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## Creating Mosquitia: mapping Amerindian spatial practices in eastern Central America, 1629–1779

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### Abstract

By examining the spatial practices of Mosquito Indians, this paper contends that colonial maps reflect the activities of colonized peoples. Situated between the Spanish and British empires in eastern Central America, the Mosquito carved out an independent kingdom for themselves between 1629 and 1779, and far beyond. My argument is that many period maps respond to, and re-present, Mosquito spatial practices. I define a spatial practice as any political feat, economic activity, forceful claim, or social performance that asserts and demonstrates authority over people and space. Through a chronological and thematic reconstruction of primary documents, my objective is to show that colonial subjects in general, and the Mosquito in particular, can and do contribute to their own spatialized representations through their actions and discourses. Without Mosquito spatial practices, there would have been no Mosquitia to map, only some other place.

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At the end of the seventeenth century, Spanish writers stopped referring to a little-known eastern province of the Audiencia of Guatemala as Taguzgalpa and began to call it *la costa de mosquitos*. The origin and meaning of the new name were not well disseminated until 1711 when the Bishop of Nicaragua, Benito Garret y Arloví, informed King Philip V of Spain about the ‘most horrific sacrileges and barbaric cruelties’ committed by ‘zambos called mosquitos.’ The bishop explained how, over the last decade, *zambos* had crossed the mountains like

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‘unforeseen lightening bolts’ to attack Spanish haciendas: ‘Sometimes they appear in Olancho, Trujillo, and the lands of Segovia, other times in the lands of Chontales, other times in the Matina Valley in the province of Costa Rica, and other times they come by many and varied rivers and [even] enter and travel upon Lake Nicaragua.’ During these assaults, the Mosquitos profaned altars, violated ‘the honor of noble women,’ enslaved Christian Indian men to sell to the British in Jamaica, and took Indian women as their own. As the bishop bluntly put it, extermination of the Mosquito was essential: ‘no expedition could be more sacred: for if one demarcated the lands of the mosquitos they would touch the majority of my Bishopric and part of that of Honduras.’<sup>1</sup>

In a royal decree that served as his reply, King Philip ordered a well coordinated military assault against the Mosquito, among the largest in the Americas to date. He also directed that a map be made ‘of the coast from Portobelo [Panama] to Trujillo [Honduras], delineating upon it the mosquito populations’ and showing the rivers they use ‘to enter and harass Spanish lands.’<sup>2</sup> Two years later, the judge of the Audiencia, Don Ambrosio Santaella, complied (Fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> The graphic duality of Santaella’s map underscores the rhetorical binaries that Spanish authors used to distinguish civilized, Catholic Spaniards from barbaric, sacrilegious zambos.<sup>4</sup> The map emphasizes this distinction by using an enlightened space to show the civil Spanish domain, and a vegetative green to offset the savage realm of the Mosquito. The border arc explicitly demarcates a *costa de mosquitos*, a space of Afro-Amerindian dominion. Contributing actors in the creation of this new colonial space include Spanish writers, the map-maker, and, most importantly, the Mosquito people themselves.

A map created by the late Bernard Nietschmann in 1995 demonstrates how Mosquito activities helped produce a colonial space in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Fig. 2).<sup>5</sup> Here, Nietschmann characterizes the same Mosquito attacks mentioned by Spanish writers as homeland defense, the territorial projection of a sovereign ‘Miskito nation.’ In all accounts, however, the location of Mosquito attacks literally and figuratively delineates a *costa de mosquitos*. This example helps illustrate that Amerindian activities can co-create colonial spaces by influencing their representations. Though contemporaneous maps chart the transition to the namesake *costa de mosquitos*, they are, in fact, responding to and re-presenting Mosquito spatial practices.

<sup>1</sup> Informe de D. Fray Benito Garret y Arloví, Granada, 30 Nov. 1711, in: M.M. Peralta (Ed.), *Costa Rica y Costa de Mosquitos* (hereafter CRCM), Paris, 1898, 43–63.

<sup>2</sup> Real Cédula, Madrid, 30 Abril 1714, CRCM, 63–74.

<sup>3</sup> A. Santaella y Melgarejo, Guatemala, 3 Oct. 1716, CRCM, 75–87; Mapa de lo principal de la Provincia de Nicaragua ..., 1716, 31 × 43 cm., pen and watercolor, Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI) MP-Guatemala 17. The map was likely drawn by Sebastian de Aranciuia Isasi, the Governor of Nicaragua.

<sup>4</sup> These spatialized distinctions are the hallmark of period letters, see Relación del viaje de Fray Pedro de La Concepción por la Taguzgalpa ... Año de 1699, in: H.M. Leyva (Ed.), *Documentos Coloniales de Honduras*, Tegucigalpa, 1991, 211–218; Carta a la Audiencia de Guatemala 1704, *Colección de Documentos Referentes a la Historia Colonial de Nicaragua* (hereafter CDHCN), Managua, 1921, 3–5; Carta a la Presidente, Guatemala, 26 July 1704, CDHCN, 6–7; Consejo de Indias, AGI Guatemala 665, 7.

<sup>5</sup> In this paper I use the most common historical spelling ‘Mosquito’ to describe the indigenous people instead of the current spellings of Miskitu, Miskito, or *miskito*.



Fig. 1. Re-presenting Mosquito spatial practices. From A. Santaella, *Mapa de lo principal de la Provincia de Nicaragua ...*, 1716, AGI MP-Guatemala 17. Courtesy of the Archivo General de Indias.

### Colonial maps and Amerindian spatial practices

While the assertion that colonial maps can reflect the spatial practices of colonized peoples is probably acceptable to most readers, few studies actually demonstrate it. The challenge of re-constructing how Amerindian spatial practices might establish a relationship with colonial representations of space is enormous. Quite apart from defining what constitutes a spatial practice, scholarship is confronted by at least three types of problems applicable to both manuscript and printed maps: (1) locating colonial maps in the context of their production across different scales; (2) a limited knowledge of how specific maps were put together; and (3) an uncertain grasp of who saw or was influenced by a given map. With manuscript maps, these problems are often compounded by archivist tendencies to separate them from accompanying textual materials. But there are intellectual barriers to this sort of research as well, including the tendency of scholars influenced by Brian Harley to view colonial maps as one-way representations of power, objects that inscribe rather than reflect power.<sup>6</sup> My point is not to challenge this perspective, but rather to better understand how Amerindian practices may have inspired specific colonial maps and, therefore, how Amerindians fit into the larger social history of colonial spatial constructions.

<sup>6</sup> A gentle critique of Harley's approach has been growing; see B. Belyea, *Images of power: Derrida/Foucault/Harley*, *Cartographica* 29 (1992) 1–9; H. Scott, *Contested territories: arenas of geographical knowledge in early colonial Peru*, *Journal of Historical Geography* 29 (2003) 166–188. For an introduction to the Harley corpus see J.B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*, in: P. Laxton (Ed.), Baltimore, 2001.

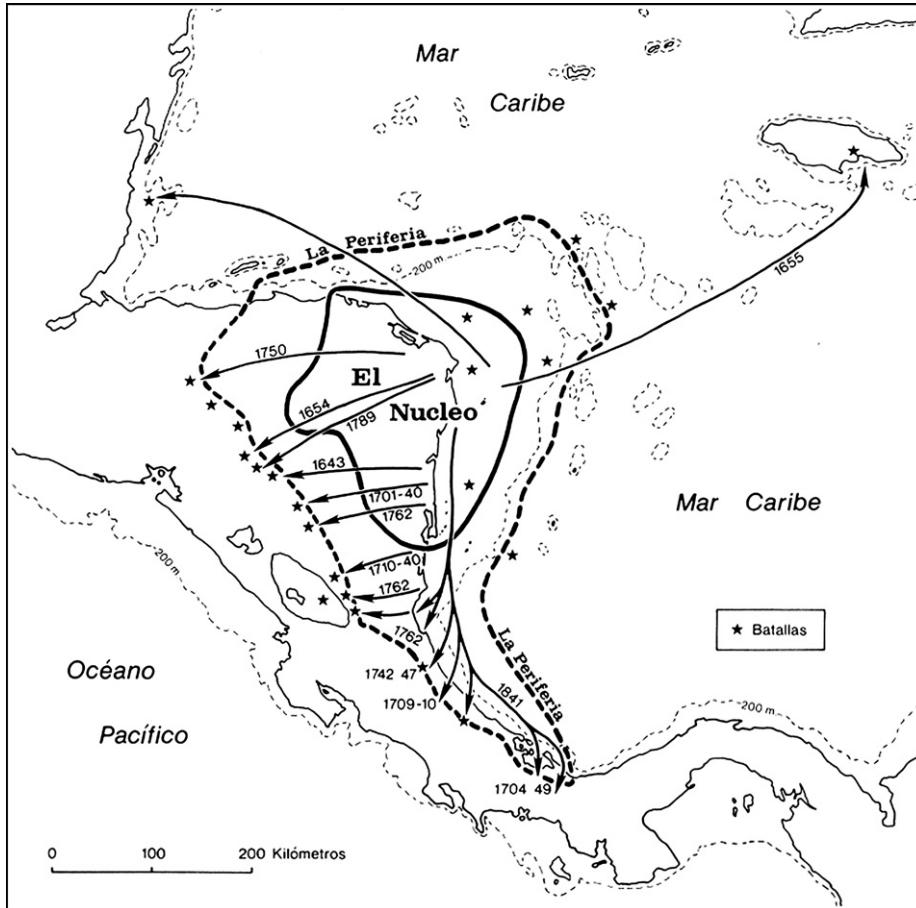


Fig. 2. ‘The defense of the core and the periphery of the Miskito nation, 1640–1849.’ From B. Nietschmann, *Conservación, Autodeterminación y el Área Protegida Costa Miskita, Nicaragua, Mesoamérica* 29 (1995) 1–55. Courtesy of Plumsock Mesoamerican Studies.

Research on Amerindian contributions to colonial maps has grown significantly since the 1970s. The scope of this research is large, but three foci stand out. The first concerns the recovery of Amerindian geographic knowledge embedded in colonial maps. Early explorers often legitimated their own drawings by referencing native collaborators, or conversely by drawing spatial relationships that they could not possibly have deduced on their own. Knowing something about the context of specific European travels thus allows historians of cartography to trace Amerindian signatures.<sup>7</sup> A second concentration examines pre-Hispanic and early colonial maps drawn with

<sup>7</sup> See W.P. Cumming (Ed.), *The Southeast in Early Maps*, Third Edition, Chapel Hill, 1998; R.A. Rundstrom, *Maps, man, and land in the cultural cartography of the Eskimo (Inuit)*, Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1988; J.B. Harley, *New England cartography and the native Americans*, in: Laxton (Ed.), *The New Nature of Maps* (note 6), 169–195; G.M. Lewis (Ed.), *Cartographic Encounters: Perspectives on Native American Mapmaking and Map Use*, Chicago, 1998; D. Woodward and G.M. Lewis (Eds), *The History of Cartography*, Vol. 2, Book 3, Chicago, 1998.

indigenous idioms that tend to privilege temporal relationships over spatial ones. This work has been heavily concentrated in Mesoamerica, and focuses on understanding the cosmology and representational practices of the cultures that made the maps.<sup>8</sup> A third focus situates colonial maps within the discourses that enable them, including Amerindian discourses. This approach examines maps as abstractions that hide the processes through which space is negotiated, represented and rendered meaningful. In addition to asking why a map is made, this focus asks who sees, contests, and is empowered by a map.<sup>9</sup> This conceptualization closely relates to my own, but I have only tenuous evidence to suggest that colonial maps directly influenced Mosquito thought: that is why an analysis of their spatial practices is so important.

In the present paper I attempt to thicken the notion of cartographic contribution by thinking about how Amerindian spatial practices influence their graphic and colonial representation, especially on the margins of colonial rule where Amerindians had significant autonomy.<sup>10</sup> In this sense, I heed Neil Whitehead's call to recover an Amerindian 'historical praxis,' and to view its manifestations 'as an integral part of the production of colonial text,' including maps. In his critique of ethnographic representation, Whitehead argues that a good deal of colonial source material is 'jointly produced' by native peoples, and that Amerindian notions have recirculated in colonial texts as if they were solely derived by Europeans. Whitehead demonstrates, for example, that Raleigh's map of El Dorado from circa 1599 'gave cartographic form to native ideas concerning the units of cultural and geographical significance in the region.'<sup>11</sup> While Whitehead is specifically concerned with figures of speech and the use of ethnography to elicit them, I am more

<sup>8</sup> D. Leibsohn, Colony and cartography: shifting signs on indigenous maps of New Spain, in: C. Farago (Ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America, 1450–1650*, New Haven, 1996, 265–281; B.E. Mundy, *The Mapping of New Spain: Indigenous Cartography and the Maps of the Relaciones Geográficas*, Chicago, 1996; E.H. Boone, *Stories in Red and Black: Pictorial Histories of the Aztec and Mixtec*, Austin, 2000; M. Oudijk and M. Jansen, Changing history in the Lienzos de Gueva and Santo Domingo Petapa, *Ethnohistory* 47 (2000) 281–331; R.L. Kagan, *Urban Images of the Hispanic World, 1493–1793*, New Haven, 2000.

<sup>9</sup> J.B. Harley, Maps, knowledge and power, in: D. Cosgrove and S. Daniels (Eds), *The Iconography of Landscape*, Cambridge, 1988, 277–312; M. Sparke, A map that roared and an original atlas: Canada, cartography, and the narration of nation, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 88 (1998) 463–495; D.G. Burnett, *Masters of all they Surveyed: Explorations, Geography and a British El Dorado*, Chicago, 2000; R.B. Craib, Cartography and power in the conquest and creation of new Spain, *Latin American Research Review* 35 (2000) 7–36; M.H. Edney, The irony of imperial mapping, in: J.R. Ackerman (Ed.), *The Imperial Map: Cartography and the Mastery of Empire*, Chicago, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Scholars have termed these marginal places middle grounds, tribal zones, frontiers, peripheries, and borderlands. A key distinction is often the extent and form of colonial influence; see R. White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, New York, 1991; N.L. Whitehead, Tribes make states and states make tribes: warfare and the creation of colonial tribes and states in Northeastern South America, in: R.B. Ferguson and N.L. Whitehead (Eds), *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, Santa Fe, 1992, 127–150; D.J. Guy and T.E. Sheridan (Eds), *Contested Grounds: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire*, Tucson, 1998; J. Adelman and S. Aron, From borderlands to borders: empires, nation-states, and the peoples in between in North American history, *The American Historical Review* 104 (1999) 814–841; C. Daniels and M.V. Kennedy (Eds), *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500–1820*, New York, 2002; D.J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment*, New Haven, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> N.L. Whitehead, The historical anthropology of text, *Current Anthropology* 36 (1995) 54, 58; see also N.L. Whitehead, Indigenous cartography in lowland South America and the Caribbean, in: Woodward and Lewis (Eds), *The History of Cartography*, (note 7), 324; N.L. Whitehead (Ed.), *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Emprye of Guiana by Sir Walter Raleigh*, Norman, 1997.

concerned with purposeful Amerindian spatial practices and reconstructing ethnohistorical geographies as a means to deduce them.

My use of the term spatial practice is intended to conceptualize space as a process, as something being produced through material and discursive relationships that are grounded in real biophysical processes.<sup>12</sup> I define a spatial practice as any political feat, economic activity, forceful claim, or social performance that asserts and demonstrates authority over people, resources, and space. I will show that the Mosquito did this in any number of different ways. For example, they proudly espoused the independence of ‘their own country’ by virtue of ‘never having been conquered.’ They saw themselves as a nation among nations represented by a defined polity that others recognized in negotiation. Diplomatic relationships, in turn, shaped and reflected distinct Mosquito political jurisdictions and territorial authority within a unifying polity known as the Mosquito Kingdom. Mosquito authority, in turn, was manifested through material practices such as inspecting one’s district, issuing land and resource concessions, taxing commerce, exacting tribute, and by demanding presents. In the process, Mosquito leaders syncretized European dominion symbols such as flags, uniforms and canes: symbolic objects that constituted and signified Mosquito power—an effective force that colonial empires sought to manipulate and map.

To discuss these topics I divide my paper into four chronological sections that underscore different themes. In *Forging a nation*, I first examine the cultural origins of the Mosquito people and their relationship to an ambivalent British empire through the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1713). Next I trace the spatial consolidation of *The Mosquito Kingdom*, an internally divided Afro-Amerindian polity. In *New geographic imaginations* I then consider how British settlement relied upon and strengthened Mosquito power and how this played out in period maps through the end of the Seven Year’s War (1756–1763). Finally, in *Emblems of authority*, I show how the Mosquito syncretized colonial symbols and wielded them to authorize their dominion. In each section, I briefly contextualize the production of specific maps in the social and political processes I describe. My objective is to show that colonial subjects can and do contribute to how spatial representations portray them.

## Forging a nation

Little is known about the early history of the Mosquito Indians. The ethnic term Mosquito was not widely known until after the publication of William Dampier’s *A New Voyage Round the World* in 1697. The popular book contained a ‘A Map of the Middle part of America’ by Herman

<sup>12</sup> My ideas of space follow the work of political ecologists who have adapted the urban-capitalist ‘production of space’ scholarship of Henri Lefebvre and others to rural-colonial and frontier settings that are significantly circumscribed by biophysical systems and human relations to them. H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, D. Nicholson-Smith (Trans.), London, 1991; J.M. Jacobs, *Edge of Empire: Postcolonialism and the City*, New York, 1996; K.S. Zimmerer and T. Bassett (Eds), *Political Ecology: An Integrative Approach to Geography and Environment-Development Studies*, New York, 2003; R. Peet and M. Watts (Eds), *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*, Second Edition, New York, 2004; K.H. Offen, *Ecología Cultural Miskita en los años 1650–1850*, *Wani* 30 (2002) 42–59; K.H. Offen, *Narrating place and identity, or mapping Miskitu land claims in Northeastern Nicaragua*, *Human Organization* 62 (2003) 382–392; K.H. Offen, *Historical political ecology: an introduction*, *Historical Geography* 32 (2004) 19–42.

Moll that inscribed the ethnic label ‘Moskitos’ over a territory that the British soon referred to as the Mosquito Shore.<sup>13</sup> A few other adventurous tales also highlighted the Mosquito in words and maps. For example, Nathaniel Uring’s ‘A New Draught of the Bay of Honduras,’ drawn around 1712 but published in 1726, shows ‘Muscheto Indian’ settlements.<sup>14</sup> In contrast to these initial but relatively late global introductions, regional Mosquito toponym variants embellish charts since the early sixteenth century.<sup>15</sup> Without a doubt, the placenames and the origins of the ethnic term are mutually entangled.<sup>16</sup>

During the colonial period, Mosquitia river falls served as *de facto* political boundaries between the more coastal Mosquito and the upland Parrastra, Mayangna (Ulwa, Twahka, and Panamahka), and Pech peoples—at least by the mid-seventeenth century (Fig. 3). As one British writer put it: ‘At the back of [the Mosquito] are several other small Nations, some in Commerce with the Mosquitomen, some with the Spanish, others divided between them, both sides contending for their alliances.’<sup>17</sup>

The first sustained Mosquito contact with Europeans came in 1629 when English Puritans settled Santa Catalina (Providence) Island, 125 miles off the isthmus of Central America (Fig. 3). Although Spanish forces ousted several hundred settlers in 1641, by then the settlers had established trade relations with the Mosquito. Significantly, they took the son of a Mosquito chief to London, and when he returned he was known as the Mosquito king—the first of an uninterrupted dynasty that lasted 250 years.<sup>18</sup> Providence settlers were also the first to locate the ‘Indians of the Cape,’ the Mosquitia, and the utility of both on the proverbial British map. Indeed, Providence Island investors took out ‘a separate charter of incorporation for the mainland trade in Central America,’ giving them the exclusive and self-proclaimed right to trade on the coast with ‘diverse heathen people.’<sup>19</sup>

Though the Spaniards never made the connection, up to 200 African slaves of both sexes escaped from Providence and capsized just north of Cape Gracias a Dios in the same year they took the island. When survivors reached the Mosquitia they intermarried with one Mosquito group and were subsequently called *zambos mosquitos* by Spanish writers and eventually Sambo Mosquito by the British. Tensions emerged between the Sambo and the ‘original Indians,’ or

<sup>13</sup> W. Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World*, in: A. Gray (Ed.), 1697; reprint, London, 1927.

<sup>14</sup> N.L. Uring, *A History of the Voyages and Travels of Capt. Nathaniel Uring*, London, 1726, 222–223.

<sup>15</sup> Anon., Portolano, c. 1540, British Library, Add. Ms. 21592, parts 17–18, panel 3; D. Gutiérrez, *Americae sive quartae orbis partis nova et exactissima descriptio*, Antwerp, 1562; P. Pastoret, Portolano, 1587, British Library, Eg. 1513, chart 41; J. Oliva, *Portolano [Chart of North and Central America and West Indies]*, 1613, British Library, Eg. 819, map 3, 4.

<sup>16</sup> K.H. Offen, The Sambo and Tawira Miskitu: the colonial origins and geography of Mosquito differentiation in Eastern Nicaragua and Honduras, *Ethnohistory* 49 (2002) 319–372; K.H. Offen, Race and place in colonial Mosquitia, 1600–1787, in: L. Gudmundson and J. Wolfe (Eds), *Between Race and Place: Blacks and Blackness in Central America and the Mainland Caribbean* (Submitted for publication).

<sup>17</sup> Hodgson to Lords, Black River, 1 April 1744, Public Record Office (hereafter PRO), Colonial Office (hereafter CO) 323/11, 67–68.

<sup>18</sup> A.P. Newton, *The Colonising Activities of the English Puritans; the Last Phase of Elizabethan Struggle with Spain*, New Haven, 1914; K.O. Kupperman, *Providence Island, 1630–1641: The Other Puritan Colony*, Cambridge, 1993.

<sup>19</sup> Certain inducements to well minded people, University Microfilms International, 1645, 9; see also Kupperman, *Providence Island* (note 18), 95–102.

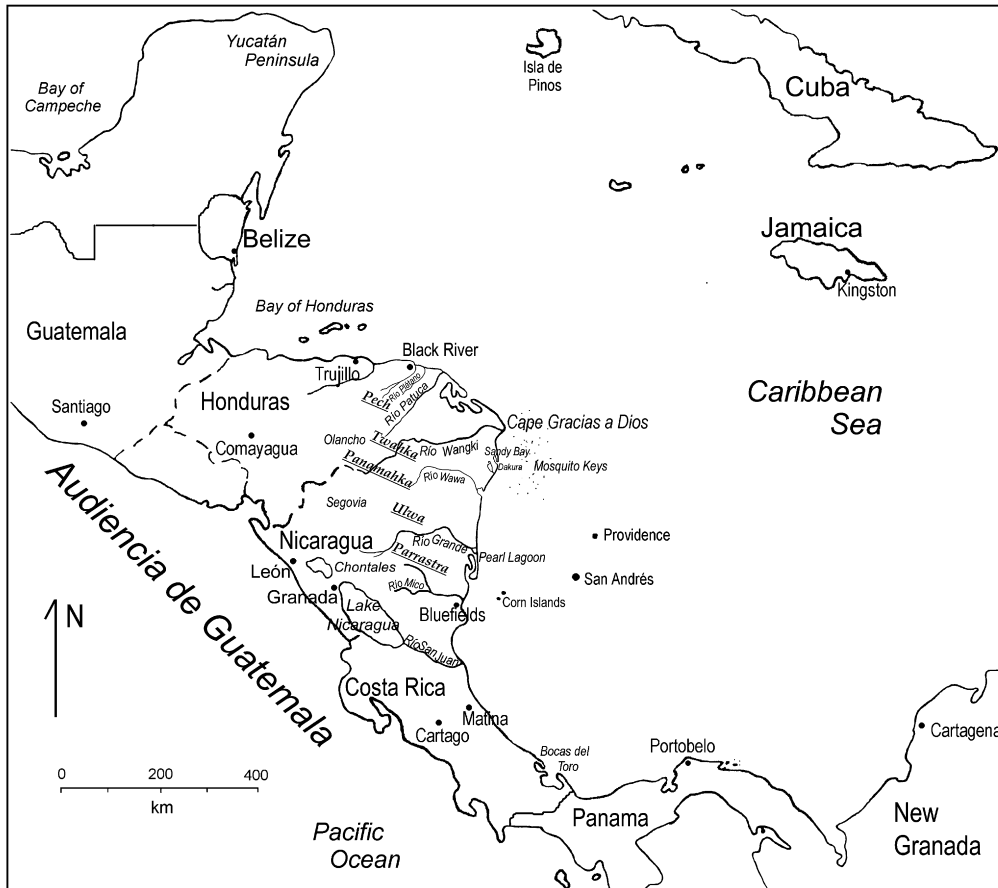


Fig. 3. Eastern Central America and the far western Caribbean, showing places and peoples mentioned in the text. Drawing by the author.

Tawira Mosquito.<sup>20</sup> As Uring heard in 1711, ‘Some of [the Tawira Mosquito] separated from the main Body ... and gave this Reason for it’:

some People who were not of the ancient Inhabitants, but new Upstarts, were got into the Government, and behaved themselves with so much Pride and Insolence that they could not bear it, and therefore had separated from the main Body. They related the Matter thus: A Ship with Negroes by Accident was cast away on the Coast, and those who escaped drowning mixed among the Native Muscheto People, who intermarried with them, and begot a Race of Mulattoes, which were the People that Society could not brook should bear any kind of Command amongst them.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup> B. Potthast-Jutkeit, Indians, blacks and zambos on the Mosquito coast: 17th and 18th century, *América Negra* 6 (1993) 53–65; Offen, The Sambo and Tawira Miskitu (note 16); K.H. Offen, Raza y Lugar en La Mosquitia Colonial, 1600–1787, *Wani* 40 (2005) 6–32.

<sup>21</sup> Uring, *Voyages and Travels* (note 14), 154–155; Offen, The Sambo and Tawira Miskitu (note 16), 329, 340–341.

Although the Sambo and Tawira were divided geographically, their combined politics constituted a Mosquito Kingdom—one of the most overlooked Afro-Amerindian polities in the Americas.

The Mosquito and the Mosquitia played prominent roles during the heyday of privateering in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. During this time the Mosquito came to see themselves as a nation among nations, as co-equals in the western Caribbean. In turn, Europeans gave the Mosquito ‘a great deal of Respect,’ and Mosquito seamen were ‘esteemed and coveted by all Privateers.’ The Mosquito worked on Jamaican sloops where they earned ‘good Wages,’ and were ‘treated in the friendliest manner by the Commanders, being always their companions, and called Brother.’<sup>22</sup>

According to British authors, the Mosquito considered themselves ‘subjects of His Majesty,’ a claim that often placed Mosquito activities in the purview of Jamaican policy. The important narrative of Mosquito fidelity to the English began in earnest when Hans Sloane described how:

One King Jeremy came from the Mosquitos (an Indian People near the Provinces of Nicaragua, Honduras, and Costa Rica) ... with others of his country, to beg of the Duke of Albermarle, Governor of Jamaica, his Protection, and that he would send a Governour thither, with the power to War on the Spaniards, and Pirats. This he alleged to be due his Country from the Crown of England, who had in the Reign of King Charles I [1625–1649] submitted itself to him.<sup>23</sup>

The Duke of Albermarle then sent King Jeremy ‘at his request, a select number of officers, in order to receive from him the cession of the dominion of his country, and of himself, his chiefs, and people, to the crown of Great Britain.’

This [Jeremy] performed in the most public manner, at Sandy Bay on the Mosquito Shore; [Jeremy] ordered the English colours to be hoisted ... and having cut from the soil a turf of earth, he placed it in a mahogany box or case, and delivered it to the English officers, as a perpetual token of the sovereignty and protection of his country.<sup>24</sup>

These one-sided accounts have created the impression that the Mosquito were British lackeys serving the empire. Yet, we know that the Mosquito thought about these relationships quite differently based on how they exploited the power that such associations confirmed.<sup>25</sup>

A few printed maps from the early eighteenth century began to chart the growing Anglo-Mosquito alliance. Herman Moll’s ‘Map of the West-Indies’ from the first edition of *The World Described* (1715) modifies the same ethnic label ‘Moskitos’ that he initiated in William Dampier’s *New Voyage* (1697).<sup>26</sup> Moll’s early maps likely reflect Dampier’s exaltation of Mosquito

<sup>22</sup> Dampier, *New Voyage*, 15–17, 67; Uring, *Voyages and Travels* (note 14), 161; see also J. Burney, *History of the Buccaneers of America*, 1816; reprint, New York, 1950, 91–95, 105, 164.

<sup>23</sup> H. Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados, S. Christopher and Jamaica*, 2 Vols, Vol. I, London, 1707, 76.

<sup>24</sup> R. White, *The Case of His Majesty’s Subjects having Property in and Lately Established upon the Mosquito Shore in America*, London, 1789, S7. Cutting a turf is the quintessential British act of possession. P. Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession: Europe’s Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640*, New York, 1995.

<sup>25</sup> B. Potthast, *Die Mosquito-Küste im Spannungsfeld Britischer und Spanischer Politik 1502–1821*, Köln, 1988.

<sup>26</sup> After his death, Moll’s ‘Map of the West-Indies’ dropped the Moskitos marker. H. Moll, *The World Described...*, London, 1715; H. Moll, *The Atlas Minor*, London, 1736.

virtues, as Moll and Dampier were part of the same intellectual circle. As Dennis Reinhartz has shown, ‘their shared vision came to influence British policy and public opinion.’<sup>27</sup> Mosquito abilities to both shun and attack the Spaniards also proved strategically important during the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1713). Pierre Mortier’s map ‘Teatre de la Guerre en Amerique’ (1710) suggests as much. His map is a close copy of Moll’s Central American coastline, but Mortier enlarges and resets Moll’s ethnic label, and he changes the spelling to ‘Mosquitos.’ The same can be said of Edward Wells’ ‘A new map of North America’ (1700), whereby ‘*MOSKITO INDIANS*’ is the only Amerindian label on the entire map covering the Western Hemisphere from the equator to the North Pole. With both maps, a deliberate modification to older copper plates suggests that the Mosquito had forged a nation that Europeans wanted to map.<sup>28</sup>

### The Mosquito Kingdom

The Mosquito Kingdom was a syncretic polity that blended Amerindian and African leadership traditions with symbolic conventions of majestic power, but it was not a monarchy in any accurate sense of the word.<sup>29</sup> Among the Mosquito, the idea of a kingdom emerged in tandem with a shared notion of a Mosquito identity, and both were inseparable from the larger colonial context that nurtured them. During the seventeenth century, both the Sambo and the Tawira Mosquito managed to carve out independent cultural spaces on the margins of competing colonial empires. Following a violent transition period in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the Mosquito Kingdom matured into a regional Afro-Amerindian alliance that played a significant role in the history of Central America and the western Caribbean.

By the early eighteenth century, the Mosquito Kingdom consisted of four contiguous and semi-autonomous ‘districts’ or ‘precincts’ that stretched from the Río Plátano in the north to Pearl Lagoon in the south (Fig. 3). Each district was headed by a commissioned—but hereditary—Mosquito leader who ruled in alliance with, but often independently from, the Mosquito King and from each other. The northernmost district was overseen by a Sambo Mosquito general, while the Mosquito King straddled Cape Gracias a Dios as far south as Dakura—the king was always a Sambo Mosquito after 1729. Meanwhile, a Tawira governor headed the next district to the south centered around the Twappi savanna, while the Tawira admiral oversaw the Río Grande and Pearl Lagoon districts at the kingdom’s southern edge. The spatial totality of the kingdom’s districts was mapped in 1780 with ‘Real Observations and Remarks’ by two long-time Mosquitia

<sup>27</sup> D. Reinhartz, Shared vision: Herman Moll and his circle and the Great South Sea, *Terrae Incognitae* 19 (1987) 1; see also D. Chambers, *The Reinvention of the World: English Writing 1650–1750*, New York, 1996, Chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup> P. Mortier, *Teatre de la Guerre en Amerique telle qu’elle est a present Possedee par les Espagnols*, hand colored, 58 × 51 cm., Amsterdam, 1710; E. Wells, *A new map of North America*, *A New Set of Maps...*, 37 × 49 cm., Oxford, 1700.

<sup>29</sup> Offen, The Sambo and Tawira Miskitu (note 16), 319–372; see also M.D. Olien, The Miskito kings and the line of succession, *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39 (1983) 198–241; P.A. Dennis and M.D. Olien, Kingship among the Miskito, *American Ethnologist* 11 (1984) 718–737; M.W. Helms, Of kings and contexts: ethnohistorical interpretations of Miskito political structure and function, *American Ethnologist* 13 (1986) 506–523.



Fig. 4. Precincts of the Mosquito Kingdom. Detail from B. Armitage, *Map of the Mosquito Shore from Real Observations and Remarks by David Lamb, the Interior Part by John Christopher*, 1780, PRO CO 700/British Honduras 9. Courtesy of The National Archives.

residents (Fig. 4).<sup>30</sup> Like all British manuscript maps from the eighteenth century, this one underscores Mosquito sovereignty. British cartographic strategies common in North America that possessively transformed placenames, or justified settlement by referring to lands as empty or Indians as ‘savages,’ were entirely absent in Mosquitia.<sup>31</sup> The limited British settlement in Mosquitia was

<sup>30</sup> B. Armitage, *Map of the Mosquito Shore from Real Observations and Remarks by David Lamb, the Interior Part by John Christopher*, London, 1780, PRO, CO 700/British Honduras 9.

<sup>31</sup> Harley, *New England cartography* (note 7); L. de Vorsey, Jr., *Maps in colonial promotion: James Edward Oglethorpe’s use of maps in ‘selling’ the Georgia scheme*, *Imago Mundi* 38 (1986) 35–45.

led by individuals who tried to attract official recognition, a strategy that was partially successful during Anglo-Spanish conflict, but not in times of peace.<sup>32</sup>

The contemporary and influential Robert Hodgson noted that although the Mosquito ‘are one people to all intents and purposes ... they are not so properly a single State, as three united, each of which is nearly independent of the others.’ Hodgson added that ‘upon the strength’ of the commissions that Mosquito leaders ‘always assume much more authority than without them.’<sup>33</sup> Although the British fostered the commission system to elevate representational leaders, they frequently complained about Mosquito obstinacy. Still, the British did not interfere directly in successional struggles until the nineteenth century.

The British provided Mosquito officers with gifts to retain their loyalty. These included a combination of military hardware, cloth, tools, rum, and adornments. By 1743, ‘annual presents’ for the Mosquito became the norm, and between 1744 and 1778 the British government allocated £28,530 to provide them.<sup>34</sup> Despite the British effort, the Mosquito ‘plainly discern [gifts] to be interested: this may account for [their] ingratitude.’<sup>35</sup> Indeed, the Mosquito viewed gifts as their due. They also gave gifts to the British. Mosquito King George I, for example, sent ‘his brother King George III’ a barrel of soil from the Mosquito Shore to symbolize his alliance.<sup>36</sup>

While the consolidation of the Mosquito Kingdom transpired through violence over space as Spanish authors described, it did not take place in the manner they supposed. In fact, the homogenous Mosquitia that Spaniards represented comprised a complex mix of Sambo and Tawira Mosquito spatial practices that were often initiated independently from specific Mosquito districts. Each practice clarified a Mosquito space in a slightly different way. Four examples from the decisive 1720s illustrate what I am talking about.

As reported by Bishop Garrett y Arloví, during the Wars of the Spanish Succession (1702–1713) the Mosquito directed their slaving raids against Spanish towns and haciendas on the eastern margins of the Audiencia of Guatemala. Following the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), British officials no longer condoned these attacks. In response, the Mosquito changed their tactics to establish hegemony over neighboring Indians outside Spanish control. They did this through outright slave raids, particularly among indigenous peoples in Costa Rica and Panama, but primarily by formalizing tributary relations among contiguous peoples. The Sambo subordinated the Pech

<sup>32</sup> In their interpretation of British ambitions in Central America, Nicaraguan historians have been influenced by British territorial strategies in North America, and during the Victorian period in Central America, and have overstepped the historical record; see T. Ayón, *Historia de Nicaragua*, 3 Vols, 1882–1889; reprint, Managua, 1993; J.D. Gámez, *Historia de la Costa de Mosquitos (hasta 1894)*, Managua, 1915–1939; S. Salvatierra, *Contribución a la historia de Centroamérica: Monografías documentales*, 2 Vols, Managua, 1939; G.R. Vargas, *Las sociedades del Atlántico de Nicaragua en los siglos XVII y XVIII*, Managua, 1995.

<sup>33</sup> Although a fourth district was added before Hodgson wrote this, he neglected to mention it; [R. Hodgson], *Some Account of that part of the Continent of America, called the Mosquito Shore...*, 1766, contained in a letter by J. Prowells, Belize, 1847, PRO, Foreign Office, (hereafter FO) 53/10, part 11.

<sup>34</sup> Trelawny to Duke of Newcastle, Jamaica, 20 July 1743, PRO, CO 323/11, 33; *Account of Government*, Kingston, 8 Oct. 1778, PRO, CO 137/73, 235.

<sup>35</sup> R. Hodgson, Jr., *Some Account of the Mosquito Territory*, Second Edition, Edinburgh, 1822, 50.

<sup>36</sup> W.S. Sorsby, *The British Superintendency of the Mosquito Shore, 1749–1787*, Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1969, 203.

and the Twahka in the Mosquitia's north and west, and the Tawira subordinated the Ulwa and others in the southwest (Fig. 3).<sup>37</sup> District leaders also commanded neighboring groups to procure slaves from the Spaniards, yet Mosquito leaders from one district generally exercised no authority over Indians subject to another Mosquito leader.<sup>38</sup>

The Mosquito referred to these subjugation efforts as a war. 'The [Mosquito] King [Peter] has sent his excuses for not having been here,' reported the Jamaican Governor, 'upon the account of his wars, but according to his desire I sent him a parchment Commission with a great Seal and trappings to it as usual.'<sup>39</sup> Upon the termination of these 'wars,' the Mosquito expanded their hegemony and redefined a colonial space: this is the one portrayed in Santaella's map (Fig. 1), and another contemporary Spanish map by Onofre Nuñez.<sup>40</sup> One outcome of this new colonial space was the steady rise in two-way contraband trade, an important feature of the Mosquitia until independence, and one that influenced and revealed Mosquito spatial practices.<sup>41</sup>

A second way that Mosquito spatial practices contributed to the colonial construction of the Mosquitia was through their willingness to serve as mercenaries in Jamaica. Governor Lawes reported in 1720 that he just made an agreement with the Mosquito King 'for a number of his people to come and scour our woods for the rebellious and runaway negroes.'<sup>42</sup> Following the agreement, Lawes had given orders to a Captain Togwood to accompany the king back to the Mosquitia where he was 'to assist him in getting his commission published in the most solemn manner, and in order to have all his subjects made acquainted therewith.'<sup>43</sup> Though the Jamaican maroons were never reduced, at least 100 Mosquito went to Jamaica again in 1725, and a group of 200 returned for the same purpose in 1738.<sup>44</sup> By sending troops to fight overseas, the Mosquito enhanced the visibility of the nascent Mosquito Kingdom.

Not all Mosquito leaders were interested in developing stronger relations with the British at the expense of the pursuing peace with the Spaniards. In November of 1720, for example, the Tawira Mosquito Governor Anibel (Hannibal) 'of the Mosquito nation, along with 11 of his Captains

<sup>37</sup> [J.S. Speer], Notes on that Part of the Map and Chart of the Continent, in the West Indies, called The Bay of Honduras and the Mosquito Shore [1765], PRO, ADM 7/837; see also Consejo de Indias, Ordenes a Honduras, 1739, AGI Guatemala 665, 8.

<sup>38</sup> Relación de una cautividad entre los Mosquitos, CRCM, 89; J. Dunham, *Journal of Voyages*, New York, 1851, 65; Offen, The Sambo and Tawira Miskitu (note 16), 344–345.

<sup>39</sup> Governor Hunter to Council of Trade and Plantations, Jamaica, 13 Nov. 1731, in: C. Headlam (Ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and West Indies* (hereafter CSP), 39 Vols, Vol. 33 London, 1938, 337.

<sup>40</sup> O. Nuñez, Mapa de la Provincia de Honduras ó Comayagua, sus poblaciones, costas, ríos, 1723, AGI MP-Guatemala 18.

<sup>41</sup> E. Conzemius, *Ethnographical Survey of the Miskito and Sumu Indians of Honduras and Nicaragua*, Washington, 1932, 82–83; T.S. Floyd, *The Anglo-Spanish Struggle for Mosquitia*, Albuquerque, 1967; L.A. Newson, *Indian Survival in Colonial Nicaragua*, Norman, 1987, 307.

<sup>42</sup> Lawes to Council, 24 Aug. 1720, CSP, Vol. 27, 126, 128; F.W. Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies, 1700–1763*, New Haven, 1917, 116.

<sup>43</sup> Instructions to Togwood, Jamaica, 24 June 1720, PRO, CO 140/9, 331; Lawes to Council, 13 Nov. 1720, CSP, Vol. 27, 194–195; Olien, The Miskito kings (note 29), 205.

<sup>44</sup> Uring, *Voyages and Travels* (note 14), 160; Meeting 3 June 1731, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations*, 14 Vols, Vol. 7, 1928, 206.

and 50 or 60 men' visited the Matina in Costa Rica. Governor Anibel told the Spaniards that he would return the following March and bring 'Rey Bernabé [Jeremy], General Pittar, and other leaders to show his obedience' to the Spanish Monarch.<sup>45</sup> This visit did not occur, but nonetheless the offer initiated the first of four conjunctures of Tawira–Spanish negotiation. This initial Tawira diplomacy came in advance of Spanish attacks initiated from Honduras. In response to Spanish aggression, Governor Hannibal returned to Matina in 1724 with 400 men and in a violent assault made off with 600 quintals of cacao and a dozen slaves.<sup>46</sup> Not only could the Mosquito withstand a military assault from the Spaniards, but they could retaliate effectively. This particular story also reveals that Mosquito attacks often originated from specific districts and could be motivated by defensive and retaliatory postures.

A fourth example illustrates how internal Mosquito social dynamics had spatial consequences, and how Mosquito movement influenced the geographic extent and character of the Mosquito Kingdom. In 1729, Jamaican Governor Hunter received a letter from 'Peter, [the heir] King of the Musketoës' informing him that King Jeremy and Governor Hannibal had recently died from smallpox acquired in southeastern Yucatán in 1727. Peter added that:

Some disorders have happened lately among some of my subjects, inhabiting the outskirts of my Kingdom. The King my Royal Brother lately dying, myself hardly settled on the throne of my ancestors, the Governour also suddenly dying, left the Kingdom in such an unsettled condition as has given some of my people an opportunity to rise in rebellion.<sup>47</sup>

This is the first historic use of the word kingdom to describe the emerging Mosquito polity, but the context suggests that things were not going well. A small pox epidemic that disproportionately affected the Tawira killed up to half the Mosquito population and stoked the fires of the related 'rebellion.'<sup>48</sup> Disease and political transition combined to produce Sambo–Tawira Mosquito tension at Sandy Bay, the greatest concentration of Mosquito people. Before the 'outrages' mentioned by Peter, historical sources describe Sandy Bay as the home of the Tawira Mosquito. After the disorder, Sandy Bay became the principal home of the Sambo Mosquito headed by a long line of Sambo kings. One outcome of the social disorder was that many Tawira moved south from Sandy Bay to the Río Grande and Pearl Lagoon for the first time—creating the initial need for the admiral's southern Tawira district by the 1730s (Fig. 4). The move also helped reinforce a Tawira economic reliance on hawksbill turtles that nested in Costa Rica. The exchange of hawksbill or tortoise shell was a leading source of manufactured goods for the Mosquito. The new

<sup>45</sup> Diego de la Haya al Consejo, Cartago, 15 Dec. 1721, AGI Guatemala 455, 484; Diego de la Haya reclama del gobernador inglés de Jamaica..., Año 1722, in: L. Fernández (Ed.), *Colección de Documentos para la Historia de Costa Rica* (hereafter CDHCR), 10 Vols, Vol. 9 Barcelona, 1907, 151–159; Diego de la Haya, Cartago, 8 Octubre 1722, in: M.M. Peralta (Ed.), *Límites de Costa-Rica y Colombia* (hereafter LCRC), Madrid, 1890, 20–31.

<sup>46</sup> Diego de la Haya al Consejo, Cartago, 1 August 1724, AGI Guatemala 455, 521; Vargas, *Las sociedades del Atlántico* (note 32), 164; M.D. Olien, General, Governor, and Admiral: three Miskito lines of succession, *Ethnohistory* 45 (1998) 297; Offen, The Sambo and Tawira Miskito (note 16), 319–372.

<sup>47</sup> Hunter to Popple, Jamaica, 29 Oct. 1729, CSP, Vol. 31, 514; Peter to Hunter, Sandy Bay, 3 Oct. 1729, PRO, CO 137/18, 68–69.

<sup>48</sup> [Hodgson], Some Account, part 11; C.N. Bell, *Tangweera. Life and Adventures among Gentle Savages*, P. Dennis (Ed.), 1899; reprint, Austin, 1989, 10.

settlement geography divided the kingdom by concentrating the Sambos in the north and the Tawira in the south.<sup>49</sup>

### New geographic imaginations

The founding of a small British settlement at Black River in the 1730s changed the colonial scene in the western Caribbean. Among the 300 British freemen residing in the Mosquitia in 1757, 80% lived around Black River, and half were ‘Mulattoes’ and ‘Mestizoes.’ These people owned some 800 slaves, 20% of whom were Amerindians.<sup>50</sup> Only a few white women helped ensure that a majority of the population was mixed-race.<sup>51</sup> As one Spanish report put it, most ‘*ingleses*’ were, in fact, ‘free blacks and mulattos.’<sup>52</sup> British demographic characteristics remained proportional until the forced evacuation of 600 freemen and their 1800 slaves in 1787.<sup>53</sup>

Although logwood was never cut in Mosquitia, Spanish officials viewed the Black River settlement as an extension of wood-cutting enterprises in the Bay of Honduras, or Belize. In some sense, they were right. British settlers did not chose Black River ‘because of its great advantages,’ but rather because it provided a safe haven: ‘it was wholly owing to this shelter that [the logwood cutters] were not totally crushed.’ Without the security that the Mosquito and Mosquitia afforded, ‘no English Subjects could ever think to venture to cut Logwood in the Bay of Honduras.’<sup>54</sup> Indeed, if it were not for the Mosquito ‘the neighbouring Spanish settlements ... would otherwise soon over run and expel the English.’<sup>55</sup> Not only were the Mosquito part of the attraction, but their stature encouraged and sustained British settlement.

The Spaniards were not the only problem confronting British settlers. Without the Mosquito, the slave system that supported small plantations, turtling, stock raising, and mahogany cutting would have been impossible in the Mosquitia. It was common knowledge among slaves, for example, that the Spaniards would grant them freedom if they could escape.<sup>56</sup> One group of slaves seeking to reach Spanish settlements had to be ‘reduced by the [Mosquito], the white men being

<sup>49</sup> Offen, *The Sambo and Tawira Miskitu* (note 16), 319–372.

<sup>50</sup> Hodgson, *Some Account of the Mosquito Territory* (note 35), 15–16; Relato de una expedición costa norte, 18 Sept. 1759, *Boletín del Archivo General del Gobierno* (Guatemala) (hereafter BAGG) 5 (1940) 138; J.A. Burdon (Ed.), *Archives of British Honduras*, Vol. I, London, 1931, 73; F.G. Dawson, William Pitt’s settlement at Black River on the Mosquito Shore: a challenge to Spain in Central America, 1732–1787, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 63 (1983) 677–706; Potthast, *Die Mosquito-Küste* (note 25).

<sup>51</sup> Trelawny to Duke of Bedford, 14 April 1750, PRO, CO 137/57, 533; Lawrie to Trelawny, 9 April 1751, PRO, CO 137/25; Pedro Gaxaycochea, *Relación de las poblaciones que tienen los yngleses en la costa de Honduras*, 1746, British Library, Add. Ms. 17566, 171.

<sup>52</sup> Declaraciones recibido por el Coronel Don Pedro de Carbonell y Pinto, 21 Junio 1776, AGI Guatemala 665, 389.

<sup>53</sup> The First Account of the State, PRO, CO 123/1, 55–80; Offen, *Race and place in colonial Mosquitia* (note 16).

<sup>54</sup> Hodgson, *Some Account of the Mosquito Territory* (note 35), 17; Jones to Moore, 3 Aug. 1768, PRO, CO 30/8, 293. On the Black River settlement and logwood see K.H. Offen, *British Logwood Extraction from the Mosquitia: The Origin of a Myth*, *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80 (2000) 113–135.

<sup>55</sup> Jones to Elletson, Jamaica, 3 Aug. 1768, PRO, CO 137/35, 24.

<sup>56</sup> ABH 75–80; Lawrie to Moore, Blewfields, 12 Oct. 1773, Manx Library, Isle of Man, Ms. 3228.

utterly unable to do it themselves.<sup>57</sup> In another instance, the Mosquito refused to track down escaped slaves, much to the consternation of settlers.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, settlers often feared a slave rebellion instigated by the Mosquito, or that slaves might be ‘induced to join the Mosquito Men, and thus add—with their advice as it is well known they have an amazing influence over them—strength to [the Mosquito], and endeavor to effect our Ruin.’<sup>59</sup> Truth be told, British settlers were dependent upon the Mosquito and could not have settled the Mosquitia without them.

The limited interest British cartographers gave to the Mosquitia changed during the Anglo-Spanish War of Jenkins Ear (1739–1742). In 1740, Emmanuel Bowen published ‘An Accurate map of the West Indies’ in the popular *Gentleman’s Magazine*. One of only seven discursive vignettes on the small-scale map read: ‘The Mosquitos is [sic] a small Nation never yet conquer’d by the Spaniards the Country being secured by morasses, inaccessible mountains, shoals and rocks.’<sup>60</sup> Likewise, Samuel Penhallow sent the Admiralty a map of the Bay of Honduras around 1741. Placing east at the top this chart highlighted its proximity to Jamaica, distinguished Spanish from Mosquito lands, and presented the bay as the vulnerable underbelly of Spanish dominion in Central America.<sup>61</sup> The prominence of the Mosquito on these maps brought them to the attention of war planners on the both sides of the Atlantic.

Jamaican Governor Trelawny believed that the Mosquitia offered a good site from which to harass the Spaniards. In 1740, he sent Robert Hodgson to the region to secure the ‘promise of assistance’ in this endeavor from the ‘Mosquito nation.’<sup>62</sup> Hodgson got the Sambo and Tawira leaders, King Edward and Governor John Briton, to sign ‘a Declaration’ acknowledging themselves subjects of Great Britain in exchange for ‘assistance from England.’ As usual, the diplomatic ritual was conducted ‘in solemn manner, under the colors, ... and concluded by cutting up a turf.’<sup>63</sup> The declaration was signed ‘English, Mosquito Men, and all the Mosquito Nation both Samboes and Indians.’<sup>64</sup> After a limited skirmish against Spaniards in Costa Rica, the Mosquito took charge and launched a three-pronged attack: the Tawira governor led 200 men up the Río Grande, General Handyside ascended the Río Patuca with 200 Sambo, while Hodgson accompanied King Edward and 220 Sambo Mosquito from Sandy Bay.<sup>65</sup> Though they supported the British cause, the Mosquito did so in their own spatially-contingent way.

Following the war, Governor Trelawny reported that ‘the tract of land possessed by the Mosquito Indians extends upwards of Eighty Leagues upon the Coast of Honduras,’ and would be

<sup>57</sup> Trelawny to Duke (note 51), 532; Otway to Commissioners, Black River, 20 Jan. 1766, PRO, CO 137/34, 11.

<sup>58</sup> McHarg to Lawrie, 4 Dec. 1775, Manx Library, Isle of Man, Ms. 3238; Cairns to Lawrie, 12 Sept. 1775, Manx Library, Isle of Man, Ms. 3236.

<sup>59</sup> Settler’s Committee to Lawrie, 14 Oct. 1786, PRO, CO 137/86; see also Potthast, *Die Mosquito-Küste* (note 25), 230–241.

<sup>60</sup> E. Bowen, An accurate map of the West Indies..., *Gentleman’s Magazine for January 1740* (author’s collection).

<sup>61</sup> S. Penhallow, *Part of ye Spanish and Musketor Shore and the Bay of Honduras with ye Islands adjacent*, London, c. 1741, PRO, CO 700/British Honduras 1.

<sup>62</sup> R. Rolt, *An Impartial Representation of the Conduct of the Several Powers of Europe, Engaged in the Late General War...*, 4 Vols, Vol. I, London, 1749, 65; Trelawny to Board of Trade, 19 Dec. 1743, PRO, CO 137/48.

<sup>63</sup> Hodgson to Trelawny, 21 June 1740, E.G. Squier, *The States of Central America: Their Geography, Topography, Climate... Etc.*, New York, 1858, Appendix D, 746.

<sup>64</sup> Declaration of Edward, King of the Mosquito Indians, 16 March 1740, PRO, CO 123/1, 52.

<sup>65</sup> Sorsby, *British Superintendency* (note 36), 27; Offen, *The Sambo and Tawira Miskitu* (note 16), 343.

a well-protected site to open relations with the Spaniards ‘for the sale of British Manufactures.’<sup>66</sup> Following the Aix-la-Chapelle Treaty of 1748, the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations agreed with him and authorized the formation of a Superintendency for the Mosquito Shore, naming Robert Hodgson as the first superintendent.<sup>67</sup> Three manuscript maps of Black River commemorate the occasion, each of which concentrates on the defense of the new British enclave and how to negotiate the dangerous sand bar at its mouth.<sup>68</sup>

Black River lay to the west of traditional Mosquito villages. By bestowing grants to the British in and around Black River, the Mosquito expanded their territorial jurisdiction and political influence. Between 1742 and 1775, Mosquito leaders granted at least 14 territorial concessions to British settlers, some quite large. Most of the land grants referred to areas behind and immediately adjacent to the Black River community. One exception was a grant to Hodgson for Bluefields and the Corn Islands in the south, places no Mosquito Indians had ever permanently resided. At the same time, individual Mosquito leaders granted mahogany concessions in territories adjacent to their districts. They provided concessions up the Black River in Pech Indian domains, the upper Río Wangki in Twahka territory, up the Río Wawa, home of the Panamahka Indians, up the Río Grande, the domain of the Ulwa, and along the Río San Juan.<sup>69</sup> The Mosquito used land grants and concessions to extend their political authority over people and territory.

With the British occupied fighting the French in North America, Spanish officials made a concerted effort to acquire new geographic knowledge about the Mosquitia.<sup>70</sup> Two examples illustrate Spanish concerns and how they were represented. The first is a detailed account of an overland voyage from Comayagua to the northern Mosquitia by Captain Juan de Lara y Ortega. The captain describes British fortifications at Black River, but he also stresses Mosquito authority: the Mosquito ‘defend the entire coast, and consider themselves absolute Masters of it, giving the reason that they have not been conquered by any potent force, and for this reason the Coast is theirs.’ He also noted the British superintendent was not at liberty to move about the Mosquitia freely. The Mosquito informed him that they ‘wanted to kill [Hodgson]’ because ‘he had made an [unauthorized] inspection of the King’s lands.’<sup>71</sup> A letter from the Corregidor of Sébaco and Chontales, Matías de Oropesa, described the rampant contraband trade through Bluefields that relied upon Mosquito protection. Dealing with this problem would be tough because ‘the coast

<sup>66</sup> Report to the Lords of the Committee, 3 May 1744, PRO, CO 123/1, 3.

<sup>67</sup> Bedford to Hodgson, 5 Oct. 1749, PRO, CO 123/1, 5.

<sup>68</sup> R. Jones, *Black River on the Mosquito Shore with Parts Adjacent, and the New Fort*, 1748, PRO, CO 700/British Honduras 3; *Plans and Profiles of the Fortifications near Black River on the Moschetto Shore, ...* 1751, PRO, CO 700/British Honduras 5; *Part of the Moschetto Shore from Cape River to Brewers Lagoon*, 1751, PRO, CO 700/British Honduras 4.

<sup>69</sup> Land Grants, Vol. I, PRO, FO 53/44; Vargas, *Las Sociedades del Atlántico* (note 32), 92–93, 173.

<sup>70</sup> The Spanish had long been active in amassing geographic information about the Mosquitia, see Informa sobre los indios y zambos Mosquitos, Feb. 1731, CDHCR, Vol. 9, 187–205; F. Carrandi y Menan, *Viaje de gobernador Carrandi y Menan al valle de matina. Año 1738*, San José, Costa Rica, 1850; Informe del Ingeniero Don Luis Diez Navarro [de 1743], *Revista del Archivo y Biblioteca Nacional de Honduras* 5 (1909) 3–44.

<sup>71</sup> Relato de una expedición (note 50), 137–140. Lara y Ortega likely drew the map, Costa, y poblaciones que ay en Río Tinto, Archivo del Instituto de Historia y Cultura Militar de Madrid (hereafter IHCM) 5.184, HND-1/7, which Diez Navarro added his name to in 1764.



Fig. 5. Map sent by the Corregidor of Sébaco and Chontales, Matías de Oropesa, to argue that the ‘Mosquitos y Sambos ... must be completely destroyed.’ From *Plano de una parte de la montaña madre ...*, 1757, Centro Geográfico del Ejército, Madrid, Ar. J-T.4-C.4–15.

of this Kingdom stretches from Black River until the last of the Province of Costa Rica, and in its majority is dominated by the *Yndios Zambos Mosquitos*.’ The notice was accompanied by a map showing the interior of Chontales. Matías de Oropesa used the map to suggest that a military outpost should be established along the Río Mico to protect against Mosquito incursions, effectively recognizing Mosquito dominion to the east (Fig. 5).<sup>72</sup> These two visual and narrative geographies demonstrate that the Spaniards were preoccupied with Mosquito power, but were powerless to do much about it.

In 1760, Spain joined the war against Britain on the side of the French. The pair lost and Britain emerged as the world’s pre-eminent colonial power following the Treaty of Paris in 1763. Ironically, British success in Central America was mixed. Article 17 of the treaty required Britain ‘to demolish all the fortifications which his subjects had erected in the Bay of Honduras, and other places of the territory of Spain in that part of the world.’ Though allowed to cut logwood in ‘the Bay of Honduras’ without fortifications, there was a difference of opinion as to whether the Mosquitia was a ‘territory of Spain’ or not.

<sup>72</sup> de Arcos y Moreno to Arriaga, 23 May 1757, AGI Guatemala 665, 303; Oropesa to de Arcos y Moreno, 20 Mayo 1757, AGI Guatemala 665, 305–307; see also Don Geronymo de la Vega y Lacayo, 19 Jan. 1759, Newberry Library, Mss. Ayer 719 G83 V42 1759; *Map of the Gulf of Honduras, memorial of Don Geronymo de la Vega y Lacayo ...*, 1759, British Library, Bauza Collection, Add. 17579.

When the Spaniards sent Luis Diez Navarro to receive the Black River settlement, Superintendent Otway would not comply because he stated ‘these lands belonged to the Mosquito.’<sup>73</sup> Accordingly, the Mosquitia was ‘a large sovereign country independent of Spanish jurisdiction.’<sup>74</sup> Otway noted that ‘the Mosquito Indians [were] masters of their own country, and he, as Superintendent, [was only] the protector of the interests of his Britannick Majesty’s subjects settled there.’ In short, the British restated facts on the ground: ‘that the Mosquito Shore is not within the territory of Spain in that part of the world; and that the Mosquito Indians are a free and independent people.’<sup>75</sup> Though this position was self-serving, it certainly was the Mosquito stance: no other nation held more authority in Mosquitia, and no nation would for another 80 years.

The new post-war Mosquitia geography was represented in partisan maps. Bowen’s ‘An accurate map of North America’ is revealing because the 1767 version makes no reference to a Mosquitia or Belize, but the 1772 version demarcates embellished British and Mosquito lands with crisp red lines.<sup>76</sup> An Anglo-Mosquito dominance of Mosquitia was also recognized on several Spanish maps. Diez Navarro’s ‘Mapa Geográfico’ (1770) illustrates what his text confirms, that the ‘Zambos, Mosquitos and English’ possess ‘la Costa de Mosquitos’ (Fig. 6).<sup>77</sup> While the Spaniards were concerned about British pretensions in Mosquitia following the Seven Years’ War, they knew that the Mosquito sustained and authorized a British presence, and they attempted to divide the Mosquito from the British.

### Emblems of authority

Both Spanish and British authorities viewed the Mosquito as autonomous actors in Mosquitia affairs because the Mosquito themselves projected this sentiment. Mentioning their independence became a sort of greeting, a mark of distinction, and a boastful claim that sustained other activities. During his time in the Mosquitia in 1776, Equiano Olaudah stressed that the Mosquito ‘particularly boast of having never been conquered by the Spanish.’ Superintendent Jones felt that the Mosquito were ‘jealous of their freedoms’ and would not be ‘drove by any.’<sup>78</sup> The Mosquito claimed ‘this country, which [they] have and do claim the possession of, as their right by virtue of its having been always inhabited by them, who have ever continued a free and unconquered people.’ When the British evacuated the Mosquitia, the Mosquito could not understand how someone could, ‘as they emphatically expressed it, “given away to their enemies their own country

<sup>73</sup> El cumplimiento del tratado, 28 Mayo 1763, AGI Guatemala 665, 297.

<sup>74</sup> Otway to Commissioners, Black River, 25 April 1764, PRO, CO 137/33, 167; R.A. Naylor, *Penny Ante Imperialism: The Mosquito Shore and the Bay of Honduras, 1600–1914: A Case Study in British Informal Empire*, London, 1989, 55.

<sup>75</sup> White, *The Case of His Majesty’s Subjects* (note 24), 6, 53–54.

<sup>76</sup> E. Bowen, *An accurate map of North America. Describing and distinguishing the British, Spanish and French dominions on this great continent...*, J. Gibson, engraver, London, 1767, 1772.

<sup>77</sup> A similar map was drawn by J. de Torres, *Descripción Geográfica ...1776*, AGI MP-Guatemala 221.

<sup>78</sup> J. Cockburn, *A Journey Overland, from the Gulf of Honduras to the Great South Sea*, London, 1735, 239; Otway to Commissioners (note 74); O. Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano. Written by Himself*, in: R.J. Allison (Ed.), 1791; reprint, New York, 1995, 172; Jones to Elletson, Jamaica (note 55).



Fig. 6. Spanish recognition of Mosquito and British possessions in Central America. From L.D. Navarro, *Mapa Geográfico de la mayor parte del Reino de Guatemala*, ca. 1770, IHCM 5.121, GMT-1/1. Courtesy of the Archivo del Instituto de Historia y Cultura Militar de Madrid.

which God Almighty gave them.”<sup>79</sup> The Mosquito held these views because their own practices legitimated them and European deference confirmed them.

Spanish authors openly acknowledged that the Mosquito ‘possess and retain what they call their Dominions.’<sup>80</sup> This recognition structured how Spanish officials dealt with the Mosquito. During a diplomatic overture to the Tawira in 1769, Guatemalan Captain-General Pedro de Salazar warned that Mosquito independence must be respected:

It is now very clear that to think of obligating [the Mosquito] to pay taxes, or to even raise this question with them, will completely jeopardize our friendship. The laws speak of other classes of Indians, those that have not established treaties with the nations of Europe, those that do not possess arms, and those who do not possess such skills as these [Mosquito] have in their ability to defend themselves and to eschew the domination of Spain.<sup>81</sup>

After the British withdrawal from Mosquitia, it became even more clear to Spanish officials that the Mosquito should retain their independence and privileges: ‘to bother them with this particular issue would create horrendous consequences.’<sup>82</sup> Though we do not know what the

<sup>79</sup> Sproat to Barrows, 5 April 1803, PRO, CO 123/15, 61.

<sup>80</sup> Governor Heredia to Governor Trelawny, 30 April 1751, PRO, CO 137/59, 142.

<sup>81</sup> P. Salazar, 11 Nov. 1769, BAGG 5, no. 4 (1940) 343.

<sup>82</sup> Plano De Colville Cairns, London, 24 Oct. 1786, LCRC, 254; El Marqués del Campo a Condé de Floridablanca, London, 24 Oct. 1786, LCRC, 249.

Mosquito thought, we can infer a few things from what the Mosquito did and how Europeans responded.

A Mosquito discourse of independence was backed by material practices in space. The Mosquito taxed trade through their districts and intervened when parties violated established norms. For example, the Mosquito of the king's district levied duty on Spanish traffic passing down the Río Wangki: '[Spanish] traders should not come below the falls (about one hundred and fifty miles from Cape Gracias a Dios), and they should pay a tribute of twenty head of cattle annually, for permission to negotiate with the [British] through their country.'<sup>83</sup> In one instance, a British schooner carrying timber cut without proper authority was seized by the Mosquito in protest.<sup>84</sup> The Sambo general of the north coast oversaw resource and contraband trade in and around his district. In 1770, for example, General Tempest seized sarsaparilla harvested by 'Spanish Mulattoes' that had been hired by a British settler named John Christopher.<sup>85</sup> Christopher asked the superintendent for help, but the latter replied that to intervene 'would have endangered a breach with the Mosquito Chief.'<sup>86</sup> Starting in 1766, the Tawira Mosquito exacted annual tribute of cacao from Spaniards at Matina—up to half the annual harvest—a practice that continued into the nineteenth century.<sup>87</sup>

Political emblems of authority both vested and sustained Mosquito authority. When Mosquito leaders dealt with matters of state, they dressed in European outfits augmented by other symbolic regalia, especially silver and gold-headed walking canes. Canes were not so much *de rigueur* fashion as critical representations of power. The earliest recorded use of walking canes among the Mosquito comes from the Spanish priest Fray de la Concepción. He claimed that the British 'make bad people a Captain by giving them their own silver-headed *bastón*.' By the early eighteenth century, General Hobby walked around 'carrying his insignia, a *vara* [cane] just as the [Spanish] mayors carry.'<sup>88</sup> It is likely that the Mosquito learned to demand canes through their initial encounters with Spaniards, as there is no evidence that canes were exchanged between Amerindians and the British in North America.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>83</sup> E. Long, Mosquito Shore, *The History of Jamaica...*, 3 Vols, 1774; reprint, Vol. I, London, 1970, I: 323; see also B. Edwards, Some account of the British settlements on the Musquito Shore, *The History, Civil and Commercial of the British West Indies*, 5 Vols, Vol. 5 London, 1819, 209.

<sup>84</sup> Bill of the Lading, 22 Dec. 1770, R. Hodgson, *The Defence of Robert Hodgson*, London, 1779, Appendix V, 31–32. For accounts of the same in the nineteenth century, see K.H. Offen, The geographical imagination, resource economies, and Nicaraguan incorporation of the Mosquitia, 1838–1909, in: C. Brannstrom (Ed.), *Territories, Commodities and Knowledges: Latin American Environmental Histories in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, London, 2004, 50–89.

<sup>85</sup> Christopher to Hodgson, 4 Aug. 1771, *The Defence of Robert Hodgson*, Appendix V, 41–42.

<sup>86</sup> Table of Capt. Hodgson's Voyages, 1778, *The Defence of Robert Hodgson*, Appendix V, 81–82.

<sup>87</sup> Sorsby, *British Superintendency* (note 36), 144; F. Molina, *Mosquito, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica*, Second Edition, London, 1849.

<sup>88</sup> Relación del viaje del Río Coco en el Año 1699, 13 Jan. 1699, AGI Guatemala 297; Relación de una cautividad, CRCM (note 38), 91–92.

<sup>89</sup> The British exchanged many symbolic objects with the Indians of North America, including gorgets, medals, pipes and wampum belts, but not canes; see N. Shoemaker, *A Strange Likeness: Becoming Red and White in Eighteenth-century North America*, Cambridge, 2004; F.P. Prucha, *Indian Peace Medals in American History*, Bluffton, South Carolina, 1994.

Canes became essential items of diplomacy. Throughout their dealings with the Mosquito, Spanish officials recognized that negotiators always ‘requested the same thing, [that canes be sent to them] as a sign of their commission.’<sup>90</sup> Before agreeing to sign a six-point contract with the governor of Costa Rica in 1768, Tawira negotiators insisted on a seventh provision, ‘that the governor of Cartago send Admiral Dilson a silver tipped cane as a sign that he will fulfill all that has been stipulated in this agreement.’<sup>91</sup> As in North America, Indian–European diplomacy often relied on tangible objects that served as a symbol of agreement.<sup>92</sup> In 1788, Dilson’s son, Admiral Dilson II asked the Costa Rican governor to demonstrate their friendship; the Governor complied: ‘I gave the Capitán Real a complete silk uniform, a sword with silver trim, a cane with a silver knob; and for his wife a silver plated necklace and pendants.’<sup>93</sup> The British moved to offset this arrangement by providing the Tawira Mosquito with the same sort of goods they had been requesting over the last hundred years: ‘musquets, powder, Regiments, a Silver Hilted Sword for Governor Briton, a Gold Laced Hatt and Cane for Governor Briton,’ and several other items valued at £537.<sup>94</sup> Throughout the eighteenth century, canes and other symbolic objects served as signs of allegiance, but more importantly, they empowered Mosquito leaders to exercise authority over people within their dominion.

British settlers in the district of the Mosquito governor noted that the ‘Indian Governor goes once in a certain time all about the province or district.’ On one occasion, the governor sent ahead ‘his stick as token, for rum, sugar, and gunpowder, which we did not refuse sending.’<sup>95</sup> When among the Tawira Mosquito in 1789, Fray Navarro noted that ‘the remission of the *bastón* is the custom of this nation and the nation of the Zambos, this is how they call their officials and ask them to provide them with what they need.’ Navarro’s partner, Fray Barrueta, noted that it was the custom of Governor Briton to ‘send his insignia’ with a trusted subordinate to call people for a meeting.<sup>96</sup> An officer in the Spanish Navy noted in 1790 that the king communicated his orders by ‘sending out his *bastón*.’ Upon receipt, the king’s followers ‘promptly executed his wishes.’<sup>97</sup> Inspecting one’s district and commanding the obedience of residents with emblems of authority were quintessential Mosquito spatial practices.

Diplomatic rituals in the Mosquitia reinforced the symbolic value of the emblems involved, particularly after the British evacuation in 1787 when the Mosquito asserted their independence from the Spaniards. When a Spanish team overseeing the evacuation visited Governor Briton, they were led through the ‘governor’s people formed into two lines, making a pathway to his

<sup>90</sup> Salazar (note 81), 341.

<sup>91</sup> Nava to Salazar, Cartago, 14 July 1769, CDHCR, Vol. 10, 18.

<sup>92</sup> Nancy Shoemaker has shown that these diplomatic objects often served as mnemonic devices to recall the agreements, and that when they were unavailable Indians of North America often used ‘memory sticks’ for the same purpose. *A Strange Likeness* (note 89), 64–66.

<sup>93</sup> Bobadilla to Mayorga, Feb. 1778, CDHCR, Vol. 10, 63, 66–67.

<sup>94</sup> Invoice of Presents for the Mosquito Indians, 8 Oct. 1778, PRO, CO 137/73, 231.

<sup>95</sup> Equiano, *Interesting Narrative* (note 78), 173.

<sup>96</sup> Navarro to Hurtado, Guatemala, 27 June 1790, BAGG 6, no. 3 (1941) 185; Barrueta to Hurtado, 1 May 1790, BAGG 6, no. 3 (1941) 180.

<sup>97</sup> A. Porta Costas, Relación del Reconocimiento Geométrico y Político de la Costa de Mosquitos desde el Establecimiento de Cabo Gracias a Dios hasta El Blewfields [de 1790], *Wani* 7 (1990) 55.

house, some Indians had halberds, and a large British flag flew on a post, and in another flew a French peace pennant.<sup>98</sup> A Spanish delegation to Admiral Dilson II was led by a reception committee of 20 armed men, and found the admiral waiting for them in a feathered hat, boots, a sword, and holding a cane.<sup>99</sup> When Dilson II led a delegation to León, Nicaragua he ‘presented himself in a worn, silk military uniform, sword and cane.’<sup>100</sup> When Governor Briton arrived in Cartagena for negotiations in 1788, he and his crew arrived amidst ceremonial cannon fire. All the Tawira leaders appeared in elegant uniforms, and Briton carried a gold-headed cane.<sup>101</sup> When Henderson met with General Robinson at Caratasca circa 1804, the general, ‘as well as most his attendants, was dressed in British regimentals, with epaulettes, sword, sash, &c.’ Later, Henderson was treated to a stately dinner attended by several well dressed men:

I really believe the entire costume of Europe, civil and military, for the last hundred years, might at one view have presented itself at my table. And whatever was once thought gay and ornamental in the brilliant and refined circles of London or Versailles, might perhaps be now considered equally so on the less polished shore of Caratasca.<sup>102</sup>

Although later writers caricatured these costumes as civilized manipulation of savage (and not coincidentally, as black) brutes, these representations were themselves political (Fig. 7). Such distortions overlook the ubiquity and magnitude of Mosquito-colonial diplomatic encounters. More to the point, the symbolic nature of Mosquito power carried on through the nineteenth century, and canes, crowns, and flags remain important symbols among the Mosquito to this day.<sup>103</sup>

Several maps from the eighteenth century record Mosquito authority; I will illustrate three. The social geography of the interior of the Mosquitia came into renewed focus for the Spaniards beginning in 1767 when Peter Alexander was shipwrecked off the coast of Costa Rica. Alexander had books and charts in his possession, including a draft chart ‘of the entire coast.’ Several versions of this map are scattered around Spanish archives, but each has a textual gloss in Spanish suggesting they were redrawn to contain information the Spaniards desired (Fig. 8). The map is a seaman’s view of the coast, and is more representational than accurate. The central feature of these maps is the number and location of *zambo* and *mosquito* residences, some with great description. The effect of these maps was to show the ubiquity and dominating presence of the Mosquito in the Mosquitia.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>98</sup> *Diario de Ocurrencias Particulares*, Trujillo, 15 July 1787, BAGG 6, no. 2 (1941) 139.

<sup>99</sup> Porta Costas, *Relación del Reconocimiento* (note 97).

<sup>100</sup> Ayón, *Contribución a la historia de Nicaragua* (note 32), Vol. 3, 165.

<sup>101</sup> Salvatierra, *Contribución a la historia de Centroamérica*, Vol. I (note 32), 505.

<sup>102</sup> G. Henderson, *An Account of the British Settlement of Honduras ...*, London, 1809, 145, 148.

<sup>103</sup> Dunham, *Journal of Voyages* (note 38), 64; Porta Costas, *Relación del Reconocimiento* (note 97), 55; T. Young, *Narrative of a Residence on the Mosquito Shore*, Second Edition, London, 1847, 12–13; Frederic to Codd, 8 March 1824, PRO, CO 123/35. A picture of the Mosquito Standard was included in Walker to Aberdeen, Blewfields, 20 December 1845, PRO, FO 53/3, 125. On the importance of these objects today see Offen, *Narrating place and identity* (note 12).

<sup>104</sup> *Cartas del Virrey de Santa Fé*, CDHCR, Vol. 10, 11–14. Two versions of the Velasco map are found at AGI MP-Guatemala 70, and in the Archivo del Museo Naval, Madrid, 12-B-5.



Fig. 7. 'Captain Drummer.' E.G. Squier's fictional portrayal of a Mosquito leader. From S.A. Bard [E.G. Squier], *Waikna, or adventures on the Mosquito shore*, New York, 1855, 93.

British maps of the Mosquitia at this time are of much higher quality and reflect the boom in British cartography that accompanied the Seven Years' Wars.<sup>105</sup> Among the 40 maps contained in Thomas Jefferys *West-India Atlas* of 1775, for example, were three dealing with different parts of the Mosquitia. The detail from all the maps suggests he used the 'actual surveys' that he advertised. Map 16 shows all the Mosquito and British settlements, the domain of the 'Moskito King's Party,' the residence of General Tempest, sailing routes, soundings, and the quality of specific

<sup>105</sup> The increasing excellence of British surveying of their American colonies in the eighteenth century had no direct corollary in the Mosquitia, as no systematic survey was ever made. On the rise of British cartography in North America see G.R. Crone, *Maps and their Makers: An Introduction to the History of Cartography*, Fifth Edition, Hamden, Conn., 1978; W.P. Cummings, *British Maps of Colonial America*, Chicago, 1974.



Fig. 8. Spanish-language gloss atop captured sketch by Peter Alexander. This is one of several versions found in Spanish archives, each obsessed with documenting Mosquito activities. Detail from Pedro Antonio de Velasco, *Mapa que comprende la costa desde Truxillo de Honduras hasta el Río de Matina y por el interior hasta el Lago de Nicaragua ...*, 1768, AGI MP-Guatemala, 70. Courtesy of the Archivo General de Indias.

landscapes (Fig. 9).<sup>106</sup> A second British map drawn by Capt. Stephen Field around 1785 is not striking for its cartographic acumen, but rather for its hand-written gloss. The annotation delineates the geography of the Sambo and Tawira Mosquito, and their leaders (Fig. 10). The text notes that ‘All the King’s men & General Lees men are Sambos,’ and shows the path by which the governor’s ‘men goes into the Spanish country.’<sup>107</sup> Both British maps highlight the geography of the Mosquito Kingdom, and in the process re-present a political reality firmly established on the ground, and one that the Mosquito were most responsible for enacting.

We can assume that the Mosquito actually saw maps re-presenting them and the Mosquitia. Although I have seen few references to Mosquito map readings or their direct contributions to surveys, we know that Europeans used and drew maps in the presence of the Mosquito on a regular basis. This was particularly the case when sailing, planning military excursions, moving contraband to the Spaniards, and allocating land titles. Hypothesizing how colonial maps may have shaped Mosquito thought and action is a study for another day, but I posit they were not unaware of how European maps represented them.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>106</sup> T. Jefferys, *The West-India Atlas; or, A Compendious Description of the West-Indies: Illustrated with 40 Correct Charts and Maps, taken from Actual Surveys*, London, 1775.

<sup>107</sup> S. Field, *A Draught of the Windward Coast of the Mosquito Shore*, ca. 1785, London, British Library, Maps 79015.(2). The AGI contains a version of this same map dated to 1785, but without the annotation, see AGI MP-Guatemala 263.

<sup>108</sup> Mosquito contributions to the wartime reconnaissance and the 13 maps produced by Robert Hodgson, Jr., in 1782–1783 are detailed in documents that fell to the Spanish when they captured him; see Expediente sobre los papeles encontrados a Roberto Hodgson, 1784, AGI Sta. Fé, 758B.



Fig. 9. Detail from Thomas Jefferys, *The Island of Jamaica and Cape Gracias a Dios with the Banks*, In *The West-India Atlas; or, A Compendious Description of the West Indies: Illustrated with Forty Correct Charts and Maps, Taken from Actual Surveys. Together with An Historical Account of the Several Countries and Islands which Compose that part of the World*, London, 1775, map 16.

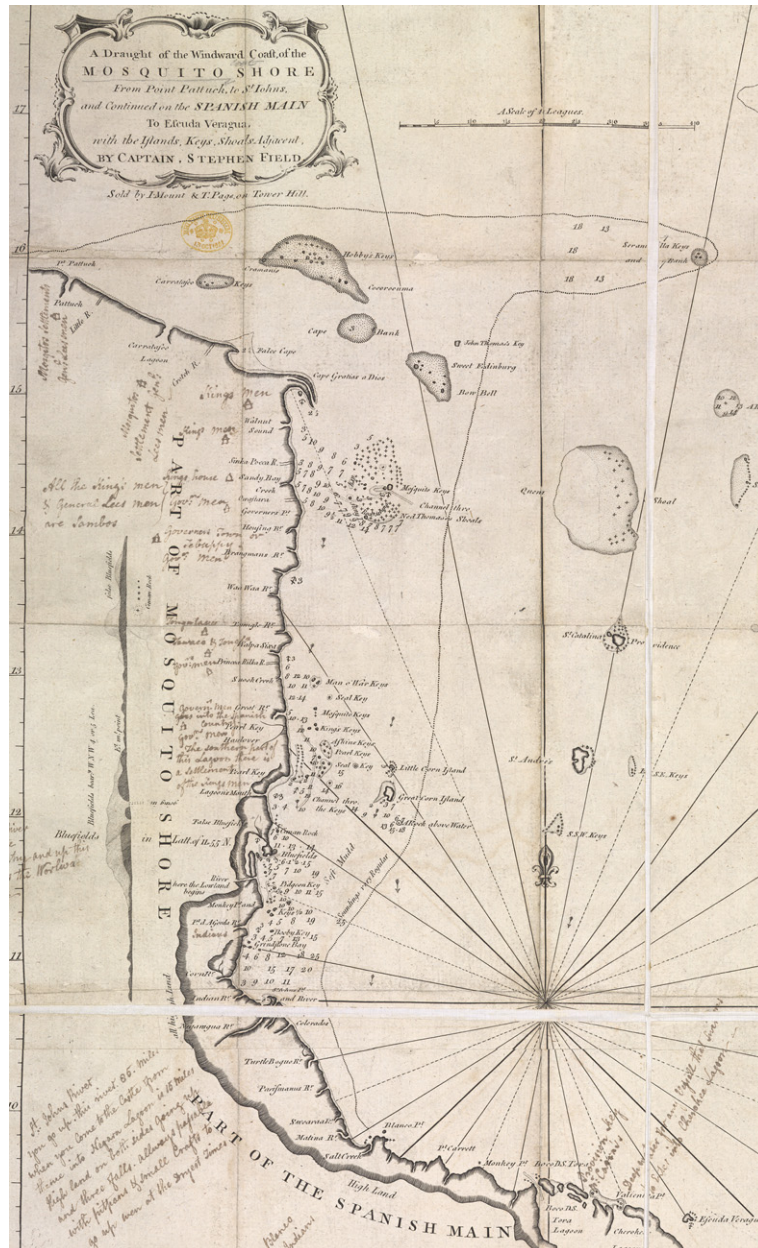


Fig. 10. The intra-ethnic nature of Mosquito Kingdom. Detail from S. Field, *A Draught of the Windward Coast of the Mosquito Shore* ..., London, ca. 1785, British Library Maps 79015.(2), 2. Courtesy of the British Library.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have sought to show that the Mosquito were significant actors in the creation of the colonial space that bears their name. I have also argued that Mosquito spatial practices—material

and discursive assertions of authority over people, space and resources—contributed to the shape, meaning, and political implications of the Mosquitia vis-à-vis European representations, particularly maps. The study suggests that Amerindians can and do co-produce colonial texts.

As a mixed-race Afro-Amerindian people, the Mosquito forged a shared identity through a diversity of colonial encounters that empowered them. Just as there would be no Mosquitia without the Mosquito, there would likely be no Mosquito without the colonial crucible that enabled their specific identity formation. Mosquito social relations of equality and autonomy, first with the settlers of Providence Island and then with pirates, provided the political foundation for an independent if divided Mosquito nation and Kingdom. Mosquito leaders empowered their positions within the Mosquito polity by granting British wood-cutters settlement, land, and concessionary rights in the traditional territories of others. The spatial meaning of the Mosquito Kingdom for Spaniards and British alike was repeatedly mapped in ways suggesting that they were responding to, or sought to better understand, Mosquito activities. Central to Mosquito power over people, space, and resources were the emblems of authority that constituted and gave meaning to Mosquito spatial practices. The fact that syncretized colonial icons remain powerfully significant to this day is not surprising when one considers that dominion in the Mosquitia continues to remain subject to ongoing negotiation.

I was reminded of this geohistorical continuity while visiting with the Mosquito Council of Elders in Bilwi, or Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua in 1997.<sup>109</sup> After a lengthy discussion about contemporary land rights and the historical geography of the Mosquitia, the president of the Council, Rodolfo Rivera, turned to me and, switching from Mosquito to Spanish, opened up a bible that served as his folder and gently pulled out a mildewed page. The paper contained a photocopy of a hand-copied version of the Armitage map shown in Fig. 4. The map had been drawn by the historian Bill Sorsby and passed along to Mosquito leaders by his widow after his untimely death in the early 1990s. Pointing to the map, the elder asked me why the Mosquito needed to ‘remap’ their lands if this had already been done. I once interpreted this postcolonial moment as a variant of mapping back, of holding up a colonial map to a foreign emissary and saying ‘look, there we are; these are our lands.’ Now I realize that Mr. Rivera’s ancestors had much more complex role in the production of the Armitage map. Just as Santaella’s map from 1716 was responding to the King of Spain’s request to visualize Mosquito spatial practices, so too was Armitage’s map fulfilling a British need to *re-present* the same thing 65 years later. Without Mosquito spatial practices, there would have been no Mosquitia to map, only some other place.

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<sup>109</sup> Offen, Narrating place and identity (note 12).

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