchange ponchos for weapons such as swords and lances, and were also able to obtain information about Porteños' movements and intentions. In 1744, the councilmen's uneasiness morphed into downright accusations of Indian treachery, after a raid on the jurisdiction of Luján caused considerable losses in Spanish property and lives. Indians, the councilmen concluded, had demonstrated that they were unworthy of the 1742 peace treaty.

The raid produced a lengthy investigation, and was followed by dramatic events that, luckily for us, entered the written record. This evidence offers an alternative reading to that of the Cabildo. As I show in the pages that follow, the problem was not that the Indians were unworthy of the 1742 peace treaty. The problem was that the treaty imposed too rigid a model for Indians' flexible political structures, and too simplistic a solution for the complex intertribal dynamics of the trans-Andean Native world. The treaty, produced by the Spaniards and "published" before the Indians, responded to the necessities of the former but not to the realities of the latter.

The events of 1744 started with a perfectly peaceful *feria de ponchos*, or "poncho fair," which allowed Porteños to obtain the prized Andean textiles directly from Indians. In order to avoid Indian traffic into the Buenos Aires campaña, the 1742 treaty had established that these fairs were to be held in the Tandil Sierras, where Porteños could go to whenever Indians sent word through the Jesuit fathers. The trip to the sierras, however, was long and difficult, especially during droughts. The year of 1743 was one of persistent droughts, and thus no fairs had been held. Therefore, when in early July of

1744 the cacique Calelián arrived at “the estancia of Peñalba,” in the outskirts of the jurisdiction of Luján, with the intention of holding a fair, no one complained about the lapse in protocol (see Map 9, p. 266, for the location of Luján).<sup>3</sup> The cacique Calelián, moreover, was one of the “friendly” Pampa caciques who had participated in the 1742 peace treaty. He must have been well known among Luján dwellers: he and his people lived directly west of that jurisdiction, crossing the river Salado. The Peñalbas, moreover, willingly received him in their estancia.<sup>4</sup> Calelián was in the company of approximately two hundred Indians, and three “unknown” caciques from the tierra adentro, whom witnesses identified disparately as Serranos, Aucas, or Pehuenches.

From Peñalba’s estancia, Calelián sent word to Governor Ortiz de Rosas that he and his companions had brought many ponchos to trade with the Spaniards. Porteños from all over the campaña eagerly answered the call, and congregated at Luján. To ensure order, the Governor deployed a small detachment of soldiers to the jurisdiction, as well as the Maestre de Campo Cristóbal Cabral de Melo. The Governor also issued an

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<sup>3</sup>For the events of 1744, I rely on AGN: IX 19-2-2, “Expediente seguido para esclarecer si el Cacique Calelián y sus parciales han sido cómplices en el robo de haciendas, despojo de casas, muertes y cautiverios que ejecutaron los Indios en el Pago de Luján, por el mes de julio de 1744. Año de 1744.” In the 1740s, the jurisdiction of Luján contained a small hamlet huddled around a shrine to the Virgin of Luján, and a vast expanse of estancias and chacras. The Peñalbas were among the earliest settlers of the area. In the eighteenth century, they owned several estancias dedicated to cattle and mule raising. See Dedier Norberto Marquiegui, *Estancia y poder político en un partido de campaña bonaerense (Luján, 1756-1821)* (Buenos Aires: Fundación Simón Rodríguez - Editorial Biblos, 1990), 26; Saguier, *Mercado inmobiliario*, 140.

<sup>4</sup>Falkner and Lozano pointed out that Calelián was a close relative—either a son or a nephew—of the Pampa cacique whom Captain Juan de San Martín had killed in cold blood by the river Salado during the fateful events of 1739. Falkner also indicates that Calelián and his people inhabited the Inland Pampas, from the lagoon Mar Chiquita to the marshes of the river Quinto in southern Córdoba. Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 100, 104-105; Lozano, “Cartas Anuas,” 32-33. See Map 9, p. 269, for geographical landmarks. The lagoon Mar Chiquita is directly west of Luján.

edict to specifically forbid the sale of “wine, hard liquor, and weapons” to the Indians by the “many persons” who were going to Luján “to buy ponchos.”<sup>5</sup>

After a few days of trading, but before they had exhausted their supply of ponchos, the Indians retreated. The reasons for this early retreat were not clear. Cabral de Melo stated that Calelián informed him that he had to guide the other caciques into the tierra adentro, so that they could return to their homeland. Calelián himself was to return in two weeks, as he had arranged with Cabral de Melo to serve as a guide for a trip to the salt flats that the Porteño government was organizing. Other witnesses, however, stated that the Indians had retreated early because they were discontented (*disgustados*) with the terms of the trade, as the Governor not only had forbidden the sale of weapons and alcohol but had also limited the sale of cattle.<sup>6</sup>

About ten days later, on July 28, a raid fell on the estancias of Luján. Most witnesses agreed that the Indians killed about fifteen people, and took another forty individuals as captives. The estimations of the heads of cattle that the Indians drove off with them were more disparate, ranging from a thousand to eight thousand. The militias of the area swiftly departed in persecution of the Indians, and were reinforced the

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<sup>5</sup>See AGN: IX 8-10-1, "Bando del Gobernador Domingo Ortiz de Rosas. Buenos Aires, 10 de Julio de 1744."

<sup>6</sup>See statements by Cristóbal Cabral de Melo, José de Zárate, and Roque Romero, in AGN: IX 19-2-2, "Expediente seguido para esclarecer si el Cacique Calelián y sus parciales han sido cómplices en el robo de haciendas, despojo de casas, muertes y cautiverios que ejecutaron los Indios en el Pago de Luján, por el mes de julio de 1744. Año de 1744." During 1743 and 1744 the councilmen repeatedly complained about the scarcity of meat, tallow, and fat for the city supply. They attributed such scarcity to the “disorderly” state of cattle ranching in the campaña, resulting from the aftermath of the 1740 raid as well as from a severe drought during 1743, both of which had dispersed the domesticated herds into the tierra adentro. In order to ensure the supply of meat, tallow, and fat for the city, the councilmen had asked the Governor to issue regulations limiting the sale of cattle to other governorships. In 1744, the Governor applied these regulations also to the sale of cattle to Indians. See *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of October 1, 1743; February 28, 1744; March 11, 1744; and June 1, 1744.

following day by Dragoons sent from Buenos Aires. The Spanish forces were able to intercept a large group of Indians about sixty leagues inland. The ensuing skirmishes left about thirty Indians dead—including one of the “unknown” caciques whom witnesses identified as Pehuenche—ten captives freed, and most of the cattle recovered.

The raid shook the Cabildo’s fragile confidence in a future of peaceful intercultural relations, and trust in friendly caciques such as Calelián. Dismissing any diplomatic solution from the outset, the councilmen revived instead the military strategies that had predominated before 1742. Hence, in the months following the raid, the councilmen updated militia registers, and discussed possible new taxes to pay for regular militia patrols, and even for the establishment of permanent forts in the outskirts of the campaña. They also planned a trip to the salt flats for September or October with a heavy militia escort, which would scout the tierra adentro for Indians.<sup>7</sup>

By late September-early October, there were signs that the raid not only had shaken the Spanish world but the Indian world as well. On September 30, three emissaries sent by Calelián arrived to Buenos Aires. Two of them were Pampa Indians known to have been “neophytes” at Concepción. Through these emissaries, Calelián pleaded his innocence and blamed the Auca caciques for the raid. He also offered, as proof of his good faith, information of his whereabouts, and promised to set his *toldería* wherever the Porteño government indicated. The emissaries also informed that other caciques, especially Bravo, were “harassing” Calelián and threatening him with death. A week later, on October 8, three emissaries of Bravo arrived in Concepción, with a message for Governor Ortiz de Rosas that the Jesuit fathers promptly transmitted. Bravo wanted to know whether he “and his vassals were safe,” and what the status of the

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<sup>7</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: sessions of August 3, August 11, August 20, August 31, and September 26, 1744.

peace was given the “preceding events,” and the fact that many caciques had retreated inland to avoid a possible Spanish armed retaliation.<sup>8</sup>

The Indians’ reopening of diplomatic negotiations caught Porteños unprepared. Governor Ortiz de Rosas requested the councilmen’s advice regarding what answer to give to Calelián and Bravo. The councilmen recommended stalling the negotiations, while Procurador Luis de Escobar carried out a proper investigation to find out whether Calelián’s pleads of innocence were true, and which Indians exactly bore responsibility for the raid (*de qué gremio son los malévolos*).<sup>9</sup> Escobar promptly called as witnesses Luján dwellers, militia and military officers, and escaped captives. On October 16, the Procurador issued his final verdict.

Instead of a straightforward verification of the *malévolos*’ identity, Escobar’s verdict was a wholesale indictment of Indians. Escobar emphasized that Indians had proved unworthy of either peace treaties or evangelization. Their participation in both was insincere, argued the Procurador, to the sole ends of avoiding punishment and obtaining goods to satisfy their “vices.” Under the protection of the peace treaty and the Jesuits, the Indians acted as “the owners and masters of the countryside” and monitored all the “Spanish movements,” which allowed them to “succeed in their evil intentions” and steal livestock more easily. The poncho fair at Luján, thus, had been a vile ruse that the Indians had contrived in order to prepare the ground for their raid. The fair gave them the chance to approach the estancias in large numbers without provoking Spanish suspicions, and to identify the areas where livestock were more abundant and easier to get. Escobar placed the responsibility for the raid first on Bravo and Calelián, as the most important caciques, and second on the mission Indians, as spies who passed

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<sup>8</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: sessions of September 30 and October 8, 1744.

<sup>9</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of October 8, 1744.

information about the Spanish movements to their “relatives and brothers” of the tierra adentro. The Procurador concluded by strongly advising Governor Ortiz de Rosas to deny the peace to both Calelián and Bravo, and to relocate the Jesuit mission to the Banda Oriental.<sup>10</sup>

The Procurador’s verdict bore little relation to the statements upon which it was supposedly based. None of the witnesses whom Escobar questioned ever mentioned the mission Indians, or the cacique Bravo, as having anything to do with the raid. As for Calelián, it was not at all clear that he had personally taken part in the raid either. Most of the witnesses answered positively to the rather slanted initial question of whether Calelián had “accompanied” the Auca caciques in the “said hostility,” and whether “all the Pampa and Serrano Indians” were “treacherous (*de mala fé*),” and had “participated in the [1742] peace treaty with devious intentions.” Only one witness, however, was able to say that he had personally seen Calelián among the raiders. This same witness also excused himself from answering most of the questions because, he explained, he did not know their content, having arrived in the River Plate from Peru only a few months earlier.<sup>11</sup> This begs the question of whether he could have identified Calelián correctly. Meanwhile, those witnesses with the knowledge to do that, such as Cabral de Melo and other militia officers, made clear that they had not seen Calelián among the raiders, but only the Auca caciques who had accompanied the former to Luján. Furthermore, several witnesses stated that they had seen the raiders kill an Indian called “Francisco el Colorado,” who was an uncle of Calelián. The same Francisco el Colorado had warned one of the militia officers, on behalf of Calelián, that the Auca caciques had “bad

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<sup>10</sup>See the Procurador’s verdict of October 16, 1744, in AGN: IX 19-2-2, “Expediente seguido para esclarecer si el Cacique Calelián y sus parciales han sido cómplices en el robo de haciendas, despojo de casas, muertes y cautiverios que ejecutaron los Indios en el Pago de Luján, por el mes de julio de 1744. Año de 1744.”

<sup>11</sup>See statement by Carlos Guerrero, in *Ibid.*



intentions” and wanted to “steal cows” from the Spaniards, a warning that the officer did not take seriously enough.<sup>12</sup>

But none of these ambiguities appeared in Procurador Escobar’s verdict. Escobar, in fact, could have written his verdict without taking the trouble of questioning witnesses. His verdict did not result from the statements that preceded it, but from the Spanish ideas about Indian politics that had been enshrined in the 1742 treaty.

After the debacle of 1740, Porteños were desperate to “avoid great disorders and possibly new wars,” as clause three of the treaty stated. For that, they needed a supreme authority on the Indian side with whom to negotiate, and from whom to obtain assurances of future peace. They assigned such authority to the cacique Bravo, whom the treaty appointed as *Maestre de Campo de toda la sierra*, or highest authority of the newly minted political territory assigned to him, which extended south of the river Salado to undefined limits. As the title given to Bravo indicates, with its parallel in the *Maestre de Campo* that commanded the Porteño militias, the post was modeled on Spanish, not Indian, political structures.

Following this scheme, Escobar explained in his verdict that Bravo was the “most powerful cacique with the greatest number of vassals, for which reason he is feared and respected by all the other caciques.” Calelián, meanwhile, had an equivalent power (*corre con la misma paridad*) in a more restricted area, as a local Pampa cacique. Between both, Escobar elaborated, they had “absolute power” over the tierra adentro, so much so that all the other caciques did not dare to even “move without their approval.” Escobar specified that this power applied to the Indians of the “Province of Chile” as well. The latter were able to “go through the lands of the already mentioned caciques,” and therefore reach the Buenos Aires jurisdiction, “only with their approval and help

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<sup>12</sup>See statements by Cristóbal Cabral de Melo, José de Zárate, Julián de Melo Cuitiño, and Pedro Leguizamón, in *Ibid.*

[*frescas providencias*].” The logical conclusion was that, whoever had actually carried out the malón, and Escobar hinted that they might have been the Auca caciques after all, Bravo and Calelián were responsible in principle.

We do not know how Bravo understood his responsibilities as *Maestre de Campo*, or what the other twenty-six or so caciques who attended the 1742 meeting, Calelián among them, thought about this arrangement. But there is enough evidence that the rigid hierarchy among caciques, and the “absolute power” of one of them over a territory that stretched for thousand of miles, were more a product of Porteño expectations than of Indian realities.

The Jesuit Thomas Falkner provides the most comprehensive description of Indians’ political organization. Falkner found Indians’ “government, or civil constitution” rather lacking. As he explained, it did not go much beyond “a small degree of subjection” that Indians had to their caciques. That subjection was necessary, however, because their “law of nations” established that no group of Indians could live without the protection of a cacique, under risk of being “killed or carried away as slaves, as soon as they were discovered.” As for the relations among caciques or nations, Falkner stated that they were “at continuous variance among themselves.”<sup>13</sup> Only in times of a general war, many nations entered into an alliance against a common enemy. In those occasions, an *Apo* or captain general was chosen among the nations more familiar with the enemy to be attacked,<sup>14</sup> and “among the oldest or most celebrated of the

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<sup>13</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 120, 123.

<sup>14</sup> Falkner explained that exact knowledge of the area to be attacked was essential to the way in which Indians waged war. Indians generally encamped at “thirty or forty leagues” distance from the place they were planning to attack. From there, they sent scouts who hid during the day, but at night “issue[d] forth from their lurking places, and mark[ed] with the greatest exactness, every house and farm of the straggling villages,” so that they could give an exact account of “their disposition, the number of their inhabitants, and their means of defence.” Indians generally attacked at night, separated in small parties, each of them “appointed to attack some house or farm.” *Ibid.*, 122.

Caciques.” The rest of the caciques subordinated themselves to this captain general, but their subordination was task-specific and short-lived. It involved only tactical matters (when and where to attack), and it ended as soon as the war was over. Falkner explained with disbelief that such subordination ended even before the division of the booty, which was thus “seldom accomplished without discontent,” and often “terminated in quarrels and bloodshed.”<sup>15</sup>

Exactly what happened in that fateful week of July 1744, it was surely more complicated than what Procurador Escobar’s verdict suggested. Had Calelián wanted to prevent his Auca companions from raiding the Luján estancias, he was far from having the needed “absolute power” to do so. Furthermore, there is no reason to think that the Indians went to Luján already set in their “evil intentions” of raiding the estancias, and that the poncho fair was only a ruse. Porteño cries of Indian treachery notwithstanding, it is worth remembering that, for the Indians, trading and raiding were not stark moral opposites but equally plausible options ultimately determined by the kinship distance with the opposing party.<sup>16</sup> The terms of trade imposed by Governor Ortiz de Rosas surely irked the Auca caciques. Seeing their long trip from the Andean zone going to waste, they decided that raiding was after all the best option to deal with those strangers who refused to sell them what they wanted the most. As they lacked previously established relations with Porteños, the Aucas must have judged they did not have much to lose from perpetrating an act of guile on them—although the heavy losses they suffered at the hands of the Spanish forces might have shown them otherwise.

For Calelián, the stakes were different. He and his people lived nearby Luján, and therefore he had much more to lose from Porteños’ predictable anger and possible

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>See the full discussion of this subject in chapter 5.

armed retaliation after a raid. There is evidence, moreover, that Calelián might have been trying to cement his own basis of power in the tierra adentro vis-à-vis Bravo, by making use of his good relations with Porteños and consequent access to intercultural trade. This is indicated by his willingness to serve as a guide for the trip to Salinas, and his familiarity with Cabral de Melo. Thanks to such familiarity, in fact, Calelián was able to buy some cattle in Luján despite the Governor's edict.<sup>17</sup> Calelián's attempt to build his own basis of power in the tierra adentro is also indicated by the fact that at least one of his "Auca" companions was a Pehuenche cacique, and the Pehuenche were, according to Falkner, staunch enemies of Bravo.<sup>18</sup>

But again, all these nuances of the Indian world were far from Procurador Escobar's mind, for whom the situation was crystal-clear. Indians had violated the terms they had agreed to in 1742. The era of friendship was over; Indians had behaved as enemies, and therefore they deserved to be treated and punished accordingly.

Punishment, however, was expensive. Porteños found themselves once more quarreling about who was supposed to pay for the defense needs of Buenos Aires and its surrounding campaña. In a pattern that had already played out after the 1740 raid, the councilmen argued that the Cabildo did not have enough funds, and that defense was the duty of metropolitan authorities. Governor Ortiz de Rosas retorted that the Royal Funds (*Cajas Reales*) were exhausted, and made plain that metropolitan authorities were

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<sup>17</sup>See the statements by Cabral de Melo and José de Zárate, in AGN: IX 19-2-2, "Expediente seguido para esclarecer si el Cacique Calelián y sus parciales han sido cómplices en el robo de haciendas, despojo de casas, muertes y cautiverios que ejecutaron los Indios en el Pago de Luján, por el mes de julio de 1744. Año de 1744."

<sup>18</sup>Falkner, *A Description of Patagonia*, 103.

primarily in charge of defending Porteños from Spain's rivals. Defense against Indians, instead, rested on Porteños themselves, through their militia duty.<sup>19</sup>

In January of 1745, a frustrated Ortiz de Rosas openly shunned Procurador Escobar's verdict and advice, and accepted Calelián and Bravo's respective peace offers. He assigned a location for Calelián and his *toldería* in the outskirts of Luján, where they could be closely monitored. In a letter to King Philip V dated January 15 of 1745, Ortiz de Rosas reported that Calelián had "asked for forgiveness" and that he had graciously acquiesced to it, as there was "solid evidence" that the cacique had not participated in the raid to Luján.<sup>20</sup> The Governor referred, of course, to the same ambiguous evidence produced by Procurador Escobar's investigation. Not surprisingly, he failed to mention to the King that such investigation had reached a conclusion entirely opposed to his own.

The Cabildo angrily protested the Governor's decision, and sent its own version of the events to the King. As the weeks passed, the councilmen complained that Calelián and his Indians "were going around in a very uppity and disorderly way" (*andaban muy desvergonzados y alborotados*), and that they were stealing cattle from Luján estancias.<sup>21</sup> By July of 1745, when rumors about another raid were rife throughout the

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<sup>19</sup>The tension between the Governor and the Cabildo peaked in late November, as rural dwellers readied themselves for the harvest and sought armed protection from possible Indian attacks. *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of November 27, 1744. The tension even resulted in bitter squabbles over protocol, see "Carta informe a SM por este Cabildo, sobre que declare si está obligado a ir en cuerpo de ciudad a darle los días las vísperas de su santo al gobernador. 30 de octubre de 1744," printed in *Revista del Archivo General de Buenos Aires fundada bajo la protección del gobierno de la provincia por Manuel Ricardo Trelles* vol. 2 (1870).

<sup>20</sup>AGI: ACh. 215, "Domingo Ortiz de Rosas al Rey, Buenos Aires, 15 de enero de 1745. Nro 58."

<sup>21</sup>AGI: ACh. 317, "Expediente sobre la concesión de varios arbitrios a la ciudad de Buenos Aires para sus gastos y defensa. 1721-1748;" AGN: IX 19-2-2, "Expediente seguido para esclarecer si el Cacique Calelián y sus parciales han sido cómplices en el robo de haciendas, despojo de casas, muertes y cautiverios que ejecutaron los Indios en el Pago de Luján, por el mes de julio de 1744. Año de 1744;" "Carta informe representativa a S. M. por el Cabildo, con remisión del testimonio de autos obrados por

campana, Governor Ortiz de Rosas finally relinquished to the pressure. Following the councilmen's advice, he sent troops with orders to attack Calelián's *toldería* by surprise, and take all the Indians as prisoners. Most of them, about a hundred individuals, were deported to the Banda Oriental, to a Franciscan *reducción*. Calelián, together with a dozen of his "strongest" warriors, were put on a ship bound for Spain, so that His Majesty could "give them the destiny He considered most convenient."<sup>22</sup> But the Indians never made it to Spain. A few days after the ship had set sail from Montevideo, they mutinied. Using bolas that they had fashioned out of cannon balls from the deck guns, and out of thongs that they cut from hides in the ship's cargo, Calelián and his warriors were able to hold the crew hostage for several hours. In the end, however, a Spanish officer shot Calelián dead, and most of his warriors leaped into the sea in desperation.<sup>23</sup>

The dramatic events of 1744-45 left a bitter legacy. There was commotion all over the Indian world, as some *tolderías* retreated into the *tierra adentro*, and others hurriedly sought refuge in Concepción. Father Falkner, who was in Tandil trying to convince the *Serranos* to settle into a new mission, had a hard time explaining why *Porteños* had attacked a *toldería* of presumably "friendly Indians." Without one word, Sánchez Labrador tells us, Falkner's potential neophytes "picked up their tents and,

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el procurador general de esta ciudad, sobre el asalto que los indios hicieron en el pago de Lujan y Cañada de la Cruz, segun se le tiene protestado remitir a S.M. en representación de 30 del corriente - Octubre 30 de 1744," printed in *Revista del Archivo General de Buenos Aires fundada bajo la protección del gobierno de la provincia por Manuel Ricardo Trelles* vol. 2 (1870). *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 9: sessions of January 19, February 14, and July 13 of 1745.

<sup>22</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 9: session of July 19 of 1745. AGI: ACh. 215, "Domingo Ortiz de Rosas al Rey, Buenos Aires, 7 de septiembre de 1745."

<sup>23</sup>By a curious coincidence, Calelián and his men were put on board the same ship that was transporting Isaac Morris and the rest of the Wager's crew back to Europe. Through the words of another crew member— Mr. Walters, who changed the name of Calelián into "Orellana"— Morris left a dramatic description of Calelián's mutiny in his narrative. See Morris, *A Narrative*, 71-84.

searching for safety, went into the tierra adentro where they know the Spaniards can not find them.”<sup>24</sup>

The consequences of the events in the Spanish world are, as usual, better documented. The 1744 raid raised serious doubts within the Cabildo about whether diplomacy and missions were the adequate means to defend Porteños’ property and lives from the Indians. The position of Porteños such as Captain Juan de San Martín, who in 1740-42 had strongly voiced his opposition to any diplomatic arrangement, suddenly gained new ground among the councilmen. San Martín, in fact, was reinstated as Maestre de Campo shortly after a new governor, José de Andonaegui, arrived to replace Ortiz de Rosas in November of 1745.<sup>25</sup>

San Martín was part of a group of “persons experienced in rural matters” (*hombres prácticos de la campaña*), whom the Cabildo increasingly consulted regarding the Indian question. These “rural experts” took a firm stance against the Jesuit missions. They insisted that the missions helped rather than hindered the unsupervised traffic of Indians into the campaña, with deleterious consequences for Porteños’ safety. The adequate shield for the *lindero* of the river Salado, they argued, were not Jesuit fathers but Porteño militiamen.

I return to this emerging cadre of rural experts and their defense projects in the last section of this chapter. For now, it is enough to say that they succeeded in radically changing the councilmen’s perception of the Jesuit missionary endeavor. In 1739, the councilmen had heralded Concepción as an outpost of civilization into the Indian world. By 1752, the Cabildo saw Concepción instead as an outpost of Indian barbarism into the

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<sup>24</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Católico,” 98. In the mid-nineteenth century, Indians of the Pampas still remembered with bitterness Calelián’s fate. See Federico Barbará, *Usos y costumbres de los Indios Pampas y algunos apuntes históricos sobre la guerra de la frontera* (Buenos Aires: 1856), 10.

<sup>25</sup>AECEBA, serie 2, vol. 9: session of December 13, 1745.

Spanish world. As Procurador Orencio Antonio de Ezcurra put it, the mission served only as “a watchtower for the enemy” (*de atalaya para el enemigo*).<sup>26</sup>

## II. THE END OF THE MISSIONS

It would be a mistake, however, to attribute the end of the Jesuit missionary experiment in the Pampas exclusively to the councilmen’s change of mind after 1744. The Jesuits, it turned out, had also overstayed their welcome among Indians and, more precisely, among the Indians of the sierras.

From the beginning, the Serrano had not shown much eagerness to have the missionaries among them. The first time that father Strobel suggested to several Serrano caciques, who were trading at Concepción, that they could live a “rational and Christian life” in a mission in the sierras, they only gave an evasive answer in the form of a cold “We will see.”<sup>27</sup> In 1744, the Jesuits made their first attempt at expanding their endeavors to the sierras, but failed owing to the commotion following the raid on Luján. Their second try, in 1746, finally resulted in the foundation of Pilar. But, as explained in chapter seven, the Indians of the sierras tolerated the Jesuits only to the extent that they facilitated intercultural trade and gave a measure of safety to the Indians who ventured into Buenos Aires or its campaña. They resolutely opposed, furthermore, the attempts that the fathers made in 1746, and again in 1748, to penetrate farther into their territory, and to reach the *tolderías* of the famous cacique Bravo.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>See the Procurador’s petition of June 28, 1752, in AGI: ACh. 221, “Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752].”

<sup>27</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Católico,” 96-97.

<sup>28</sup>“José Cardiel a Pedro de Calatayud. Buenos Aires, 20 de diciembre de 1747,” in *José Cardiel*, ed. Furlong, 208.



A series of events in 1749 made clear that the Jesuits were not only failing Porteños' expectations of an orderly campaña free of rogue Indians. They were also failing Indians' expectations of riskless intercultural trade, and physical safety for those Indians going into Spanish territory. In early 1749, three Tehuelche caciques of the names Chanal, Sacachu, and Taychoco, who used to frequent Pilar, had agreed to settle themselves and their people in a new mission farther south in the Tandil Sierras. This was the seed of the abortive Desamparados. Father Strobel wrote a letter with the good news to his Jesuit superiors in Buenos Aires and, in mid-July, a delegation of Indians that included a brother of cacique Sacachu departed for Buenos Aires with the missive. After delivering the letter to the Jesuit college and meeting with father Querini, the Indians "went for a walk" to see the city, and try to sell some horses they had brought for that purpose.<sup>29</sup>

The timing could not have been worse. A few days earlier, on July 8, two large cart convoys that were on the road from Mendoza to Buenos Aires had been viciously attacked in southern Córdoba. The convoy's cargo had been ransacked and most of the passengers killed, their mutilated corpses left at the mercy of wild animals for several days. Among the dead, there were a number of "very well-known" merchants from Mendoza, who were escorting a valuable cargo that not only included wine and other goods, but also haversacks filled with silver (*zurrone de plata*). Córdoba authorities indistinctly blamed the Pampa, the Serrano, and the Auca Indians for the attack.<sup>30</sup>

The news of the attack caused great concern in Buenos Aires. The horrifying deaths of the passengers were compounded by the loss of the cargo, with which many

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<sup>29</sup>Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Católico," 119.

<sup>30</sup>AAC: Cabrera 17-3390, "Expediente sobre insulto de los indios Pampas a dos tropas de carretas. Córdoba, 1749." There were widespread suspicions among the authorities that the missing silver had been stolen not by the Indians, but by the soldiers who arrived after the attack.

Porteños were already counting. Sánchez Labrador explained that these Porteños were the most incensed by the attack and that, “without distinguishing between converted and savages,” they held equally responsible all Indians, “including the missions’ neophytes.”<sup>31</sup>

Among those incensed Porteños was Captain Juan de San Martín, who happened to run into the Indian delegation from the sierras. According to Jesuit father Andrés Carranza, who initiated legal actions against San Martín, the captain proceeded to “despotically search the said Indians, on the street and in broad daylight.” He found three *pesos* in possession of one of them, which the Indian had honestly obtained through the sale of the horses. But San Martín immediately called soldiers, who violently seized two of the Indians while the others fled and sought refuge in the Jesuit college. Among the seized Indians was cacique Sacachu’s brother. The soldiers put a rope around his neck, as if “he were an animal,” and dragged him by the hair to the jail, all the while kicking him and striking him with their sabers. In the turmoil, all the Indians were stripped of their horses, which had “gear of the best quality” on. Carranza finished by emphasizing that the Indians were “obviously discontented, extremely vexed, and justly distrustful of the advantages in subjecting themselves to the subtle yoke of the Gospel and the protection of the Spaniards.”<sup>32</sup>

When news of the events reached Pilar and the fledgling Desamparados, there were “cries and turmoil,” as the Indians feared for their relatives’ lives. A *chamán* (spiritual leader) told the Tehuelche that the Indians had been seized “not on the Spaniards’ whim, but on account of the letter that the father [Strobel] had written

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<sup>31</sup>Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 120.

<sup>32</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, “Petición del Padre Andrés Carranza al Alcalde Ordinario para que éste levante una información sobre las injurias y ofensas inferidas a los Indios Pampas y Serranos por los Españoles y averigüe quienes son sus autores [1749].”

against them.” By mid-September, as the Indian prisoners were killed in Buenos Aires in unclear circumstances, Indians threatened to take Strobel’s life in retaliation. In the end, the life of Strobel was spared but not that of Espinosa, the Spanish peon who took care of Pilar’s horse herd. Espinosa was murdered and stripped of his clothing, and all the horses under his care were taken away. When confronted by Strobel about the murder, a Tehuelche cacique angrily retorted that “just as some Spaniards had killed [the] two Indians” without the Governor’s blessing, as Strobel had explained to them, some Indians had killed Espinosa and stolen the horses, without the caciques’ blessing.<sup>33</sup>

After the events of 1749, the Jesuit venture in the sierras did not last much longer. In August of 1750, the cacique Bravo paid a visit to Pilar and Desamparados. He openly showed his dissatisfaction with the missions, which, he decried, “took vassals from him,” and “infringed on his lands.”<sup>34</sup> The following August, the fathers received credible warnings that Bravo had convoked a large army, and was ready to fall on the missions during the coming new moon. The new moon, father Strobel wrote, was “entering on the 29 of the month.” It found the missions of the sierras deserted, as the Jesuits and the few Indians willing to accompany them had hastily retreated to Concepción.<sup>35</sup>

After a little over a decade, thus, the Jesuit experiment in the Pampas was back in square one: by 1751, only Concepción was left standing. And its standing was, in fact, quite wobbly. The Cabildo had not only kept pressure on the Governor to close the mission but had also elevated formal complaints against it to the Council of the Indians

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<sup>33</sup>AGN: Bib. Nac. 189, "Matías Estróbel al Padre Procurador Andrés Carranza, Ntra Sra del Pilar, 17 de septiembre de 1749."

<sup>34</sup>Sánchez Labrador, "Paraguay Catholico," 129-130.

<sup>35</sup>AGN: IX 7-1-2, "Matías Estrobel a Sebastián Garau. Ntra Sra del Pilar, 17 de agosto de 1751."

in Spain. To buttress its case, in 1752 the Cabildo entrusted Procurador Orencio Antonio de Ezcurra with conducting a formal investigation to find out whether the mission was pernicious for the safety of Buenos Aires and its campaña. Ezcurra questioned Dragoons who had served in Concepción, militia and military officers, and ex-captives. In June of that year, the Procurador presented his findings before the Cabildo. Copies of the report were promptly given to Governor José de Andonaegui, and dispatched to Madrid as well.<sup>36</sup>

Ezcurra's findings confirmed the long-standing suspicions that the Cabildo had held since 1744. The mission Indians, most Dragoons reported, were not subject in any way to the fathers. The majority did not attend the religious services, and refused to work unless they were offered a good payment. They kept their "savage" lifestyle, spending weeks at a time hunting in the tierra adentro, and eating horsemeat instead of beef. Thanks to the freedom they enjoyed, Dragoon Blas de Espinosa elaborated, the mission Indians continuously communicated with the "enemy Indians" of the tierra adentro, of whom, furthermore, they were relatives. Dragoon Joaquín Marín added that the mission Indians transmitted information to the tierra adentro about "everything that happens in this city : when the militias are ready, when they are not, and when there is an expedition ready to go inland." Ex-captive María Rodríguez stated that she had heard her Indian captors discussing "the smallest things that happened in Buenos Aires," including the arrival of a ship to the port, and the escape of a group of prisoners from the jail. Dragoon Juan Galeano had seen with his own eyes, while he was deployed at Concepción, that the "enemy Indians" went frequently to Buenos Aires, mixed with the mission Indians. Militia captain Antonio Cabral added that, in these trips to the city, the

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<sup>36</sup>AGI: ACh. 221, "Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752]." AGI: ACh. 221, "Informes sobre la reducción de los Indios Pampas, 1752."

“enemy Indians” exchanged ponchos for weapons such as sabers. Finally, Rafael de Soto, who had spent a year as a captive in the tierra adentro, stated that his Indian captors had “all kind of weapons” bought in Buenos Aires, including “sabers, lances, knives, and daggers.”<sup>37</sup>

Ezcurra’s report concluded that, because of the collusion between the mission Indians and the Indians of the tierra adentro, the dwellers of the Buenos Aires campaña lived in a constant state of anxiety. They feared Indian attacks. They had stopped going to the woodlands located south of the river Salado, from where they used to obtain firewood, and timber to make their homes, corrals, and sheds. They lost cattle during droughts, because as the animals went inland in search of water the Indians took them, and did not allow their legitimate owners to identify and recover them. Many rural dwellers, the report emphasized, were simply abandoning their homes in fear and frustration, and moving to other jurisdictions.<sup>38</sup>

Repeating the advice given by Procurador Escobar in 1744, Ezcurra urged Governor Andonaegui to either dismantle the mission or relocate it to the Banda Oriental. That way, the fathers could continue their evangelizing endeavors on a site that was not harmful for the safety of Buenos Aires and its campaña.<sup>39</sup>

In the months following the 1744 raid to Luján, Governor Ortiz de Rosas and the councilmen had met several times with “rural experts” to determine the best means to

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<sup>37</sup>See the respective statements in AGI: ACh. 221, “Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752].”

<sup>38</sup>AGI: ACh. 221, “Informes sobre la reducción de los Indios Pampas, 1752.”

<sup>39</sup>See the Procurador’s petition of June 28, 1752, in AGI: ACh. 221, “Copia de la Informacion hecha sobre la Reducción de los Indios Pampas, que esta al cargo de los RRPP de la Compañía de Jesús [1752].”

ensure the safety of the campaña.<sup>40</sup> By late 1752, as Governor Andonaegui took steps to dismantle Concepción in the midst of much turmoil and rumors of renewed Indian attacks, the time seemed finally ripe to implement the alternative plans of these “rural experts.”

### *III. THE ASCENDANCY OF THE “RURAL EXPERTS”*

Who were these “rural experts”? Two petitions with proposals to ensure the safety of the campaña presented in 1751 before the Cabildo help answer this question. The petitioners were Captain Juan de San Martín and Lieutenant Juan Francisco Basurco. San Martín has already appeared several times throughout this dissertation. He was a prominent member of Porteño society, a member of the Cabildo and supporter of the Franciscan Order. His expertise and interest in rural matters, which had earned him the post of *Maestre de Campo*, stemmed from his many properties in the campaña. In addition to his house in Buenos Aires, San Martín owned two *chacras* and four *estancias* in the jurisdictions of Areco and Luján. The other petitioner, Juan Francisco Basurco, was also a distinguished *vecino* of Buenos Aires who had held Cabildo posts and belonged to religious organizations. Basurco owned, in addition to his house in the city, several *estancias* in the jurisdiction of Arrecifes where, he declared, he had slaves and *peons* tending to his livestock.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: sessions of September 26 and December 1, 1744; vol. 9: session of January 19, 1745.

<sup>41</sup>AGN: IX 19-2-4, "Expediente obrado a representación de D. Juan Francisco Basurco en orden a los insultos, robos y homicidios que han practicado los enemigos infieles en los Arrecifes y otros parajes, para cuyo remedio se trata del establecimiento de dos o tres compañías de gente del país asalariada, y de los arbitrios con que deba subvenirse al pago de sus sueldos. Año 1751;" AGN: IX 19-2-4, "Expediente obrado a representación del *Maestre de Campo* de Milicias de esta Capital D. Juan de San Martín, y del Tte Cnel D. Juan Francisco Basurco sobre que se tomen providencias eficaces para contener y castigar los insultos de los Indios enemigos que casi diariamente están

Clearly, San Martín and Basurco were well-to-do rural producers or *estancieros* (estancia-owners) who also held a respectable social position and wielded political power through their participation in the Cabildo. As recent scholarship has demonstrated, this was not the norm during colonial times. The vast cattle-ranching estancias and the mighty *estancieros* that came to be identified with the Pampas were a product of the nineteenth century. In the colonial period, the *estancieros* of Buenos Aires were, paraphrasing historian Carlos Mayo, landed but not necessarily powerful.<sup>42</sup> Small and medium-size rural establishments that mixed agriculture and ranching were the norm. Many rural producers, furthermore, did not technically own their land but rented or simply squatted.<sup>43</sup> Well-to-do rural producers like San Martín and Basurco not only were few but also a marginal group of the Porteño elite, which was dominated by the urban wholesale merchants who linked the city to the Atlantic and Andean markets. The

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ejecutando robos de las haciendas y muertes de sus dueños. Año 1751." For San Martín, see also footnote 22 in chapter 6.

<sup>42</sup>Mayo, "Landed but not powerful."

<sup>43</sup>A pioneering work that challenged the traditional image of the all-powerful *estanciero* for the colonial period can be found in Tulio Halperín Donghi, "La expansión ganadera en la campaña de Buenos Aires (1810-1852)," in *Los fragmentos del poder. De la oligarquía a la poliarquía argentina*, ed. Torcuato Di Tella and Tulio Halperín Donghi (Buenos Aires: Editorial Jorge Alvarez S.A., 1969). Only in the past decade, however, scholars have begun to mine the very scattered and labor-intensive data available to obtain a social portrait of the colonial *estancieros*. See, among others, Banzato, *La expansión de la frontera bonaerense*; Raúl Fradkin, ed., *La historia agraria del Río de la Plata colonial. Los establecimientos productivos*, 2 vols. (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993); Garavaglia, *Pastores y labradores*; Mayo, "Landed but not powerful;" Carlos A. Mayo, *Estancia y sociedad en la Pampa, 1740-1820* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 1996); Mayo and Latrubesse, *Terratenientes, soldados y cautivos*; Saguier, *Mercado inmobiliario*. For recent historiographical reviews on these advances, see Garavaglia and Gelman, "Rural History of the Río de la Plata;" Eduardo Míguez, "El capitalismo y la polilla. Avances en los estudios de la economía y la sociedad rural pampeana, 1740-1850," *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana Dr. Emilio Ravignani* Tercera serie, no. 21 (2000). For a dissenting perspective, see Eduardo Azcuy Ameghino, ed., *La otra historia. Economía, estado y sociedad en el Río de la Plata colonial* (Buenos Aires: Imago Mundi, 2002).

merchants, who controlled the Cabildo, were not necessarily interested in rural matters.<sup>44</sup>

This socio-economic context is necessary to understand the ambivalent position of the upper crust of rural producers that fulfilled the role of “experts in rural matters,” and the difficulties that they initially faced in translating their projects for the campaña into reality. In 1745, in the aftermath of the raid on Luján, the Cabildo had summoned San Martín and other “rural experts” to ask for their advice.<sup>45</sup> They presented a proposal that introduced, for the first time, the idea of a permanent “defensive war” against the Indians, to be waged on the “frontier area” of the river Salado. As explained in chapter six, the 1742 treaty had introduced a radical shift in Porteños’ territorial imagination by defining the river Salado as a *lindero* that clearly demarcated the end of the campaña and the beginning of the tierra adentro. The “rural experts” completed the shift with their 1745 proposal, which redefined the *lindero* as a militarized frontier on a state of permanent defensive war. Such defensive war was to be waged by rural dwellers under their militia duty, who were to be “constantly on the alert,” scouting the frontier to warn their officers of any suspicious Indian movements. Following the rural producers’ advice, the Cabildo set up a War Fund (*Ramo de Guerra*) with a series of emergency taxes to pay for daily rations of tobacco, yerba mate, and biscuits for the militiamen during the duration of their service.<sup>46</sup> The War Fund was also to provide some

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<sup>44</sup>For a study of urban merchants during the late colonial period, see Susan Migden Socolow, *The Merchants of Buenos Aires, 1778-1810. Family and Commerce* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), chapter 3. For merchants’ role in the local government, see María Andrea Nicoletti de la Quintana, “El Cabildo de Buenos Aires, 1776-1795” (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1988).

<sup>45</sup>*AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 9: session of January 19, 1745. The meeting had been called in early December, but postponed until San Martín, who was away in one of his estancias, was able to attend. See *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: session of December 1, 1744.

<sup>46</sup>There were many disagreements on the type of taxes to be levied for the War Fund. They eventually included a tax on local trade, which was to be levied on carts



undefined compensation for the militia officers, who in most cases were recruited from the rural producers' upper crust.<sup>47</sup>

A 1750 investigation by Procurador Manuel de Zuviría, however, showed that the defensive war had withered soon after it was declared in 1745. The emergency taxes had not obtained the needed ulterior approval by the Crown, and thus their collection was not enforced. Due to the War Fund's meager revenue, the defense of the frontier had ultimately fallen back to the upper crust of rural producers, and to the humbler rural dwellers dragged into militia service. Hence, several witnesses reported that Captain Juan de San Martín, by his own "vigilance, effort, and application in the service of His Majesty," had organized militia units in the northern jurisdictions, and maintained them constantly on the alert. Juan Francisco Basurco had also taken matters into his own hands. Lacking the experience of San Martín's, he had called the Maestre de Campo of Córdoba, Joseph de Zeballos, and offered him a plot of land in one of his estancias of Arrecifes. Basurco pointed out that Zeballos was "extremely experienced in the war against the Indians," and that he would hopefully "settle on that frontier" and contribute to the "the defense of the jurisdiction." San Martín's worthy efforts, Basurco pointed out, did not suffice to cover such a vast expanse of territory. Basurco also declared that

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coming from the campaña with rural products to be sold in the city. As two councilmen pointed out, the tax affected mostly the same humble rural dwellers—*vecinos labradores y campestres*—who were already providing the militia service. *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 9: sessions of January 19 and February 17, 1745. For the beginnings of the War Fund, see AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Cuentas del Ramo de Guerra del año de 1745." The Cabildo had established for the first time temporary emergency taxes to fund expeditions against the Indians in 1740, in the aftermath of the 1740 raid. See AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Copia de los autos que siguió el Procurador General en el Tribunal de los señores Gobernador y Oficiales Reales sobre que de Real Hacienda se sacase dinero para la defensa de esta ciudad del enemigo bárbaro. Año de 1740." *AECBA*, serie 2, vol. 8: sessions of November 27, 1740; February 27, 1741.

<sup>47</sup>Militia officers not only enjoyed social prestige but also powers of command over the rural population under militia service duty (generally, all males between sixteen and sixty years of age).

he had paid for the construction of a fort and for basic supplies for eighty men, for the duration of their militia duty (*cada vez que se acuartelan*). Finally, Joseph de Arroyo, who owned estancias in Magdalena and was a militia officer as well, also stated that he had paid out of his own pocket all the expenses incurred by his unit during three expeditions. He added that he had done so because the “the wretched militiamen clamored that they lacked even the most basic equipment” (*hallarse del todo destituídos*).<sup>48</sup>

These events show that, although in time of crisis the Governor and the Cabildo urgently asked for the advice of the most prominent rural producers, they then demurred in providing the resources needed to implement such advice. Governors Ortiz de Rosas (1742-1745) and José de Andonaegui (1745-1756) were saddled with fortifying the Banda Oriental and protecting it from Portuguese encroachment, a commission that, they argued, drained most of the royal revenue and resources. The Cabildo was perpetually short of funds, and the councilmen showed reluctance to spend scarce money on defending the campaña.<sup>49</sup> More generally, urban dwellers were not particularly eager to

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<sup>48</sup>See the statements by Joseph de Valdivia y Alderete, Domingo Morales, Juan Francisco Basurco, and Joseph de Arroyo in AGN: IX 19-2-3, "Expediente de informacion judicial recibida a pedimento del Sindico Procurador gral de esta Capital para demostrar la necesidad de la permanencia de los Vecinos milicianos que se hallan destacados en las fronteras para contener las invasiones y hostilidades de los Indios Pampas y Serranos. 1750-1751." Basurco's and Arroyo's initiative of paying out of their own pockets for the defense of the frontier had precedents. In October of 1738, the councilmen had discussed the need of building a fort in the jurisdiction of Arrecifes. The fort, a humble construction surrounded with a wooden palisade, was in place by early December, as at that time there are records of an Indian raid against it. The fort was located in the estancia of Francisco Díaz Cubas, and it is very likely that Díaz Cubas had paid for it. See AECBA, serie 2, vol. 7: October 28, 1738; AGN: IX 19-2-1, "Autos en testimonio de la sumaria información producida sobre la imputación hecha a varios vecinos soldados que fueron dicho año en la expedición contra los Indios Infieles. Año de 1738."

<sup>49</sup>In the aftermath of the 1740 raid, for instance, the Cabildo established, for the first time, temporary emergency taxes to pay for a “punishing expedition.” But then the councilmen wanted to use the revenue to pay for the new Cabildo building and jail. See AGN: IX 19-8-2, "Copia de los autos que siguió el Procurador General en el Tribunal de

volunteer their militia duty to defend the campaña.<sup>50</sup> In a 1745 letter to King Philip V, Governor Ortiz de Rosas explained that he had tried to organize a large punitive expedition into the tierra adentro, in response to the 1744 raid on Luján. He had started by calling the urban militias to the main plaza, with the established signal of a cannon shot. But only twenty men had responded, out of an estimated number of two thousand. The Governor tried again with another canon shot and drumming through the main streets, but still the number of men responding to the call did not reach thirty. The Cabildo, moreover, dragged its feet when the Governor requested a census (*empadronamiento general*) of urban dwellers, to find out the exact number of males between the ages of sixteen and sixty. Ortiz de Rosas finished his letter by emphasizing that the burden of the defense against the Indians was left exclusively to the rural militia units and their officers.<sup>51</sup>

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los señores Gobernador y Oficiales Reales sobre que de Real Hacienda se sacase dinero para la defensa de esta ciudad del enemigo bárbaro. Año de 1740." More research on Cabildo finances is needed. There are only a few studies, see Oscar Luis Ensínck Jiménez, *Propios y arbitrios del Cabildo de Buenos Aires, 1580-1821 (Historia económica de una gran ciudad)* (Madrid: ICI- Instituto de Estudios Fiscales- Sociedad Estatal Quinto Centenario, 1990); Oscar Luis Ensínck, "Reglamentación sobre los propios y arbitrios del Cabildo de Buenos Aires," *Investigaciones y Ensayos* 33 (1982).

<sup>50</sup>As explained in chapter 3, all males with residence in the Buenos Aires jurisdiction—either the city or the campaña—had the duty of providing “service of arms” in militia units whenever the Governor required it. As the population grew and diversified, different militia units emerged with distinctive characteristics. In the late seventeenth century, for instance, there were three urban units and five rural units. See “Joseph Martínez de Salazar a SM, acompañando un discurso documentado con un plano sobre la mejor defensa y conservación de aquel Puerto y Provincias. Buenos Aires, 21 de marzo de 1673” and “Andrés de Robles a SM, da cuenta del estado en que se hallaban las fortificaciones. Buenos Aires, 20 de octubre de 1674,” both printed in Peña, ed., *Documentos y planos* vol. 1: 145-159, 167-175. More research on militia units and, more generally, the militia service, is needed for this period. Both are only mentioned in passing in the existing works of military history, see Beverina, *El virreinato*; Juan Monferini, “La historia military;” Palombo and Pozzi Albornoz, *La organización militar*.

<sup>51</sup>AGI: ACh. 215, “Domingo Ortiz de Rosas al Rey, Buenos Aires, 15 de enero de 1745. Nro 58;” AGI: ACh. 215, “Domingo Ortiz de Rosas al Rey, Buenos Aires, 15 de enero de 1745. Nro 59.”

The middle decades of the eighteenth century were, however, decades of incipient changes. These changes favored both the ascendancy of the rural experts within the Porteño elite, and the eventual militarization of the frontier. Recent research has shown, on the one hand, that during this period urban merchants gradually began to invest in rural and semi-rural properties, as well as to include rural products in their multiple commercial activities. The growing Atlantic demand for hides during this period played a role in closing the gap between rural and urban interests.<sup>52</sup>

On the other hand, recent research has also emphasized the incipient consolidation of a rural elite in tandem with the expansion of public power into the campaña. During the first half of the eighteenth century, as the rural population increased, the church and the colonial state began to expand their institutional reach beyond Buenos Aires.<sup>53</sup> Thus, in 1730 the Church for the first time established parishes in each of the six rural jurisdictions surrounding the city.<sup>54</sup> Since 1733, the Cabildo began to appoint extra personnel to keep order in the campaña, because the two Alcaldes de la Hermandad, the councilmen pointed out, could not "repair all the wrongdoings

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<sup>52</sup>See Jorge Gelman, *De mercachifle a gran comerciante. Los caminos del ascenso en el Río de la Plata Colonial* (Universidad Internacional de Andalucía - Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires, 1996); Oscar José Trujillo, "Así en la ciudad como en el campo." *Negocios e inversiones de un comerciante de Buenos Aires, 1750-1773* (Buenos Aires: Paper presented at the Red de Estudios Rurales, Instituto Ravignani, Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2005). A list of merchant-estancieros, active in Buenos Aires between 1700 and 1810, can be found in Saguier, *Mercado inmobiliario*, 73-75. This trend was still incipient in the mid-eighteenth century, it became much more defined in the late colonial period.

<sup>53</sup>As mentioned in chapter 6, in 1744 there were about four thousand rural dwellers in the campaña. Population increase owed mostly to immigration from the neighboring jurisdictions of Paraguay, Córdoba del Tucumán, and Cuyo.

<sup>54</sup>AGI: ACh. 214, "Bruno de Zavala al Rey, Buenos Aires, 30 de marzo de 1731." In most cases, already existing chapels were designated as parish seats. These chapels were the hearts of the hamlets that began to dot the campaña, and the centers of social and civic life for the rural population dispersed in chacras and estancias.

committed” in a rural jurisdiction that extended “over seventy leagues.”<sup>55</sup> Cattle-rustling was chief among these wrongdoings. The Cabildo minutes for 1745-1750 are filled with complaints about “disorders” in the campaña, about cattle-rustling, and about persons who were not estancieros and clandestinely slaughtered cattle to produce tallow and hides.<sup>56</sup> A 1752 report by Governor Andonaegui spelled further the problem, fulminating against petty itinerant traders (*mercachifles* and *changadores*) who encouraged cattle rustling by traveling the campaña buying hides, tallow, and lard from persons “who do not own any livestock.”<sup>57</sup>

By mid-century, therefore, the interests of diverse parties began to converge in the campaña. As urban merchants invested in rural properties, they had a common interest with established rural producers in the protection of property rights. At the same time, these private individuals helped to enforce public order in the campaña through the available rural posts—such as militia officers, Alcaldes de la Hermandad, ad-

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<sup>55</sup>AECBA, serie 2, vol. 7: session of February 26, 1735, and January 13, 1736.

<sup>56</sup>AECBA, serie 2, vol. 9: sessions of June 10, December 5, and December 16, 1746; sessions of May 10, June 14, and July 20, 1747; sessions of September 16 and October 1, 1748; sessions of January 24, September 17, October 11, and October 31, 1749; sessions of April 16, July 23, and August 3, 1750.

<sup>57</sup>AGI: ABA 42, “Memorial sobre comercio de cueros, sevo, grassa, y granos en la jurisdizion de Buenos Aires y Santa Fe. 1752.” AECBA, serie 3, vol. 1: session of August 3, 1750. Many of these “cattle rustlers” and “persons who were not estancieros” were in fact humble rural producers who did not technically own their lands, and who lived close to a subsistence level. Carlos Mayo has referred to them as the “squatters of the Pampas” in *Estancia y sociedad*, chapter 4. As historians have recently argued, the mythical *gauchos* (Argentine cowboys) are to be found among these humble rural producers who enjoyed a relative freedom owing to the relatively easy access to land. Efforts on the part of well-to-do rural producers to push these “squatters” out of their precarious subsistence and into a needed rural proletariat—labor shortages were a constant during the colonial period—began to have some success only in the post-revolutionary period. For a recent review article, see Míguez, “El capitalismo y la polilla.”

hoc commissioners, and parish priests—which were not easy to fill because they provided little to none remuneration.<sup>58</sup>

This was the context in which, in 1751, San Martín and Basurco tried once again to rally urban support, and to commit public funds, for the transformation of the *lindero* of the river Salado into a militarized frontier.<sup>59</sup> Their plans went even further than the 1745 proposal. Concretely, Basurco proposed the immediate construction of two forts on the outskirts of the campaña. He also pointed out that rural dwellers were already overtaxed with their militia duty, and could not leave their homes and fields for the amount of time required to waging a successful defensive war against the Indians. To man the forts, therefore, Basurco proposed the creation of two permanent, paid companies of fifty “militia soldiers” each, with their respective officers. These companies were to be at the forefront of the defensive war, and receive the support of the rural population in their militia duty when needed.

By the end of 1752, San Martín and Basurco’s proposals were slowly becoming reality. The Cabildo established new taxes to revive the War Fund, and issued orders for

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<sup>58</sup>For recent scholarship on the incipient formation of a rural elite in tandem with state-building in the campaña, see María E. Barral and Raúl Fradkin, “Los pueblos y la construcción de las estructuras de poder institucional en la campaña bonaerense (1785-1836),” *Boletín del Instituto de Historia Argentina y Americana Dr. Emilio Ravignani* 3ra serie, no. 27 (2005); Marquiegui, *Estancia y poder*; Eugenia Néspolo, *Gobernar en la frontera bonaerense en el siglo XVIII. Manuel Pinazo, un estudio de caso* (Buenos Aires, 2005), Paper draft.

<sup>59</sup>AGN: IX 19-2-4, “Expediente obrado a representación de D. Juan Francisco Basurco en orden a los insultos, robos y homicidios que han practicado los enemigos infieles en los Arrecifes y otros parajes, para cuyo remedio se trata del establecimiento de dos o tres compañías de gente del país asalariada, y de los arbitrios con que deba subvenirse al pago de sus sueldos. Año 1751;” AGN: IX 19-2-4, “Expediente obrado a representación del Maestre de Campo de Milicias de esta Capital D. Juan de San Martín, y del Tte Cnel D. Juan Francisco Basurco sobre que se tomen providencias eficaces para contener y castigar los insultos de los Indios enemigos que casi diariamente están ejecutando robos de las haciendas y muertes de sus dueños. Año 1751.”

the construction of three instead of two forts on the outskirts of the campaña.<sup>60</sup> The forts traced a line north of and parallel to the river Salado, and were respectively located in the jurisdictions of Arrecifes, Luján, and Magdalena (see Map 8, p. 224). A paid company of militia soldiers was created to man each fort, holding the confident names of “The Invincibles,” “The Braves,” and “The Audacious.” All of them would ultimately be known as *Blandengues de la frontera*.<sup>61</sup> As before, rural dwellers were required to report for militia duty when needed, a duty they fulfilled under the orders of *Comandantes de Frontera* (Frontier Commanders) designated for each jurisdiction.

The success of Basurco’s proposal should not be overstated. The larger social and economic changes underlying it were only incipient. Well-to-do rural producers, despite their gradual ascendancy, were still a marginal group of the Porteño elite that was laboriously and haltingly trying to steer the power of the colonial state towards the campaña. Thus, lack of funds to maintain the new militarized structure on the frontier continued to be serious problem. The rural population, furthermore, chafed at the new demands imposed on them. There were the frequent desertions from the Blandengue companies—particularly when the salaries were not coming or considered insufficient—and rural dwellers opposed an obdurate resistance to their militia duty. Nevertheless, despite these obstacles, this time the militarized structure that redefined the *lindero* of the river Salado as a defensive frontier had arrived to stay. Beginning in 1778, this militarized structure provided the basis upon which Viceroy Vértiz built his “frontier line” (*línea de fronteras*) of Bourbon fame.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>The taxes were levied on the sale of hides, as well as on regional trade.

<sup>61</sup>See Roberto Marfany, “El cuerpo de Blandengues de la frontera de Buenos Aires,” *Humanidades; publicación de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación* 23 (1933).

<sup>62</sup>For the frontier military structures in the period after 1752, see Barba, *Frontera ganadera*, chapter 1; Marfany, “El cuerpo de Blandengues;” Carlos A. Mayo, “Sociedad

In making their case for the militarization of the frontier in the 1740s and early 1750s, the “rural experts” had vociferously insisted on the need to protect Spanish society from Indian savagery, and had described apocalyptic scenarios if their advice was not followed. In their 1751 proposals, both San Martín and Basurco berated the Cabildo for its slowness in responding to the campaña’s urgent troubles, and emphasized the connection between the defense of the frontier and the defense of Buenos Aires itself. Basurco warned that Indians’ savage livestock raids were ruining the campaña, and offered as proofs the plummeting tithe collected over cattle (*diezmo de cuatropea*) and the alarming number of rural dwellers who abandoned their homes in fear. A depopulated campaña, he ominously explained, would leave the city unprotected. If Indians saw that there were no “people to resist their repeated thefts,” they would advance towards the ring of estancias closer to the city. In a sort of domino effect (*eslabonados los insultos*), “Indian hostilities” would eventually ruin the whole jurisdiction, and reach Buenos Aires itself.<sup>63</sup>

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rural y militarización de la frontera en Buenos Aires, 1737-1810,” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 24 (1987). For recent general works on colonial rural history in which the frontier structures play a part, see Barral and Fradkin, “Los pueblos;” Oreste Cansanello, “Pueblos, lugares y fronteras de la provincia de Buenos Aires en la primera parte del siglo XIX,” *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 35 (1998); Marquiegui, *Estancia y poder político*; Carlos A. Mayo, “Sobre vagos, peones y malentretidos: el dilema de la economía rural en el período colonial,” *Anuario IEHS* 2 (1987); Mayo and Latrubesse, *Terratenientes, soldados y cautivos*; Eugenia Néspolo, “La singularidad de la frontera bonaerense y de sus relaciones interétnicas en el siglo XVIII (La Comandancia de Luján),” in *Signos en el tiempo y rastros en la tierra. III Jornadas de Arqueología e Historia de las regiones Pampeana y Patagónica*, ed. Mariano Ramos and Eugenia Néspolo (Luján: Universidad Nacional de Luján, Departamento de Ciencias Sociales, 2003); Néspolo, *Gobernar en la frontera*.

<sup>63</sup>See Basurco’s *representación* of January, 1751, in AGN: IX 19-2-4, “Expediente obrado a representación de D. Juan Francisco Basurco en orden a los insultos, robos y homicidios que han practicado los enemigos infieles en los Arrecifes y otros parajes, para cuyo remedio se trata del establecimiento de dos o tres compañías de gente del país asalariada, y de los arbitrios con que deba subvenirse al pago de sus sueldos. Año 1751.”



Historians have taken these claims for granted and, until recently, have uncritically reproduced them when trying to explain the militarization of the frontier. As the argument goes in its modern form, by the early 1700s over-hunting by both Porteños and Indians had caused feral cattle to dwindle. Porteños thus abandoned the “primitive” stage of *vaquerías*, and turned instead towards the more rational exploitation of livestock through open range cattle ranching, each *estanciero* keeping his herds within the limits of his *estancia*. These plump herds tempted the Indians of the Pampas, who by then included mostly “Auca” intruders. They thus responded to the extinction of feral cattle by raiding with renewed vigor the *estancias* of the Buenos Aires campaña.<sup>64</sup>

The fact that Indian raids became more frequent after the 1740s is unquestionable, particularly large-scale raids involving intertribal alliances. As shown in this dissertation, however, Indians were not all the same, and their interests were not limited to raiding for cattle but included as well intercultural trade and intercultural alliances. Indians’ desire for cattle, furthermore, was not some innate trait automatically triggered by the mere sight of a herd. As I have demonstrated when analyzing the events of 1740 and 1744, intercultural blunders and agitated intertribal politics offer more plausible explanations for livestock-raids than simplistic allusions to Indian “thievery.”

The same can be said about the context of the 1749-1752, when well-to-do *estancieros* such as San Martín and Basurco stepped up their demands for the Cabildo to defend the campaña against the “many fatal and tragic incidents”—in Basurco’s ornate language—of Indian attacks. A careful look at the available sources for this period

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<sup>64</sup>As explained in chapter four, Emilio Coni first articulated this argument for historians in *Historia de las vaquerías*. Coni’s argument was repeated in the early works on the “frontier wars” as well as on works on the history of cattle ranching. See for instance Horacio Giberti, *Historia económica de la ganadería argentina* (Buenos Aires: Solar Hachette, 1974), 48-51; Walther, *La conquista del desierto*, chapter 5. This argument still persists in recent scholarship. See for instance, Gascón, “La articulación de Buenos Aires;” León Solís, *Maloqueros y conchavadores*, chapter 1; Marquiegui, *Estancia y poder*, chapter 5.

revealed only a few small raids in the area of Arrecifes during 1750-1751. In the worst of them, Indians had surrounded the hamlet of Pergamino, burnt down the chapel, killed the priest and two “vecinos of importance,” wounded a dozen people, and stolen most of the cattle of the surrounding estancias.<sup>65</sup> The sources are too thin to allow for a close analysis of this or the other raids that took place during this short period. But it is worth remembering that this was a period of great unrest in the tierra adentro, and of heightened intercultural tensions. During 1749-1752, the Tehuelche Indians were imprisoned and murdered in Buenos Aires, the missions of the sierras were chaotically dismantled, and the fate of Concepción was surrounded by uncertainty until its final, violent dismantling in 1752.<sup>66</sup> None of this appears in Basurco or San Martín’s denunciations of Indian savagery, but this context should be the starting point of any analysis that takes Indians seriously as historical actors.

The assumption that feral cattle dwindled to nothing in the early eighteenth-century and that Porteño herds pulled Indians towards the campaña, meanwhile, also needs to be questioned and examined further. First, the often-repeated statement that feral cattle became extinct originates in impressionistic assessments by interested parties, such as estancieros practicing open-range cattle ranching who labeled feral animals as “runaways” in order to claim property rights over them.<sup>67</sup> Second, as late as

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<sup>65</sup>See Basurco’s written *representación* before the Cabildo in January, 1751, in AGN: IX 19-2-4, “Expediente obrado a representación de D. Juan Francisco Basurco en orden a los insultos, robos y homicidios que han practicado los enemigos infieles en los Arrecifes y otros parajes, para cuyo remedio se trata del establecimiento de dos o tres compañías de gente del país asalariada, y de los arbitrios con que deba subvenirse al pago de sus sueldos. Año 1751.”

<sup>66</sup>While dismantling Concepción, Porteño soldiers mistakenly shot an Auca Indian, and violently murdered a cacique. See AGI: ACh. 221, “Informes sobre la reducción de los Indios Pampas, 1752.” For a dramatic narrative, see Sánchez Labrador, “Paraguay Catholico,” 154-161.

<sup>67</sup>The fact that during this period “domesticated” and “feral” were not clear-cut categories adds complexity to the topic of the “extinction” of feral cattle, which certainly

1810, witnesses noticed extensive feral herds of livestock in the tierra adentro, specifically in the area of the salt flats.<sup>68</sup> Third and finally, as Raúl Mandrini has shown, by the late eighteenth century, Native societies in the Tandil and Ventana Sierras had developed a fully pastoralist economy that sustained large herds of cattle, horses, and sheep.<sup>69</sup> Porteño herds in the campaña, therefore, were neither the only nor the easiest option for Indian raiders coming from the Andean zone in search of cattle. The point here is not to deny that Indians raided for livestock—they did raid Porteños for that, as well as each other. The point is to emphasize that livestock raiding was more than simple “theft” done by innate “thieves.” As indicated by the anthropological literature on equestrian hunters and pastoralist nomads—to which the Indians of the trans-Andean world belonged—livestock raiding was a legitimate part of the economic strategies of these societies, and was embedded in a broader spectrum of social relations. Scholars hence should aim at reconstructing this broader spectrum of social relations that gives livestock raids their specific meaning, rather than simply enumerating instances of livestock raids.<sup>70</sup>

The denunciations of Indian savagery that underlay the militarization of the frontier, thus, covered a much more complex reality. Such reality included the colonial state’s need to organize the campaña and control rural dwellers, the Porteños elites’ desire to ensure their property rights, the rural producers’ eagerness to cement their position, and the inter-tribal readjustments in the tierra adentro following the debacle of

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merits further research. This research should include the input of disciplines like environmental sciences, in order to complement or correct the impressionistic assessments found in written sources.

<sup>68</sup>See Garavaglia, *Pastores y labradores*, 27.

<sup>69</sup>Mandrini, “Procesos de especialización.”

<sup>70</sup>In this regard, but for a later period, see Eduardo Crivelli Montero, “Malones: saqueo o estrategia? El objetivo de las invasiones de 1780 y 1783 en la frontera de Buenos Aires,” *Todo es Historia* 283 (1991).

the Jesuit missions. It should be noted, furthermore, that the militarization of the frontier introduced crucial changes for the future of intercultural relations. Not fully mistakenly, rural producers such as San Martín had seen the Jesuits as bothersome mediators who protected the Indians, and the missions as centers of unsupervised—and potentially destabilizing—intertribal and intercultural relations. Under the new scheme implemented in 1752, the forts that formed the frontier line became the new institutions to regulate intercultural relations, and the militia and military officers became the main official mediators. These new mediators were much less autonomous from the upper crust of estancieros (as the case of Joseph de Zeballos) when they were not one and the same (as the case of Juan de San Martín).

By the end of 1752, the Blandengue companies and the humble trio of forts had finally made palpable the transformation of the *lindero* of the river Salado into a militarized frontier. Notwithstanding the claims or hopes of rural producers such as Basurco and San Martín, this transformation did not isolate Spanish civilization from Indian barbarism. On the contrary, as recent research shows, this militarized line became the heart of a wide cross-cultural space of “conflict, negotiation, and cohabitation,” with distinct social relations and institutions.<sup>71</sup> But the militarized frontier did bring novel power dynamics to Porteño society, and a novel context for intercultural relations. It also marked the end of an era in which Porteños had imagined that the *campaña* melded seamlessly into the *tierra adentro*. From then on, in fact, the Pampas and the frontier fused into one in Porteños’ territorial imagination, as if they had always been synonymous.

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<sup>71</sup>Jones, “Conflict and Adaptation;” Ratto, *La frontera bonaerense*.

## CONCLUSIONS

One of the main galleries of the Buenos Aires Fine Arts Museum displays a large and striking canvass. Against the background of a stormy sky, the visitor faces a horde of fierce-looking Indians riding triumphantly across vast, barren-looking plains. One Indian clutches a bursting suitcase, others brandish sacred ornaments—most prominently, a tall silver cross—many in the back drive scores of horses and cattle. The leading rider's dark complexion stands out against a very pale and seemingly unconscious woman that he carries in his arms, her white dress down to her waist, and a tiny golden cross gleaming over her delicate chest. The havoc that the Indians have just wreaked on the world laying beyond the flat horizon is easy to imagine: ransacked chapels, plundered estancias and farms, devastated families, and dishonored husbands and fathers.

The painting, by Porteño artist Angel Della Valle, caused quite a stir in Buenos Aires when it was first exhibited in 1892. Della Valle titled it *La vuelta del malón*, which could be loosely translated as “The Indian raiders’ return.”<sup>1</sup> By 1892, however, Indian raids were rapidly becoming a distant memory to Porteños. Twelve years earlier, in 1880, the Argentine Army had finished the so-called “Conquest of the Desert,” a series of ruthless military campaigns against the Indian peoples of the Pampas. The campaigns

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<sup>1</sup>For a reproduction of the painting, the enthusiasm with which it was received by the Porteño public, and its place in turn-of-the-century Porteño cultural life, see Laura MaloSETTI Costa, “Las artes plásticas entre el ochenta y el centenario,” in *Nueva Historia Argentina. Volumen I: Arte, sociedad y política*, ed. José Emilio Burucúa (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana, 1999), 192–195. For a gender-based analysis of this and other nineteenth-century paintings of Indian raiders carrying Creole women away as captives, see Laura MaloSETTI Costa, “Mujeres en la frontera,” in *Historia de las mujeres en la Argentina. Tomo I. Colonia y Siglo XIX*, ed. Fernanda Gil Lozano, Valeria Silvana Pita, and María Gabriela Ini (Buenos Aires: Taurus, 2000).

had advanced the frontier, opened thousands of acres to white settlement, and set in motion an era of rapid economic growth. By 1910, Argentina was one of the worlds' main producers of beef and grain, and Buenos Aires boasted to be "the Paris of South America."<sup>2</sup>

When Porteños looked back from their turn-of-the-century perches, therefore, they saw the swift triumph of the forces of civilization. Della Valle's depiction of barren and violent plains dominated by savage Indian provided a strong symbolic justification for the "Conquest of the Desert," as the necessary first step towards an era of nation building and unending progress. There was no place for Native peoples in this new era. They were relegated to the edges of the national territory (placed in reservations), the national community (considered legal minors in need of tutelage), and the national history (regarded as the savage others who for centuries had stubbornly resisted the march of civilization).<sup>3</sup> The metaphor of the frontier as a clear-cut line separating civilized from savages became an organizing principle of that national history. Projected backwards, to the very moment of the Spanish arrival on the River Plate shores in the

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<sup>2</sup>See classic studies such as Ezequiel Gallo and Roberto Cortés Conde, eds., *La república conservadora* (Buenos Aires: Hyspamérica, 1986); James Scobie, *Revolution on the Pampas: A Social History of Argentine Wheat* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964); James Scobie, *Buenos Aires. Plaza to suburb, 1870-1910* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974). For a comparison of southward expansion in Argentina and westward expansion in the United States, see Jones, "Conflict and Adaptation," chapter 8.

<sup>3</sup> See Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata, "Living on the Edge (Still)," in *Contemporary perspectives on the Native peoples of the Pampa, Patagonia, and Tierra del Fuego*, ed. Claudia Briones and José Luis Lanata (Wesport & London: Bergin & Garvey, 2002). The Native peoples who survived the Indian wars suffered different fates. Some groups were removed from their homelands and relocated into reservations or missions along the new, faraway national borders. Many groups, however, were decimated by diseases such as tuberculosis, and by government policies that forced individuals to join the army or work in the agricultural industries that were developing in northern Argentina.

early 1500s, the frontier delimited the narrow territory where European settlement made historical knowledge possible.

This dissertation, which started as an effort to bring Indians back from the edges of history, became a history written from the edges of that narrow territory, that is, from the outskirts of the *campaña* and from the Pampas themselves. Writing from the edges was illuminating in more than one sense. It revealed a complex Indian world that emerged in the aftermath of the Spanish arrival in the southern tip of the Americas. This world was built upon Native networks of exchange that linked the Pampas to Chile, thereby cutting across colonial jurisdictions that have traditionally compartmentalized our knowledge. Writing from the edges also revealed a more complicated Spanish world, in which *Porteños* did not have center-stage but had to compete for our attention with Indian peoples as well as with settlers from the neighboring jurisdictions of Córdoba and Cuyo. Writing from the edges, finally, revealed that the Pampas were not barren plains or a mere backcountry, but a space where two complex cultural worlds, Indian and Spanish, overlapped. The frontier that late nineteenth-century *Porteños* imagined eternal was, in fact, a historical product of this overlap.

This perspective on the history of the pre-1776 River Plate provides a way out of the one-sided, ethnocentric interpretations that relegate Native peoples to the other side of the frontier, and to the role of eternal “savages” besieging Spanish civilization. As this dissertation has shown, the frontier had not always been there but took two centuries to emerge. And in the process, alternative paths were taken if only to be abandoned. The missions developed as trading centers and the Jesuits as intercultural mediators before intra-Spanish rivalries and intertribal tensions undid both. Skilled intercultural mediators like Cristóbal Cabral de Melo rose before losing ground to ascending rural producers such as Juan de San Martín. *Porteños* and Pampa Indians responded enthusiastically to intercultural trade fairs, although in the end intertribal differences

and intercultural violence prevented their consolidation. Reconstructing these alternative but aborted paths not only recovers the complexity and contingency of the past. It also shows that, as anthropologist Guillaume Boccara insists, frontiers were not lines reflecting pre-existing and fixed cultural differences (European and Indian, civilized and savages) but dynamic spaces where such cultural differences were produced and reproduced. Boccara rightly warns historians of the early Americas against falling into the ethnocentric traps set by the European-produced sources, which make it too easy to begin the story from “the frontier as a given, and the savage ethnic groups that lived there as ever-existing entities.”<sup>4</sup>

This perspective on the history of the pre-1776 River Plate also highlights the different character that the colonial encounter, and the Spanish colonial enterprise itself, acquired in what became the empire’s peripheries. As J. H. Elliott has recently pointed out, within one generation of the capture of Tenochtitlan in 1521, the Spaniards had fanned out through the continent, from New Mexico to the River Plate. This determination to range far and wide owed much to the early evidence of the wealthy Native polities encountered first by Cortés and later by Pizarro, and to the (reasonable) expectation that they would find more of the same.<sup>5</sup> The City of the Caesars in the River Plate, like the Golden Cities of Cibola in Northern New Spain or El Dorado in the South American tropics, were just alternative names for similar hopes pinned to different areas of the American space. We now know that these hopes were doomed to fail. Sixteenth-century Spaniards, however, could not know, and probably did not want to know, that Mexico and Peru were not the rule but the exception to what Europeans would encounter in the New World. While some of the Spanish wild-goose chases throughout the

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<sup>4</sup>Boccara, “Mundos nuevos,” 8.

<sup>5</sup>Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 36-37.



American continent ended in epic ordeals (Vázquez de Coronado and Lope de Aguirre come to mind) others morphed into less spectacular, more prosaic settlement endeavors. In the case of the River Plate, Buenos Aires settlers soon had to forgo their dreams of heroic conquest, quick wealth, and abundant Native servants for the hard reality of building a humble town on a land that offered fertile soil and feral livestock as the only economic resources.

The settlement of the River Plate, thus, does not fit easily into the normative story of the Spanish expansion into Americas, as such story is based on the conquest of the wealthy and populous Native polities of central Mexico and the Andean highlands. But the settlement of the River Plate does fit easily into the more general story of *European* expansion into the Americas. Beyond the Spanish cores (in Anglo, French, and Portuguese America, as well as in the Spanish peripheries), such expansion created multiple spaces like the Pampas, where European settlements lay contiguous to vast areas that remained under the control of “unconquered” or politically independent Native peoples. The ubiquity of the frontier, both as a reality and as a metaphor to understand intercultural relations between natives and newcomers throughout the Americas, is a clear symptom of this larger, continental story that cuts across “national” experiences.

Early in the twentieth century, Frederick Jackson Turner and Herbert Eugene Bolton produced the paradigms that defined, respectively, the study of Anglo and Spanish American frontiers. The Anglo frontier was constantly moving west in a recurring “procession of civilization” that started with the half-Indian trapper and ended with the pioneer farmer, and in the meantime begot democracy, freedom, and American

exceptionalism.<sup>6</sup> The Spanish frontier was more lethargic, stifled by absolutism and suffused with Catholicism, but compensated these shortcomings with the missions. Missions, which according to Bolton became “well-nigh universal” along the Spanish frontiers, “made for the preservation of the Indians, as opposed to their destruction, so characteristic of the Anglo-American frontier.”<sup>7</sup>

Recent revisionist scholarship has challenged these contrasting narratives. Historians of the United States have engaged in a sharp debate about the Turnerian legacy of exceptionalism, and have rejected the triumphalist frontier epic of pioneer progress and Indian retreat.<sup>8</sup> Historians of Latin America, meanwhile, have produced Indian-centered mission studies that have seriously questioned the benevolence of the

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<sup>6</sup>Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *Selected Essays of Frederick Jackson Turner: Frontier and Section*, ed. R. A. Billington (Englewood Cliffs, 1961). For a lucid assessment of Turner’s work and influence, see Nobles, *American Frontiers*, Introduction.

<sup>7</sup>Bolton, “The Mission,” 21. David Weber discusses Turner’s influence on Bolton, as well as Bolton’s own work and legacy in David J. Weber, “Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands,” *American Historical Review* (2001).

<sup>8</sup>For critiques of American exceptionalism and arguments in favor of recasting the study of the frontier from a global perspective, see Michael Adas, “From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon: Integrating the Exceptionalist Narrative of the American Experience into World History,” *American Historical Review* December (2001); Patricia Nelson Limerick, “Going West and Ending Up Global,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (2001). Many scholars have implicitly or explicitly discarded the concept of the frontier for alternative, more inclusive metaphors that underscore the ambiguities of conquest, the ubiquity of cross-cultural accommodation, and the persistence of hybrid formations. See Colin Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore: 1997); Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: 1987); Richter, *Facing East*; White, *The Middle Ground*. Those who are in favor of keeping the “F word,” meanwhile, have repudiated Turner’s Eurocentric assumptions, emphasized intercultural penetration, and recast frontier expansion as lessons in conquest and colonization. See Stephen Aron, “Lessons in Conquest: Towards a New Western History,” *Pacific Historical Review* 63 (1994); Kerwin Lee Klein, “Reclaiming the “F” word, or Being and Becoming Postwestern,” *Pacific Historical Review* 65, no. 2 (1996); Nobles, *American Frontiers*.

missionary endeavor.<sup>9</sup> These revisionist currents, several scholars have argued, indicate that the time is ripe for a more comparative and common “American” history.<sup>10</sup>

This dissertation adds to these recent debates by showing that, *pace* Bolton, missions did not become “well-nigh universal” on the frontiers of Spanish America. The study of the Spanish colonial experience in peripheral areas that did not conform to the mission-frontier model is a step towards this more comparative and common American history. When writing this dissertation, in fact, I found the most useful guidance not in Latin American frontier scholarship but in recent studies of early North America that have challenged the Turnerian narrative by emphasizing the multifaceted overlapping of Indians and Euroamericans.

More importantly, this dissertation shows that, in frontier areas, indigenous actors and local geographies shaped the colonial experience as much as European settlers’ intentions and cultural baggage. In the River Plate, Spanish settlers tried to replicate proven colonial institutions such as the *encomienda* and Old World practices such as cattle ranching, but the Pampas environment and its Native inhabitants demanded radical adaptations, to the extent that the final results barely resembled the originals. The full understanding of the Spanish colonization experience in the River Plate, furthermore, requires our full understanding of the trans-Andean Native world that stretched beyond the area of Spanish settlement. The internal dynamics of this

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<sup>9</sup>Deeds, “Pushing the Borders;” Langer and Jackson, eds., *The New Latin American Mission History*.

<sup>10</sup>Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders;” Cynthia Radding, *Landscapes of Power and Identity. Comparative Histories in the Sonoran Desert and the Forests of Amazonia from Colony to Republic* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2005). From an Atlantic perspective not exclusively focused on the frontier but, more generally, on the dynamics of European expansion in the Americas, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors. Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550-1700* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2006); Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*.

Native world not only shaped intercultural relations in the Pampas. They also shaped Porteño society itself.



## **APPENDICES**



## APPENDIX 1.

### 1.1. GOVERNORS OF PARAGUAY – RIVER PLATE (1593-1618)

<i>Date of taking office</i>	<i>Governor's name</i>
1593	Hernando de Zárate
1594	Juan Ramírez de Velasco
1597	Hernando Arias de Saavedra (Hernandarias)
1598, January	Diego Valdés y de la Banda
1602, August	Hernando Arias de Saavedra (Hernandarias)
1609	Diego Marín Negrón
1613, July	Francés Beaumont y Navarra
1614, September	Hernando Arias de Saavedra (Hernandarias)

### 1.2. GOVERNORS OF THE RIVER PLATE (1618-1770)

<i>Date of taking office</i>	<i>Governor's name</i>
1618, November	Diego de Góngora y Elizalde
1623, April	Alonso Pérez de Zalazar
1624, September	Francisco de Céspedes
1631, December	Pedro Esteban Dávila
1637, November	Mendo de la Cueva y Benavídez
1640, November	Francisco de Avendaño y Valdivia
1640, December	Ventura de Muxica
1640, December	Pedro de Rojas y Acevedo
1641, July	Andrés de Sandoval
1641, October	Jerónimo Luis de Cabrera
1645, June	Jacinto de Lariz
1653, February	Pedro Baigorri Ruiz
1660, May	Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta
1663, July	José Martínez de Zalazar
1674, March	Andrés de Robles
1678, July	José de Garro
1682, February	José de Herrera y Sotomayor
1691, April	Agustín de Robles
1700, February	Manuel de Prado y Maldonado
1702, July	Alonso Juan de Valdés e Inclán
1708, February	Manuel de Velazco y Tejada
1712, March	Juan José de Mutiloa y Andueza
1714, April	Alonso de Arce y Soria
1714, December	José Bermúdez de Castro
1715, May	Baltasar García Ros
1717, June	Manuel del Barranco y Zapián
1717, June	Bruno de Zavala
1734, March	Miguel de Salcedo y Sierralta
1742, June	Domingo Ortiz de Rosas
1745, November	José de Andonaegui
1756, November	Pedro de Cevallos
1766, August	Francisco de Paula Bucareli y Ursúa
1770, September	Juan José de Vértiz y Salcedo

## APPENDIX 2

2. 1 ENCOMIENDAS GRANTED IN BUENOS AIRES. 16<sup>TH</sup> AND 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES

<i>Year</i>	<i>Encomendero</i>	<i>Vida**</i>	<i>Cacique or "Nation"</i>	<i>Number of encomendados</i>
1583	Ruiz de Ocaña, Juan	First	Telomian Condé	?
1589	Ruiz de Ocaña Juan	First	Homasquepen	?
1602	Muñoz Bejarano, Alonso		Caguas	?
1603	Gómez de la Puerta, Miguel		Auyere	?
1603	Bermúdez, Antonio		Yosembes	?
?	Gil Negrete, Carlos		Tubichaminí	?
?	Muñoz Bejarano, Juan		Tubichaminí	?
?	Morán, Felipe		Tubichaminí	?
?	Díaz Caballero, Alonso			?
?	de Esquivel, Juan		Tubichaminí	?
?	Gribeo, Domingo		Velachichis	?
1670	Ponce de León, Cristóbal	First	Serranos	8 *
1673	Guerrero de Ayala, Alonso		Tubichaminí	?
			Colcol	
1673	Cabral de Ayala, Sebastián	First	Vilachichís	25 *
1677	Fernández Agüero, Ignacio	First	Serranos	9 *
1677	Díaz, Gregorio		Don Jacinto	27
1677	Flores, Sebastián		Don Manuel Flaco	29
1678	de Saavedra, Pedro	First	Bagual	4 *
1678	Ponce de León, Ignacio	First	Serranos	15 *
1678	de la Cruz, Juan Gerónimo	First	Laguneros	9 *
1678	Jofré de Arce, José	First	Serranos	32 *
1678	Nieto de Humanes, Juan	First	Laguneros	6 *
1678	del Pozo y Silva, Juan	First	Tubichaminí	12 *
1678	Ruiz de Ocaña, Juan	Third	Tubichaminí	11 *
1678	Vacant		Serranos	6 *
1678	Bautista de Aguirre, Juan		Tubichaminí	2 *
1683	Guerrero de Ayala, Alonso		Tubichaminí	54
			Colcol	
1683	Maciel del Aguila, Francisco		Tubichaminí	37
1683	Isidro Antonio de Velasco		Laguneros	5 *

\*Only adult males

\*\* Encomiendas were usually granted for three "vidas," that is, they were valid for three generations (the encomendero, his son, and his grandson). After that, they reverted to the Crown and could be reassigned to a different Spaniard.

Based on: "Autos y diligencias obrados sobre las encomiendas de indios...1676-1677," printed in Gandía, *Francisco de Alfaro*, 547-557; AGI: ACh. 104, "Autos en testimonio de la merced de encomienda de Indios de nación Tubichaminis y Serranos hecha a Francisco Maciel del Aguila. 1673-1684;" AGI: Ach. 105, "Autos en testimonio de la merced de encomienda de Indios de nación Tubichaminis y Serranos hecha al Capitán Alonso Guerrero de Ayala. 1673-1687;" AGN IX-19-1-4, "Solicitud de Alonso Muñoz

Bejarano. Buenos Aires, 24 de septiembre de 1602;" AGN 19-1-4, "Solicitud de Antonio Bermúdez. Buenos Aires, 7 de marzo de 1603;" AGN 19-1-4, "Solicitud de Miguel Gómez de la Puerta. Buenos Aires, marzo de 1603;" AGN 40-8-4, "Expediente de merced de encomiendas de indios a Sebastián Cabral de Ayala;" ME: AGI F 3, "Confirmación de encomienda de indios de nación serranos a Ignacio Fernández Agüero. 13 de octubre de 1677;" ME: AGI G 30, "Joseph de Herrera y Sotomayor al Rey. Buenos Aires, 24 de noviembre de 1686."

## 2. 2 REDUCCIONES IN BUENOS AIRES. 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

<i>Reducción Name</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Governor</i>	<i>Location</i>
San José del Bagual	1610	Diego Marín Negrón	Areco river, fifteen leagues from Buenos Aires
?	1611	Diego Marín Negrón	Luján river
Tubichaminí	1615	Hernandarias de Saavedra	Ensenada de Barragán. Later relocated to the south, on the Todos los Santos river
Santiago del Baradero	1616	Hernandarias de Saavedra	Arrecifes river
Nuestra Señora de la Estrella	1616	Hernandarias de Saavedra	Fifteen leagues from Buenos Aires
Of the <i>campana</i>	1628	Francisco de Céspedes	?
Of the Laguna de San Lucas	1635	Pedro Esteban Dávila	Eight leagues from Buenos Aires
Of the Laguna Cuculo	1662	Alonso de Mercado y Villacorta	Twelve leagues from Buenos Aires
Of the Laguna de Aguirre	1676	Andrés de Robles	Eight leagues from Buenos Aires

Based on: González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 58; "Hernandarias de Saavedra al Rey. Buenos Aires, 25 de mayo de 1616" *DHG* vol.1:226; "Instrucción de Don Pedro Esteban Dávila al Capitán Amador Baz de Alpoin. Buenos Aires, 8 de octubre de 1635" printed in Schmidl, "Tres documentos;" ME: AGI F 6, "El Gobernador Andrés de Robles al Rey. Buenos Aires, 24 de mayo de 1676;" *AECBA* serie 1, vol. 11: session of February 6, 1659.



## 2. 3 NATIVE POPULATION IN REDUCCIONES NEARBY BUENOS AIRES. 1620

<i>Reducción</i>	<i>Converted Adults</i>	<i>Non- converted Adults</i>	<i>Youngsters</i>	<i>Total</i>
San José	59	99	70	228
Tubichaminí	33	131	89	253
Baradero	121	18	58	197
Total	213	248	217	678

Taken from González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 56

### APPENDIX 3

#### INTERREGIONAL AND ATLANTIC TRADE (1600-1640)

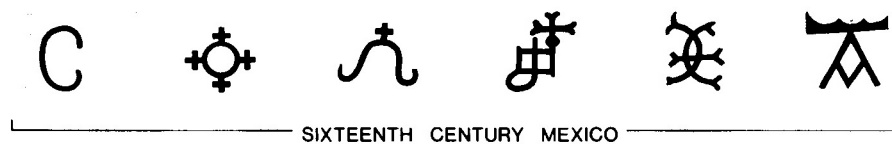
	FROM BUENOS AIRES	TO BUENOS AIRES
POTOSÍ	European imports Cattle on the hoof African slaves Mules?	Silver
GOVERNORSHIP OF TUCUMAN	European imports African slaves	Carts      Spanish leather Salt      Flour Soap      Blankets Wool cloth
CHILE AND CUYO	European imports African slaves	Wine      Dried fruit Olives      Blankets Cloth      Wool cloth
PARAGUAY	European imports African slaves	Wine      Yerba mate Honey      Tobacco Wood      Sugar Wax      Carts Cotton
BRAZIL	Silver      Flour Jerked beef      Tallow Hides	African slaves      Sugar Wine      Wood Salt      Lime Bricks
AFRICA	Silver      Hides Jerked beef      Flour	African slaves
EUROPE	Silver      Hides Wool	Clothing      Iron tools Wine      Furniture Fabrics      Oil Salt

Taken from González Lebrero, *La pequeña aldea*, 71

## APPENDIX 4

SELECTED LIVESTOCK BRANDS<sup>1</sup>

COLONIAL BUENOS AIRES



<sup>1</sup>Brands for colonial Buenos Aires taken from *AECBA*. Other brands taken from Jordan, *North American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*, 28.

**APPENDIX 5**

**CATTLE EXPORTS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

**AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

**5.1 BULL-HIDES SHIPMENTS FROM THE PORT OF BUENOS AIRES TO BRAZIL, 1609-1616**

SELECTED YEARS	TOTAL HIDES SHIPPED
1609	80
1612	2,040
1613	350
1614	4,740
1616	9,854

Based on Coni, *Historia de las vaquerías*.

**5.2 BULL-HIDES SHIPMENTS FROM THE BUENOS AIRES PORT IN REGISTRO**

**AND ARRIBADA SHIPS, 1648-1702**

FIVE-YEAR PERIOD	TOTAL HIDES SHIPPED	ANNUAL MEDIA	PORT ACTIVITY
1648-1652	80,000	16,000	8 ships
1653-57	200,000	40,000	20 ships
1658-62	470,000	94,000	47 ships
1663-67	130,000	26,000	13 ships
1668-72	128,000	25,600	16 ships
1673-77	138,000	27,600	17 ships
1678-82	118,000	23,600	15 ships
1683-87	72,000	14,400	8 ships
1688-92	36,000	7,200	6 ships
1693-97	32,000	6,400	4 ships
1698-1702	40,000	8,000	4 ships

Based on Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*.

## 5.3 CATTLE-ON-THE-HOOF EXPORTED FROM BUENOS AIRES TO THE ANDEAN MARKET,

1643-1702

FIVE-YEAR PERIOD	TOTAL NUMBER OF HEADS	ANNUAL MEDIA
1643-1647	54,411	10,882
1648-1652	12,020	2,404
1653-1657	54,427	10,885
1658-1662	43,700	8,740
1663-1667	14,000	2,800
1668-1672	16,464	3,292
1673-1677	16,000	3,200
1678-1682	64,766	12,953
1683-1687	43,800	8,760
1688-1692	59,000	11,800
1693-1697	155,542	31,108
1698-1702	49,500	9,900

Based on Moutoukias, *Contrabando y control colonial*.

## 5.4 HIDE EXPORTS THROUGH THE ASIENTO, 1708-1739

SELECTED YEARS	COMPANY	HIDES SHIPPED	ANNUAL MEDIA
1708-1712*	French Guinea Company	174,000	43,500
1715-1726*	South Sea Company***	218,242	19,840
1726-1738*	South Sea Company***	192,445	9,194
1713-1733**	South Sea Company***	363,646	18,182

\*Magnus Morner, "Panorama de la sociedad del Río de la Plata durante la primera mitad del siglo XVIII." *Estudios Americanos* 17, no. Enero-Febrero (1959): 203-216.

\*\*Nelson, George. "Contraband trade under the Asiento, 1730-1739." *The American Historical Review* 51, no. 1 (1945): 55-67.

\*\*\*Trade through the South Sea Company was (at least theoretically) interrupted several times during the contract period owing to war between Spain and England. The annual media is therefore only a very rough estimate. For instance, when discounting war years from the period 1726-1738, the annual media of shipped hides rises from 9,194 to 24,055. Scattered Cabildo records confirm these higher numbers, showing negotiations with Asiento officials for annual deliveries that ranged between 20,000 and 40,000 bull hides. See for instance *AECBA Serie 2*, vol. 3, session of September 7, 1715; session of September 19, 1718.

## 5.5 TOTAL ANNUAL HIDE EXPORTS (ASIENTO PLUS REGISTRO SHIPS), 1700-1750

PERIOD	ANNUAL MEDIA
1700-1725	75,000
1725-1750	50,000

Based on Garavaglia, *Pastores y labradores*, 221.

## APPENDIX 6

## VAQUERÍA PERMITS GRANTED BY THE BUENOS AIRES CABILDO

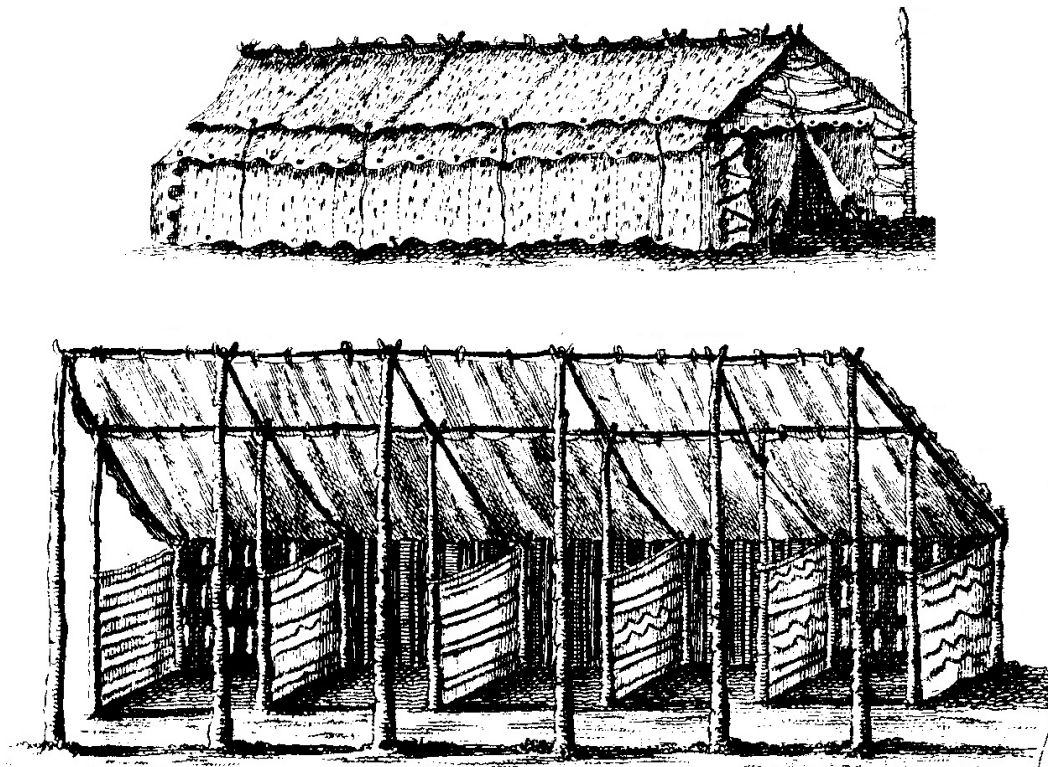
## DURING THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

DATES	ACCIONERO	HEADS OF CATTLE
1611-03-07	Morán, Gonzalo	40
1612-01-09	Domínguez Palermo, Joan	30
1613-11-13	Quintero, Juan	20
1613-12-02	Vega, Diego de	300
1619-01-14	Muñoz, Alonso	200
1619-01-07	Rodrigo, Martín de	200
1619-02-18	Cobos, Cristóbal	200
1619-02-05	Barragán, Juan	200
1623-01-30	Trigueros, Diego de	200
1664-09-02	Ferreyra, Manuel	2,000
1665-09-14	Betancur, Catalina de	6,000
1665-09-14	Díaz Caballero, Gregorio	1,500
1666-01-11	Lavayen, Luis de	3,000
1666-02-08	Villegas, Luis de	3,000
1670-11-08	Arze, Juan Jufre	3,000
1671-01-26	Herrera Guzmán, Felipe	2,000
1671-02-12	Olguín de Ulloa, Juana	2,000
1673-03-22	Casas, Juan de las	2,000
1673-03-22	Peñalba, Toribio de	2,000
1673-04-14	Rocha Lobo, Antonio de	3,000
1673-10-05	Gayoso, Tomás	6,000
1674-08-07	Maldonado, Juan Arias	12,000
1679-02-21	Betancur, Catalina de	1,000
1679-04-19	Peñalba, Toribio de	2,000
1679-07-11	Paz y Serrano, Ana	6,000
1679-07-11	Rojas y Acevedo, Amador	4,000
1679-09-11	Rivera Mondragón, Hernado de	1,500
1680-06-06	Ferreira, Alonso	3,000
1680-12-16	Arias Maldonado, Juan	2,000
1680-12-16	Matías de Tapia Roxel, Isabel	2,000

Source: AECBA, corresponding dates

## APPENDIX 7

A LONG TENT OR *TOLDO*, ACCORDING TO THOMAS FALKNER



“The tent is built with poles and horse-skins.

The interior space is divided by means of woven blankets.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Falkner, *A description of Patagonia*, Appendix.



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## CURRICULUM VITA

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## COLLEGES ATTENDED

- 2000-2008 *Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*  
Philosophy Doctor – History
- 1998-2000 *New School for Social Research*  
Master of Arts – Sociology and Historical Studies
- 1990-1996 *Universidad Nacional de Buenos Aires (Argentina)*  
Licenciatura (Bachelor of Arts) – Sociology

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Fall 2007 Guest Lecture, “Spanish Colonialism: A Peripheral Perspective”  
*Latin American Studies Colloquium, Washington University in St. Louis*
- Fall 2006 Temporary Instructor of History  
*Augusta State University*
- Fall 2005 Panelist, “Poder, conflicto y redes sociales en espacios fronterizos latinoamericanos”  
*National History Conference, Rosario, Argentina*
- Fall 2003 Instructor  
*Rutgers University at Newark*
- Summer 2003 Instructor  
*Rutgers University at New Brunswick*
- April 2002 Co-Chair, 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Warren Susman Memorial Graduate Student Conference  
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## PUBLICATIONS

- 2008 “Asegurar la ‘defensa y custodia’ de las campañas: Vaquerías y diplomacia interétnica en las sierras pampeanas durante la primera mitad del siglo XVIII,” *Trabajos y Comunicaciones*, Revista de la Universidad Nacional de la Plata (forthcoming).
- 2000 “Historia del tercer sector en Argentina,” (with Inés González Bombal) in Mario Roitter and Inés González Bombal, eds., *El tercer sector en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: CEDES-John Hopkins University).
- 1996 *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: Argentina*, with Mario Roitter and Inés González Bombal, eds., (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Institute for Policy Studies)