

William V. Davidson

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The
LOST TOWNS OF HONDURAS

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Eight colonial places that dropped off the map, 1530-1845,
with a critical recapitulation of the mythical
Ciudad Blanca of La Mosquitia

William V. Davidson

The Lost Towns of Honduras.

**Eight once-important places that dropped off the maps,
with a concluding critical recapitulation of documents about
the fictitious Ciudad Blanca of La Mosquitia.**

**Printed for the author
Memphis, Tennessee, USA
2017**

The Lost Towns of Honduras.

**In Recognition of the 100th Anniversary of the Honduran Myth of Ciudad Blanca –
The last of the “great lost cities” that never was.**

**Design by
Andrew Bowen Davidson
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, North Carolina, USA**

**Cover Photograph: Church ruin, Celilac Viejo
By author 1994**

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Preface

Over the last half century my intention has been to insert a geographical perspective into the historical study of indigenous Honduras. Historical research, appropriately, focuses on "the what," "the who," and "the when." To many historians, "the where," the geographical component, is much less important, and, indeed, is sometimes overlooked. One of my students once reflected on the interplay of the two disciplines:

"Historical geography, in contrast to history, focuses on locations before dates, places before personalities, distributions before events, and regions before eras. The historical geographer reconstructs the stage of the past, whereon the historian discusses the plot. Each relies upon the other to add dimension to the final production." (Galvin 1999: xiv)

A few years ago, a very bright Honduran physician who was raised in the fruit company complex of La Lima and educated in the U.S., asked me if I knew about Cangélica, an obscure little settlement far up the río Leán that was a site where indigenous populations once traded, illegally, with the British during the very late 18th century. As we discussed that place and its little-known history, I realized that many Hondurans, like the good doctor, wonder about esoteric questions in the historical geography of their country. I recognize that few beyond the borders of Honduras will ever care about "lost places" in Honduras, but *catracho* interest, or my own, alone is enough to initiate this consideration.

Our concerns here are some of the more prominent former settlements: Nueva Salamanca, Elgueta, Teculucelo, Cárcamo/Maitúm, Munguiche, Quesaltepeque, Cayngala, and Cururú. All of these places, for at least a while, captured the attention of the country. They have been ordered in this presentation according to approximate dates of their demise.

The eight places highlighted herein are only a few of many aboriginal and colonial settlements now abandoned. There are many more. We are not absolutely certain about Nito's location near la boca del río Dulce (in modern Guatemala). Tencoá is a well-known location on the right bank of the middle Ulúa south of Santa Bárbara. Tatumbra and Tenambra were in the Otoro Valley, west side piedmont across from Jesus de Otoro. Remnants of Celilaca Viejo and Jalapa Viejo can be found in the valley of the Jicatuyo. Old Tambla became Humuya, in the southern Comayagua valley. Villa de la Frontera de Cáceres can probably be located south of the río Guayape in Olancho (Davidson 1991: 214). Of course, ancient San Jorge de Olancho, east of Juticalpa and up the Boquerón, can be located with precision and still exhibits evidence of a relict landscape (see below). Others, such as Maniani and Aramani, on the *camino real* between San Pedro and Comayagua, have disappeared, without visible traces. A somewhat comparable

situation exists in the relocation of major towns, such as Gracias and Puerto Cortés (see Lunardi 1946), and the renaming of settlements (such as old Tambla becoming Humuya).

Figure 1. El Boquerón, Olancho, 1991.



Pre-Columbian and colonial ruins are found along a two-kilometer stretch west of and paralleling the Río de Olancho, at the foot of the bluff, on the bluff slope, and at the top edge of the bluff.



Figure 2. Artifacts from El Boquerón, Olancho, 2000.
Foto courtesy Mark Bonta.

Archaeologist Paul Farnsworth, on examination of the photo of the collection of local teacher Ramona Figueroa, classified most of the sherds as Ligurian Blue on Blue, 1550-1600 or Sevilla Blue on Blue, 1550-1630. One is a Sevilla Blue on White 1530-1650; some sherds might be Yayal Blue on White, 1490-1625 and/or Santo Domingo Blue on White 1550-1630.

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My appreciation is hereby expressed to geographers Scott Brady, Craig Revels, Rick Samson, and Joby Bass for their insights and companionship during searches for the lost towns. They are exceptional field geographers. Mark Bonta provided valuable insights on several matters. Son Chadwick sought with me the ruins of Cururú. Son Andrew designed the book.

I. Introduction

Fascination with "lost" places seems universal. A mere mention of Atlantis, Camelot, Cíbola, El Dorado, Shangri-La, or The Lost City of Z often makes even the meek wish for, and seek, a bit of personal exploration and discovery. Bush pilot Jimmie Angel, in an unsuccessful attempt to locate the fanciful *Lost World* (1912) of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, crashed his plane atop a Venezuelan *tepuí* (flat-top mountain) in 1937 and was rewarded by having his name attached to the highest waterfall on Earth. Angel Falls drops 3,212 uninterrupted feet from Auyén Tepuí. **Jimmie lived out a full life.** In 1925, Colonel Percival Harrison Fawcett (1867-1925) sought "Z" in Brazil. While seeking, with his son, he died in the Brazilian forest, the bodies never recovered (Grann 2005). **Percival did not live out a full life.**

Of course, the places mentioned above are mythical, not to be located in reality because many originated long ago . . . only in the minds of romantic novelists, philosophers, greedy colonizers, and self-proclaimed "explorers" . . . perhaps, for their own purposes.

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Mi segunda patria, Honduras, has its own non-existent lost city. Much has been written of Ciudad Blanca, the ancient, large, fabulous indigenous settlement of the eastern interior. Of course it can never be found, because it never existed. It has appeared only **recently** on maps, entered **recently** the oral tradition of indigenous people and been "sought and found" by several explorers, pseudo-scientists, and novelists. However, like the other places mentioned above, Ciudad Blanca exists only in the silly imaginations of its seekers. Those who mention Cortes' *Fifth Letter to the King* (1526; 1971) as the first notice of Honduras' Ciudad Blanca should fear for their credibility on their other "scholarly" pursuits.

And, by the way, why are there no notices of Ciudad Blanca in the five centuries between Cortés and the 1917 note by Conzemius? Why did the Franciscan missionaries who traveled widely over La Mosquitia never mention such a place? Why did not the early ethnographers and educated travelers of the region hear of the most important and sacred native place of the region? How can a story that began only about a century ago take on such ancient significance?

Easy, if you were among those who believed the world would end on December 21, 2012. Remember that rubbish about the Maya calendar?

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On the other hand, Honduras does have real lost towns. Most were important places that are well-documented historically. Of the eight selected here, six began as indigenous settlements; two are very early places established by Spaniards. After the arrival of the Europeans those sites occupied by natives were abandoned after many years and then fell from general knowledge. The two colonial settlements were quite ephemeral. To be located, each of the eight required some historical and geographical reconstructions, based on archival and field reconnaissance. But they can they be located. That is, not always with absolute precision.

Abandoned settlements are some of the fun stuff of historical geography. In Honduras, maps are dotted with place names indicating the locations of former settlements. According to the listing of places in the *Gazetteer of Honduras* (DMA 1983), "Pueblo Viejo" appears 27 times and "Azacualpa" and its equivalents (Azacualpita, Sacualpa, Zacualpa, Zacualpita) occur 63. Azacualpa is a nahuatl indicator of a site of ruins of human habitation (cite). Another indicator of old places is *calpules*, from the Nahuatl *calpuli*. *Antiguales*, generic for any ancient site with artifacts, are widespread.

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The Problem with *la légua*

Among the problems encountered during the search for lost towns in Honduras is the consideration of distance. In most documents of colonial Honduras the *légua* (league) is the most-employed land measurement. A difficulty arises, however, because the official length of the *légua* varied over the years and according to place. Further, among Hondurans and especially in the countryside, the *légua* was (and is) often thought of as the distance that could be walked in an hour. Obviously that measurement varies enormously depending on the speed of the walker and conditions of the terrain (flat or irregular topography, high or low elevations, etc.). Therefore, when noted in documents the *légua* might have little value as an absolute distance. On the other hand, within the same document it might very well have value as a relative distance. A league today is thought of as about 3.45 miles or 5.55 kms. For a complete discussion of changes of the league through time see Chardon 1980.

As will be seen below, the complicated nature of the *légua* is an important consideration in the following cases of Nueva Salamanca, Elgueta, and Cururú.

Early Colonial Settlement Patterns

Whether the method was contemplated or simply evolved, the pattern of site selection for the earliest Spanish settlements in Honduras was simple: the conquerors selected 1) coastal sites with the best natural harbors and 2) piedmont locations in the largest interior valleys near the

confluences of streams. In the first instance, examples are Trujillo, Triunfo de la Cruz, and Puerto Caballos; in the second case are San Pedro at the western edge of the Ulúa Valley, Comayagua at the northern end of the great valley where the Humuya flows into the narrow mountain gorges, Gracias a Dios, far up the Jicatuyo in the flats of the río Arcagual, and San Jorge de Olancho, on the northern edge of the great valley of Guayape/Olancho. However, once the most obvious places were occupied in the resource rich and more densely populated western portion of the country, ambitious Spanish leaders turned their attention to the less hospitable lands to the east. Even after a half a century no major settlements had been developed in the eastern 40 percent of the country. The two earliest unsuccessful attempts at settlement -- Nueva Salamanca and Elgueta -- were ephemeral and had little impact on permanent development. The other six "lost towns" had their period of prominence, but faded for a variety of reasons. Their stories follow . . . in order of date of abandonment.

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II. Nueva Salamanca Earliest Spanish Center Beyond the Eastern Frontier 1544-1559

The first serious attempt at Spanish settlement east of the Trujillo-Olancho-Nueva Segovia frontier line was initiated by Francisco Montejo. Shortly after he was named to govern from his seat in western Honduras at Gracias a Dios in 1543, Montejo sought to place a Spanish center in the Far East (Chamberlain 1953: 222). Obviously, the frontier settlement was named for Montejo's hometown in Spain – Salamanca.

Little is readily available to reconstruct in detail who was involved in the settlement and exactly where it was located. In the absence of documents that established the settlement and *cédulas* that allocated the nearby subjugated towns into the *encomienda* system much of the information on Nueva Salamanca will remain a mystery.

The location of the site has never been determined with any certainty. Rarely has it been placed on a map and never with accuracy. Unfortunately, the “Map of Honduras” presented by Chamberlain (1953: facing page 10) placed Nueva Salamanca south of the río Coco (Segovia), in Nicaragua. Perhaps he was led to this more southern location by Durón (1904: 216) who believed its site to be even farther away on the north bank of the Río San Juan (Desaguadero) in Nicaragua. Another suggestion is Salamá, Olancho (Sarmiento 1990: 42-3). Lunardi (1946: 88-90), in his discussion of the founding of the earliest Honduran cities, expressed the possibility of its location on either the Río Paulaya or Guayape. He also thought it might have been established as early as 1543.

Of course, the Nueva Salamanca of Honduras must not be confused with others in the New World: Villa de Nueva Salamanca in Puerto Rico (Fernández Méndez 1981: 116), la Villa de San German de la Nueva Salamanca (Martí Carvajal 2007: 161), or Villa de Nueva Salamanca de la Ramada in Santa Marta, Colombia (Bermúdez B. 1997: 304). La Villa de Salamanca, known also as Bacalar, was a Spanish town just north of Belize (Jones 1998: 39). Montejo had previously established Salamanca de Campeche and Salamanca de Xelha, across from Cozumel in 1527, the first Spanish town in Yucatán (Chamberlain 1948: 36).

Chamberlain (1953: 222) wrote that after becoming governor of Honduras, for the third time, Montejo desired to expand his zone of colonization beyond Olancho. To this end he sent his devoted follower Alonso de Reinoso, with Luis de Aguilar, on a reconnaissance into supposedly rich lands that are between Olancho and Trujillo and extended to the Río Desaguadero [modern Río San Juan, Nicaragua-Costa Rica border] (Maldonado 1545: *CDI-AO* 24 [1875]: 394, 438). Of course, the explorers did not wander that far to the south, but did find the area east and north of Olancho to be a place worthy of a new frontier settlement – “es tierra rica,” they wrote. A year later, Pedraza reported that in 1546 “valle de Yara” [Paulaya] was the

site of “minas de oro” (Pedraza 1547), information probably gleaned from the Reinoso-Aguilar entrada of 1544 (Luis Aguilar was in the vicinity of Nueva Salamanca with Alonso de Reynoso, AGCA A1.29/4670-40107). It was Reinoso who allocated *encomiendas* to Aguilar (Jaguilla and Paraqui) and to Casanos (Xagua and Tanguara) (Maldonado 1545: CDI-AO 24 [1875]: 394).

By year, the major documents concerning Nueva Salamanca follow:

1543 The earliest date that can be suggested for Nueva Salamanca is 1543, a year implied from Pedro Ramirez’s letter to the King (25 de julio de 1545). During his attempt to move the Audiencia de los Confines from Gracias a Dios to Guatemala (CDHN 11: 490; CDI-AO 24 (1875: 394), he writes that “the new town of Nueva Salamanca, which is 20 leagues beyond San Jorge Olancho, had been populated roughly two years ago.”

1544 Better evidence supporting a beginning in 1544 comes from the *probanza* of Luis Aguilar who stated on July 30, 1550, that he had been in Nueva Salamanca for six years (AGCA A1.29/4670-40107), but he might have been referring to his original entry with Reinoso. Also, in 1544 Bishop Pedraza (1544), writing from Trujillo where he had been bishop for three years, did not yet know of any new settlement called Nueva Salamanca. To the interior he knew only of “**tagiusgualpa**, which is to say in their language “house where gold is melted.”

1545 Clearly, the new settlement was underway during 1545, sometime before December 30, because the *Oidores de la Real Audiencia de los Confines*, writing to the King from Gracias a Dios, noted that in Honduras Spaniards populated only six places: Gracias a Dios, Comayagua, San Pedro, San Jorge, Trujillo, and the new settlement of Nueva Salamanca, which is located in rich lands (CDI-AO 24 (1875): 440; CDHN 12: 458-9, 474). Still, at that time, the new settlement had no *regidores* to govern.

1546 Within three months, by March 17, 1546, a *vecino* of San Pedro, Jerónimo de San Martín, was named to serve as *alcalde mayor* of the *ciudad de la Nueva Salamanca* and the *villa de San Jorge del Valle de Ulancho*--for two years (MCH V: 2825). By July 9, 1546 the King understood generally that Nueva Salamanca had been established, but his geography of the site was quite unclear. To Him the new settlement was within a giant territory that was bounded on the northwest by Olancho and Trujillo in a land that reached to the south and east as far as the *Desaguadero* of the *laguna de León* that enters the *Mar del Norte* (the San Juan River that flows from Lake Nicaragua into the Caribbean Sea) (MCH I: 466; CDHN 12: 474). His enthusiasm for exploiting the region, however, was muted by the New Laws that prohibited new conquests among the indigenous populations.

By the year 1546 the new settlement might have begun producing tribute. Pedraza (1547), who passed through the settlement during his country-wide *visita*, knew of the local gold mines. Juan de Lerma (1547), writing from Gracias a Dios, May 22, 1547, reported that for “los diesmos de 1546, Nueva Salamanca i San José (sic: San Jorge) [contributed] 350”) (RAHM 9/1258(2) folio 226). Of course it must be expected that the “Villa de San Jorge del Valle Ulancho,” which had

been organized for many years, was the overwhelming producer of this pair of *encomiendas* administered by San Martín. See other instructions for Martin in 1546 in (MCH V: 2826-7).

1547 (Pedraza May 1547).

Bishop Pedraza, in his determination to view all of his new *obispado*, travelled over the country, leaving Trujillo on the 15th of August, 1545 and returning during the middle of December, 1546. His estimations on distances within the country were: Trujillo to Puerto Caballos, by sea, 40 leagues; Puerto Caballos to San Pedro, over a difficult, irregular and muddy road, 14 leagues; San Pedro to Gracias a Dios, passing only two or three villages, 30 leagues; Gracias a Dios to Comayagua, passing through no more than three villages, 25 leagues; Comayagua to San Jorge del Valle de Olancho, with no villages along the route, 20-30 leagues; San Jorge to Nueva Salamanca are another 30 leagues, without any villages along that road; and from Nueva Salamanca to Trujillo are about 40 leagues, of **the most hellish road**.

Pedraza makes clear that the Nueva Salamanca to Trujillo route was by far the worst. There are at least two versions of his text.

1) "De N. Salamanca a Truxillo hai cerca de 40 leguas infernales, que ni a pie ni a caballo se pueden andar, sino la mas parte erodando con el lado a los medios muchos i descalzos, i muchas veces subrendo hasta el cielo; otros vs bajando hasta los abismos." (RAHM 9/1258(2) 1 mayo 1547)

2) "De la Nueva Salamanca hasta esta ciudad de Trugillo ay cerca de quarenta leguas infernales, de manera que si alguno antes que muera quisiere ver el purgatorio y el infierno, véngase a esta tierra, y verá el purgatorio en todo el camino, y el infierno desde la Nueva çibdad de Salamanca hasta esta çibdad de Truillo. Porque a caballo ni a pie, no se puede andar sino la más parte rrodando, con el lodo hasta los medios muslos y descalços, y muchas vezes subiendo hasta el çielo y otras vezes bajando hasta los abismos de la tierra." (AGI Guatemala164, reprinted in Leyva 1991: 14)

Pedraza described the topography well. A direct route from the middle Paulaya to Trujillo would require traversing mountains at least 3,000 ft high and riverine lowlands at 300 ft —up and down, at least three times. Pedraza's description led Gómez (2013:136) to place Nueva Salamanca "along the middle or high Sico or Paulaya rivers or at least near Cabo Camarón."

From the interrogatories of the several *encomenderos* living in Nueva Salamanca something of the *encomienda* hinterland of the town can be gleaned.

1548 *Provansa de Miguel de Casanos*, December

As a vecino of Nueva Salamanca, Casanos was entrusted with the Indian settlements of *Xagua Quemara* and *Tanguara* [or *Tauguara*] (AGCA A1.29-4670-40100). One had 20 Indians

(*tributaries*), while the other was very poor. Two others places, Xicaque and Caruina (Calaguina), were *vacos* at the time of his statement.

1549 On February 22, 1549, the areas surrounding Trujillo and Nueva Salamanca (“que es parte de Punta de Camaron”) were assigned to Juan Pérez de Cabrera, a citizen of Cuenca, as *corregidor* [chief administrator and judicial officer] (AGI Panamá 245, legajo 1, folios 83-85; Maximiliano 1549, MCH III: 1807). According to the *Real Provisión*, he was to administer justice in the jurisdiction of these towns for a two year term. La Villa de Salamanca (CDHN 15: 28-30)

According to another document from the same period (AGI Justicia 299A [1548-50]), it is claimed that Nueva Salamanca was founded in the Yara valley, some 30 leagues from Trujillo, with its territory including the Peizacura river, where according to the *encomendero* of Topel there were gold mines 5-6 leagues away from Topel, which was also within the jurisdiction of Trujillo. See Gomez 2013: 137

1550 *Provanca de Luis Aguilar*, July 30, 1550.

In his *provanca hecha en la ciudad de Salamanca*, of July 30, 1550, Luis Aguilar, a vecino and conquistador of Nueva Salamanca, declared that he had been granted the *encomiendas* of *Paraquey* and *Xaguiya* by Capitan Alonso de Reynoso. Together, the number of Indians in these two places was not more than eight (AGCA A1.29/4670-40107). He was later killed by Indians (AGCA A1.29/4671-40116, fol. 9).

By the 14th of August, 1550, when the bishop of Honduras (Trugillen) wrote his report to the King (AGI Guatemala 8, folios 16-20; also see Martínez 1983: 230-43), there were only seven *curas* in the country, and, so wrote the bishop, one was in Nueva Salamanca. At the time, while the other six Spanish towns had between 6 and 40 *vecinos españoles*, Nueva Salamanca had only three.

1551 According to the “Méritos y servicios de Alonso Vanegas . . . , de Santiago de Guatemala, 1551” (AGI Pat 59, N3, R1), Nueva Salamanca is in a planicie along Sico, (see Gómez (2013: 140).

1555 *Probanza de Juan Jiménez*, April 8, 1555.

At the time of this record Jiménez was serving as *procurador* of Nueva Salamanca. His testimony focused on three major themes: 1) the rebellion of the Indian towns near Nueva Salamanca, 2) the status of the so-called *miagules*, sodomous natives in the region, and 3) the story of the capture of several Spanish women from ships off the north coast by Indians from the coastal town of Xicaque (AGCA A1.29/4671-40116). At least four named casiques had Spanish “concubines.”

Another mention of the *xicaque* raid on the Spanish vessel comes from Juan Gutiérrez [de Ayala], a *vecino* of Trujillo, who was with his father , and Capitan Juan Lander de Saavedra in

the conquest of *la Teguzgalpa* in 1551. Twice they fought the *indios xicaques* near Cabo Camarón who had robbed a Spanish ship and killed people on board (MCH XI: 530).

The twelve native towns in rebellion, all once in *encomiendas*, were Paya, Guaunquiri [also Guaangueri], Taxao, Moncaune [also Aburuncaune], Quiriquiri, Guaha, Inmuca, Auca, Guipo, Yahu [also Ahu], Tauizquiri [also Tabizqueri], and Cumay. Another town, located on the coast east of Trujillo and within the boundaries of territory attached to Nueva Salamanca, was Xicaque, the encomienda of Carlos de Segura and Pedro Madera, conquerors and citizens of Nueva Salamanca.

The town of Xicaque, led by cacique Guarro Xicaque, subjugated the more peaceful towns of Xau and Caporri. From Xicaque they attacked Xagua, Quemara, Tanguara, Tomin, and Gualey [Gualcay]. Lorenzo Duque de Colmenares, alcalde mayor de Trujillo was also killed by those from Xicaque.

When Lazaro Lamadrid (O.F.M.) reviewed Lunardi's *La Fundación de la Ciudad de Gracias a Dios* (1946) for *The Americas* (1947) he questioned the monsignor's notions on Nueva Salamanca.

"Its disappearance was not as early as the author [Lunardi] would have us believe. It still existed in 1555, for on April 8 of that year the procurator of the town, Juan Ximénez, stated that there were no clergymen and that when there had been a few priests, they demanded too much for their services, hence the reason why the natives were not instructed in their religion nor baptized. He says that the last priest in town left four years before. The town, according to him, had eight or nine inhabitants. The town of Xicaques, he says, was given in *encomienda* to Carlos de Segura and Pedro Madera. It bordered on Nueva Salamanca, on the Río Pezicura. The Indians of that region killed Lorenzo Duque (de Colmenares) and were very savage, laying waste to many localities inhabited by other Indians and inflicting much damage to the Spaniards. They took possession of the towns of Xagua, Kemara, Tanguara, Tomin, Gualcay and made others subservient to them, as Xau and Caporri. These Xicaques dwelt some sixteen leagues from Truxillo and some twelve leagues from Nueva Salamanca. In the same region other Indians were in rebellion. These were the Poyas, the Uauankirris, Aumuncanes, Cumayes, Kirikiris, Yumancas, Aucas, Quipos, Yautaxaus. All these villages had *encomenderos*, but they feared entering their *encomiendas* and waited until the King would order them to go."

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Given the list of *encomiendas* assigned from Nueva Salamanca, the region under its nominal control was indeed large. The region raided by the xicaques of the cape was even larger – reaching from Xagua, a coastal town ca. 65 km west of Trujillo, to Auca, in the southeastern savannas of Mosquitia, a distance of some 250 km by the coast.

Given the unsettling news that the Indians around Nueva Salamanca had been mistreated and were in full rebellion, Spanish authorities suggested drastic measures.

1556-57 On the 14th of January, 1556, the King ordered *la ciudad de la Nueva Salamanca*, in Honduras, to change locations from where it is and to proceed to *punta del Camarón* [Cabo Camarón], which is at the mouth of the *Río Grande de Motoque* [Paulaya-Negro]. However, by August 11, 1557, 19 months later, Isidro Rodríguez informed the Crown that the move had not occurred (*MCH V*: 2826).

1559 In response, San Martín, still the King's treasurer in Honduras, wrote in October 1559 that he had been working on the relocation project. He said that he had opened a road with his own negro slaves and servants from San Jorge de Olancho to the *Río Motoque* [upper Paulaya]. There he had constructed six *gruesas canoas* and 30 *balsas* and atop these he floated many provisions, horses, and 50 Spaniards downstream until *punta Camarón* and its vicinity. However, after surveying the nearby coastal environment he concluded that he could not find an appropriate place to rebuild the town and further that there was no place for a port anywhere along that coast (Roblado 1559).

While searching for a suitable location for the new Spanish town on the coast, San Martín encountered some natives who told of a Spanish woman captured from a Spanish vessel some years ago who lived at the village of Calaguina (also Calaguna) located “up” the coast from Cabo Camarón [up wind, or to the east]. After locating the village and finding the woman, they learned that after five years in captivity, she had been given her freedom. Now, because of her ability in the local language, she was instrumental in further interactions with the Indians of the area. The woman, named María de León, had been heard of by the Audiencia in Santiago, Guatemala, and because of her renown status was undoubtedly immortalized cartographically on the 1604 (Anon.) map that places her name east of *Camaron* (Davidson 2006: plate XVII).

After informing the native chiefs of Spanish intentions to relocate their town, the Indians recommended a move to the province of “Guagua and Tehuizgalpa” [Wawa-Taguzgalpa, in northeast Nicaragua] which was three days from “Puerto Caxina” [probably meaning south of Carataska, not Trujillo]. Land there was fruitful, the Spaniards were told, with cacao and cotton plantations and gold mines. Also, there the ports are good and easily reachable to Veragua, farther to the south. Apparently, the Indians of the Cabo Camarón region did not consider the Spaniards to be good neighbors and were eager to deceive them in hopes of being left in peace.

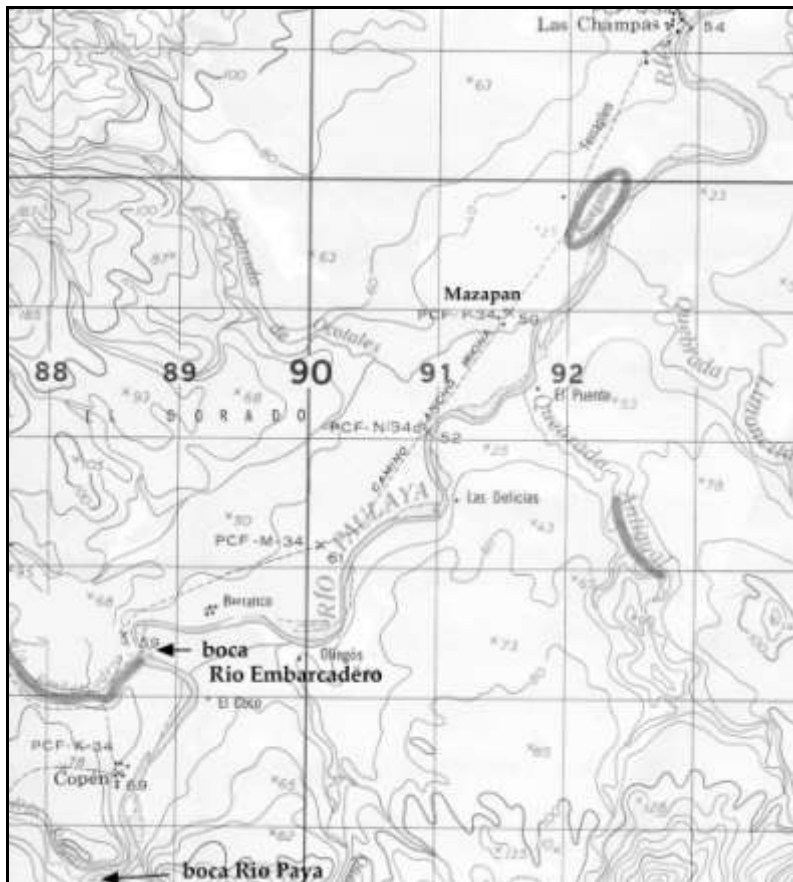
1560 By early 1560 word of the abandonment of Nueva Salamanca had not reached throughout the Spanish world and the King remained persistent. Four years after the initial order, on January 30, 1560 (*MCH V*: 2586, 2768) He again demanded that His Treasurer, San Martín, move the town. One week later, His *real cédula* of February 7 awarded eastern Honduras and Nicaragua “donde está el pueblo de españoles que se llama la Nueva Salamanca” to Alonso Ortiz de Elgueta, alcalde mayor of Nicaragua (Beltran y Rózpide 1937: 6). On the same day the Council of the Indias (Consejo de Indias) proposed that “two towns, Nueva Salamanca and Nueva Xerex en los Cherrotecas [Choluteca], be joined to the alcaldia de Nicaragua.” (*CDI-U* 17 : 245). Nothing more is heard of the settlement of Nueva Salamanca.

In 1561 the new bishop of Honduras, Gerónimo de Corella, moved the bishopric from Trujillo to Comayagua, and government interest in Eastern Honduras begins its decline. (A1.29.1/4672-40137: "Probansa de los meritos y servicios del obispo don Gerónimo de Corella," de San Jorge de Olancho, 2 de dic.,1561, 25 folios (paleografía por Oscar Haeussler, Ciudad de Guatemala).

The Probable Site of Nueva Salamanca

That the residents of Nueva Salamanca relocated down the río Paulaya is overwhelming evidence that supports the location of the town up the río Paulaya -- approximately 12 leagues from the mouth. More specifically, one might expect, given the early Spanish propensity for relatively flat riverine locations, away from flooding, but on a navigable waterway, that the site was within a fairly small area – near what is today the area between Copen and the entrance of río Paya (at about 70 m above sea level) and the Embarcadero (see Map 1). Within a relatively short distance of five km four streams empty into the Paulaya (Paya, Embarcadero, Olingos, Antiguales) adding enough water to make canoe travel possible. Apparently, the settlement was placed as far up the Paulaya as large canoes could travel. Because water depths are seasonal, the settlers were probably conservative and placed the outpost downstream of the shallow parts, perhaps near modern río Embarcadero.

Map 1. Probable location of Nueva Salamanca, 1544-1559. Sites near head of canoe navigation, río Paulaya (map 1973: IGN 3162-I).



It is this same location, at the head of large canoe navigation on the Paulaya, that the Franciscan fathers Martínez and Baena probably established in 1622 a mission settlement (Barcaquer) (Vásquez 1714, IV: 164). This same location, during the middle of the 18th century, both English and Spanish sources recognized it as place where the road to the interior (Olancho) began (TNA CO 137/25, 1753; Lara y Ortega (1759) [where lived a community of more than 25 payas (“*al límites de pipantes en el Río Paun*” [Paulaya]. In 1821 payas were still there (ANH 1821) and in 1840 the Embarcadero was still known as the route to the interior of Olancho from “La Criba” [boca del Río Negro, Black River] (Herrera 1840).

On modern maps the *encuentro* (confluence) of the Paulaya y Embarcadero rivers (map 1973: IGN 3162-I) is just south of a zone known as “El Dorado,” recalling the place and times of gold placer operations.

Others who have attempted to use the Paulaya, for example floating dredges and barges while seeking gold, have not gone farther upstream than the Las Champas vicinity because of shallow water (see Moore and Jennings 1974: 166).

1993 Field reconnaissance of the route between Dulce Nombre Culmí and the mouth of the río Paulaya took place during January 1993. Rick Samson, Scott Brady, and the author sought appropriate sites for early Spanish settlement. The hikers saw the first large area of flat land near Río Paya, at 70 m above sea level, where the Paulaya emerges from the irregular upland. They first found large canoe travel available on the Paulaya at Las Champas, at 54 m above sea level. (figures 2, 3) The only other flat area for appropriate settlement along the route was at Limeta, just upstream from the entry of Quebrada Limeta into the Paulaya. Here is an elongated flatland approximately 2.5 x .25 km at 325 m above sea level and 50 km upstream from Río Paya (figure 4). While this delightful inter-montane valley must have been a special place for native populations, and perhaps the early Franciscans, it seems quite unlikely that Spaniards would have established a settlement so far from canoe navigation on the Paulaya.

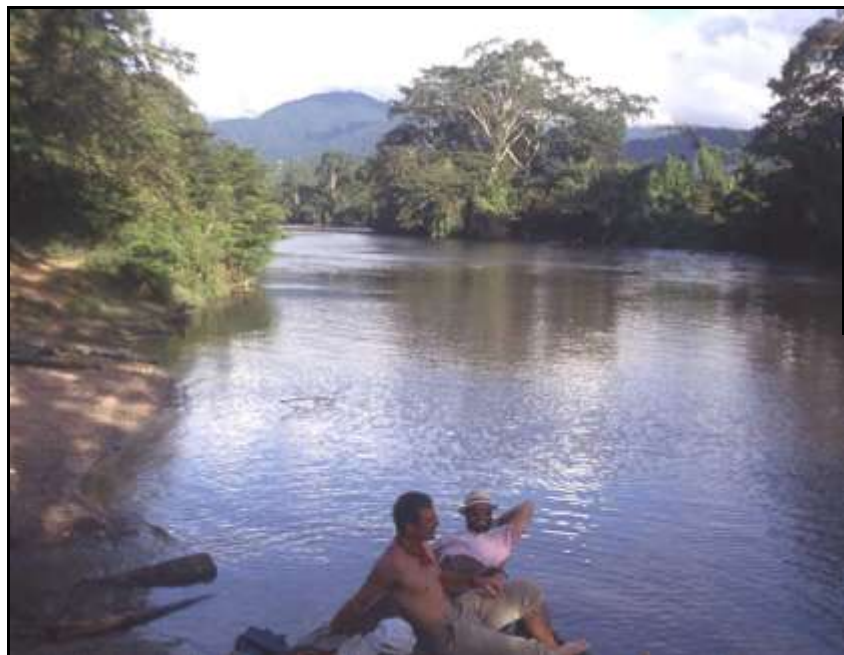


Figure 2. Geographers S. Brady and R. Samson preparing to embark on the Paulaya at Las Champas, January, 1993.

Figure 3. The relatively shallow water at Las Champas *embarcadero* is indicated by wading cattle, January 1993.



Figure 4. The savanna-like vegetation of the Limeta Valley, facing north, January 1993.



Toponyms Associated with the Geography of the Nueva Salamanca region, 1545 - 1560.

Auca (1555)

One of several towns, formerly *encomiendas*, but now in rebellion. From here native raiders entered the more peaceful *encomienda* towns, thus making this town a probable one of the proto-Mískito. The term in the Mískito language refers to the *cortéz* (*Tabebuia ochracea*), a very distinctive tree that produces the beautiful yellow flowers for a brief period after the first days of the rainy season. It seems unlikely that this place might be modern Auka, a Mískito village on the upper río Kruta in the savannas of southeastern Mosquitia. Auca does appear in the 1699 list of "Guaiane" (Mískito) towns. However, it is difficult to imagine that a place so far from Nueva Salamanca [240 km by coastline and up river] could belong to an *encomendero* from the middle río Paulaya. More likely it refers to another Mískito place –unlocated for 1555.

Buga (1548)

According to Bonta (2001: 118), this place is mentioned in the *probanza* of Miguel de Casanos (AGCA A1.29/4670-40100). Its location is not noted, but is likely a Pech village.

Calaguna, Calaguina (1559) [and perhaps **Catuina** (1948), **Caruina** (1548, 1555)]

The suffix *guina/wina* is Mískito term for *carne/meat*. This settlement was near Cabo Camarón, probably to the east perhaps around Ibans Lagoon. It was well known place because here, for five years, a Spanish woman, María de León, from Tenerife, had been held. She was taken from a Spanish ship headed to Trujillo and eventually rescued.

Camarón, punta de (1555, 1559)

Cabo de Camarón is one of the best known places in the region. Since the 1504 voyage of Columbus it has been a major reference point for other places on the east coast of Central America. Based on nomenclature from the 1504 trip, at that time it was occupied by the Pech and named for Camarona, a Pech *casique* (Davidson 1991: 209).

Caporri (1555)

A town paired with Xav that was subjugated to the raiding Xicaques who lived in a town near mouth of río Tinto/ Cabo Camarón.

Guainaqui - Carasqui (1555) [Arrasquy] Katski ?

One of the three named *casiques* who raided Spanish ships, capturing women with whom they sired children. If he lived in a village that bore his name, as was normal for the period, Karaski might be a modern spelling for this place. *Kara* is the Mískito word for lizard/crocodile/alligator perhaps placing the settlement along the coast to the south and east of Camarón. Carataska, the large lagoon of Mosquitia, is derived from similar terms. "Qui" is also a Pech suffix for "four" (Vásquez 1944: IV, 177; Holt no date: 7).

Caxinas, Puerto de (1559)

During the earliest days of European discovery in Honduras, Caxinas (Cajinas, etc.) referred to the point (cape) and port at Trujillo. However, by the time of Nueva Salamanca Caxinas also referred to landscape features farther south along the shore of Mosquitia. Maps show Caxinas as a punta and rio just north of Cape Gracias a Dios (see maps 1562 Gutiérrez, 1563 Lázaro, in Davidson 2006: 24, 39).

Coasapi (1555)

A named proto-Mískito *casique*, and probably a place near cabo Camaron, because in the Spanish conception of the day the leader and his town often share the same name. The prefix *coa* is suggestive of the Nahuatl term for snake. Is it coincidence that during the 1504 Columbian trip, the region (and perhaps chief) of the cabo Camarón was also named for a snake *eb.uya* = “big snake” in Pech (Davidson 1991:209).

Cotunga (1561) [Cotunca]

This “pueblo de la comarca de los taicones, en Olancho, cerca de Nueva Salamanca” was reported by Juan de Rojas in 1561(AGCA A1.29.1/4672-40137: folio 21; see Bonta 2001:120). Towns in this locale normally were Pech.

Cumay (1555)

One of several towns, formerly *encomiendas*, now in rebellion. This is perhaps the first use of the term -- a generalized Pech term that refers to the Mískito. (Herlihy 2008: 132; Vásquez 1944: IV, 79). It might, therefore, have been reasonably close to Pech lands,

Guagua y Tehuizgalpa (1559)

Known as “una provincia,” or region, south along the Mosquito Coast. Guagua probably refers to modern “Wawa,” the large lagunal area just south of Cabo Gracias a Dios. Of course, Tehuizgalpa is one of the numerous cognates/corruptions of Taguzgalpa, that large region of unexplored territory along the Mosquito Shore. In this era it was also one of the names for the modern río Coco.

Guaha (1555)

Apparently in the list of Pech towns.

Gualeay (1555) [Gualcay]

Within the list of places raided by the Xicaque of cabo Camarón.

Guanguyry (1555) [also Guaunquyrri, Guaunguerry, Guayuaquy]

One of several towns, formerly an *encomienda*, but now in rebellion. The “quire” suffix probably indicates a Pech town. “Aguaquire,” a frequent toponym in the Culmí area, is perhaps the most prominent example.

Guypo (1555)

One of several towns, formerly encomiendas but now in rebellion. From here raiders entered the more peaceful [Pech] towns. Perhaps this was a proto-Mískito Xicaque settlement along the east coast to the south.

Moncaune (1555)

One of several towns, formerly an *encomienda*, but now in rebellion.

Motoque, Río Grande de (1559) [Motaqui?]

Apparently, the Motoque was the Río Paulaya. It is the stream floated by the departurers from Nueva Salamanca when they arrived at Cabo Camarón. Within the same group of documents the river is also called the Yara. Perhaps, as now, each ethnic group had its own different name for the river.

Paya (1555)

One of several towns, formerly encomiendas but now in rebellion. Modern places with this early Spanish term for the Pech can be found up the Río Paulaya and along the coast (río Paya) west of Cabo Camarón.

Paraquey (1550) [also Paragri]

Paraquey, with Jagüilla, was a joint *encomienda* of only 4-5 indios tributarios, under the direction of Luis de Aguilar, vecino de Nueva Salamanca, granted by Capitan Alonso de Reynoso (AGCA A1.29/4670-40107).

Peçecura, río (1555)

A Pech town on río Sico – well known by the early Spaniards, 1526-1531 (Davidson 2016: 367). In 1550 the *encomendero* of Topel, 5-6 leagues away, reported gold mines (AGI Justicia 299A, see Gómez 2013: 137) The “cura” suffix is similar to that of Pacura, a modern Pech town in the northern Agalta Valley. During the days of Cortés, “Pizacura” was one of the *casiques* of the province of Papayeca (or Papaeca), a province seven leagues from Trujillo that had 18 subject towns, including Coabata (and evidently “Pizacura”) (Cortés 1971: 265-6).

Quemara (1548, 1555)

Quemara (with Xagua) was a coastal site that was plundered by the xicaques of cape Camarón. It was first noted by historian Bernal Díaz del Castillo in 1525-6 (1982: 545) as a native town four days walk east of Tela; two days west of Trujillo. Modern Punta Quemara is 20 km west of Trujillo.

Quyriguyri (1555)

An alternate spelling might be “Quirequire,” a distinctively Pech toponym.

Tanguara (1555) [also Tauguara, perhaps Tauguaca, as in “Tawahka”]

Tavizqueri (1555) [Tabisquiri]

One of several towns, formerly encomiendas but now in rebellion. Because of the “guire” suffix, it was probably a Pech place.

Taxao (1555) also Tajao

One of several towns, formerly encomiendas but now in rebellion.

Tomin (1555) with **Chameca** (Chalmeca)

Topel (1550) near Trujillo, see Davidson 2016: 515.

Truxillo (1555)

The major Spanish settlement and port of eastern Honduras that is mentioned most frequently as the contact urban place for Nueva Salamanca.

Xav (1555)

A probably-Pech town paired with Caporri subjugated to the raiding xicaques who lived near the mouth of río Tinto/cabo Camarón. Because they were apparently under control of Xicaque, they might be expected to be located nearby.

Xagua (1548, 1555)

Xagua was a coastal site west of Trujillo. Earliest notice of Xagua might be the notation “la baia de le xagua” on a map constructed from the voyage of Pinzon and Solis (1508/1510 Maggiolo, in Davidson 2006: 24). In 1526 Díaz del Castillo (1982: 545) also reported Xagua was 10 leagues from Triunfo de la Cruz. A river with that name also served as the eastern boundary of Pedro Alvarado’s region surrounding San Pedro in 1536. The Río Papaloteca seems a likely modern equivalent for Río Xagua, but the tributary counts of 1582, 1590, and 1592 has both places. (Davidson 1991: 219) However, because the term refers to a well-known, widely-distributed dye-producing plant, *jagua* (*genipa Americana*), the toponym could be found throughout the country.

Xagua Quemara [see Quemara and Xagua, above]

Xaguiya (1550)

One might expect that given the practice of naming people and places after prominent local animals Xaguiya is equivalent to a term still used on the east coast of Central America, Jagüilla. The latter term is local nomenclature for the white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*). Because of its reputation for being ferocious, the pig is nicknamed “little jaguar.” Its Anglicized form is *warree/wari/warri* (Donkin 1985: 48-50). Because the animal is more likely to inhabit the forests than the savannas and coastal lands of the Miskito, the unlocated place was probably inhabited by Pech. Jagüilla, with Paraquey, was a joint *encomienda* of only 4-5 indios tributarios, under the direction of Luis de Aguilar, vecino de Nueva Salamanca (AGCA A1.29/4670-40107).

Xicaque (1548, 1555)

This settlement is undoubtedly named generically for the occupying Indians who were still “wild” and “uncivilized” in the eyes of the Spaniards. They resisted being incorporated into the *encomienda* system and were therefore worthy of this derogatory label. Their casique, “Guero Xicaque,” was one of three named leaders. He was responsible for killing the mayor of Trujillo, while on a canoe trip, and taking two Spanish women from vessels as concubines for their chiefs. These “Xicaques” were not part of the Yoro people, the Torrupán, who were called “Jicaques” until recently.

The document of 1555 notes that Xicaque (the settlement) is not more than 16 leagues east of Trujillo and 12 leagues from Nueva Salamanca. That location is near the mouth of the Sico-Paulaya-Negro, perhaps near modern Palacios, or another lagunal site. From there the inhabitants raided ships offshore and by canoe attacked coastal settlements. From this place raiders took the towns of Xaguaquemara, Tanguara, Tomin, and Gualeay. They made Xav and Caporri their subject towns.

It is speculation, but perhaps the case, that Xicaque was the western-most Cumage/Mískito village at the time and the leading edge of raids into Pech lands.

Yahu (1555) [also Ahu]

One of several towns, formerly *encomiendas* but now in rebellion. From here raiders entered the more peaceful Pech towns south and west of Cabo Camarón, making them suspicious as proto-Mískito xicaques. Further, “Yahu” is a Mískito prefix for sweet manioc. For example, Yahurabila, a settlement on Caratasca Lagoon, translates as “place where cassava grows abundantly.” Would Mískito raid so far from that settlement in 1555?

Yara, valle de (1555)

In all likelihood, “Yara” was the proto-Mískito term for the modern lower río Paulaya. According to Incer (1990: 202), “Yara, Yare, and Yari” were generic names for any large stream in the Mískito language. This is good evidence of at least occasional Mískito presence on the lower Paulaya.

Ynmuca (1555) [also Inmuca]

A formerly peaceful *encomienda* now in rebellion.

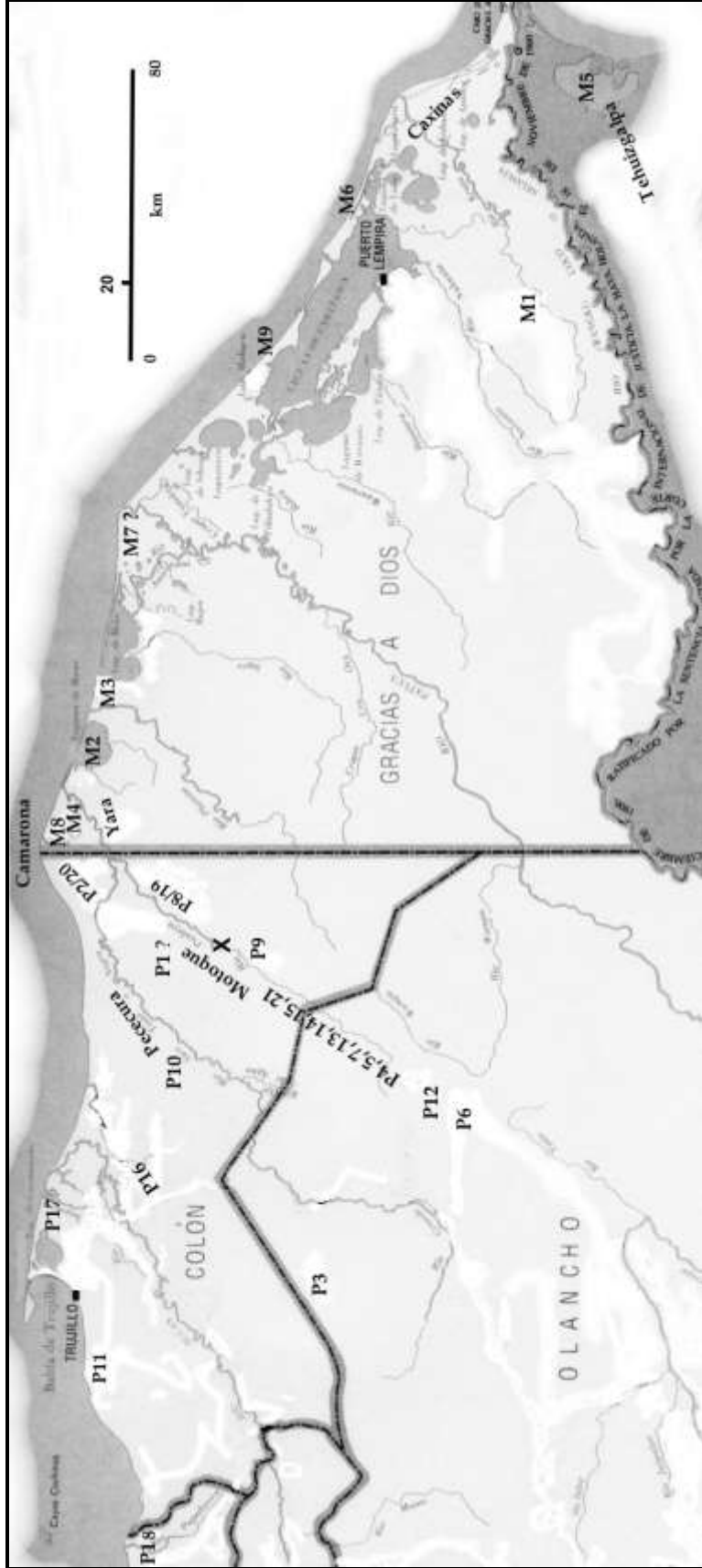
People of the period

Alonso de Reinoso, conquistador, first entrada to Nueva Salamanca with Aguilar, allocated encomiendas
Luis de Aguilar, conquistador and sheriff of Nueva Salamanca, encomendero of Jaquilla and Paraqui
Juan Pérez de Cabrera, Corregidor de Trujillo and Nueva Salamanca
Jerónimo de San Martín, alcalde mayor de Nueva Salamanca and San Jorge de Olancho
Lorenzo Duque Colmenares, alcalde de Trujillo (killed in canoe, returning home from Yara Valley)
Juan Jiménez, procurador de Nueva Salamanca
Miguel de Casanos, encomendero de Xagua/Quemara and Tanguara
Diego Diaz Vizcaino (killed with Aguilar)
Pedro Madero (Madera), conquistador, encomendero of Xicaque
Nieves, Juan de (killed with Colmenares)
Juan de Reina (killed with Aguilar)
Carlos de Segura, conquistador, encomendero of Xicaque
Juan de Villa Sante, alcalde ordinario
Pedro Gómez de Rueda, regidor de Nueva Salamanca
Juan de Rojas, de Nueva Salamanca, encomendero of Cotunga, pueblo de la comarca de los taicones, en Olancho, cerca de Nueva Salamanca (AGCA A1.29.1/4672-40137: folio 21)

Mapping the Nueva Salamanca region of interaction.

Based on information provided in the documents above, primarily on linguistics and raiding patterns, tentative ethnic identifications and locations can be suggested for 9 proto-Mískito and 21 proto-Pech places. Mapping the hypothetical locations of the 30 settlements, 3 regions (Camarona, Caxinas, Tehuizgalpa), and 3 river names (Pececura, Yara, Motoque) mentioned in the Nueva Salamanca documents gives an indication of the culture regions of northeastern Honduras for the mid-16th century. As has been suggested previously by F. Colón (1959) and (Davidson 1991:207-12; 2002: 63, 75) the micro-physical geography of winds and currents probably places a major role in making Cabo Camarón the coastal boundary between groups – in 1500, and until today!

Aid in locating the sites of the encomiendas also comes from the major archeologist for the region, Chris Begley (1999: 196). He noted that along the Paulaya, the largest sites of ancient aboriginal occupation were located more than a kilometer up smaller tributaries, on areas of flat land. Such locations were probably often hidden from the Spanish *entradas* that stayed on or fairly near the main river. These micro-habitats were potential sites of the Nueva Salamanca *encomiendas*.



Map 2. Nueva Salamanca, region of interaction, mid-16th century.

X = Nueva Salamanca

M = proto-Mískito sites: 1. Auca, 2. Caruina/Calaguina, 3. Cumay, 4. Coasapi, 5. Guagua, 6. Guainaqüi-Carasqui, 7. Guypo ?, 8. Xicaque, 9. Yahu

P = proto-Pech sites: 1. Buga ?, 2. Caporri, 3. Cotunga/Cotunca, 4. Guaha, 5. Gualeay, 6. Guanguyri [Aguanquire ?], 7. Moncaune, 8. Paraquey, 9. Paya, 10. Pececura, 11. Quemara, 12. Quyriguyri, 13. Tanguara, 14. Tavisquire, 15. Taxao, 16. Tomin-Chameca, 17. Topel, 18. Xagua, 19. Xaguiya, 20. Xav, 21. Ynmuca (Puerto Lempira shown for orientataion only.)

III.
Elgueta
Ephemeral sites and associated settlements Anahuaca and de los Guabas,
Laguna Cartago [Carataska]
1564-1567

The Iberian settlement known as Elgueta is a Basque town located in northern Spain between Balboa and San Sebastian, about 20 km inland from the sea (Bay of Biscay). Its namesake in Honduras (also El Gueta, Delgueta, ...) is the least permanent and most difficult to locate of the "lost town" settlements established by early Spanish explorers.

Shortly after Nueva Salamanca was abandoned, interest in another attempt to settle eastern Honduras arose. The story revolves around Lic. Alonso Ortiz de Elgueta, *alcalde mayor* de Nicaragua (June 1552-April 1553 and 1559-1560) and governor of Honduras beginning December 2, 1562.

Several Europeans sailed along the east coast of Central America before attempts at settlement. Colón (1502), Pinzón and Solís (1508), Nicuesa (1509), and a few others, including perhaps Calero (in 1539, Peralta 1883: 740), knew these waters briefly, but not until 1540 did the Crown call for the east coast mainland, then known as "Taguzgalpa," to be conquered and settled. The first to respond was probably Diego Gutiérrez, son of the Honduran treasurer Alonso Gutiérrez, who offered, at his own expense, to enter the unknown land between Cabo Camarón and the Bay of "Carabaro" (western Panamá). At the time (1540), the distance was considered to be twenty-five leagues (about 140 kms), a distance understated by about perhaps 700 kms. This is only one of many indications of how little was known of actual distances and geography in the region.

After a few conflicting *cedulas reales* over the rights to "conquer and populate" the east coast of Central America (on occasion also called "Veragua"), Capitan Alonso Ortíz de Elgueta organized the first expedition that met with some slight success at settlement. Following his term as governor of Nicaragua (1552-1562) Ortíz was named governor of Honduras on December 2, 1562. Within two weeks, the King had written to the new governor (AGI Guatemala 39, R6,N18, dic 16; Leyva 1991: 55-8) with specific orders on how to proceed in the conquest of La Mosquitia. Ortíz was to enter the new territory, "seeking healthy, fertile land, well-watered and with ample firewood. Pasture was needed for livestock." The inhabitants of the two "provinces" – Cabo de Camarón and Taguzgalpa – were to be "treated with friendship and Christianized and offered ten years without the payment of tribute, if they converted

peacefully. **The Spaniards were to build their town next to that of the natives** -- to better indoctrinate them."

According to Peralta (1883: 644) [who cited Ortíz's *residencia* taken in San Pedro in 1567 (AGI Justicia 314)], late in 1563 the governor sent his pilot (Andrés Martín) from Trujillo for an initial reconnaissance of the coast between Cabo Camarón and Río San Juan (also Desaguadero).

By May 17, 1564 the new governor Ortíz had completed *una visita* of all Honduran towns occupied by Spaniards – Puerto Caballos, San Pedro, Gracias a Dios, and Comayagua, from where he rode on to San Jorge, Olancho (AGI Guat 39,R6,N18,fs 1-2). In response to the King's warning of "certain French Lutherans who have joined with Englishmen," to raid "Puerto Caballos and Trujillo, the best ports," Ortiz describes the site and situation of Trujillo and how it is so well protected from pirates. All most immediately after becoming governor, Ortiz was expressing interest in learning more of the coasts of "Taguzgalpa y cabo camaron, que son provincias." It was simply a matter of time before he headed out there.

Receiving a favorable report of the initial reconnaissance, during the next year (1564) Ortíz accompanied Martín and established a settlement somewhere along the Caribbean shore within Laguna Cartago, the largest coastal lagoon in Mosquitia, now known as Carataska. These lands were not entirely unknown to Ortíz. While he was governor of Nicaragua, in February, 1560, he had been informed by the Crown of the terrible unjust activities that had taken place at the hands of the *encomenderos* at Nueva Salamanca (MCH V: El Rey, 593).

After one year the place on Carataska was abandoned for a better site to the south where another town was founded after entering up a river. This second Elgueta also disappeared after a little more than two years: it "had to be abandoned owing to the inability of its inhabitants to resist the strong attacks of the natives" (El Rey 1576: 529).

The conclusive tale of Elgueta is blurred by a mangled geography of inconsistent accounts, distances, and an imprecise cartography from the period. Much after the events, writing in 1591, Francisco Pavón confused the story by writing that the river Elgueta entered to establish his second town was the Caxinas, which he claimed is only "eight leguas" [ca. 44 km] **north** of the San Juan. This conflicts with the "25 leguas" [ca. 140 km] known to Diego López in 1577 (Peralta 1883: 644) and the actual distance of 480 km. Had the records stated that the second Elgueta was established eight leguas **south** of the earlier town it would properly locate the site up the modern Río Coco, ancient Caxinas.

"Caxinas" is one of those place names that has traveled on maps. Originally, it was one of the names for the large spit at Trujillo, appearing on Bartolome Colon's 1502 map as "P[unta] de Casin[a]." As that place became "Cabo de Honduras," and "Punta Castilla" "Caxinas" is

displaced farther south along the coast of Mosquitia as a *punta* and *río*. Maps of the period of Elgueta’s founding clearly shown “Caxinas” (also *Caxines*, *Casinas*) as the river entering the Caribbean at Cape Gracias a Dios (maps: 1563 Lázaro, L.; 1573 Vaz Dourado, F.; reprinted in Davidson 2006). This is also the first time “mosquitos” appears cartographically (map:1562 Gutiérrez, D.). Later, Caxinas is also shown as the *río Desaguadero*, much farther south.

Map 3. Map of Vaz Dourado (1570) indicating locations of Laguna Cartago, *Río de Casinas*, and *Río Desaguadero* during the period of Elgueta’s settlement attempts. Map is oriented with North to the left.



On the 25th of April, 1567, from Trujillo, gov. Alonso Ortíz de Elgueta wrote the king giving an account of his recent expedition to “discover the provinces of Camaron and Taguzgalpa by sea and land and founded the town of Delgueta where he named a mayor and councilors.” From the trip he also sent the King some Honduran sarsaparilla, which had been proclaimed the best known. (AGI,Guatemala,98,R.6,N.24; also *Limites entre Honduras y Nicaragua*. Madrid, 1905: 197-8.

The cabildo of Comayagua seems to have anticipated success from the venture. They wrote in March 28, 1567, before receiving the governor's report, "that Ortíz, their governor, did well finding much gold," but they "need the king's money to sustain the population there because they are so poor" (AGI Guat 43, n. 82, folio 1). The cabildo was incorrect. Before the year was out, Elgueta, the second, was abandoned.

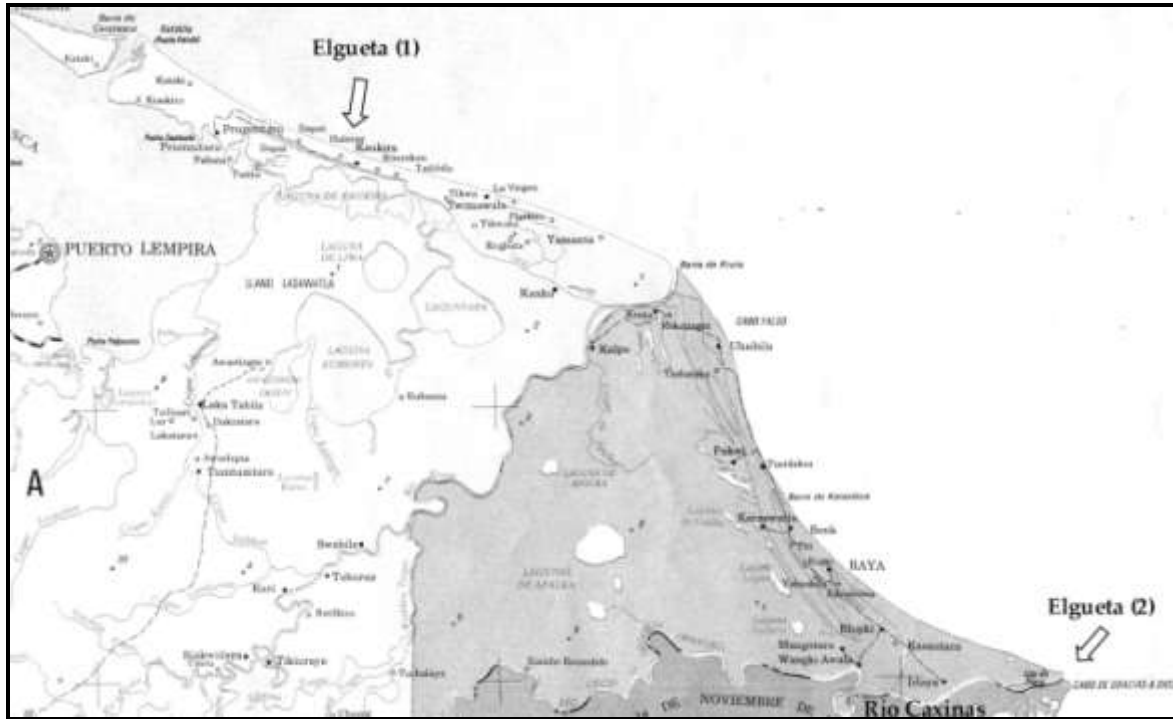
While we will probably never accumulate evidence to locate precisely the site of Elgueta, the primary documents apparently indicate that Ortíz de Elgueta placed his initial temporary settlement within the Cartago/Carataska lagoon system, perhaps near modern Kaukira, and later founded a second site up the Río Coco, which was then known as the Río Caxinas, or more generally as the river of the region known as Taguzgalpa. "Taguscalpa" first appears cartographically as a river south of Camaron and Carataska Lagoon (map: 1604 Anon.; Davidson 2006: 54-5).

Kaukira is perhaps the best and most likely site for an early settlement for the same reasons of physical geography that make it a preferred location for settlement now. After entering the mouth of Carataska Lagoon, it is the only place that has direct access to the intracoastal waterway system to the southeast AND has easy direct entry into the larger lagoon. Also, a document from 136 years later, the first to name Miskito villages of that day, includes "caukira" indicating perhaps long time affinity for that site. (AGCA 1699).

Map 4. Possible location of Elgueta, 1564-5, inside Laguna Carataska, perhaps near modern Kaukira. Modern Puerto Lempira is shown for perspective.



Map 5. Possible location of Elgueta re-settlement, 1565-7, up Río Caxinas, modern Río Coco.



Postscript on Locating the Anavacas and the Guabas mestizo settlement (s).

After the unsuccessful attempts of the 16th century to colonize militarily the eastern seashore political figures apparently decided that the next effort to incorporate the native lands into the Spanish realm would fall to the more reverend conquerors. Other littoral settlements mentioned by early missionaries might be related to Elgueta’s first location. The Elgueta colonizers were ordered to **locate next to the native village** and the mestizo village Anavacas (Anabacas) and/or Guabas (Guavas) is the only settlement known for the period. We do know that the Franciscans did visit there (Vásquez 1714: IV, 165-6). We do not have specific locations for Anavacas. I have never seen it shown on any map. It is described only as “pueblo costero de Guabas al norte de Cabo Gracias” (Vásquez 1714: IV, 169). Other manuscripts locate it generally on “Laguna de las Anabacas” or “Baya de las Anabacas” (AGCA 4056-31441, folios 104-105v), it would be reasonable that the padres utilized the same area as the first Elgueta site inside Caratasca Lagoon for their mission among the mestizos.

We do not know the origins of the mestizo populations but they might be traced back as far as the times of the Nueva Salamanca settlement when at least four proto-Mískito casiques procreated with several Spanish women taken from Spanish vessels off northeastern Honduras. (see above, p. 7) Another reference suggests the mestizos derived from men of a Spanish shipwreck who lived among the coastal Indians (Vásquez 1714: IV, 166).

The most successful of the early 17th century missionaries in *Taguzgalpa* was Cristóbal Martínez de la Puerta, a Spaniard born in Andalusia, who came to America at the close of the 16th century. We learn of his exploits from the Franciscan historian Francisco Vásquez (1944: IV, 127-86). The earliest experiences of Martínez on the Mosquito Coast played an important role in his later missionary work there. Supposedly, on his first approach to the mainland, coming from Spain at the end of the 16th century, he was shipwrecked just north of Cabo Gracias a Dios. Another account reports that he was first a soldier and while on an *entrada* from Trujillo towards Costa Rica he was captured by the Indians and forced to live among them. At any rate, it was there, on the coast north of Cabo Gracias a Dios while living with the Indian and mestizo populations (known later as the Guabas), that he learned something of the native languages that suited his later work in conversions. Eventually he entered the Spanish realm via Trujillo and completed his Franciscan seminary in Guatemala in 1602.

On his return to Mosquitia, his final missionary venture, Martínez lived first on the coast at Anavacas, a village of mestizos called Guabas [or Guavas]. From Anavacas, whose name has been confused with Tabanacanas and Tabancuntas, three *entradas* to the interior were attempted: once up the town's river (perhaps the modern Río Kruta), once directly overland (out into the extensive savanas), and once by entering Bahía de Cartago [Carataska Lagoon]. In all instances their actions were thwarted by the local Guaba guides who would not accompany the priests to the interior for fear of the numerous "indios de guerra," then called by their generic name, "xicaques." The xicaques in this part of Honduras, probably belonged to the larger Sumu language family.

The one unyielding group of "jicaques" was the "Albatuinas" (Vásquez 1944:IV,167-170), or "Albahuinas" (AGCA 4056-31441). It was this group who deceitfully asked the padres to visit them and then killed the missionaries in October 1623. When Spaniards from Trujillo came in search for the vanished padres they initiated their search at Anabacas (ACGA 4056-31441, 8/v/1624).

IV. Teculucelo Robust Early Center of Honduran – Salvadoran Borderlands 1530s-1590

During the first decades of the colonial period provincial boundaries within the Guatemalan realm were poorly delimited and almost never demarcated. Mountain ridgelines and large rivers were obvious physical features, easily recognized, that could be used as borders. In the region between the Spanish centers of Gracias a Dios (clearly in Honduras) and San Salvador (clearly in El Salvador) the rivers Lempa and Sumpul often served to separate the colonial territories. However, in a small mountainous area between the Sumpul headwaters and where the Lempa enters Honduras political administration was uncertain. Some maps still label the land as “in dispute.” (maps: IGN 2359 II, III)

In this transition zone was located Teculucelo (also Tecolucelo), a large and important town of uncertain ethnicity. Lardé y Larín (1957: 285) suggests that residents were of Chortí stock, but he also translates the toponym as náhuat/pipil for “búhos-ocelote” – meaning eventually, to him – “Owl-warriors,” one of the ancient military castes. Plus, given the location, could the residents have just as easily been Lenca? Of course, the náhuat toponym could have been given by the Mexicans who accompanied the earliest Spanish explorers.

The settlement has not been discussed often in the literature, perhaps hidden by its modern mislocation (normally near Tecoluca), some 110 km to the southeast (Fowler 1989: map, 62-63,168).

Clearly, for at least the earliest colonial period, Teculuzelo was within the boundaries of Honduras.

Teculucelo appeared first in the historical record when Gov. Francisco Montejo, over a decade after the fact, reconstructed the early days of the Spanish conquest in western Honduras (Montejo 1539). He explained that in 1525 when Gil González and Francisco de las Casas were passing through the valleys of the upper Lempa and Sumpul during the initial Spanish entrada they renamed the native town of “Ocotepete” to “El Asistente.” Teculocelo, unmentioned, was about one league south of El Asistente.

1530s Teculocelo was a pueblo de la provincia de Asistente (Ocatepeque Viejo) (Vallejo G-H 2008: 1237) during the conquest of Hernando Chávez and Pedro Amalín.

1532 The so-called *Relación Marroquin* of 1532 includes housing estimates for 1527-31 in encomiendas of the San Salvador región. Teculuzelo was not included, implying that it belonged to a Honduran encomendero (Fowler 1989: 139). However, in the same year, G. de Alvarado, brother of Pedro held El Asistente in encomienda (Lardé y Larín 1983: 285).

1533 Because G. Alvarado went on an expedition to Perú, Pedro Alvarado placed El Asistente and all of its subject towns in hands of Sancho de Figueroa (Lardé y Larín 1983: 285). At the time Teculocelo, was an impressive pueblo de 2-3,000 casas (AGI Guatemala 49, N.11, folio 5)

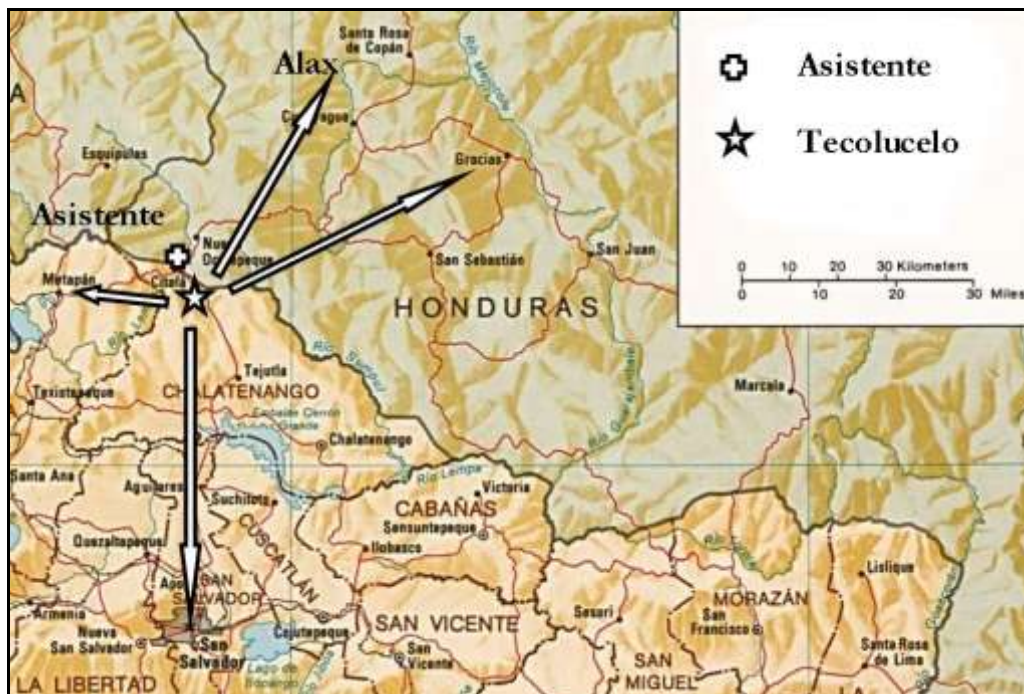
1536 Pedro Alvarado (1536b) grants to Pedro Calderón El Asistente and Yeuralapa, with all their subject towns.

1538 When Pedro Alvarado passed through the upper Lempa región he encountered natives who took a war-like stance. Fierce battles took place with those “chontales” of Teculucelo, about “una legua” south of Asistente. Slaves were taken and bearers were demanded for temporary use (Montejo 1539).

1538 According to the *tasación* of 1538, Teculucelo (or Teculuzelo) was known as a very productive encomienda under Cristobal de la Cueva, a vecino de San Salvador (AGI Indiferente General,857,f.3v, in Kramer *et al* 1986: 370 y Kramer, Lovell y Lutz 1993: 54-6). The document is transcribed by the later authors, who in doing so (p. 55) also mislocated the town (“situated southwest of San Salvador”). Teculucelo was actually 70 km due north of the capital.

Maiz and wheat were harvested for distribution to the mines of Metapa and Alax and to Gracias a Dios and San Salvador. The natives were also expected to produce annually 150 soles for *alpargates* (Catalan: flat soled shoes) and 150 soles for *cutaras* (sandals). Further, yearly tribute included cotton, wax, honey, quail, other birds, axi, lumber, and liquidambar.

Map 5. Distribution sites for products from Teculucelo, mid-1500s.



1539 carta de Montejo sobre Pedro Alvarado en el pueblo de Asistente (Ocotepeque Viejo) y Teculucelo, una legua de allí (Montejo 1539, *CDI-AO* 1864, II: 223). Also, "Tealualo" (sic), pueblo una legua de Asistente (Ocotepeque Viejo) (Martínez 1983: 277, de AGI Guatemala 9).

The Spaniards evidently used the upper Lempa as a route between central Salvador and into Honduras – passing Ocotepeque and connecting with other Honduran river valleys via "Alax." The Alax (modern Alash) was the upper tributary (and valley) of the Uluá system in southwestern Honduras. The flat land stream begins at San Marcos de Ocotepeque (950 m), flows northward past San Francisco del Valle (900 m), Sensenti (865 m) and Lucerna (820 m.) before entering the río Higuito at 680 m. The valley is approximately 40 km long and 1-3 km wide: 35 sq. km. in area (maps: IGN 2459 III, IV). Continuing downstream, the Higuito meets the Jicatuyo at 480 m (about 20 km north of Gracias), and the Jictuyo-Uluá confluence at 150 m, just south of Gualala. From there the Uluá leads into the Chamalecón and Uluá valleys, San Pedro, and Puerto Caballos.

1544 On the 10th of May, Alonso de Maldonado conducted a census in Teculucelo, a pueblo which was still the encomienda of Cristóbal de la Cueva. The tribute was essentially as in 1538, but now the residents were expected to provide 150 pairs of cantaros (clay pitchers) instead of leather soles. The area of distribution remained the same (Cabrera y Rivero 2011, II: 36).

1547 The "Tasaciones de los términos de Gracias a Dios, 1544-47" (AGI Justicia 299A) places Teculucelo in the partido de Gracias a Dios and gobernación de Honduras. No encomendero is mentioned in the tasación of 15 de enero, 1547, although Cristóbal de la Cueva is listed as encomendero before and after this date. The transcription below indicates a dynamic pueblo that contributed ten products for the encomenderos.

The 15 fanegas of maíz that was planted was mostly for the mines of "Alax," a site now known in Honduras as "valle de Alash," some 50 km to the northeast. In documents of the period Alax was 8 leagues from Gracias (Sherman 1979: 100) and ca. 50 kms from Teculocelo). Gracias was ca. 60 km from Tecolucelo, over rough indirect trails. The 8 fanegas of wheat planted were destined for San Salvador, ca. 70 km to the south.

Tasación:

Mandose que siembren quinze hanegas de mayz y dellas pongan en las minas de Alax dozientas hanegas.

Hagan una sementera de trigo de ocho hanegas y lo pongan en la villa de San Salvador o en esta çibdad de Graçias a Dios y a los yndios que llevaren el trigo o mayz se les ha de dar a cada uno una carga de mayz para que hagan comida para sy y dexen en sus casas.

An de dar cada setenta días çiento y çinquenta pares de suelas para alpargates y çiento y çinquenta pares de cotaras.

Y les dieren algodón hilen hasta dozientas arrobas.

Den cada año diez e ocho arrobas de çera y veynte de miel.

Çien tablas puestas en la villa.

Doze dozenas de aves cada año.

1548 The next padrón, of December 4, 1548, for “Teculozelo,” “which is in the jurisdiction of San Salvador,” revealed that each year the King ordered the residents to produce in tribute plots of 12 fanegas of maíz, 8 fanegas of wheat, and 4 fanegas of cotton. In addition, the town produced each month 50 pairs of alpargates and a dozen chickens and each year 18 arrobas of clear wax and 20 arrobas of honey (Cabrera y Rivero 2011, II: 182-83). It was a pueblo de 300 tributarios (Kramer *et al* 1986: 389). Fowler (1989: 183) noted that at this time Tecoluzelo was the top settlement of bee-production, with 40 jars of honey and about 250 pounds (10 arrobas) of wax.

1553 “Tecuruçelo,” encomienda de Cristobal de la Cueva, vecino de Jerez de la Frontera, sobre derecho a los tributos del pueblo (AGI Justicia 52; AGI IG,1033, N.2,R.1 y Recinos 1952: 160)

1558 Corregimiento de Tecolucelo confirmed to Bernal Diaz del Castillo in a letter by Felipe II (Diaz del Castillo 1982: II, 60)

1570 The tasaciones of August 1570 assessed even more bee-production from Tecolucelo: 30 jars of honey and 20 arrobas of wax (Fowler 1989: 183).

1571 In his real cedula of March 27, 1571, the King asked officials in Guatemala to favor Diego Ordoñez Villayacán with one of the vacant repartimientos, including “El corregimiento de Teculucelo” (AGI Guatemala 394, libro 5; MCH 2001, VI: 215). It is unknown which repartimiento passed to Ordoñez.

1572 However, because Teculucelo was a “pueblo en el real corona, con 7 o 8 pueblitos en su visita, tiene 500 vecinos,” in the “Relación de 1572” en (see Veblen y Gutiérrez-Witt 1983: 229), apparently Teculucelo was not transferred to Ordoñez.

“El pueblo de Teculucelo, que está en la Real Corona, Citala, Seque, Ahuetepeque y su visita, que son siete u ocho poblezuelos, tienes los indios siguientes: El dicho pueblo de Teculucelo, y los demás que están dichos de su visita, tiene quinientos vecinos, según consta por memoria y noticia que dello se dio.” (Acuna 1982:179)

1573 One year later, according to the “Relación de las renta que su mag. tiene en las provincias de Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua” (AGI Patronato 182,R.43, folio 3), Teculozelo paid a tribute of 120 pesos. Obviously, at that time the town was still within the real corona.

1574 Although it is uncertain exactly when he collected his information, the Crown Cronista López de Velasco claimed Teculozelo, which was then within the realm of San Salvador, had 300 tributarios, the fifth largest encomienda of 153 towns in the realm of San Salvador and San Miguel. (López de Velasco 1894: 294). See 1548 above for another count of 300 tributarios.

1590 When Antonelli and Quintanilla were planning for the construction of the route between Puerto Caballos and Golfo Fonseca they mentioned that in the “cerranías de Tegulizelo,” a place “behind San Miguel, to the north, where much “brea y alquitran” were produced. (AGI, Patronato 183.N.1,R.16, ítem 101). This is the last indication of a settlement known as Tecolucelo.

1685 According to Lardé y Larín (1983: 285-89), in 1685, a resident of Santa Ana, El Salvador, some 55 kms. to the southwest, petitioned the government in Guatemala City to have a plot measured before buying it. Given the locations and measurements noted in the document, “quebrada de Tecolucelo,” perhaps the only remaining indication of the ancient town, is south-southwest of modern San Ignacio and west of La Palma. The eastern border of Tecolucelo lands ran north some 104 “cuerdas” from where the camino real between Citala and Tejuta crosses the río Nunuapa. Other landmarks are the quebradas Sopilot and Guasapa. Today, Quebrada Tecolucelo is known as “El Espino” (Lardé y Larín (1983: 289).

Rough coordinates are 14 degrees, 19 minutes north, 89 degrees, 11 minutes west.
Approximate elevation is 3,000 feet.

V.
Cárcamo/Maitúm(n)
Ancient trail town between colonial centers
1536-1632

While **Cárcamo** is a prominent Spanish surname and a village near Granada (El Cárcamo, in Andalucía), the toponym in Honduras is not necessarily related to the Spanish language. The *car* and *carca* letter combinations are also found in several places in the Lenca linguistic region of western Honduras. *Carcata*, *Carquín*, *Carcancay*, *Caragual*, *Cara*, *Caratique*, and *Caranchulo* are examples. The *car* prefix appears even in *Care*, name of a major dialect of the Lenca language. Therefore, it seems reasonable that originally the term *cárcamo* could have been an indigenous toponym -- that was also a quite familiar sound to the Spanish ear. Spaniards also commonly spelled the word with a transposed "l" for "r." (hence, "Calcamo.") When asked the meaning of the word, a man in San Rafael (near the site of Cárcamo) said that "cárcamo" referred to "*una zanja*" or a man-made trench to guide the flow of water. The Velásquez Spanish dictionary defines "cárcamo" as "rifle, or a cleated trough" (Velázquez de la Cadena 1967: 125). From a Wikipedia entry: "Spanish (Cárcamo): from *cárcavo* 'cooking pot' (from Latin *carcabus*), hence probably a metonymic occupational name for a maker of such pots or for a cook."

Maitum, another place name that is often substituted for the same location as Cárcamo, in the national nomenclature of "Hondureñismos," refers to a curved metal agricultural tool used to cut weeds, to trim small branches, and to harvest beans and maize. On occasion the instrument can be purchased in village markets. As in the case of other nearby regional languages, such as Maya, the endings "m" or "n" are often interchanged, hence, Maitúm can be Maitún, with and without an accent.



Figure 5. "Maitún"
acquired in the market of
Marcala, 2006.

The search for Cárcamo/Maitúm(n) began at the Honduran National Archives, in the section of land titles (*títulos de tierra*). Documents of relevance are published in indices for 1901 (ANH 1901), 1926 and 2009 (HSCAD). Bibliography entries for Lempira 30, 165-170 all have information that aid in locating the site, beginning in 1680. Census records do not indicate a settlement after 1632.

The historical record of the place is abstracted below.

1536 First notice of "Calcamo" is perhaps from Pedro Alvarado's *repartimiento* (1536b) of indigenous places in the region controlled by Gracias a Dios in western Honduras. It was placed under the care of Juan de la Puebla.

1539 At the time of the conquest, Cárcamo must have been a large and important settlement because Montejo reported that "Cárcamo, which had 500 houses" when Alvarado's men under Juan de Chaves passed through in 1536, "had only 20 houses" in 1539 (Montejo 1539: 230). The town was the largest mentioned at the time.

1541 A *real cedula* of October 26, 1541, restores "Calmo" to a former, unnamed *encomendero* (MCH X: 6407), probably Juan de la Puebla.

1544 Apparently, Montejo's statement from 1539 was an exaggeration when he claimed such population reduction, because five years later "Calcamo" was a productive *encomienda* shared by Hernán Sánchez de Alvarado and Francisco de Ojo under the jurisdiction of Gracias. They assigned 60 *tamemes* to transport cargo between San Pedro and Calcamo. For their work each bearer was given 400 cacao beans. In addition, the villagers were required to plant five *fanegas* of maize and contribute a *cántaro* of honey. Four servants were sent to Gracias to work in the homes of the *encomenderos*. (See "Tasaciones de los términos de Gracias a Dios." ANH rollo E111/007, folios 882r-904v).

1582 Tarcamo/Jarcamo [sic, mistranscriptions] had 15 *tributarios* and was attached to Gracias a Dios (Contreras Guebara 1582).

1590 The town was a place of 30 *indios casados*, 8 leagues from Gracias (Valverde y Mercado 1590).

1592 Carcamo had been reduced recently to 8 *tributarios* since the previous count. It had changed its administrative position from Gracias to be listed within the jurisdiction of Tencoa (AGI Contaduría 989).

1632 Carcamo was included as one of eleven Care-speaking towns, within the Merced partido administered by Tencoa (AGCA A1.16/4056-314441, ff 174-76; Black 1989:231).

1661 In this listing of 116 tribute towns in Honduras (AGCA A3.16/511-5313), there is no indication of Carcamo/Maitum as a settlement.

1680 Maitum, was an early plot, “una medida de 4 caballerías no compuestas por su Majestad, distrito de Gracias” (ANH-TT Lempira 165).

1683 Maitum y Guatequi, “la medida de dos sitios en las riberas de los ríos Lapagual y Jaguas” (ANH-TT Lempira 170).

1684-5 Carcamo/Maitum is not reported in the “Nomina de los Pueblos de la Provincia de Comayagua, 1684-85,” (AGI Guat. 29).

1721 San Pedro Maitún, also Maytun, was a land title in the departamento de Lempira, (ANH-TT Lempira 165).

1791 In the *matricula* of Cadiñanos taken in 1791, both place names are listed. Maitum is a *valle* within the curato of Gracias a Dios, 12 *leguas* from the *cabesera*. Cárcamo is shown as a *valle* 8.5 *leguas* from the *curato cabesera* at Tencoa. The *título de tierra* from 1791 (ANH-TT Lempira 169) portrays Maitum as a hacienda just west of Cárcamo.

1798 Maitum or Carcamo, according to the land title is a “terreno de 4 caballerías, distrito de Gracias (ANH-TT Lempira 168).

1803 Maitum o Carcamo, “tierras, en el distrito de Gracias, fueron amparados por el gobernador Intendente Ramón Anguiano” (ANH-TT Lempira 169).

1840 Maitum, “medida de 4 caballerías y 13 cuerdas a favor del pueblo de Santiago de la Iguala” (ANH-TT Lempira 166).

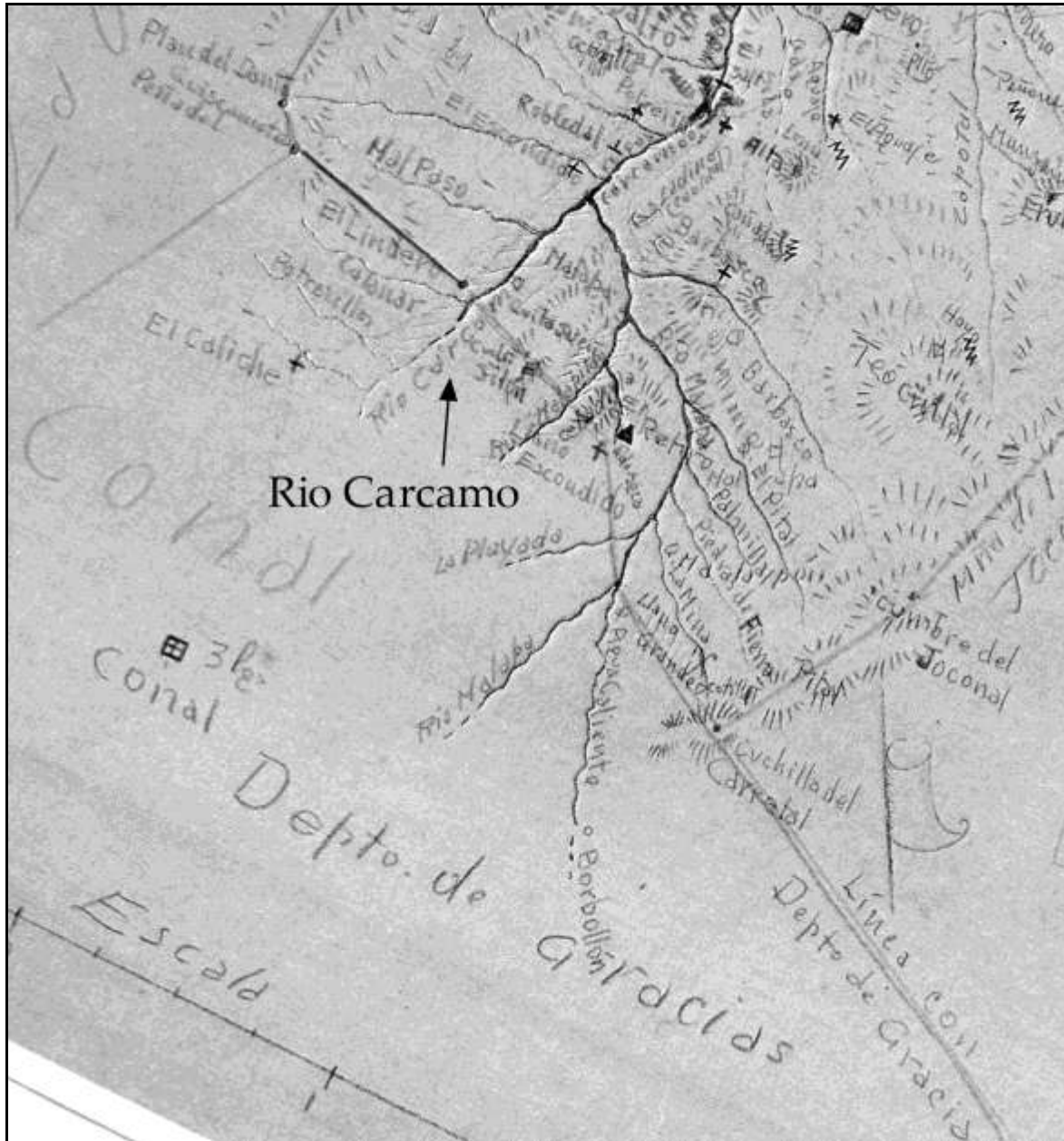
1895 During late March, 1895, German geographer Karl Sapper passed through “the hamlet of Conal” (modern San Rafael, Lempira) before “he arrived at the valley of the Río Cargaco” – a corruption of “Carcamo” -- down which he traveled until meeting the “Río Balaja” [Palaja] that flowed into the Río Ulúa (Termer 1966: 170). He did not mention any settlement along the route. This is however a firm indication that the río Palaja was a known route between Gracias and Santa Bárbara. El Conal appears in the 1887 census as a subject town to La Iguala in Gracias Department, with a population of 562, 90 % indigenous.

1897 Carcamo-Maitum, “*remedida de un terreno,*” jurisdiction of La Iguala (ANH-TT Lempira 30).

1898 In the land title of Maitún, Depto. de Gracias (ANH-TT Lempira 166-67, old 161), the sites of Cárcamo and El Zapotal are prominent. In fact, Zapotal, according to the document, was also called San Pedro de Maitún.

1924 On the manuscript map of Jesús Aguilar Paz, El Nispero section, which he drew based on his field trip there, the "Río Cárcamo," a headwater stream of Río Palala, appears just north of the town of Conal (modern San Rafael, Lempira).

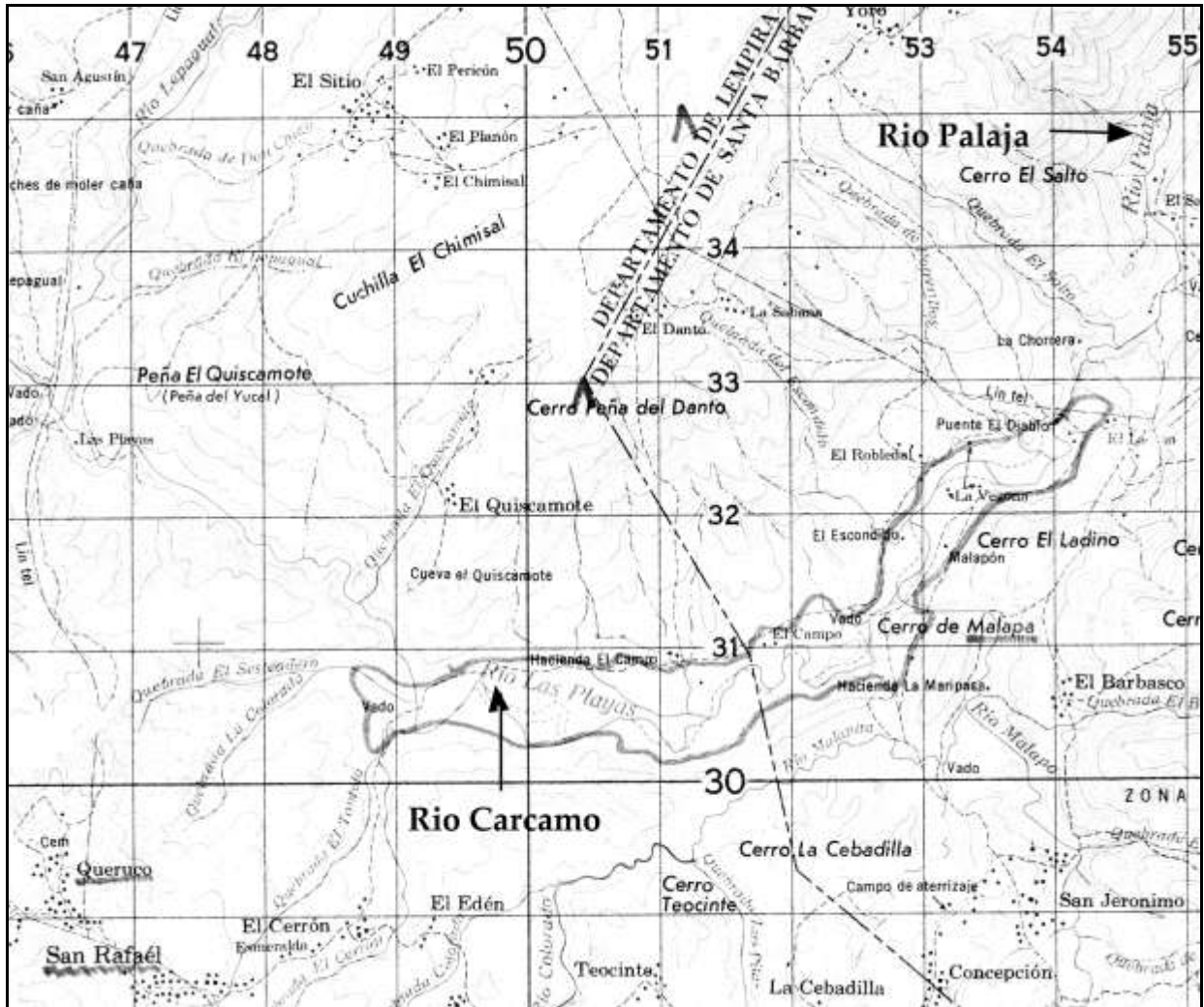
Map 6. Portion of the manuscript map of the "Municipio de El Nispero," Santa Bárbara, by Jesús Aguilar Paz, 1924. (Courtesy of Dr. Enrique Paz Cerrato, Tegucigalpa).



Apparently, the Río Cárcamo of Aguilar Paz is the modern upper Río Las Playas, and ancient Cárcamo was located in the elongated inter-montane valley that sits between El Nispero, S. B. and San Rafaél, Lem. The narrow valley encompasses approximately 4.2 square kilometers

and ranges in elevation from 580 and 610 meters above sea level (map: IGN 2560 III). That the valley lies across the political boundary that separated the Gracias and Tenoca jurisdictions (as well as the modern boundary between Santa Bárbara and Lempira) makes the site fit into the earlier descriptions. The peripheral location between early jurisdictions might have played some role in its isolation from political centers, inattention, and its eventual decline.

Map 7. IGN 2560 III.



2004 An on-site confirmation of the location took place during January 2004. With the aid professor don Bandilio, a local teacher who also served as the director of the San Rafael municipal census of 2001 and knew intimately the toponyms of his home territory, we were guided to the valley below the town and pointed out the flat area along the river edges locally known as "Cárcamo." During this time of year, the dry season is about one month underway and the upper stretch of the stream is low in water. (Figures 7, 8, 9).

Figure 6. Professor Bandilio of San Rafael indicates on a map the location of Cárcamo to geographers (L to R) Joby Bass, Scott Brady, and Craig Revels -- at the bus terminal in El Nispero, Santa Bárbara, January 6, 2004.



Figure 7. A ceiba marks the ancient trail and *vado* and new bridge across the Río Cárcamo, north of San Rafael, Lempira, January 2004.



Figures 8 and 9. Flat floor of the Cárcamo Valley, much occupied by maize (now doblado) and pasture, January 2004.



Archeological confirmation of the site is pending. The late George Hassman of the Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia sponsored investigations in the valley during the 1990s, but the author has not been able to locate his report that is supposedly held in the archive of the IHAH.

As for the demise of Cárcamo, given the date of the origins of El Conal and the nearby geographical setting of Cárcamo in a flat, elongated river, it might be suggested that an unusual flood persuaded the people to move directly upslope and found El Conal, perhaps sometime during the mid-1800s.

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VI.
Munguiche
Early aboriginal Caribbean port *encomienda*
1582-1662

The exact location of Munguiche (also Monguiche, Mochiquo, Monchiquo, Mumguiche, Munguche, Morro Chico, etc.) is problematic. The toponym appears on several maps of the Bay of Honduras between 1642 and 1755, but the scale of the maps makes precise location impossible. On the other hand, among the so-called lost colonial towns of Honduras, Munguiche is the most frequently placed on national maps.

The etymology of the term is unclear, but the word sounds much like the Mayoid terms with the suffix "*che*" (tree) found throughout Guatemala and Yucatán. Examples of three syllable words ending in "*che*" are Chemiche (*palo de pita*), Chaquiche (*árbol seco*), Chilonche (*árbol halada*), Chimusche (*árbol de ladino*), Ixcoche (*árbol de la mujer*), Pacamche (*árbol de bejucos*), etc. (Arriola 1973: 122, 129, 132, 159, 289, 385). Quehueche, a coastal village west of Livingston, Guatemala, is the nearest example. Quehueche, previously inhabited by Q'eqchi' (Kekchi Maya), is now occupied by 100 or so Garífuna who entered from Livingston, just up the coast.

Munguiche was probably occupied during aboriginal times. The site is near the boundary of territory between the Pech and Torrupán (Tol) at European Contact so it is quite possible that the toponym derives from one of those cultures. An early settlement might have been depopulated by Spanish slavers from Cuba (Las Casas 1957: II, 391-4) before the arrival of Cortés, but re-occupied later after slaving along the north coast ended. When Cortés' s colleague Bernal Díaz del Castillo passed along the coast, he did not note the village specifically, although his troops did have to fight natives at one coastal site (Quemara) two days before reaching Trujillo (1525). The place is not listed in the *repartimiento* of Alvarado (1536), but his geographical range apparently did not reach that far east along the coast.

1537 The coastal description provided by Castañeda *et al* (1977: 106) for 1537 notes that "cerca de Cabo de Montañas [the La Ceiba area], es una punta que sale al norte, y tiene delante de sí dos bajos, y por la banda del oeste tiene Puerto y una ancon)." Although the writer mentions no settlement, such a location and description matches much later mapping efforts that show the site of Munquiche.

1582 The first certain notice of "Monguiche" comes from the "Relación de todos pueblos . . . de Honduras" (Contreras Guevara 1582). It appears as the largest of four small coastal *encomiendas*, all west of Trujillo, controlled by Gregorio del Puerto. Monguiche had 20 *tributarios*. The other holdings – Ochoa, Xagua, and Papaloteca – were also within the jurisdiction of Truxillo, almost certainly to the east of Monquiche.

1590 The “Memorial . . . of Valverde,” (1590) notes that Monguiche has 30 *indios casados* and is located on the seacoast 20 leagues west of Truxillo. This same document notes that Ochoa (the *encomienda* San Bartolomé de Ochoa that is later joined with Monguiche) was 14 leagues west of Trujillo.

1592 Monguiche had recently been reduced to 13 *tributarios* since the previous count. It remained within the jurisdiction of Trujillo (AGI Contaduría 989).

1616 In September of this year, “geronimo, yndio del pueblo de Monguiche, **en la lengua mexicana,**” presented himself in Trujillo before a scribe to pay his “tasación.” “Chalachala,” a nearby pueblo was also mentioned (AGI Guatemala,98, N.8).

1618 In 1618 the small port and *encomienda*, then known as San Juan de Monguiche, was vacated on the death of an unnamed vecino de Truxillo [evidently Gregorio del Puerto, see **1619** below]. The five *tributarios* paid an annual tribute of 50 contes de cacao, 7 chickens, and 5 *fanegas de maiz* (AGCA 1751-11737, fs. 236, 236v). In the same year, a nearby town on Isla Elena, San Lorenzo Masa, was vacated on the death of Juan Lopez de Real of Trujillo and evidently grouped with Munguiche (fs. 235v – 236v). Elena is modern Helen, in the Bay Islands.

1619 Monguiche (along with Ochoa, Chalachala and San Lorenzo Maza (Elena, Islas de la Bahía]) comprised an *encomienda* that was vacated on the death of Gregorio del Puerto of Trujillo. Taken together these sites had only 12 *tributarios* (AGI Guatemala,98,N.8, fs. 6, 8). Chalachala, a rarely cited coastal place, is portrayed as “Hala hala” on a map of 1711 (AGI M&P Guatemala 14). See Map 10 below.

1639 It is unknown who replaced the *encomendero* immediately, but by 1639 Munguiche was revealed as a small port and abandoned town on the coast south of Isla Utila between Truxillo and Triunfo de la Cruz (Avila y Lugo 1639; also in Squier 1858: 612).

When Francisco de Avila y Lugo, governor and captain general of Honduras in 1639, was asked by the President of Guatemala to report on conditions in the Bay of Honduras, the relationship between the island of Utila and Munguiche was intimate. Andrés Martínez de Zuñiga served as *encomendero* for both when they were not burned out by the Dutch. In September 1639, when the Dutch burned Utila, the 22 *tributarios* who lived on the island grew cassava for the people who once occupied Munguiche. The governor’s report provides perhaps the best indication of its location. Apparently “The western part of the port of Utila is nearly north of the site of the abandoned town of Munguiche, on the coast of the mainland (Squier 1858: 612).” Actually, the town might have been abandoned because of pirate attacks, but people apparently lived there or nearby. In 1642 the manuscript map probably drawn by Melchor Alonso Tamayo, shows Monquiche as the only coastal location between the mouth of the Ulúa river and Truxillo (Map 7.)

1662 In 1662 the report of *encomienda* activities from Comayagua (AGI, Guatemala 39,N.9) contains the following note: ". . . Por falta de confirmación de Cosme Gonzales de los rreyes. Los ttributos, de los pueblos, de Tomala, y Munguiche, Por orto nombre Ochoa, Jurisdicción de ttruxillo."



Figure 10. Portion of AGI Guatemala,39,N.9, folio 5.

This is the first notice that Munguiche and Ochoa are the same place (or at least adjacent areas). Ochoa can be seen on several maps as well, and the 1753 Cotilla (Davidson 2006: XLIII) provides an exceptional insight into the location of Monguiche. This map clearly locates “Sierra de Ochoa” behind modern La Ceiba with its distinctive “Pico Bonito.”

At the same time, however, another document from 1662 (AGCA 190-1919) indicates that Munguiche (also Mumguiche) had an *encomendero*, a vecino of Comayagua, who did collect tribute.

Beyond this date, we have no further archival evidence that the place was viable. It is not surprising that according to the rule of “cartographic lag” the toponym continues to appear on maps long after its abandonment. Table 1 presents something of the cartographic record of Monguiche and Ochoa and indicates that Monguiche drops off of the map when Ochoa becomes more prominent.

Table 1. Maps of the 17th and 18th centuries portraying the Monguiche and Ochoa toponyms.

Date	Cartographer	Toponym	Citation
1642	Tamayo	Monguiche	Davidson 2006: XIX
1646	Dudley	Monchiquo	Davidson 2006: XX
1650-60	Vingboons	Monchiquo	Davidson 2006: XXI
1666	Sanson	Monchiquo	Davidson 2006: XXII
1681	Keulen	Monchiquo	Davidson 2006: XXV
[1711]	Anon.	Munguche	Davidson 2006: XLIV
1753	Cotilla	Sieras de Ochoa	Davidson 2006: XLIII

1755	Lopez	Morro Chico	Davidson 2006: XLIV
1757	Cierto	R de Ochoa	Davidson 2006: XLVI
1758-65	Anon.	rio Ochoa	Davidson 2006: XLVIII
1760-70	Anon.	Morro Chico	Davidson 2006: XLIX
1762-70	Anon.	Sierra de Ochoa	Davidson 2006: LI
1764-70	Anon.	Sierra de Ochoa	Davidson 2006: LIV

Map 9. Map of Sanson (1666) showing "Monchigue" on the mainland south of Utila.



1711 Map 10. Spanish map locating "Munguche" south of Utila. Caribbean Sea and north is to the bottom. "hala hala," mentioned as "Chalachala" in a manuscript from 1619, is shown to the east of Monguiche. (AGI, mapas y planos, Guatemala 14)



Map 11. Modern aerial image of La Ceiba area, showing mouth of the río Cangrejal, the recently enlarged lagoon to the east, and the prominent point of land jutting into the Caribbean.



As is often the case, ancient and colonial sites of settlement were selected as appropriate places for human activities for the same reasons that these places are occupied by modern settlers -- locational values such as access to water, flat alluvial lands for agriculture, ease of transportation, etc. The reasons for La Ceiba to be settled and to be developed by the fruit companies are the same that might have drawn indigenous and colonial settlers to the area. The La Ceiba vicinity is the best example of a point and bay as noted on the Dudley map of 1646.

The natural lagoon east of the río Cangrejal, a relict distributary of the river, formerly known as "barra boca vieja," was recently enlarged to serve as a harbor for vessels plying between La Ceiba and the Bay Islands. This setting seems the most likely location of Munguiche, ancient port and *encomienda* of the north coast.

VII.
Quesaltepeque
Ancient transshipment node of the upper Ulúa
1536-1767

Quesaltepeque is a pure *nahuatl* toponym that translates as "mountain of the quetzals." The *quetzalli* was the sacred bird of the Aztecs and the term occurs frequently as a place name in Mexico and Central America, such as Quetzaltenango and Quetzaltepeque. Before the late 18th century, Quesaltepeque, Honduras (also written as Quechaltepete, Quechaltepete, Quetzaltepeque, Quetsaltepeque, and Quesaltisique), was a settlement of some importance within the Tencoa district of the modern department of Santa Bárbara. The place was first noted in the **1536** *repartimiento* of San Pedro by Pedro Alvarado (1536a) as Quechaltepete. The site was one of eleven *encomiendas* awarded to Diego Hernando. Most of his holdings were clustered on the banks of the "upper Ulúa" near modern Chinda (AGI Patronato 20, N.4, R.6, 15 junio 1536); also see, *CDI-AO* 15 (1871): 20-30).

A chronology of other notices of the place follows.

1541 By 1541 the *encomienda* of Quechaltepete, had passed to Alonso de Valdés, *veedor* of the province of Honduras (AGI Guatemala 402, libro 2; *MCAH* 2001: VII, 604).

1544 In the important "Tasaciones de los terminos de Gracias a Dios, 1544" (ANH rollo E111/007, folios 882r-904v) Quezaltepique was an *encomienda* within the *jurisdicción* of Gracias a Dios. At the time Quezaltepique was perhaps the most important transshipment site on the upper Ulúa. The village provided 150 *tamemes* (bearers) for the cargo that was to be carried from San Pedro to Quetzaltepeque from where it was then distributed to Comayagua or Gracias. Each *tameme* was given 400 cacao beans for his maintenance. In addition, the town was required to plant three fanegas of maiz and from the harvest -- one-half was delivered to the *encomendero*, Joan Pérez, who lived in Gracias.

1568 As reported in the records of the Merced, Quezaltepique was in the *jurisdicción* of Gracias a Dios (Zúñiga C. 1971)

1582 Zaltepique (o Quecaltepique) was a village 40 *tributarios*, in the *jurisdicción* of Gracias (Contreras Guebara, A., *RAHM* 16-XLIII, 20 de abril de 1582).

1587 While it was from Comayagua that scribe Rodrigo Ponce de León recorded the annual tribute for Quezaltepique to be over 118 pesos gold, 72 gallinas, 54 cotton mantas, and 72 fanegas of corn (AGCA A3.16.5/236-2420), the *encomienda* was still within the *jurisdicción* of Gracias a Dios.

1590 In the “Memoria” of F. Valverde, Quezaltepepet was located approximately 15 leagues from the *camino real* that passed through Comayagua. Ninety tributarios occupied the place.

1592 Quezaltepeque, an encomienda of the *real corona*, had been reduced to 67 tributarios since the previous count. At this time its administrative center had been changed from Gracias to Tencoa (AGI Contaduría 989), a place quite nearby down the Uluá.

1632 Quecaltepeque, along with Cárcamo, is one of eleven Care-speaking places within in the Merced partido administered from Tencoa (AGCA A1.11/4056-31441; Black 1989: 231). Care is a dialect of the Lenca language.

1661 Queçaltepeque is an *encomienda* in the *partido de Tencoa*, with an approximate tribute of 458 *reales* (AGCA A3.16/511-5313).

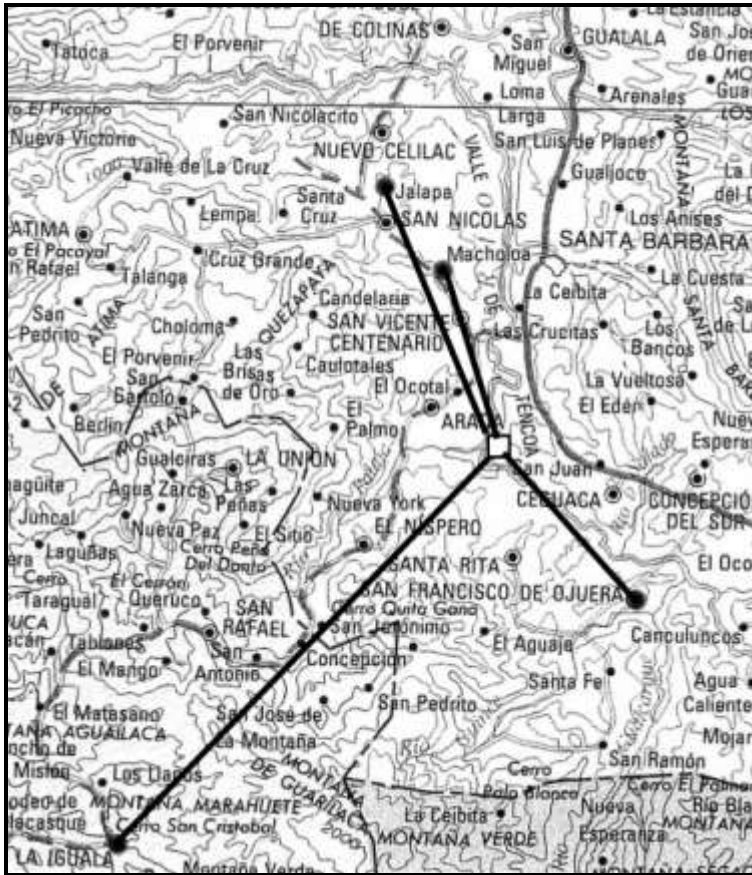
1684-5 Quezaltepeque, as reported in the “Nomina de los Pueblos de la Provincia de Comayagua, 1684-85,” (AGI Guatemala 29,R.2,N.37: “Las condenaciones que han pagar cada año para la Real Corona . . ., 16 de octubre de 1684” [PARES imágenes 64-70] y “Nómina de los pueblos de indios de la Provincia de Comayagua, 1684-85” en Vallejo 1893:104; see also, Macías 1989) was a town attached to Tencoa. It paid tribute of 5 *reales*.

1703 The padrón of Quesaltepeque that was taken on June 2, 1703 indicated a very small village of 19 residents living in 6 houses (AGCA A3.16/511-5330). In addition, four women from the town lived away in Machaloea, 12 km to the north. Alcalde Diego Bentura, who was 36 years old, was married to a women from LaYguala, 32 km to the southwest towards Gracias. Lorenzo Mexia was the “*rejidor*.” Although small, the town was responsible for an annual tribute of 6 *mantas*, 8 *gallinas*, 7 *tostones de servicio*, 4.5 *fanegas de mays*, and 7 *almudes de maiz* for the fort at Granada. From another padron (AGCA 193-1992), for 1703 and 1705, the total populations were recorded as 18 and 21, respectively.

1720 The Quesaltepeque padron of 1720 listed only 22 residents living in eight dwellings (AGCA A3.16/511-5330). Lorenzo Mexia, the *rejidor* during the count of 1703, had become the *alcalde*. Six females lived in other towns, four in Machaloea and one each in Jalapa (22 k north) and Ojuera (12 km east). Four residents were from outside the village: two women were from Machaloea and two men from Ojuera and La Yguala, easily accessible up the río Palaja via Carcamo (map xvi).

Taken together these two early 18th century *padrones* define the “marriage region” of Quesaltepeque, undoubtedly Lenca in culture.

Map 12. Marriage region of Quesaltepeque, early 18th century.



1750 Quesaltepeque was a town of 5 *tributarios*, attached to the partido of Tencoa (AGCA 2325-34320, folio 42).

1752 Quesaltepeque, continuing its decline, contributed only 13 pesos in tribute. It was still in the partido of Tencoa (AGCA 438-8949 y 438-8950).

1757 By this year the town within the Partido de Tencoa was barely viable, with only 5 *tributarios* (AGCA 2325-34320, folio 42).

1762 Quesaltepeque, partido de Tencoa, a settlement of 6 *tributarios* (AGCA 2325-34320).

1767 A *padrón* of this date (AGCA 193-1988) is the last record of an occupied settlement. It is therefore not surprising that this census listed no *tributaries*.

1783 Quesaltepeque is not included in the list of 86 tributary towns in the seven *partidos* of Honduras for 1783. (AGCA 193-1992)

1797 The town is not mentioned in the partido de Tencoa for this year nor seen on the map of the region from this period (AGCA 39-328; Davidson 2006: 184). My erroneous supposition that

Quesica, a place from the map of 1797, was a remnant term from Quesaltepeque (Davidson 2006: 184-5) was corrected by Raúl Alvarado (historian of Santa Bárbara) in 2014. He knows the place well and explained that Quesica, was not Quesaltepeque, but is a small stream that bounds the lands of ancient Quesaltepeque.]

1855 Records of a land grant in the Santa Bárbara district: ANH-TT, Santa Barbara Quezaltepeque, 1855 [TT 1901: 333; TT Santa Bárbara 343 (microfilm nuevo), viejo TT Santa Bárbara 285; SCAD 2009: 473] provides the last information on the site. Testimonies found within the land titles concerning Quesaltepeque are clear that when measuring the territory called Quesaltepeque (also Quesaltisque) in 1852 and 1854, near Agua Blanquita, Santa Bárbara, all witnesses proclaimed that the site was *terreno baldio que hubo pueblo*, but now is occupied by no one. The sketch map that accompanies the text records an area of 7.14 *caballerias* (ca. 770 acres) being measured in the great bend in the Ulúa river. The only place name from the land title map that remains on modern maps (map: IGN 2560 III, 1978) is “Remolino.” The site of ancient Quesaltepeque lies along the east side of the Ulúa at 200 meters elevation. Because it is at the confluence of the Palaja and Ulúa, Quesaltepeque was approximately 22 kms downstream from ancient Cárcamo/Maitúm.

2004 A field reconnaissance of January 2004 approached the site from Santa Bárbara and Agua Blanquita. Local informants confirmed the location along the river below, approximately 2.5 km southwest of Agua Blanquita (Map 13). Just east of Agua Blanquita is a cerro that today bears the name of the settlement (Figure 12).

Map 13. Location of Quesaltepeque. (Base map: IGN 1987 Santa Bárbara 1/200,000)

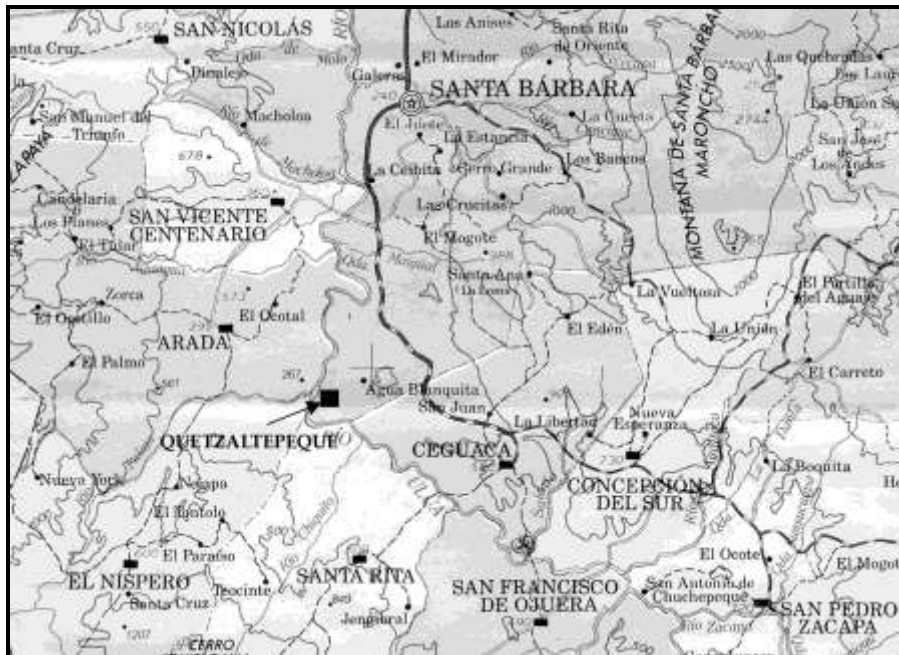


Figure 11. Quesaltepeque. Facing west at the boca del río Palaja (arrow) before it enters the Ulúa, January 2004.



Figure 12. Cerro Quesaltepeque, east of Agua Blanca, January 2004.



Why Quesaltepeque was abandoned remains a mystery. Perhaps one factor might be, as in the case of Carcamo/Maitum, a neighboring “lost” town up the río Palaja, that the site is roughly equi-distant from Gracias and Comayagua. Lost in the peripheral zone between two colonial centers, they were administered by neither, and were left behind.

The end of Quetsaltepeque might have had repercussions in Tencoa as well. For within a few decades of the collapse of Quesaltepeque, Tencoa also declined and lost to the new political center, Santa Bárbara. Further, as in the case of Cárcamo, when the routes between Tencoa and Gracias a Dios, established early during the colonial era, were altered in favor of a route between Tencoa and Comayagua, the dominating capital, the río Palaja route was abandoned.

VIII.
Cayngala
Rebellious Lenca *encomienda*
1549-1814

The first notice of Cayngala (also Caigala, Caigalai, Caingala, Caygala, Cayagala, Cayancala, Cayangala, Cayengala) comes from the 1549 list of *encomiendas* by Cerrato. At the time the place was one of five bi-nodal properties included in the Honduran accounting. Cayngala was paired with Çalanbala, a name associated with an area about twenty kilometers to the northwest of Cayngala, in the headwaters of the río Selguapa, and just west and southwest of Siguatepeque (see río Calan, Calanterique: map IGN 2659 IV). The RAHM (s. f.) manuscript spelling is "Caigalai y Zalambala." The *encomienda* was one of the largest in Honduras, reporting 120 *tributarios*. Only Tegucigalpa and Comayagua, each with 150 *tributarios*, were larger.

Tribute from Cayngala included almost the complete range of products of the day, including maize, beans, wheat, cotton, chickens, fruit, fish, liquidambar, *toldillos*, *petates*, and pottery. The *encomienda* also provided six servants to live in Comayagua with *encomendero* Johnnes de Baide and a boy to watch the local herd. Velasco confirmed these figures for "Caygala y Calabala" in his 1571-4 copying of the Cerrato document. These pueblos also appear in Contreras Guevara's list of *encomiendas* (1582). By then the number of tributaries had been reduced to 60. In that document Tomas Gutierrez was listed as *encomendero*. He also controlled Jurla (modern Jesús de Otoro) and Roroteca (modern Rauteca). The range of his land was relatively compact – but reached over the Montecillos mountain range between the Comayagua valley and that of the upper Ulúa (Otoro) to the west.

During the previous year (1581) "*los indios del pueblo de Cayngala*" (also *Cayangala*), felt secure enough to bring a case against the *encomendero* Tomas Gutierrez, a vecino of the ciudad de Comayagua (AGCA A3.16/511-5346). The 60 *tributarios* of Cayngala normally paid 30 *mantas*, 3 *fanegas* of maiz, 50 *gallinas*, 2 *fanegas* of beans, and 2 *arrobas* of honey, and more, but because of a reduction in population and abuses by the *encomendero*, the residents of the village sought relief and asked for a new census to prove their plight.

As part of the presentation of the case, probably organized by the local priest, a census was attached. As was usual, the families are listed beginning with the lead family, in this instance, "*don Juan, cacique y su muger Juana, y tres hijos.*" Sixty-seven family households included 185 adults and children and 12 *solteros* -- a total population of 197. Surnames, according to the understanding of the scribe and despite difficulties of transcription, provide an interesting list: Diego Jutepa, Juan Temastane, Diego Coruta, Domingo Ajuite (also Lajutu), Juan de Cejacaya,

Juan Yayacotita, Juan Lamaja, Pedro Cai, Juan Maraca, Domingo Yatite, Diego Laba, Juan Juita, Juan Taucepa, Diego Yaruje, and Juan Cejabta.

The surnames provide excellent evidence that Cayngala was a Lenca settlement. A few parts of the *apellidos --tau* (house), *yaru* (monkey), and *cayan* (mountain)—are all well known terms in the Lenca language.

1590 The “Memoria ...” of Francisco de Valverde (1590) shows again that Cayngala was one of the largest tributary settlements in Honduras. The village of 80 *tributarios* (fifth largest) was three leagues from the *camino real* (probably as it passed through Comayagua) and described as “*tierra fria*.” That geographical note might be explained because some of the settlement’s lands were upslope the valley of the río Selguapa towards Calan (or towards Siguatepeque) and probably included modern cerro Agua Blanca. The report does not indicate crop production as it does for many other sites.

1592 Despite the claim of reducing population a decade previously, the count of this year reported 66 *tributarios*. The *encomienda* was still within the jurisdiction de Comayagua and remained under Tomas Gutierrez (AGI Contaduría 989).

1611 Caingala, a place in the large census (AGCA 311/5313).

1625 Cayngala, confirmación de encomienda (AGI Guatemala 99,N.1)

1632 In the elaborate subdivisión of the church in western Honduras of 1632, Cayngala was noted as a Lenca town within the jurisdiction of Comayagua (AGCA A1.11/4056-31441, folios 171-176; Arriaza 1632)

1661 Caingala was the *encomienda* of Pedro de Mexia of the *partido* of Comayagua. At the time, it was the fifth most productive property of 123 *encomiendas* in Honduras, having a total value caculated at 1,131 *reales*. Aside from “208 *tostones en dinero*,” Caingala contributed 47 *fanegas* of *maiz* and 118 *gallinas*.

1682 Cayngola was an indigenous town of 37 *tributarios* in the jurisdiction of Comayagua (AGCA A3.16/1602-2642). In the same year land titles were allocated for “San Antonio Buenavista,” a concession between Caingala y Ajuterique (ANH-TT 1901: 104).

1684 Caingala, pueblo de Comayagua, had dropped significantly in tribute – to 9.5 reales (AGI Guatemala 29, R2, N37)

1684-5 Caingalá, as reported in the “Nomina de los Pueblos de la Provincia de Comayagua, 1684-85,” (AGI Guat. 29), paid tribute of 23.5 reales.

1703 According to the June census of 1703 taken in Macholua, a prominent town 75 km over the mountains to the northeast, a male from “Caingala” was living in town (AGCA 511-5329). Assuming that people of that day married into their own linguistic/ethnic group, this is an indication that Macholua was also a Lenca place.

1739 The alcalde of Caingala reported in 1739 that it was impossible for his “pueblo indígena,” in the jurisdiction of Comayagua, to continue paying tribute at its normal rate because of population loss from the “continuadas pestes y enfermedades”(AGCA A3.16/192-1955).

1757 Perhaps because of the diseases reported above, by 1757, Caingala, partido de Comayagua, had been reduced to only 12 *tributarios* (AGCA 2325-34320).

1781- 1783 Documents associated with smallpox epidemic in western Honduras (AGCA 1781; 1783; AGI 1783) never include Caingala as a settlement, with the implication that it did not exist.

1791 By the time of Bishop Cadiñanos’s matricula in 1791, the village was no more. Had the settlement been significant, it would have been listed, especially because of its proximity to the bishop’s headquarters in nearby Comayagua.

1814 The land title of 1905 (ANH-TT Comayagua 30) proclaims that Caingala, en tierras de Comayagua (ANH-TT 1901: 112; SCAD 2009: 78), became “*extinguido*” in 1814. No reason for the abandonment was given at this time.

1853 While Doris Stone (1957: 11) reported that E. G. Squier visited “Caingala,” the detailed map of the Comayagua valley produced by the Squier team (map: 1853 Anon., in Davidson 2006, p. 219) does not show the place. The río Selguapa as it flows from the mountains towards the Humuya is portrayed, but no settlement is indicated. Squier’s own record of his trip to Guajiquiro (1859: 605) mentions that “Caingla” was one of the Indian towns within a league of Comayagua where a few locals return for annual visit (probably ruins only), but Squier does not state that he visited the site in person.

1896 The listing of Honduran settlements for 1896 (Honduras. DGEC 1896: 113) records only one “Caingala,” a caserío of the municipio of Guayape, distrito de Yocón, in Olancho.

1898 In the April 28, 1899, issue of *El Diario*, no. 166 (Tegucigalpa), a report discusses the complaint of Tito del Torondon, four months earlier, concerning “Caingala,” lands near Tular in the Comayagua Valley.

1905 According to the last *título de tierras* for Caingala (ANH-TT Comayagua 30 [1905]), the site is two leagues, towards the west, from Comayagua (SCAD 2009: 38). The plot is bounded on the

south by the lands of padre Cáceres, on the north by the río Selguapa, on the east by La Zumba and Los Castros, and on the west by the lands of Lo de Reina. Within the territory of Caingala are places called Mirajoco and Catacamas. Included in the folder of the *titulo* is a newspaper article from December 29, 1898 (*El Diario*, Tegucigalpa, no. 166) that describes the former landowner's (Tito del Torondon) battle to keep others from using his land and water.

1917 According to Doris Stone (1957:12), Samuel K. Lothrop visited the site of "Cayengala," in 1917, but made no excavations. His report of the trip is unpublished.

1954 Doris Stone visited the site in 1954 and reported: "Caingala is two and a half leagues northeast [sic, it is northwest] of Comayagua, at the foot of the hills. A fence runs across the further [sic, farther] end of the ruin, and the site has been used as a cemetery in recent years. Only one large aboriginal mound remains practically intact" (Stone 1957: 13). Her map on page 7 locates the site properly. Seventeen sherds collected from the ruin are pictured in Figure 39. She also noted "the use of obsidian chips and potsherds as fillers in the walls of the old Spanish church at Caingala" (p. 44).

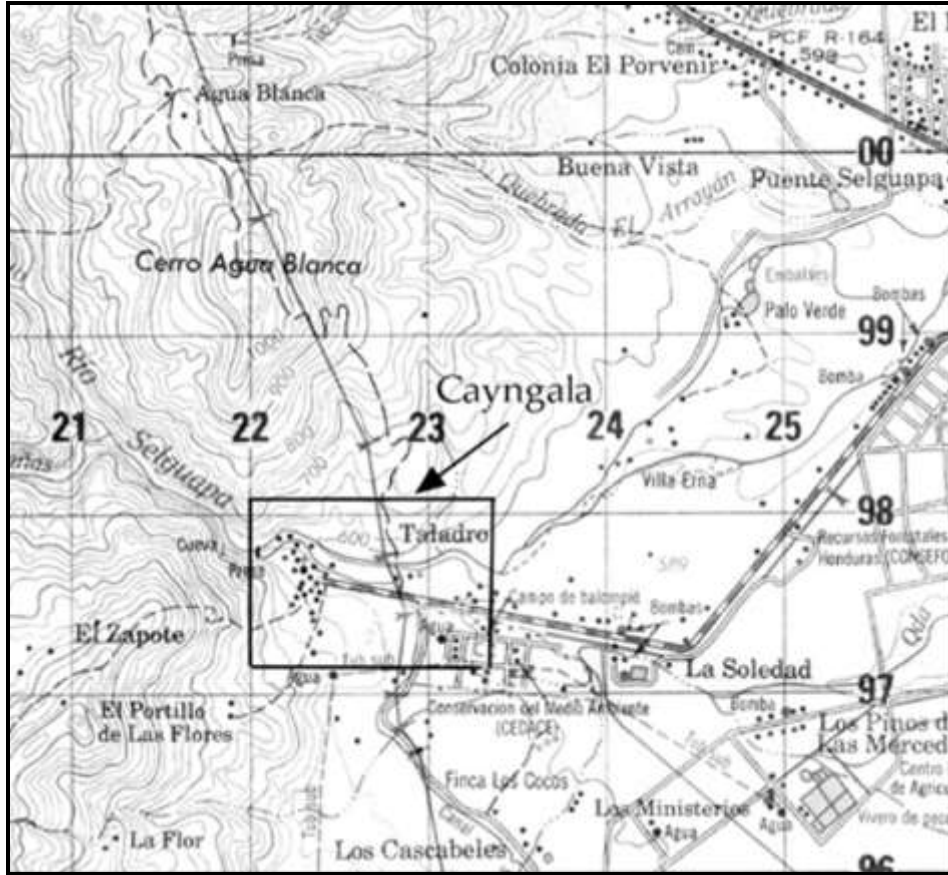
1983 Caingala, is located at 14-45'N/86-49'W (DMA. *Gazetteer de Honduras*. Washington, D. C., 1983).

2007 A field investigation in January 2007 revealed that almost all informants around Taladero knew of the name and site. They pointed out "Cerro Agua Blanca" on the modern map (Figure 13 and Map 14) as "Cerro Cayngala." They said, at the foot of the mountain, near where the río Selguapa flows onto the valley floor, the ancient town was located.

Figure 13. Cerro Agua Blanca, or Cerro Cayngala, from the southeast, January, 2007.



Map 14. Location of Cayngala, northwest corner, Comayagua Valley (map IGN 2659 II).



IX.
Cururu
Elusive early *curato* center
1545-1845

Like Tencoa a century before, Cururu during the 17th century was a settlement that assumed a much more important role after the Spanish organized Honduras. It is a place that grew in stature and also changed sites throughout the centuries--often giving rise to confusion and difficulties in locating the site.

Meaning of the term "Cururu" is not known with certainty. Stone (1957: 13), without citation, thought the word meant "place of roots." Because of its location in the southwest sector of the Comayagua Valley, one must expect that it derived from a Lenca term. Aguilar Paz (1968: 24) believed it to be the term for "un sombrero viejo" -- derived from Taino/Carib origins. The first notion was probably a guess; the second is nonsensical.

1545 Although the place is apparently not mentioned in the Alvarado *repartimiento* documents of 1536, it did exist as an *encomienda*, because Maldonado, writing about ten years later (1545: 348), noted a "Quorora" ("*un pueblo de indios*" near Comayagua, Tegucigalpa, and Lejamani), an *encomienda* that was vacated on the death of Pedro Alvarado. Perhaps, this was the initial reference to the place later known as Cururu.

1549 Cororu, in the "*tasaciones*" of Alonso Cerrato (1549) was a town of 85 *tributarios*. Their tribute to the *real corona de su magestad* consisted of 72 *gallinas de Castilla*, 6 *petates*, 5 *fanegas de maize* and 5 *canteros de miel*.

1574 The town does appear, as "Cororu," in the census of Velasco (1574). At that time, the number of *tributarios* from the settlement was not recorded. Subsequent lists of Honduran settlements from the 16th century (1582, 1590, 1592) show Cururu (also Coruru) to be one of the largest Lenca towns on the southwestern side of the jurisdiction of Comayagua-- some nine leagues away. The place was home to between 50 and 80 *tributarios*, or *indios casados*, during this period.

1577 Zúñiga C. (1971) mentions "Coruro" as a Merced town near Comayagua.

1582 By 1582, in keeping with its status as one of the largest towns in Honduras, the "pueblo de Cororu" was in the process of enlarging its spiritual realm. A major effort to install the complete array of religious artifacts in the church proceeded from Comayagua, including a very expensive silver bell (AGI Contaduría, leg. 989, fol. 14; Martínez C. 1983: 110). For this year the number of tributaries was 50 (Contreras Guevara 1582).

1587 From Comayagua scribe Rodrigo Ponce de León recorded the annual tribute for Cururu to be over 85 pesos gold, 55 *gallinas*, 27.5 cotton *mantas*, and 49 *fanegas* of corn (AGCA A3.16.5/236-2420).

1590 The Valverde manuscript from 1590 lists Cururu with 80 *indios casados*, 9 leagues from Comayagua towards Similatón (Valverde 1590).

1592 Cururu, an *encomienda* of the *real corona* had been reduced to 50 *tributarios* since the previous count. It remained within the jurisdiction of Comayagua (AGI Contaduría 989).

1632 By 1632, the "*partido y encomienda de Cururu*, a Care-speaking center," (AGCA A1.11.3-4056-31441, ff. 174-6; Black 1989: 104) was **the largest Merced headquarters in Honduras**, with 12 subject villages and 1,200 Christians -- larger than the major centers in Comayagua (7/800), Tencoa (11/1,100), and Gracias (5/800). The range of the *partido* extended from the upper Comayagua Valley over the western mountains into the Otoro Valley and included Acula [not located], Cacaoterique [Santa Ana], Chinacla, Quelala [within Jesús de Otoro], Ingrigula [Ingrula], Jurla [Jesús de Otoro], Puringla, Opatoro, Toctheca [Rauteca], Similatón [Cabañas], Tambla [Humuya], and Tatumbla [abandoned, Otoro Valley] . **See Map 15 below.**

In the same year a *vecino* of Cururu occupied cattle lands without permission from the local justices (AGCA A1.24-1557-10201-f.192), thus initiating a legal dispute. The problem was settled by "*un real padrón a favor de los indios a criar ganados en tierras privadas del pueblo*" (AGCA A1.24/1557-10210, f. 192).

1661 While "Cuzarlic" seems an unlikely paleographical rendering of "Cururu," "Quesailica" is present in this document and Cururu is not. Further, because of the prominence of the *encomienda* as judged from its value en reales of 2,012 (second largest in the country) and its location within the partido de Comayagua, this toponym might possibly represent Cururu (AGCA A3.16/511-5313).

1671 Early in the year Cururu and Tambla sought resolution to their territorial claims to the site of "La Saqualpa." Diego Gómez, in his position as *alcalde* of Cururu, brought the action because the site was nearer to Cururu (AGCA A1/368-3410, Diego Gómez, *alcalde*, 24 de enero de 1671). Another document from 1671 reported that the *común* of the town of "Curua" went against the town and people of "Tzaculapa" (Azacualpa, not located) because of the incorrect demarcation (*deslinde*) of the *ejidos* (AGCA 1671: A1.45-368-3410).

1680 A document from 1680 (BNM 1696) recognized the problems of such a large ecclesiastical realm. Tatumbla was part of Cururu, but later divided . . . having vacated the *doctrina de los Cares* del partido de Gracias a Dios on the death of Fray Joseph de Lievana . . . was without order then finally Bishop gave them a secular priest. The Cururu partido is so large...the priest (*cura*) needs to be at the same time in Tambla and also in Tatumbla, but Tambla in the Comayagua Valley is 14 leagues over terrible roads from Cururu and Cururu is separated from

Tatumbla by another 22 leagues of bad roads. Each place needs its own cura. Other settlements recognized as being in the Cururu realm were Apatoro (Opatoro) which is 24 leagues from Tatumbla and Guajiquiro (Guajiquiro).

Figure 14. Ruins of the large church at Tatumbla, Otoro Valley, another “lost town.” Author’s photo 1994.



1682 Cururu was a very large town, of 101 *tributarios*, in the jurisdiction of Comayagua (AGCA A3.16/1602-26402). Of the 59 places reporting tribute for western Honduras, only Cacaoterique was larger (117 *tributarios*).

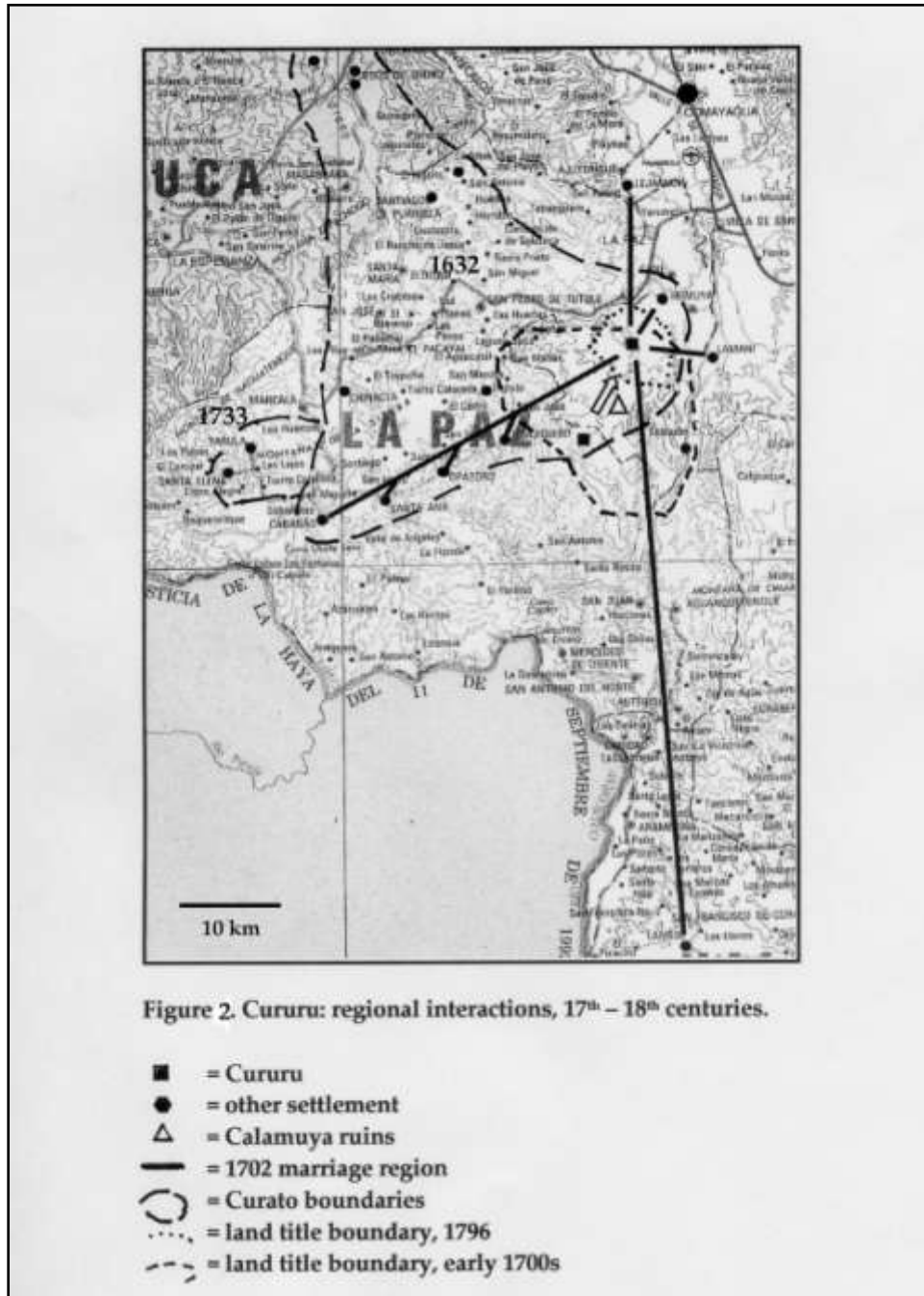
1683 San Pedro de Cururú, was noted as a Pupuluca-speaking town, the most important of its *partido* (AGI Guat. 184).

1684-5 Cururu, as reported in the “Nomina de los Pueblos de la Provincia de Comayagua, 1684-85,” (AGI Guat. 29), paid tribute of 23.5 reales.

1698 First evidence that San Pedro Cururu was involved in settlement movement -- the population of the settlement was considered to be relocated to the site known as Moloa, in the upper slopes of the southern Comayagua Valley (AGCA A1.10-121- 1416). The new site is about 7 leagues from Comayagua and 2 leagues from Teapanaxe.

1702 According to the *padrón* of 1702, Cururu had 95 separate households with 297 residents. At least 14 other citizens lived in nearby Lenca villages, such as Tambla (6), Guaxiquiro (4), Lamani (2), and Lejamani (1). One man was married in Langue, also Lenca, 60 kms to the south in the modern department of Valle (see Map 15). The 113 tribute-paying residents of Cururu each paid three tostones in dinero, one tostón in service, two gallinas de Castilla, one fanega de maiz, and one almud de maiz for the military at Granada, Nicaragua (AGCA A3.16/511-5325).

Map 15. [Figure 2 in map] Cururú: regional interactions, 17th and 18th centuries.



1710 El *ayuntamiento* of San Pedro Cururú, jurisdiction of Comayagua, petitioned to cease all classes of the *repartimiento* (AGCA 1710: A3.12/509-5295).

1712 Again, in relative importance, Cururu is greatest Honduran contributor to Merced Order: 80 pesos. Gracias, Tencoa, and Tatumbra curatos contributed 20 pesos each, Comayagua only 20 (Black: 1989: 139).

1711-4 The second piece of evidence that San Pedro Cururú was involved in site changes comes from the land title document of 1711-14 (ANH-TT La Paz 30). At this time the town had just been transferred “down” to a “llanos” area where it had been destroyed by fire three times. This zone, at the extreme southwest part of the Comayagua Valley was something of a natural savanna that was perhaps susceptible to annual fires during the dry season. After one such fire the pueblo leaders requested a new *revisión* of their tribute because, the fire had “destroyed a large part of the town” (AGCA A1.24/1581-10225, f. 396). The document implies that the original site of Cururu was in the mountains that border the Comayagua Valley on the southwest. From there, resettlement of the town took place down slope on the piedmont of the “12 *leguas*” from the capital (see arrow, figure 2).

1733 Even after moving eastward onto the plain of the upper Comayagua Valley, as a *curato* center, Cururu’s jurisdiction enlarged to include Yarula and Jocoara (modern Santa Elena) far over the mountains, over 40 km to the southwest (AGCA A3.16/498-10209). See figure 2 below.

1734 Because of reduced population, Cururu requests a new census (AGCA A3.16/513-5368).

1752 Cururu was a tributario village of the partido de Comayagua, contributing 91 pesos (AGCA A3.16/438-8949 y 8950).

1753 Cururu, again, sought a *revisión* to their census because of population decrease (AGCA A3.16/514-5392).

1757 Cururu, in the *partido de Comayagua*, had 15 *tributarios* (AGCA 2323-34320, año 1758).

1762 In this year, Cururu was a town of 23 *tributarios* (AGCA 2323-34320, año 1762).

1767 de 42 (?) *tributarios* (AGCA A3.16/193-1988).

1777 At the time of the “Memoria de lo producido Cururu y su anexos, 18 dic.” (ANH col. 59/1907) the “*cura intereno de Cururu*” was José Manuel Quintanilla. He was quite energetic in his record-keeping and reported in detail the number of *ganado*, *bestias*, and amount of cheese produced in the area he supervised. His subject villages were the mountain towns of Opatoro, Cacauterique, Similaton, and Guajiquiro, plus the Comayagua valley’s Lamaní and the five haciendas [*cofradías*?] of Tambla.

1781 During the smallpox epidemic in western Honduras, Cururu lost 12 citizens, including 3 *tributarios* (AGI Guatemala 568; AGCA [1781] 516-5422). The impact seems more severe in the hinterland upslope. Guajiquiro lost 130 residents, Opatoro 64, Cacaoterique 43 and Similatón 33. The piedmont towns, Cururu and Tambla, which lost 24, were less affected. Still, it might be that this epidemic marks the beginning of the town's demise.

1783 The town, in the realm of Comayagua, had 18 *tributarios* (AGCA A3.16/193-1992, año 1784).

1791 The 1790 visit of Fray Fernando Cadiñanos, bishop of Comayagua, records much information on Cururú and its ecclesiastical region (AGI Guatemala 578). For example, Cururú, where the *cura* resided, was situated amidst its eight subject places, for which distances are given: Lamani, a ladino town, was three leagues away. The other *pueblos*, all indigenous in population, were as follows: Tambla arriba (8 leagues), Tambla abajo (2 leagues), Quajiquiro (8 leagues), Opatoro (14 leagues), Cacaoterique (18 leagues), and Similatón (20 leagues), plus Rancho Chiquito, the sole *valle* (5).

Although the land was describe as mountainous, humid, and difficult for travel, it did produce wheat of good quality, *maiz*, and beans. The eleven *cofradías* of Cururú oversaw 1,217 *ganado-vacuno* and 355 *mular y caballar*. The 1,177 inhabitants of the *curato* contributed a value of 3,502 pesos or an average of 3 pesos per person – the sixth most productive of the 35 *curatos*.

1792-3 Shortly after the visit of the bishop, *ejidos* were established for Cururú in 1792 (TT 1901: 82) and a year later the *titulo de tierra* was granted (ANH, TT, La Paz 30). The land then held by the "indios" of Cururu, was 550 *caballerías* [ca. 250 sq. km], quite a large area for such few people. The territory, roughly 15 x 16 km, was bounded by lands belonging to the people of Opatoro, Guajiquiro, Tambla and the places of Testeca, Río Cange, Santo Cristo, and etc.

On the modern 1/50,000 map (Opatoro sheet, Instituto Geográfico Nacional), still indicated is a zone of dispersed settlement known as "San Pedro" some 10 kilometers southeast of Guajiquiro. Nearby, slightly to the northeast, is the "Potrero de Cururu" and Testeca, Cangel, and Santo Cristo, all names from the land titles. A field trip in May 1983 confirmed these place names.

1795-6 Another land title was granted a few years later. This time Cururo (Curruru) was reported to be 12 leagues from Comayagua (ANH-TT, La Paz 31).

1798 San Pedro de Cururu in a note from an amended *titulo de tierras* recorded a place of 16 *tributarios* (ANH-TT, La Paz 31).

1800 Cururu produced "una carga de 112 pesos" at the turn of the century (AGCA A1.73/390-3668).

1801g San Pedro Cururú in the census of Guerra had 70 inhabitants, including 12 *tributarios* (AGCA A3.16/244-4871).

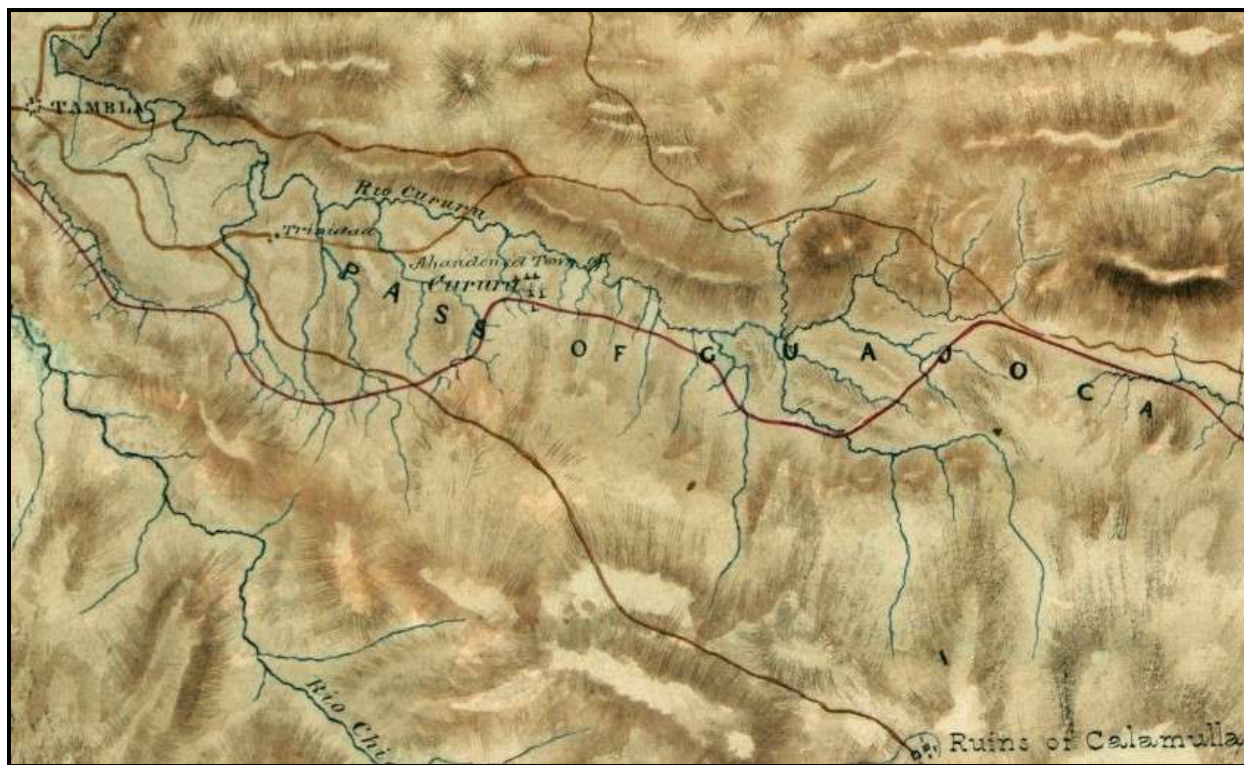
1801a Anguiano's count reported in the same year was slightly different: San Pedro Cururú of 74 residents and 14 tributarios (AGI IG 1525, AGI Guat 501).

1803/06 In the census of 1803/06 San Pedro de Cururu had only 12 tributarios (AGCA A3.16/244-4871; BAGG 3(2) 1938: 202-229).

1841 According to the last census taken of Cururú, in 1841, the village had a population of 45 (ANH CyP, Depto. Comayagua 1841).

1853 The complete abandonment of the settlement cannot yet be dated, but it is known that by 1853 when E. G. Squier passed through the area and his team was surveying the Comayagua Valley for the proposed trans-isthmian railroad, Cururú was a town in ruins (Squier 1870:75). The magnificent map they produced shows in detail the location of abandoned Cururu. On the "Map of the Plain of Comayagua" (map: 2006 Davidson, plate XCIX) the cartographer places the "Abandoned Town of Cururu" in the "Pass of Guacoca" about midway between Tambla and the "Ruins of Calamulla." Since, the Moloa River has destroyed some of the village by meandering into the edge of the site.

Map 16. "Abandoned Town Cururu," and Río Cururu, on the Squier map of 1853.



1954 Doris Stone (1957: 13-14, 47), during her study of the archeological sites of the Comayagua valley, heard from the locals that “Spanish friars brought the inhabitants of Calamuya, which lies southwest [8 km] in the hills, to found Cururú.” On her map (p. 7) she situated the site properly: “on the first low rise at the southwest end of the [Comayagua] valley.” The río Moloa runs through the site. She noted ruins of a large adobe church and several mounds.

1980 The modern 1/50,000 map of the Instituto Geográfico Nacional de Honduras shows “Cururo” as a site two km north of Travesia in a elongated valley section of the greater upper (southern) Comayagua Valley (map: IGN 2658 I).

1987 An on-site investigation by the author and his son (Chadwick) in June 1987 found a ruin known by local informants as “la iglesia vieja de Cururu” (photo, figure 15). To reach the site we walked south from Cané along the road to Humuya, then hiked an incised trail beside the río Moloa before reaching the slightly elevated plain (700 m) known locally as “Cururu.” Kids from the vicinity guided us from their soccer field to the church. The church is located approximately 5 km south-southwest of Humuya.

Some Hondurans today believed that the modern capital of the Department of La Paz is ancient Cururu. Their evidence is based primarily on the name of the southern barrio of La Paz that is called San Juan de Cururu. It may be that some former residents of Cururu, on the abandonment of their site, moved into La Paz, 12 km to the north. According to local records housed in La Paz, the cabildo was established in 1797 (Machuca 1983: 32) by inhabitants along the Río (y Valle) de las Piedras. Las Piedras was promoted to villa status in 1848 when it gained its present name, La Paz. This is about the time that Cururu was abandoned. The 2001 census listing of barrios does not include “San Juan” or “Cururu.”

Figure 15. Son Chadwick, with local guides, sits atop ruins of the old church of Cururu, 1987. Facing south: Travesia is directly ahead through the pass; cerro Guapinol (900 m) is to the right background.



1988 - 2001 The Honduran national censuses of 1988 and 2001 (INEH 1988, 2002) include “Hacienda Cururo” in the jurisdiction of aldea Travesia, municipio de Humuya, departamento de Comayagua. In 1988 the place had one occupied dwelling with five residents. In the 2001 census the building was unoccupied. Coordinates are 14.12.49 N, 87.41.18 W.

The national census of 2013 (INEH 2013) lists “Hacienda Cururo,” without population.

X. Concluding Remarks

In light of no definitive explanation of the abandonment of most of these sites, some speculations might be exercised. The common feature shared by most of these abandoned places is that they were in locations peripheral to major population centers and the routes that connected the settlements.

The sixteenth century settlements of the Far East, Nueva Salamanca and Elgueta, were the most isolated. They were in challenging physical environments, amidst hostile populations, and far from the developed transportation routes. To support such out-of-the-way places was simply too difficult under conditions of that time. Even today these areas are underdeveloped and outside effective state control.

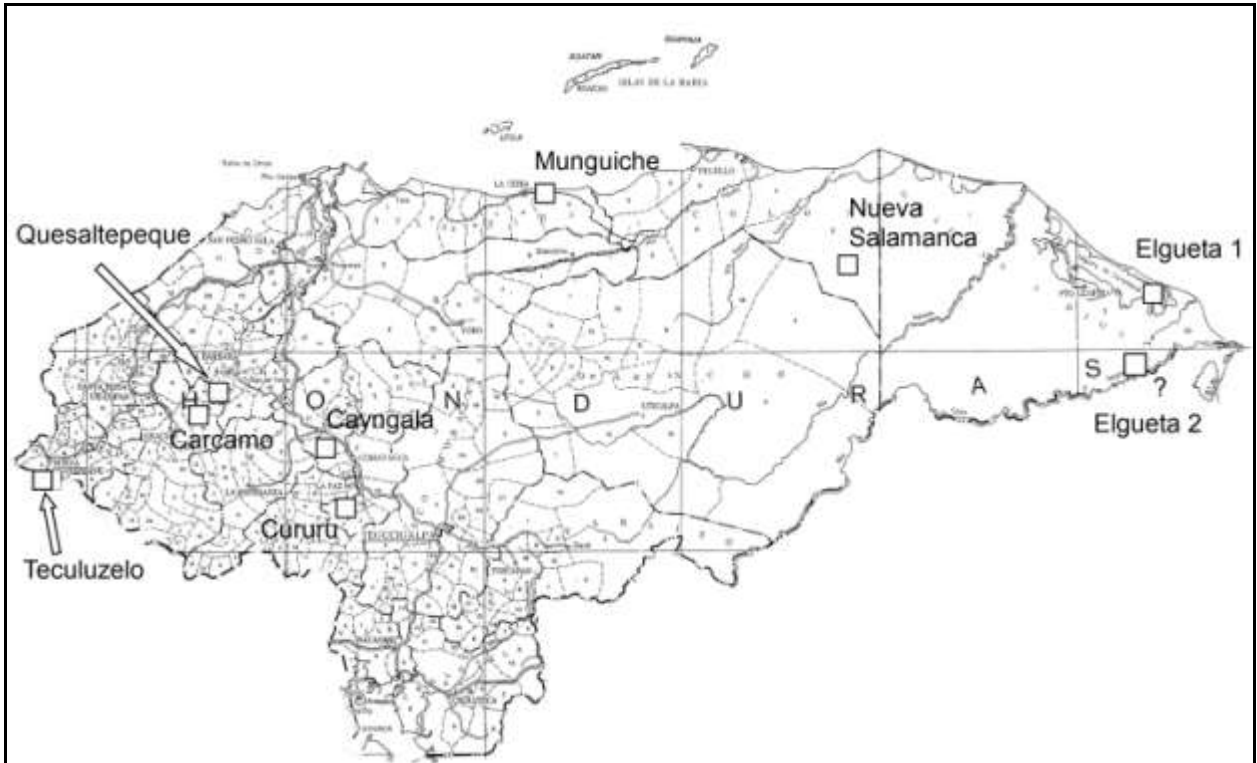
Cárcamo/Maitúm and Quezaltepeque were once connected by their positions at ends of the río Palaja, a lesser tributary of the middle Ulúa. After Tencoa declined as a major center, the route up the Palaja to Gracias, the major city in western Honduras, becomes unused. Also, because these settlements were in the peripheral zone separating the power centers of Comayagua and Gracias and were frequently administered by one or the other city, they were logically of less interest to the cities than those well within their political hinterlands.

Cururú and Cayngala, at far opposite sites of the Comayagua Valley, suffered from their locations as well. The development of La Paz during the early 19th century as a node probably attracted folks from the Cururú area, which was also bypassed by the inter-oceanic road that was directed along the eastern pass and not through that of Cururú.

Cayngala was probably placed on the sideline as well when the new road between Comayagua and Siguatepeque left the río Selguapa (the most direct route) and was constructed over the mountains to the east.

The case of Munguiche might be the most interesting, possibly involving natural disaster. The coastal site was open to the frequent hurricanes that pass over the north coast. From modern examples (Fifi, Mitch) we have learned that heavy, prolonged rainfall in the coastal mountains cause rivers such as the Cangrejal to become torrential currents that bring large landslides and that giant boulders move downstream destroying all in their path. While the boulders cannot reach the coastal zone occupied by Munguiche, they do clog the river and make the flooding reach larger areas. The result might have been the catastrophic obliteration of the little port.

Map 17. Locations of the eight “Lost Towns” reported herein.



These inquiries all fit nicely into the time-honored quest for “lost places,” but are not surrounded by the hype associated with the major Honduran lost city. In Honduras this space has been dominated by “Ciudad Blanca,” the White City of La Mosquitia.

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XI.
On Ciudad Blanca
The “last great lost city of the Americas”
1917 – Never Was

"The interest I have to believe a thing is no proof that such a thing exists." Voltaire

During law school days we learned about THE BURDEN OF PROOF (*onus probandi*):
"The person who brings up a new idea has the burden of proving it to be so. The person has
to provide, to produce, unassailable evidence that the notion is true."

Prologue

The notion of lost places and civilizations has been around for a while.

About 360 B. C. Plato mentioned **Atlantis** (island of Atlas), a place of great civilization located west of the Straits of Gibraltar that sank into the sea (See his dialogues *Timeus* and *Critias*). A quote from a scholar of the period, Alan Cameron (*Greek Mythography in the Roman World*. Oxford University Press, 2004: 124) seems appropriate: "It is only in modern times that people have taken the Atlantis story seriously; no one did so in antiquity." Among those "modern" folks who took the Atlantis story seriously were several Mesoamerican "scholars," starting with Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg, and including Edward Herbert Thompson and Augustus Le Plongeon. During the middle and late 19th century, they proposed that Atlantis was somehow related to Mayan and Aztec cultures. Others, such as the very serious "non-scholar" Frederick Mitchell-Hedges, followed.

When discussing "lost cities" one question, imminently geographical, arises immediately: Where was it? The answer to that question is perhaps answered best by Charles Nicholl in his book, *The Creature in the Map. Sir Walter Raleigh's Quest for El Dorado* (1997, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 9). He wrote: "The first and sensible answer is, nowhere. El Dorado did not exist. There never was a great and golden city lost in the South American jungle, and that is why it could not, and cannot, be found."

The same can be said about the Honduran Ciudad Blanca. A great urban center, in the forests of Mosquitia, which traded with Aztecs and Incas, cannot be found, because it never did exist!

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The notion of a mysterious "ancient lost white city" did not originate in Honduras. Ideas such as these originated far from Honduras and reach far beyond Honduras. "Lost cities" are a worldwide phenomenon and can be found deep in the ethos of medieval Spain and its offspring countries in America. Even today "*ciudades blancas*" have widespread mythical and real world components. A few years ago Christoph Wiegand produced an unbelievable on-line account of a "*ciudad blanca*" and the "patrimonio oculto of the Incas" in Peru (*Aventuras en el Valle del Colca*. Berlin: epubli GmbH, 2010). The catchy words are employed by tourism agencies in several modern cities in Latin America -- the "*ciudad blanca*" theme appears in their brochures, including in Arequipa (Peru), Bogotá (Colombia), Cartagena de Indias (Colombia), Ibarra (Ecuador), Liberia (Costa Rica), Mérida, Yucatán (México), and Sucre (Bolivia).

As for the mythical example from Honduras, the sequence of literature that led to its continuing nonsensical discussion looks something like the following. Here is the chronological progression, with some background information and brief commentary. I am aware that much more has been written about the Honduran Ciudad Blanca; what is presented here comes from a personal survey.

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1917 When did Honduras's Ciudad Blanca first come to our attention? When did the notion first appear in the literature? I believe the first notice is from Eduard Conzemius (1892-1931), the adventurous banker/businessman/traveler and amateur, but very capable, ethnographer who lived in eastern Central America during the second decade of the 20th century. At seventeen Conzemius came to America from Luxembourg with his older brother Viktor (Conzemius, V. 1973), arriving in New York March 21, 1910 (Wey 2017: 21). After jobs in Chicago and New Orleans (with Hibernia Bank) Eduard left for Honduras, to work for a bank in La Ceiba before moving to eastern Honduras and Nicaragua where, between 1917 and 1921, he traveled extensively as a logger, planter, and as an "administrator" for the Trujillo Railroad Company working out of Trujillo. For two years (1917-1918) he worked in "the banana and coconut plantations of the United Fruit Company" (Wey 2017: 22-4). With keen interests in indigenous cultures and languages, he accumulated, organized, and eventually published ethnographical materials on several groups including the Mískito, Sumu, Paya, Rama, Garífuna, and Jicaque. He returned to Europe (Le Harve) from Costa Rica in April 1922 (p. 22). By October 1925 Conzemius was reported to be in Paris (*Journal, Société Americanistes de Paris*, n.s., tomo XXI [1929]: vii). He died in Borneo in 1931.

Most importantly, here is exactly when he learned of the "ciudad blanca."

From a letter Conzemius wrote to German linguist Walter Lehmann (May 10, 1923) we learn that Conzemius visited the río Plátano in 1917 (Wey, p. 25). While among the Paya there, he was told by an elderly man that **he had heard** of a large white ruin, first found by a ladino during the last decade of the 1800s, in the headwaters of the Plátano and Paulaya rivers, the difficult-to-reach and heavily forested upland of interior Mosquitia.

“Ciudad Blanca.

En esta parte de Honduras se cree que en la margen del Río Plátano, en su curso superior, existen ruinas muy importantes que fueron descubiertas por un “hulero” hace unos 20 a 25 años, cuando éste se había extraviado en el monte entre los ríos Plátano y Paulaya. Dejó este hombre una descripción fantástica de la que vio allí. Eran las ruinas de una ciudad importantísima con edificios blancos de piedras parecidas al mármol, ciñeda por una grande muralla del mismo material. Poco después este ladino se fué de la Mosquitia y nadie sabe lo que se ha hecho de él. Un viejo saurín paya dijo entonces que el diablo le había matado por haberse atrevido de contemplar este sitio prohibido, del cual este indio tenía noticias de su predecesor.

Por motivo de sus edificios blancos este lugar fué conocido con el nombre de “Ciudad Blanca.” Pocos años después un mulato, quien andaba “cateando” en los pequeños afluentes izquierdos del Río Plátano, pretendió haber dado con estas ruinas; pero pocos días después de haber contado esto, él se ahogó en el río y los indios atribuyeron su muerte al enojo del diablo.

Por más diligencias que hayan hecho ladinos y extranjeros para conseguir un guía, nunca han hallado un Paya que les conduzca a estas ruinas. Los indios dicen todos no concocen y aun que todo esto es un mito, pero los otros moradores de la Costa afirman que no quieren enseñarlas a otras estas ruinas por miedo que entonces tendrían que morirse.” (Conzemius, E. 1927: 302; 1927-8: 58-59)

Apparently, this second-hand hearsay is the earliest written account of the Ciudad Blanca myth. English version is below, see 1927 publication date.

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On the other hand, it has often been stated that the first notice of Ciudad Blanca is from much earlier times, even 400 years previously. Although the words “Ciudad Blanca” were never used, it has been said that early conquistadores Pedro Alvarado and his boss Hernán Cortés wrote of hearing about a fabulous city that would rival Tenochtitlán. The city appears in the literature as Tlapalan, Tapala, Tlapallan, Tepalan, Tlillan/Tlapallan, Hueitapalan, or (Hue)Tlapallan, and is terribly intertwined with the several myths describing the final days of the foremost Mexican culture hero, Quetzalcoatl. Proponents of Mosquitia’s Ciudad Blanca believe the city of Tlapallan is the same as the Ciudad Blanca that exists in the forests of eastern Honduras. Jesús Aguilar Paz (1969) was especially keen on that notion. But . . . what do scholars have to say about that? **No serious student of the Quetzalcoatl legend believes Tlapallan was in Honduras.**

1524 Pedro Alvarado," Segunda Carta a Cortés, 28 de julio de 1524," in Adrian Recinos, *Pedro de Alvarado (1485-1541), Conquistador de México y Guatemala*. Segunda edición. Guatemala: CENALTEX, 1986. In this passage the biographer of Pedro Alvarado notes the conqueror's interest in "Tlapalan." But Alvarado places the city in northern Yucatán, not in far-off Honduras (p. 101).

"Alvarado again described his dream to Cortés, never realized, to conquer the big cities and provinces, the fabulous El Dorados, whose existence filled the imagination of the Indians. After the winter months Alvarado planned to leave Iximche [Guatemala] and to enter the "Tepalan"[Tlapalan] province, which is fifteen days from here inland, where, according to my information, is a city as large as Mexico City, and with large buildings of limestone blocks and rooftops.

The ambitious Spanish captain had reached this world with a delay of two hundred years to see the wonders of Tlapallan, the region where Quetzalcoatl went to live and die, believed to be the littoral and north of Yucatan, where the great Toltec civilizer rebuilt the ancient city of Chichen Itza and constructed Mayapán. Those great cities that had flourished during New Mayan Empire, were deserted and abandoned in the sixteenth century, but their fame had survived the ruin and were still the topic of conversation of wonder and pride among the Indians of Mexico and Guatemala."

1526 -- Hernán Cortés, "Carta-relación de Hernán Cortés al Emperador Carlos V, 3 de septiembre de 1526," *Cartas de Relación*. Nota preliminar de Manuel Alcalá. México: Editorial Porrúa, 1971, pp. 222-283. It is in his fifth letter to the King that Cortés discusses the "special rich **province** called Hueitapan," which is perhaps 50-60 leagues from Trujillo.

". . . tengo noticia de muy grandes y ricas provincias, y de grandes señores en ellas, de mucha manera y servicio, en especial de una que llaman Hueitapan, y en otra lengua Xucutaco, que ha seis años que tengo noticia de ella, y por todo este camino he venido en su rastro, y tuve por nueva muy cierta que está ocho o diez jornadas de aquella villa de Trujillo, que puede ser cincuenta o sesenta leguas. Y de ésta hay tan grandes nuevas, que es cosa de admiración lo que de ellos se dice, que aunque falten los dos tercios, hace mucha ventaja a esta Mexico en riqueza, e igualale en grandeza de pueblos y multitud de gente." (p. 268).

Perhaps the most-recognized scholar on this matter should weigh in. After H. B. Nicholson, author of *Topiltzin Queszalcoatl: The Once and Future Lord of the Toltecs* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2001) addresses the "complicated method of transmission of the discourse [about the Quetzalcoatl myth] between Motecuhzoma and Cortés" [Motecuhzoma - Marina - Francisco de Aguilar - Cortés] (p. 86), he speaks to the location of where Quetzalcoatl ended his journey. [The **bold face** is mine.]

"At the terminus of his [Quetzalcoatl's] journey, three names stand out: Coatzacoalco, Acallan, and (Tlillan) Tlapallan . . . The location of the first two is well known: the first ("sanctuary of the serpent"), at the mouth of the modern river of that name, and the second ("place of canoes"), in the Río Candelaria drainage, in southern Campeche. Tlillan/Tlapallan

("the place of the black and red colors" or "the place of writing"), on the other hand, seems to have been **a more mythical place**. Seler, followed by Jimenez Moreno, suggested that its name might have had reference to the Maya country, the area of "writing" par excellence; certainly, it was located in that direction. Melgarejo Vivanco (1949: 47) believed that it could be located precisely, to the extent of identifying it, together with Poctlán ("place of smoke") with two towns in Veracruz (near Totutla and Axocuapan, respectively). Another Tlapallan, the "old," he believed was that mentioned in the *Relación de Espiritu Santo* (Coatzacoalco) of 1580 and in an unpublished document of 1591—which he identified with a *ranchería* of Chinameca, near Jaltipan (1949: 47, 491). Tlatlayan ("place of burning") has been identified (Covarrubias 1947: 137) with a modern village of that name in the district of Los Tuxtlas, Veracruz. All of these putatively precise identifications may be tantalizing, but I believe that to the Conquest-period inhabitants of the plateau Tlapallan and associated places were located in the same vague way as Teocolhuacan, Chicomoztoc, and other localities that were connected with **semi-legendary origins** and migrations.

This is well brought out by the references to (Hue)Tlapallan in the letters of Cortés and Pedro de Alvarado. The reference in the 1526 fifth *Carta y relación of Cortés* (1946: 601-602) is particularly revealing ("tengo noticia . . ." see above).

The parallel to Teocolhuacan is particularly close. **These places were essentially legendary and, in colonial times, smacked more than a little of El Dorado.** The location of Cortés's "Hueitapalan," so far east in Honduras, is interesting. His account is paralleled by Pedro de Alvarado's (1924: 87) statement in his 1524 second letter to Cortes, during his conquest of Guatemala, that he planned to search for the province of "Tepalan," located fifteen days' journey into the northern interior [from Santiago, Guatemala, Antigua], where there was a city as great as Mexico Tenochtitlan, with large flat-roofed stone buildings. **The mystical, "fabulous kingdom" aspect of Tlapallan** is also well brought out by Torquemada's (1943-1944, II: 50) citing of the questioning of Sahagun concerning its location by the natives (Xochimilca) themselves (pp. 281-2)." See also Fr. Bernardino de Sahagún (*Historia de las cosas de Nueva España*, México: Editorial Nueva España, S. A., 1946, tomo I: 84, 308-12); Cline's translation of Sahagún (1989: 39) makes clear that Quetzalcoatl went by sea after he was summoned by the Sun God to join him in the kingdom of Tlapalla.

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Perhaps Alvarado knew his geography better than his boss, Cortés. Alvarado believed Yucatán was the Quetzalcoatl end site while Cortés apparently does not realize that his "Xucataco" is the same as the Yucatán of Alvarado – "Yuca" with two similar nahuatl locatives (*tán* [tlán] and *co*).

William Folan *et al* (2016: 305) in their brilliant paper on Quetzalcoatl **mythical** routes never get the culture hero into Central America. The closest they find him, **even mythically**, is headed south from Tulum on the east coast of Yucatán. They never mention the word "Tlapallan." (Folan, William V., David D. Bolles, and Jerald D. Ek 2016 "On the trail of Quetzalcoatl/Kukulcan: tracing mythic interaction routes and networks in the Maya Lowlands," *Ancient Mesoamerica* 27: 293-318.)

David Carrasco, author of *Quetzalcoatl and the irony of Empire: Myths and Prophecies in the Aztec tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1982), makes the point that there are several different myths, or storybooks tales, that discuss Quetzalcoatl and Tlapallan. In one (p. 34), "Quetzalcoatl departs from Tollan and arrives at Tlapallan-Tlatlayan, where he sacrifices himself by fire and is transformed into the Morning Star." Another account (p. 35) describes Quetzalcoatl . . . "reaching Tlapallan, where he falls sick, dies, and is burned on a funeral pyre." Still another rendering (p. 78) notes that ". . . Quetzalcoatl went to enter into the water at Tlapallan, where he went to disappear." Mighuel León-Portillo, in his *La huida de Quetzalcoatl*, México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001: 99-100), clearly has "Tlapalan" as a coastal site.

The last two accounts seems much like the idea presented by Rafael Girard in his *El Colapso Maya y los Nahuas* (1959: 39) that "Quetzalcoatl partió para Tlapallan, provincia que cae hasta la mar del sur (Pacífico) y era tierra muy próspera, rica y bien poblada, donde estaban los reinos y señorías de sus antepasados." The difference, however, is vast: Pacific versus Gulf of México.

One final observation is from another Pedro Alvarado expert. From his book, José María Vallejo García-Hevia (*Juicio a un conquistador: Pedro Alvarado. Su proceso de residencia en Guatemala, 1536-38*. 2 tomos. Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2008), writes that when Quetzalcóatl

"Reached the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, he said farewell to his followers, promised to return with his descendants to visit the country, and, on a boat made of snake skins, took to the sea in the direction of the fabulous land of Tlapallan." (p. I: 55)

("Alcanzados las orillas del Golfo de México, se despidió de sus seguidores, prometió volver con sus descendientes a visitar el país, y, a bordo de una embarcación, hecha de pieles de serpientes, se hizo a la mar en dirección a la fabulosa tierra de Tlapallan.")

[To further confuse the issue, as he usually did, Lunardi (1946: 88) notes the possibility that "Sulaco" might be "Xucutaco."]

All of the legends and myths of Quetzalcoatl notwithstanding, clearly, Cortés did not come to Honduras specifically in search of Tlapallan and a golden city. Cortés writes in his fourth and fifth letters to the King that he comes to Honduras to find the traitor Oli(d) (Cortés 1971: 216, 237). Further, once he was in Trujillo he did not seek any "rich province" beyond one entrada of some 35 leagues where his troops found a "very beautiful valley populated by many large towns." (Cortés 1971: 269-70) While Cortés did meet with natives interior of Trujillo who spoke a "Mexican" language that his translators understood, they did not, as Pedraza reported perhaps 15 years later, tell of a rich town to the south. Perhaps because the one expedition did not find, nor hear of, that exceptional "golden city," once his trip to Honduras was over and he was back in México Cortés did not organize another trip in search of the rich provinces that some might have thought existed in eastern Honduras. Instead, he sent his emissaries to the South Seas, and in several other regions. Clearly, Cortés did not believe the best opportunity for wealth was eastern Honduras.

Historians of the period who were actually on the scene and writing from first-hand knowledge, such as Bernal Diaz del Castillo, knew that Cortés came primarily to deal personally with his disobedient follower – Oli(d) and secondarily to seek the gold of the north coast of Honduras (Díaz del Castillo 1972: 416).

As pieced together from a few sources (Cortés 1971, Díaz del Castillo 1972, Valle 1948, Chamberlain 1953) a timeline for the period is presented that indicates Cortés' lack of interest in "Tlapallan."

1524, Jan. 11 – Cristóbal de Olid sent by Cortés to western Honduras (Hibuera) not to eastern Honduras (puerto Guaimura, later Trujillo harbor where Columbus made landfall in 1504), via Havana, because "that land [Hibuera] is mountainous and with many rivers where can be found much to gain (*granjerias*) and gold." One of the eight specific instructions to Olid is "que buscase oro y plata." There is no order to seek the "rich city/province."

1524, May 3 – Olid arrives in Triunfo de la Cruz. He heads west into Ulúa-Chamelecón valleys for conquests, not east toward Trujillo [and the supposed location of Tlapallan]. Olid makes Naco his headquarters.

1524, October 12 – Cortés leaves Mexico for Honduras. After hearing of Olid's traitorous behavior, Cortés had earlier dispatched Francisco de Las Casas to Honduras to discipline Olid.

1525, May 12 – Olid is decapitated in Naco by forces allied with Cortés.

1525, May 18 – Trujillo is founded and named for Spanish hometown of Las Casas.

1525, September 8 – Cortés reaches Puerto de Caballos, in Honduras, after 11 months.

1526, April 25 – Cortés departs Trujillo for México . . . without seeking the magnificent "rich city/province" some 10-12 days from Trujillo.

Pedraza and "Tegiusgualpa" as Ciudad Blanca

The other early Spanish account, from Trujillo, that has captured the attention of the proponents of an early 16th century Ciudad Blanca is that of bishop Cristóbal de Pedraza who first came to Honduras in 1538 as "Protector y Defensor de los Indios" (Chamberlain 1953: 128, 131). In 1541 Pedraza was named bishop of Honduras and lived in Trujillo. In the **printed** account of his famous *relación* Pedraza (1544a: 407) mentions one place name to the interior from Trujillo – "Tagiusgualpa."

"When asked by our Nagualatos (interpreters) what land was that they replied "tagiusgualpa," which is to say in their language "house where gold is smelted."

("preguntándoles por nuestros naguatatos que quieren dezir interprete que tierra era aquella respondieron que tagiusgualpa | que quiere dezir en su lengua casa donde se funde el oro.")

From this statement alone, Ciudad Blanca fans believe Pedraza was referring to their city.

Commentary: I do not know which modern writer first injected Pedraza into the Ciudad Blanca story, but questions arise from the primary document (Pedraza 1544b). The handwritten “*relación*” in the Archivo Museo Naval in Madrid (AMN ms. 0189) clearly does not transcribe as “**tagiusgualpa**.” The paleography is straight-forward using letters of the same document. The word is “**tagansgeralpa**.” Because the printed versión differs, I would not be surprised to learn of another manuscript copy. I have been unable to find it, if it exists.

Figure 16. The Pedraza 1544b “*relación*,” Museo Naval, Madrid ms. 0189, folio 56v.

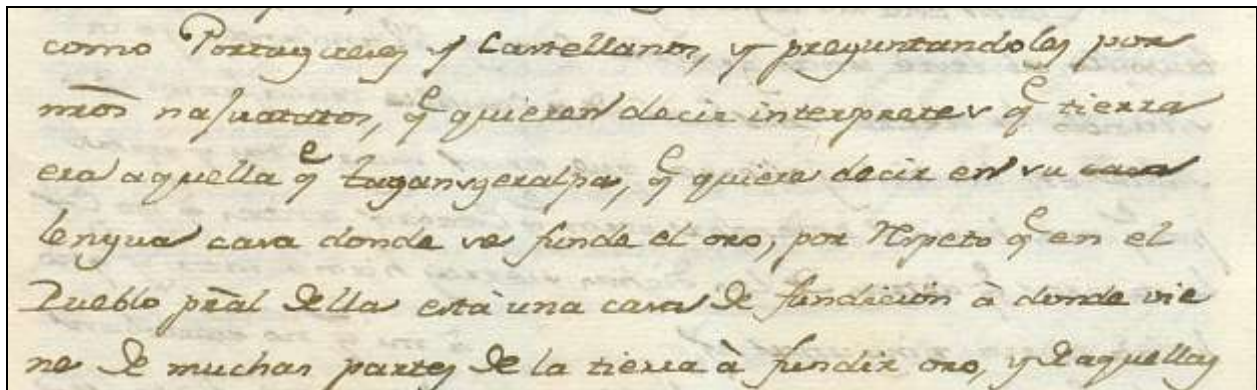


Figure 17. The Pedraza 1544a “*relación*,” printed versión, CDIU II (1898):407. (Differences in renderings in **bold**.)

“preguntándoles por nuestros naguatatos, que quieren dezir interprete que tierra era aquella **respondieron** que **tagiusgualpa**, que quiere dezir en su lengua casa donde se funda el oro, por respeto que en el pueblo **mas** principal della esta vna casa de fundicion adonde **vienen** de muchas partes de la tierra a fundir oro, y de aquellas / sierras que dizen que son cerca de veragua”

Under either circumstance, in her passing comment to me a prominent Nahuatl linguist (Dakin, K. 2021 personal communication) apparently gives little validity to the toponym:

“Re your comment about ‘tagiusgalpa’, I would be inclined to think that it is just a variant or misspelling - the kw- sound before a following consonant also might put in some kind of vowel, and there are a lot of variations, for example in *tekw*-(tli), often heard and written as *tekuh*-, sometimes as just *tek*-, and I would guess possibly as *tagiuh* also. I don’t think that Pedraza’s attribution as the ‘house where gold was smelted’ has any evidence behind it, except for the European obsession to find gold.”

Two years later Pedraza (1547), when the bishop reports to the King about his 16-month trip to view his ecclesiastical realm, makes no mention of eastern Honduras being the area of a rich city. In fact, he reports the area between Nueva Salamanca and Trujillo to be the most inhospitable of the entire country. If his 1544a note on “tagiusgualpa” referred to Ciudad Blanca, why did he not mention it again after he actually went closer to the site?

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At about the time Pedraza was in Trujillo, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado had been informed that well to the north of México City were seven cities of gold, one of which was larger and more wealthy than Mexico City [sound familiar?]. The streets were lined with goldsmith shops . . . and doorways were studded with emeralds and turquoise. (That story was enough to send Coronado on his 6,000 mile search for Cíbola and beyond to the mythical Quivira (1540-1542). Even after utter failure, Spanish expeditions continued futile searches in 1594, 1601, 1634, and 1662. The medieval idea of seven cities out into the Atlantic on the mythical island of Antilla can be traced back until the 8th century (Baker 1992). The main equivalent in South America was El Dorado (Nicholl 1997). Whose quest reached its greatest heights when by Sir Walter Raleigh returned for a second trip in 1618.

Map 18. The imaginary golden city of El Dorado, or Manoa (which later becomes Manaus, Brazil), as shown on the imaginary lake Parime, north of the Amazon river (map: 1630 Johannes de Laet). Ciudad Blanca never received such cartographic attention.



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The Franciscan missionaries of Mosquitia never reported a “Ciudad Blanca”

Perhaps the most critical evidence that Ciudad Blanca never existed as a large, magnificent, urban built-up, multistructured aboriginal place is that during the mid-16th and 17th centuries the middle region of La Mosquitia was explored intensely by Spaniards in their early roles of discoverers, conquistadors, encomenderos, and missionaries.

The organizers of Nueva Salamanca, located on the middle río Paulaya, ranged widely desperately trying to organize their 12+ encomiendas and interacted intimately with the Pech, from who the Ciudad Blanca legends apparently originated. In none of the manuscript documents associated with the Nueva Salamanca era is there any indication of such a place. Why would the Spaniards never find such a place in their explorations? Why would the Pech never mention such an important place in their culture history to the Spaniards?

The same questions must be asked of the missionaries who roamed the interior of Mosquitia. In 1622 Franciscan fathers Martínez and Baena established “Barcaquer,” their mission outpost, probably on the middle Paulaya, among the Pech and near the most logical site for Nueva Salamanca (Vásquez 1714: IV, 164). The most famous of these – Esteban Verdelete (1606), Cristobal Martínez (1622), Fernando Espino (1674, 1676), Pedro de Ovalle 1676, and Pedro Concepción (1698-1700 at Los Dolores) – wrote detailed accounts of the eastern region and none of these educated missionaries ever mention a special abandoned indigenous city in eastern Honduras.

1559 to 1856 During this four-century period no mention of a large indigenous settlement for eastern Honduras appears. During this 400-year span, while Pedraza, Spanish explorers and encomenderos wandered the interior of Mosquitia, and Franciscan missionaries traveled and lived over much of the territory (Esteban Verdelete (1606), none mentioned a “ciudad blanca” or any large pre-Columbian site. The major sources are Vásquez, Francisco, 1714-16 *Crónica de la provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de Guatemala*. 4 tomos. (Biblioteca “Goathemala,” tomos 14-17.) Guatemala: Sociedad de Geografía e Historia, 1937-1944; Graiño, Antonio, 1907 *Documentos referentes á los indios llamados Xicaques en la América Central*. Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez. Also in el Archivo Nacional de Honduras, rollo 68-2429; Serrano y Sanz, Manuel, 1908 *Relaciones históricas y geográficas de América Central*. (Colección de libros y documentos referentes á la historia de América, Tomo VIII.) Madrid: Tipográfico de Idamor Moreno; Verdelete, Fray Esteban 1606 [1612] “Noticia de la provincia de Tegucigalpa o Teguzgalpa.” Ms. (see Streit 1924: II, 732 *Bibliotheca Missionum*. Band 2: *American Mission Literature, 1493-1699*. Band 3: *American Missionum Literature, 1700-1909*. Xaverius – Verlagbuchhandlung); Espino, Fray Fernando, 1674 *Relacion verdadera de la redvcción de los indios infieles de la Provincia de la Tagvisgalpa,*

llamados Xicaques . . . desde el año de 1612 . . . hasta 1674. Guatemala: por Ioseph Pineda Ybarra, Impressor de Libros. Also see, Serrano y Sanz 1908: 329-374; J. E. Arellano 1968; y Managua: Banco de América 1977 (Colección Cultural, serie ciencias humanas No. 8); Ovalle, Fray Pedro de, 1676 "Razón del estado en que se hallan las reducciones de indios infieles . . . en la provincia de la Taguisgalpa, en los parajes de Xicaques y Iamastran, del obispado de Comayagua, como en la de la Nueva Segovia y parajes de la Pantasma del obispado de Nicaragua . . .," ms. AGI, Guatemala, est. 63, caja 6, legajo 25 (cartas y exp., 1676 y 1677), also, in Graiño 1907: 48-57, Serrano y Sanz 1908: 375-385, *Revista Conservadora del Pensamiento Centroamericano*, num. 87 (dic., 1967): 19-20, and J. E. Arellano 1977: 43-50; Ovalle, Fray Pedro de y Fray Lorenzo Guevara, 1681 "Breve manifiesto y relación sucinta del origen, progresos y de las conversiones de los indios infieles Jicaques, Paías y que han entendido y actualmente van entendiendo religiosos de la orden de . . . San Francisco . . . , 4 de marzo de 1681," ms., AGI, sección V, Gobierno e Indiferente General, legajo 183. Also, Leyva 1991: 136-161; Concepción, Fray Pedro de la. 1699 "Relación del viaje . . . por la Taguzgalpa . . . 13 de enero de 1699 [sic, 1700], de El Samorano," AGI Guatemala 297, folios 50-6, also Leyva 1991: 211-18.

Nineteenth Century Traveler Accounts and Government Reports from Mosquitia

North American and European traveler accounts of eastern Honduras, including Orlando Roberts (1827), Wood (1840), Young (1842, 1847), E. G. Squier (1855, 1858), Bard (1855), Wells (1857), Bell (1862) are without mention of "Ciudad Blanca" or another "lost city."

Also, during the years of national attempts to incorporate Mosquitia into Honduras, 1840 – 1882, several reconnaissances and reports were produced, none of which mention "Ciudad Blanca" or another "lost city." See Herrera (1840), Fellechner (1845), Lamorthe (1862), Alvarado (1866), Zúñiga Echenique (1875), Portal (1879), and Fleury (1882).

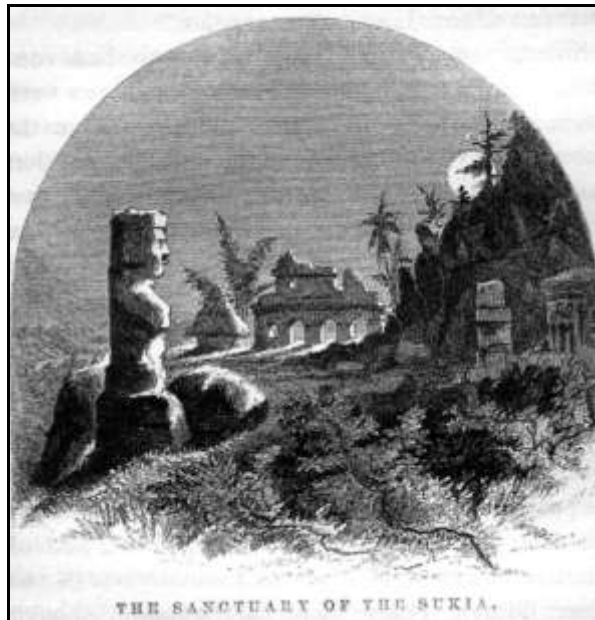
Therefore, in view of all of the attention Mosquitia attracted during the three centuries, without any notice of a lost city, it seems a little surprising that writers only during the third decade of the 20th century began to discuss the existence of the place.

There were some distractions along the way, such as the first entry here, but mostly no abandoned city in Mosquitia was ever mentioned.

1856 "By 1856, the persistent legend of the white city had led to the Honduran publication of a romantic engraving of the mysterious city." This incorrect statement by David D. Zink (see **1979 below**, p. 98) and repeated by Childress (1993: 45), **both without citation**, is difficult to understand. In which Honduran publication was the engraving shown? Perhaps he was thinking of the illustration of a fictitious ruin up the Bocay river of north central Nicaragua in E.

G. Squier's novel *Waikna* (Bard 1855: 259). Of course, because Squier never visited eastern Honduras (see his biography by Stansifer 1959), his drawings are as fanciful as his prose in this novel.

Figure 18. Drawing in Bard [E. G. Squier] 1855: 259).



1888 -- James P. Taylor and E. W. Perry conducted investigations in the Perry Land Grant of Mosquitia and reported their findings in *Honduras and the Perry Land Grant*. Chicago: The American Honduras Company, 1888 (p. 55). They traveled the areas around Trujillo, Culmí, Guampú, Patuca, and Carataska. **No mention of Ciudad Blanca.**

1888 -- Cecil Charles (*Honduras: The land of great depths*. Chicago/New York: Rand, McNally & Co., 1890) also entered Mosquitia from Culmí, heading down the Lagartos, Wampú, and Patuca. Before reaching the Lagarto, he came upon "a mine of antiquities" (p. 97). **No mention of Ciudad Blanca.**

1893 -- E. W. Perry, "Honduras," *Journal, American Geographical Society* XXV (1893): 224-235. Perry, from Chicago, was the major organizer of a gigantic land colonization scheme for land north of the Patuca river and around Caratasca Lagoon during the last decade of the 1800s. He travelled widely over the area, entering from Culmí and down the Wampú and Patuca and paddling up the Plátano where he noted "Far up this river lie the ruins of a city, and not far from it is a cave wherein lie the stone hammers, the bowls and the metates of granite . . ." (p. 227). **No specific mention of Ciudad Blanca.**

1898 -- During September and October, Captain J. Francis LeBaron, an engineer with the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers, traveled up the Patuca until Walpatanta Creek and constructed a map of the river and its settlements. His note on Central American ruins appears in *Records of the Past* (Washington, D. C.) XI (1912): 217-222. His comments on sedimentation at the river mouth appear in *Transactions, American Society of Civil Engineers* XLIII (June, 1900): 95-6. He **makes no mention of Ciudad Blanca.**

1898 -- Karl Sapper, "Die Payas in Honduras," *Globus* 75 (1899): 80-83. See West (1990: 176) for route of Sapper. West also lists Sapper's publications.

Comment: The famous geographer of Central America travelled throughout Paya lands in 1898 without reporting any mention of the "Ciudad Blanca." He did however learn of major sites of old *metates* still used by the modern Indians.

p. 83—**"their grinding stones from ancient ruins burst forth, and the same is situated about 15 leagues to the east of Culmi at Rio de Lagarto in the Cuesta de Llorona; a second, apparently more important ruin place where also numerous stone idols are found is located on the road from Culmi to Iriona, after the Río Paulaya at El Barranco near El Dorado. To see such a millstone, I contacted Don Leonardo Duarto and some other Indians in a Paya house, and they showed three dormant millstones decorated with animal heads, the moler was long and cylindrical."**

1903 -- Francis Child Nicholas, a physician, traveled up the Patuca and Wampu to Culmí and then on to Trujillo with Pech guides and does not mention Ciudad Blanca (*Around the Caribbean and across Panama*. Boston/New York: Caldwell Company).

1915 According to Enrique Aguilar Paz (son of Jesús Aguilar Paz), in 1915 a ladino hunter (Nicolás Cardona) and his son found the lost city. Perhaps Jesús Aguilar Paz heard this from Martínez Landero, who Enrique Aguilar Paz Cerrato said (1995: 129) spoke to his father in 1939.

[OR, is this simply the re-telling of the Conzemius account ?]

"He was lost in the wilderness of the mountains, reaching peaks of the sierra, and the headwaters of the Plátano River or Raj, [when he] found the famous ruins of the White City for the first time, reporting this unexpected discovery to his neighbors."

"Se perdieron en la espesura de la montaña, alcanzando las crestas de la sierra, y en los orígenes del río Plátano o Raj, encontró las famosas ruinas de la Ciudad Blanca por primera vez, informando al vecindario de su inesperado hallazgo."

1916-17 Francisco Martínez Landero, "Los Taoajkas o Sumos del Patuca y Wampu," *Anthropos* (Paris) 30 (1935): 33-50. Reprinted in 1980 as *La Lengua y Cultura de los Sumos de Honduras*. Estudios Antropológicos e Históricos 3. Tegucigalpa: Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia. As a government mission teacher, Martínez Landero lived among the Sumu on the lower Wampú in 1916-17. In his writings (1935, 1980) he does not mention Ciudad Blanca. The teacher did report the gift of a large *metate*, taken from an archeological site on the west side of the Río Aner, a nearby tributary of the Wampú (1980: 16). Perhaps the site is Las Crucitas, which was worked by George Hasemann in 1985. (see 1987 below)

1917 As mentioned previously, Eduard Conzemius came to eastern Honduras in 1917. His time with the fruit company probably overlapped with that of Rafael Girard, but as yet there is no evidence that they interacted. His major work on the Miskito and Sumu (*Ethnographical Survey of the Miskito and Sumu Indians of Honduras and Nicaragua*. Smithsonian Institution Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 106. Washington, D. C.: United States Printing Office, 1932), does not mention Ciudad Blanca, see p. 191.

1919 Rafael (Raphael) Girard (1898-1982), a Swiss ethnologist, first came to Honduras, **reportedly**, as leader of a six-man French expedition to La Mosquitia in 1919 (*Esotericism of the Popol Vuh*, 1948: Foreward). The "presentation" of his *festschrift* memorial volumes gives a little more detail (Horacio Figueroa M., *La Antropología Americanista en la actualidad: homenaje a Raphael Girard*, vol. 1: 21-36. México: Editores Mexicanos Unidos). With a letter of introduction (Paris, May 29, 1919) from Policarpo Bonilla, Honduran ambassador in Europe at the time, Girard met with President Francisco Bertrand in Tegucigalpa. Although in the midst of a civil war, Girard (with only one Honduran guide) sought "Hicaques" in the vicinity of Cedros and Yoro. The "presentación" provides no further travel specifics but claims that Girard also learned much of the Payas, Tawahkas, and Miskitos on the trip. In 1920, he supposedly sent reports of his Honduras field research to Paris and Geneva, but until now they are unreported and otherwise unmentioned in the literature. My searches in Guatemala and France have been unsuccessful. *The Tribune de Genève* (41 (78, 2 avril 1919) does report "Una mission suisse d'étnâes eu Amérique central" designed "to establish trading posts and fields of colonial exploitation to develop relations between Switzerland and Honduras . . . The initiator and leader of the utilitarian enterprise is M. Girard Raphael de Marligny."

Girard did obtain work from the Cuyamel Fruit Company [and Trujillo Railroad Company ?] to prolong his stay in Honduras. In April 1922 he was living in Trujillo (*Journal, Société Americanistes de Paris*, n.s., tomo XV (1923): xi). By November 1936 he was living in western Honduras at Corquín and in Chiquimula, Guatemala (*Journal, Société Americanistes de Paris*, n.s., tomo XXX (1938): x; XXXI (1939): ix).

1923-24 The next account of the upper Plátano - Paulaya region comes from a professional archeologist in 1923 -- Herbert J. Spinden. In his publication "The Chorotegan Culture Area," *Actas, XXI Congrès International des Américanistes* (Goteborg 1924), vol 2: 529-45, the author

includes his examination of Honduran *antiguales* ("old village sites") in the Aguán valley, along the north coast, and the Paulaya and Plátano river valleys. In the latter two valleys, Paya areas, he located many *antiguales* where deposits of ceremonial corn-grinders (*metates*) were concentrated. He believed the sites near Barranco (middle Paulaya) were those mentioned to Sapper by the Paya of Culmí (Sapper 1899: 83). A *metate* site far up the Plátano, reached by Spinden, was not located by later expeditions (neither Strong in 1933 nor Helbig in 1953 [1965: 189]). However, **at no time does Spinden mention Ciudad Blanca**. It is from this research he first proclaims "Chorotegan" as a culture type and region.

1924 David E. Harrower, under the auspices of the Museum of the American Indian visited the Sumu area around the Wampú/Patuca confluence **without mentioning any "lost cities"** ("Rama, Mosquito and Sumu of Nicaragua," *Indian Notes* 2(1) January 1925).

1927 Eduard Conzemius, "Los Indios Payas de Honduras. Estudio geográfico, histórico, etnográfico y lingüístico," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris*, n. s., tomo XIX (1927): 245-302; tomo XX (1928): 253-360. Ciudad Blanca is presented on p. 302 in vol. 19 (1927). In the offprint edition of 166 pages Ciudad Blanca is mentioned on pp. 58-59.

"In this part of Honduras it is believed that along the bank of the upper Rio Plátano there are very important ruins that were discovered by a "rubber collector" about 20 to 25 years ago [1895-1900], when he was lost in the mountains between the Plátano and Paulaya rivers. This man left a "fantastical" description of what he saw -- ruins of an important city with white buildings of stone like marble, surrounded by a large wall of the same material. Shortly afterward this ladino left Mosquitia and nobody knows what has become of him. An old saurin Paya said then that the devil had killed him for daring to look at this banned site – this information learned from his predecessor.

Because of its white buildings this place was known as the "White City." A few years later a mulato, who walked "cateando" in the small left tributaries of the Río Plátano, claimed to have found the ruins, but a few days after having said this he drowned in the river and the Indians attributed his death to the devil's anger.

To inquire further into this matter, ladinos and foreigners have sought a guide, but they have never found a Paya who will lead them to these ruins. All of the Indians say that they do not know the place and that this is a myth, but other coastal residents say they do not want to show others these ruins for fear that they would die."

1928-9 Charles A. Lindbergh sees Ciudad Blanca, at least according to Anne Chapman, see 1958, below.

1930 Jesús Aguilar Paz. *Tradiciones y Leyendas de Honduras*. Tegucigalpa: Editora Museo del Hombre Hondureño. Manuscript in Instituto Hondureño de Antropología e Historia,

Tegucigalpa. In this collection of 152 brief essays that covers the range of Honduran folklore, **Dr. Aguilar Paz does not mention Ciudad Blanca.**

1931 Frederick A. Mitchell-Hedges, a known fabricator of his adventures in Honduras, 1926-1936, writes in his 1931 book *Land of Wonder and Fear* (New York/London: The Century Company), that

“My old friend, the veteran Doc Brown, who makes Tegucigalpa his head-quarters, probably knows more about the jungles and Indians of the Republic than any other living man. I believe he is the only man in the world who holds the key to the riddle of a ruined city covering an immense area. This is not a rumour, for he actually stumbled on it when penetrating an almost inaccessible region somewhere in Honduras. Close by, he told me, is a gigantic monolith which had formerly stood on the banks of a river; it can still be seen lying obliquely in the clear water, its position due, possibly, to one end resting on a great rock rising from the river-bed. . . . In his indefatigable prospecting for gold and silver he has penetrated parts where no other white man has ventured . . . ”(p. 189).

“In Honduras a legend is rife of a great white city buried in the heart of that unknown part of the country called the Mosquitia. How it originated I have no idea, yet it persists. There is said to be an ancient city of immense pyramids, temples, and courtyards which gleam like frosted ice in the sunlight. . . . When questioned the Indians shut up like clams – it [Ciudad Blanca] is a place of the dead, a home of ghouls and vampires. To approach means death. . . . Even supposing one located this white city, it would be almost impossible to get natives to penetrate the interior and act as guides” (pp. 192-3).

Mitchell-Hedges’ second book, of 1954, *Danger My Ally* (Boston/Toronto: Little, Brown and Company), does not mention the lost city, but he does write that “once, on a tributary of the Patuca River, I stumbled across a race of primitive but friendly Indians” (p. 113). His account of Kruta Indian rituals is absolutely nonsensical (p. 250). Kruta, also Cruta, is a river and settlement some 105 km south of the Patuca. He also claimed that he donated “thousands” of artifacts to the Museum of the American Indian in New York (p. 88).

Robert L. Brunhouse (*Pursuit of the Ancient Maya. Some archaeologists of yesterday.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), in recounting the life story of Frederick A. Mitchell-Hedges (pp. 74-91) notes that “By the beginning of 1931 Mitchell-Hedges secured the support of the British Museum and the Heye Foundation for a bold expedition to discover the cradle of the human race in Central America. He announced the hope of finding evidence of an unsuspected ancient culture which would revolutionize the conventional interpretation of the American Indian. Coy and mysterious, he refused to reveal the site to be examined, except to say that it was in the region of Mosquitia, which in turn he located with studied vagueness.

He admitted, however, that he and Mabs [his female companion] had examined the site the previous year [1930] and had found a civilization dating back to 3000 or 4000 B. C. The site included an ancient city, a *cenote*, and several caves thirty to sixty feet deep.”(p. 85)

“He visited Mosquitia and came away convinced that he had found remains of a very early civilization. Sometimes he made the claim that he had uncovered the cradle of civilization, but he never published a scientific report of his discovery.” . . . **“He believed that the Bay Islands off Honduras were remains of Atlantis . . .”**(p. 86)

1932 Honduran essayist and poet, Medardo Mejía, presents in *Discurso del Dorado* (Tegucigalpa: Imprenta Calderón, 1932 and reprinted by UNAH in 1995) the notion that since the days of William Wells Olancho has been the Honduran equivalent of the Empire of El Dorado, with its seven legendary cities of fine gold [confused with Cibola?]. Also, because the Aztecs and Incas, the great pre-Columbian empires lay to the north and south, poetically-speaking, Olancho lies between them and can represent a new Empire of Gold.

1933 William Duncan Strong, "Hunting ancient ruins in northeastern Honduras," Smithsonian Institution pp. 44-48.

"For many years reports of great stone cities with carved monuments located somewhere in the little-known jungle region of the Patuca River have reached the ears of archeologists. Allan Payne, research associate of Johns Hopkins University, organized an expedition under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution to investigate these rumors and to determine whether a hitherto unknown extension of the Maya culture might not be here represented. Norman A. Haskell, a graduate student in geology at Harvard University, financed the work and, with the writer, who was the direct representative of the Smithsonian Institution, accompanied the expedition. The party was in the field from February 2 to July 11, 1933. . .

No ruins were encountered [on the Patuca] until we had passed into the more mountainous regions and reached the mouth of the Wampu, where a very large mound group was discovered at Wankybila . . . We worked our way up the small and rapid Wampu River as far as a Sumu Indian village at Pautarbusna, making collections from these little-known people and gathering ethnological data. One small mound was examined, and the vicinity yielded a few archeological specimens. Further progress being impossible in a large dug-out, we returned and proceeded up the Patuca to another Sumu village . . . The party divided at this point, Mr. Payne and Mr. Haskell continuing up the Patuca to examine some small mounds on the Cuyamel branch, while I remained at Wankybila to excavate. Assisted by some Miskito Indians, I mapped the large, definitely arranged plaza and earthworks, making trial excavations in four mounds, which proved to be entirely of earth with cores of red, burned clay. . . All the pottery obtained from this and other sites on the Patuca, Wampu, and Cuyamel Rivers is of a simple Chorotegan type, and no evidence of Maya occupation was observed. The lower and middle

river does not seem to be very promising archeologically, but further work at Wankybila should yield valuable results . . ."

1933-34 Following Duncan Strong to eastern Honduras by only a few months was Captain R. Stuart Murray, F.R.G.S. A seven-page manuscript by Murray, "Summarized Report of the Primera Expedición del Museo Nacional de Honduras, 1933-34," was presented to Frans Blom at Tulane for inclusion in the *Pan American Union's Annual Report on Archaeological Research*.

During fall of 1933 Murray visited "the Miskito villages of the Patuca in a leisurely manner . . ." as far upstream as Wankibila. His large collection of "ethnological specimens" was divided between the American Museum of Natural History and the Museum of the American Indian. The Captain then "recessed" to New York for December 1933 to late February 1934 and returned to the Patuca to visit the Sumus as far upstream as the confluence of the Guampu. He learned from them of "**. . . a large site about two days up the Guampu and a half day up the creek-like tributary called the Río Aner. This site has provided the Sumu Indians for years with metates and manos, and while they report the presence of beads, jade-like figures etc, they will not remove artifacts which seem to have been used for the personal adornment of the dead.**"

"Consistent rumors along the coast of a 'lost city' in the valley of the Río Plátano caused the expedition to exert special effort to run this rumor down. After ten days of discussing the matter with the oldest surviving Paya men, and in particular with the oldest living Paya, Dama Pio, it was decided that **no such site of extensive ruins exists in this valley** which for centuries been crossed and counter-crossed by the hunting trails of the Paya whose taboo system leads them to report all "antiguales" or places where the spirits of the dead reside in order that they may be avoided by members of the tribe."

The manuscript map Murray refers to on page seven of his report is in the collection of the American Geographical Society, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. It is a fine contribution including some new information (Brayton, George M. and R. Stuary Murray 1933 "Map of the Patuca River and adjacent territories.)

In the "Report of Council of Royal Scottish Geographical Society, 1 October 1933" "A fellowship was confirmed on Captain R. Stewart Murray "for his surveying work in Central America." *Scottish Geographical Magazine* XLIX (VI, November): 397.

[Captain R. Stuart Murray gained some fame during the mid-1930s as an "explorer." *Popular Science* (1933: 27) published his photograph before the trip under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History of New York.]

Figure 19.



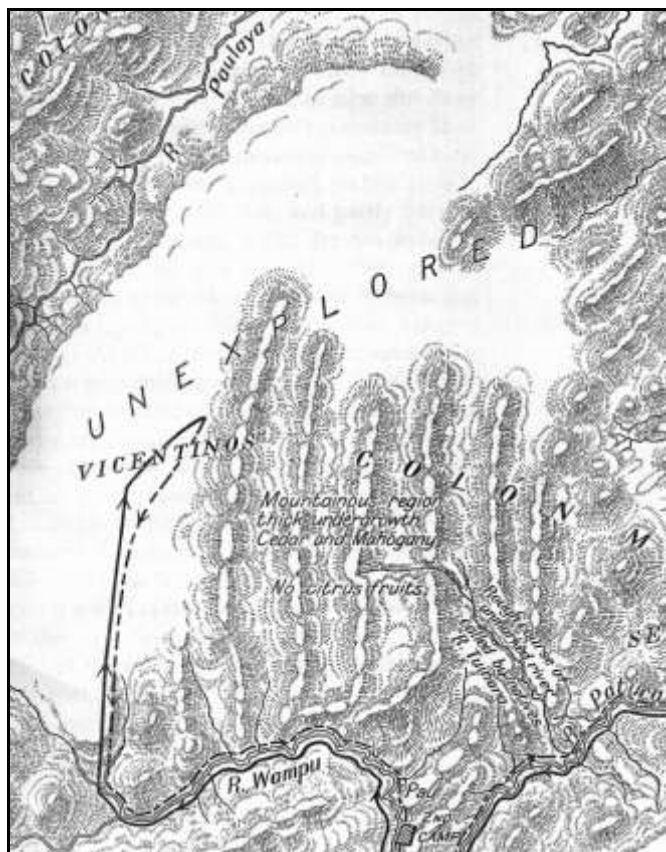
A handsome man, the captain was also a "pitch-man" for Camels cigarettes in 1934. The ad appeared for sale on E-bay during January 2012. The text reads: **Explorer** Captain R. Stuart Murray, F.R.G.S., says: "I was in Honduras -- The Mosquitia Territory -- for 10 months. Fortunately, I had plenty of Camels. They give one a 'pick up' in energy. I prefer Camel's flavor, too. They never upset my nerves."

Figure 20.



Further, *Science* (1935: 38-9) did announce Murray's plan to lead an ethnological and natural history "expedition" to British Guiana. The trip was to include exploration of Sir Arthur Conen Doyle's *Lost World* (book of 1912) at Mount Roraima in the Venezuelan portion of the Guyana Highlands. To participate in Murray's six-month venture "explorers" would have to pay \$1,250 each. I have seen no evidence that the expedition to Guyana took place.

1936 Peter Keenagh (*Mosquito Coast: An account of a journey through the jungles of Honduras*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1937) visited the Patuca region with his cousin Nigel Mac Dermott. He proclaimed that the last “official” expedition into Mosquitia was in 1882 – a trip that was prematurely disbanded because of Nicaraguan bandits. [Fleury 1882 ?] Keenagh went up a tributary of the Wampu [perhaps the Aner?], northward into “unexplored” lands. After “days walk into the forest” they found a tribe of “almost pure” “Vicentinos Indians.” [A fiction?] The Indians “are quite pale but high-cheeked and stolidly Indian.” After four days with the Indians they returned to the Patuca. **Ciudad Blanca or a lost city was never mentioned.** His map indicates generally where he says he went. **Map 19. Keenagh map (1937: 34).**



1938 In a paper prepared for the Sociedad de Geografía e Historia de Honduras the well-known Swiss Mayanist Rafael Girard ("Conferencia sobre arqueología y etnología nacional, 1938," *RABN* 17 (2 y 3) agosto y septiembre (1938): 132-140) stated that the natural feature that inspired the "legend of Ciudad Blanca" is a natural limestone cave with entrance to east where the last Paya chief lived, near the headwaters of the río Plátano, beyond where other investigators had gone. According to Girard, who had recently visited Mosquitia, the chief's name was Uah, which means "hammock." The modern Paya call the place "Casa Blanca." He thought that these Payas have good recollections of their traditions and myths, including a principal one about monkeys.

Girard at the time claimed that Honduras was his adopted country. He was probably living in Corcuín. He was, not yet, one of the experts on the Maya and Chortí (Girard 1949). Girard claims that at the time of his visit in 1938 the “Taoajkas” (the term as used by Martínez Landero, see 1916-17, above), lived only in Yapu-huas and Dimikian, villages located on the left bank (north side) of the Patuca, just upstream from the boca Wampú. This “Sumal” zone had a total population of 98 souls. Five photographs of the “taojka” of Dimikian do appear in volume 4 of *Los Chortis ante el Problemas Maya* (1949), but they are undated.

More details of his 1938 trip to eastern Honduras appear in Girard’s *Historia de las Civilizaciones Antiguas de América desde sus orígenes* (1976, 1978). While hiking near La Llorona (probably following the well-known trail along the Río Lagarto to the south to reach the Wampú), during a rainstorm Girard’s Tawahka informant/guide (Martínez) told him of the flood myth recounting that as all humans were lost and the Ciudad Blanca was also destroyed, with only a few rooms in caves remaining. Girard writes further that the myth of Ciudad Blanca is very popular among the Paya. “Many explorers have taken it seriously but sought it unsuccessfully” (1978: I, 177).

Girard concludes his chapter on the Paya with the following unconfirmed notions:

"According to living traditions, the last important Paya settlement was Urashah, in the middle region of the rio Platano. The last cacique or 'king' who reigned in that town was called Uah, meaning hammock. To those sites, from which came the last splash of their splendor and where legend places the 'White City', religious pilgrimages still converge from Olancho and around the paya area." (1978: I, 258)

[After asking several of residents of Olancho and La Mosquitia, over the last three decades, to confirm Girard’s notion of this pilgrimage, I have yet to find a single person who knows of it.] Girard, it must be concluded, often uses his considerable “subjective interpretation” that has brought frequent criticism during reviews (see for examples: Betty Starr 1951, *American Anthropologist* 53 (3): 355-69, “The Chorti and the problem of the survival of Maya culture,” review of R. Girard 1949, *Los Chortis ante el problema Maya*. 5 vols. Mexico: Antigua Libreria Robredo and Stephen Borhegyi 1963, *American Antiquity* 28 (3) January: 410-11, review of R. Girard 1962, *Los Mayas eternos*. México: Editores Libros Mexico.

1939 Doris Stone, in her extensive *Archaeology of the North Coast of Honduras*. Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, vol. 1, no. 1. Cambridge, Mass.: Published by the Museum, 1941, 103 pp., **makes no mention of Ciudad Blanca.**

1940 The next “Ciudad Blanca” escapade was perhaps the **most outlandish** – that of Theodore A. Morde (1911-1954). Perhaps he read Girard’s account of the Payas and their monkey legends, and his notions of Ciudad Blanca or Casa Blanca. Apparently, Morde was the most notorious type of self-described “explorer” -- those who seek first and foremost their own aggrandizement. Morde traveled with Laurence C. Brown to Mosquitia under the sponsorship of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York City. Called the Third Honduran Expedition (Victor von Hagen into Jicaque lands and Mosquitia was the Second. Morde claims they spent five months on the Patuca, Wampú, and up the Aner, but newspaper accounts verify less than four months abroad.

1940, April 6: The United Press, from New Bedford, Mass., announces Morde's expedition is about to leave for Honduras. On April 7th, *The Sunday Morning Star*, Wilmington, Delaware, publishes its account:

Seek Long Lost City of Monkey God

"Theodore A. Morde traveler, writer and ethnologist, will head the third Honduran expedition, which leaves soon to find the 'Lost City of the Monkey God.' The expedition also plans to study Indian tribes, explore the archaeological sites of the ancient Chorotegan sites, and chart the upper reaches of the Wampu river, which has not yet been explored by white men. Discovery of the 'Lost City' was expected to throw considerable light on the people who inhabited the country 1,000 years ago. Stories of the existence of the city were partly confirmed by Capt. R. Stuart Murray, an explorer. He said that natives confirmed rumors of the presence of a 'great ruin, overrun by dense jungle.' Murray also indicated that traces of ancient Chorotegan culture are believed to exist there."

1940, August 1: Morde presented in New York the story of his trip to Honduras. An article about the trip was published in the August 2 edition of the *New York Times*, page 17:

Honduran Jungles Yield Indian Data

Explorer, back after 5-month trip, tells of evidence of 5th century culture.

“The story of exploring hitherto unknown land in the Mosquitia Territory of Honduras and of discovering evidences of gold, silver, platinum and oil deep in jungles inhabited only by Indians, was told yesterday by Theodore A. Morde on his return to New York from a five-month trip [**actually < 4 months**] through the Mosquitia Territory. Mr. Morde, with Laurence Brown, served as co-leader of the third Honduran expedition of the Museum of the American Indian (Heye Foundation), at Broadway and 155th Street.

Mr. Morde said the expedition also had discovered evidences of a thriving agricultural civilization, that of the Chorotegans, which probably was contemporary with that of the Mayan Indians. He brought several thousands (* **See below**) examples of Chorotegan art, which, he said, date back to the fifth and sixth centuries. These art objects, which will become the property

of the Museum of the American Indian, include sculptured religious idols, stone household utensils, a six-tone flute and primitive razor blades.

Civilization Wiped Out

Mr. Morde said evidence indicated that the Chorotegan civilization had been wiped out by some major catastrophe. Only the small tribe of Paya Indians remains. The Payas, with the Sumu and Miskito Indians, are the only modern inhabitants of this rich agricultural land, he added.

Their lives and habits had been unknown even to the Honduran Government, Mr. Morde said, until the American expedition started its long journey in native pitpans (forty-foot wooden canoes). All information gathered by the expedition will be made available to the government and the National Geographic Society (** See below) which cooperated as a sponsor for the trip.

Among the rarities brought back by Mr. Morde is the only known specimen of the "Sacred bird of the Chorotegans," a bird with a sunburst pattern in its plumage which the ornithologist of the National Museum of Honduras was unable to identify. Mr. Morde said the bird has been kept by the expedition since it was found as a fledging after one member of the party had shot the male parent in a search for food. The killing of the father bird was looked upon as "horrible" by the superstitious Payas, Mr. Morde said. Ornithologists in this country will attempt to identify the bird.

A major objective of the expedition was to discover the "Lost City of the Monkey God." Mr. Morde said the city was found and that an expedition would return to it next January to commence excavation.

"A big part of our job," he continued, "was charting rivers, and streams which no white man had ever traversed before. We even had to name several of the rivers."

Indian Culture Primitive

Mr. Morde described the Indians living in the territory as "extremely primitive." "Their culture," he said, "is that of the wood age. Everything, including needles, thread, and cooking utensils, is made of wood. Such stone implements as they have, come from the earlier civilization of the territory."

The expedition lived under native conditions, traveling only by boat with the help of Sumu guides. Stopping in the Miskito Indian village of Avas Ducban, they came upon an outbreak of the black water fever (an advanced form of malaria) which Mr. Morde stopped by injections of American medicine.

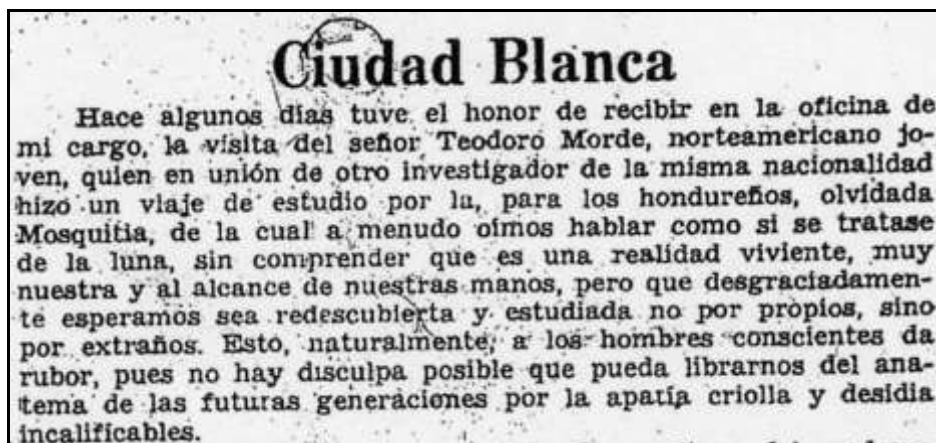
He forecast that the territory, which is in Southern (sic) Honduras, soon would be opened to commercial use. Besides the silver, platinum and gold, samples of which were brought here, Mr. Morde reports the discovery of fertile farm land and flat areas which might be used as air bases. He said it was impossible to estimate the oil possibilities, but 'there is definitely evidence of oil-bearing land.' "

[*E-mail from National Museum of the American Indian, February 9, 2012: "In spite of a thorough search, I have been able to find only 26 objects deriving from Theodore Morde.

Aside from the canoe and paddle, all of the objects are archaeological. I have attached a report on these objects and a guide to using the reports."]

[**E-mail from National Geographic Society, February 8, 2012: "We have checked our research grants database, our comprehensive index to publications, and our internal archives and have been unable to locate any references to Theodore Morde."]

1940, 27 de agosto: In perhaps the first Honduran analysis of Morde's trip, Jesús Aguilar Paz, published "La Ciudad Blanca," in the newspaper *El Cronista* (Tegucigalpa), 27 de agosto, página tercera. Dr. Aguilar Paz writes of meeting Morde and his colleague [Laurence Brown, probably] in his office in Tegucigalpa. Morde showed Aguilar Paz a copy of his map that directed their explorations. Morde was delighted to have been the first foreigner to visit the ruins of the lost city (Ciudad Blanca) where the monkey god is worshipped, which he presumed to be the ancient capital of the Paya nation. Morde refused to locate the site of the ruin or show Aguilar Paz any photos of the site, because he did not want to expose the discovery to others until his reports were complete. Morde also stated that **"he did not know the ruins personally, but had data on their location, according to directions given him by old Paya and Sumo Indians."** Figure 19.



Aguilar Paz expresses his impatience that Honduran men do not do their own explorations in "forgotten Mosquitia."

[Dr. Aguilar Paz's son confirms the meeting between Morde and his father (Aguilar Paz-Cerrato 1995: 129), but places it in 1939 . . . the year before Morde comes to Honduras.]

1940, September 22: *The Milwaukee Sentinel* publishes Theodore Morde, "In the Lost City of Ancient America's Monkey God," pages 28-29. The full range of outlandish illustrations appears, including volcanos, a gigantic idol of an ape, and a figure representing Hunuman, the Hindu "Monkey God," with serpents.

The lead-in is pretty exciting: “Explorer Theodore Morde finds in Honduras jungles a vanished civilization’s prehistoric metropolis where sacrifices were made to the gigantic idol of an ape – and describes the weird “dance of the dead monkeys” still practiced by natives in whom runs the olden blood.”

Figure 20. From *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, Sept 22, 1940, pp. 28-9.



It is difficult to read such a long and prefabricated account of his trip in Honduras, but the full article is needed to understand the flavor and ridiculousness of Morde.

Morde Newspaper Articles (slightly abbreviated)

"I am convinced that we have found the place where the legendary lost city of the Monkey-God once stood, the ancient capital of the extinct Chorotegas, whose civilization is perhaps older than that of the Mayans and Aztecs. The stories that refer to this Indian people have aroused so much interest from explorers that many of them have ventured into the intricate Honduran jungles in daring investigations.

We found the city after having penetrated the unexplored territory of the Mosquitia, where the treacherous and dense vegetation extends to the very banks of the rivers and where the dreaded malaria, deadly snakes, harmful insects and wild beasts lurk to anyone who ventures beyond the narrow strip of land called the Coast of Lost Hope, which borders the beautiful blue waters of the Caribbean Sea.

For five months, the expedition of the Museum of the American Indian of the Heye Foundation in New York, navigated with oars or poles through the unexplored rivers and streams that rush from the high mountain ranges of Honduras. Paddling hundreds of miles in canoes and cutting trails with ax

and machetes through the dense jungle vegetation, we finally reached the ruins of the lost city of the Monkey-God .

The place was ideal for such a city. Towering mountains formed the background of the scene. Nearby, a swift waterfall, beautiful as a garment of glittering jewels, plunged into the green Valley of Ruins. Birds glittering like gems, flitting from tree to tree and little monkeys, peeking out their noses, gazing at us curiously from the dense foliage that surrounded us.

I cannot specify what I have done about the location of the City of the Monkey-God because, as I have already said, there are many who seek it, attracted by the stories that speak of treasures, and we want to find it intact on our next trip, which will be very soon. On that occasion, we hope to discover the Great Temple and unravel, among other things, the mystery of the resemblance of this prehistoric American Monkey-God with the Monkey-God Hanuman , worshiped for dozens of centuries in India.

The exploits of Hanuman are recounted in the Ramayana , one of the Hindu sacred texts. His great temple is located in Benares, where his priests care for and feed the sacred monkeys. About Hanuman and power speak something in the unforgettable work of Rudyard Kipling 's "The Mark of the Beast" , which tells what happened to the drunk Fleete when he hit his snuff on the front of the image in red stone Hanuman as At an order from the leper priest, the drunkard ate and cried and ran on all fours and gave off the same stench of a leopard until the curse was removed.

Hanuman is peculiarly revered in India because he figured prominently in the great battles of the hero Rama , who was the eighth incarnation of Vichnu, the Creator, and his beautiful wife Sita . Hanuman's feats of strength and courage will deserve our full attention in this very article. A reproduction of a Hindu religious plate shows the Monkey-God taking to a safe place, protected on his chest, which had been torn for this purpose, Rama and Sita .

The American Monkey-God had his priests and perhaps also his human sacrifices. The legends are quite explicit about this. But their monkeys are no longer worshiped, unless the gruesome and mysterious ceremony called the Dance of the Dead Monkeys, which I will describe later, is a misrepresented reminder of that old form of religious worship.

In accordance with laws whose possible verification was the purpose of our expedition, the much sought-after Lost City of Mosquitia was once key to a civilization whose people inhabited the entire region. The Indians had not spoken of vast ruins today covered by the jungle. In their superstitious minds, it was a place not to go; however, the older Indians described some of its characteristics with curiously explicit details, which they claimed to have known from their ancestors who had seen the place.

This was so, especially with regard to the Temple. We would discover, we were told, a long access road, stepped, built and paved in the style of the Mayan ruins in the north. Stone carved effigies of monkeys would line this entrance.

The center of the Temple would be formed by a high stone dais on which would be the statue of the Monkey-God, in front of it would be the site of the sacrifices.

Immense balustrades would flank the stairway to the dais. One of the balustrades would begin with the colossal image of a spider and the other with the also gigantic figure of a crocodile.

From the lips of some old Payas Indians, the modern tribe that now lives near the region we were exploring, we learned about the legends about the Monkey-God that they had passed down from generation to generation, they insisted that, despite the thousand or more years ago when the city was abandoned, it was preserved quite well preserved. The main characteristics of its wonders were well fixed in the memory of the tribe.

The Lost City was inhabited a thousand years or more ago by an ancient and advanced tribe called the Chorotegas. It is not known whether they built the city themselves or took it from some other people, occupying it ever since. Not much is known about the Chorotegas, except that some archaeologists say that they were contemporaries of the ancient Mayans and dominated what is now the territory of Mosquitia in Honduras, which then was not made up of swamps and jungles, as now, but of fertile lands.

Skillful Builders

There are others who believe that the Chorotegas existed before the Mayans and that they were perhaps the forerunners of the Mayan and Aztec cultures, which flourished in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, and northern Honduras.

The Chorotegas were very skilled in quarrying, which is why, luckily for us, they erected solid and perfect constructions. The City of the Monkey-God was walled. We found some of those walls in which the green magic of the jungle had caused some damage, but which, nevertheless, had withstood the onslaught of vegetation. We followed one of those walls until we came to mounds that have all the appearance of having once been great buildings. Indeed, several constructions are still covered by their ancient earth shroud.

We know that the Lost City was of great proportions and that, at its peak, it must have had many thousands of inhabitants.

It was the rains that put an end to our work there. But when they cease, we will return and undertake the enormous task of removing the jungle from above the city. The first task will be clearing and burning several hundred acres of the forest. Only then can the real excavation work begin.

And judging by the magnitude of the work required to clean up the Copán Ruins, it will take several years to unearth the City of the Mono-God. But what a discovery will be made during those years!

The dance of the dead monkeys

I have discussed the Dance of the Dead Monkeys and the possibility that it was a perverted religious cult that took place in the Lost City long before the New World was discovered by Columbus. Well, we were allowed to attend one of these entirely macabre parties.

Anyone who has seen the cremation of the dead on the banks of the Ganges in India will never forget the unpleasant chills caused by the spectacle of the muscular movement of corpses under the action of fire. Sometimes the corpse shakes and shudders as if it were still alive, and other times it sits upright, lifting a stiff arm or curling a leg. In short, it is a gruesome sight. And in crematoriums the corpses also sometimes sit, or seem to try to escape from their coffins or make gestures that seem pleading or

threatening, things that would not be convenient for the relatives to see. But all of this is caused by the intense heat on the muscles and tendons. The corpse is dead as always.

For the Dance of the Dead Monkeys is something like that and the movements of the corpses of the monkeys are due to the same cause. However, there is something indescribably diabolical about this ceremony and that is that after the dance is over, those attending the feast eat the monkeys. It is this, possibly, that constitutes the perversion of what was probably formerly a religious rite.

The name that the natives give to the monkey is *urus*, which literally translated means "sons of hairy men." His parents or ancestors are the *ulaks*, half man and half spirit who lived on earth, walked erect and had the appearance of large, hairy monkey men. The Indians of the Mosquitia territory still believe today that these creatures inhabit the highlands of the interior and southern Honduras, because the unique Dance of the Dead Monkeys is their terror.

Once we were approaching this so-called *ulak* region, our native rowers began to whisper among themselves. The Honduran mestizo who served as our interpreter told us that the Indians would not continue any farther. We are approaching the forbidden region of "hairy men."

For nothing in the world would they moved forward. In six hours they made a raft and set out on it, propelled by the current, leaving us alone to explore and face the dangers of the *ulak* land. For several days we made our way through the jungle territory, but we never found even traces of the legendary half-man anthropoids.

The origin of dance

According to the older Indians, the Dance of the Dead Monkeys originated from the following fact: One day, three of the hairy men who looked like great monkeys, entered an indigenous village and kidnapped three of the most beautiful young women of that place, they took the girls to their caves in the mountains, and made them their women. From those unions did not produce human or semi-human beings, but the little monkeys that the Indians call *urus*. And that's why he calls these little monkeys "sons of hairy men."

Today's Indians believe that the unique Dance of the Dead Monkeys is a rite that is celebrated in revenge for the kidnapping of the three virgins. Indeed, their tastes and their cries while eating the roasted monkeys, indicate more cruelty on the fallen enemy than a mere gastronomic delight.

But some technologists who have witnessed the dance do not believe that this is the true origin. Religious cannibalism has been practiced throughout the world and at all times. By eating the body of the sacrifice, the savages believed they were consuming something of the spirit that had animated it. The meat was secondary, therefore, the Aztecs took out the hearts of the sacrificed and their priests threw them down the steps of the pyramids who cut them into pieces and distributed them among the worshipers, whom they served as delicacies.

Sometimes union with the gods affected this form. In Mexico, a physically perfect young man was chosen every year to be the god *Tezcatlipoca* until the next. He was worshiped like any other god, he was given the most beautiful maidens, he could have and do whatever he wanted, except abandon his position, *Tezcatlipoca* was the god of the sun; its name means "Smoking Mirror." After a year of this

"gift life," the young man was sacrificed and his body was consumed by those attending the sacrifice. But it was not eaten as food, but as the sacred flesh of a deity.

Technologists believe that this rite was copied from the Chorotegas and perhaps a certain priest was like the Aztec Tezcatlipoca, who received his court of beauties in the time of the Monkey-God. At the expiration of his period, the priest was sacrificed and devoured in the same way as was the young man who became the god of the Sun. The modern Indian version is believed to be misrepresented and apocryphal.

Monkey hunting

Anyway, whenever one of the periodic monkey migrations occurs through the jungles of Honduras, the Sumu warriors tie fire-hardened nails to their long bamboo arrows and go out to kill urus. Each hunter shoots three monkeys, using only use three arrows. If he does not return with his three monkeys, he will be censured by other members of the tribe.

From this part, each Indian is supposed to kill the equivalent of three hairy men like those who kidnapped his three virgin ancestors.

While the men are away hunting their trio of apes, the women of the tribe prepare for the dance. Older women, especially those who no longer have teeth, play an important role in this rite, as their mission is to make the "Misla," which is a very strong beer. Old witches make misla by chewing cassava and leaves from a bush called snik. Then they spit the juice of this mixture into huge tubs in the shape of canoes.

This liquid is soon fermented, becoming a drink with high alcohol content. During the dance, the nonos of the tribe serve the men misla. The little maidens approach the men reclining in their hammocks and with solemn courtesy hand them the gourds with misla.

When the men of the tribe return with their monkeys (each with three), large bonfires are lit in a circle. Pine torches and bonfires illuminate a grotesque scene.

The gruesome rite

From his Watla - a typical Indian hut made from the gigantic leaves of a Waja bush - comes the chief sorcerer dressed for the occasion. He is called the Dama Suk ya-Tara.

He wears nothing but a loincloth, but his body is profusely striped with white plaster which stands out in the light of the bonfires. The necklace-amulet that falls on his chest is made of small skulls of monkey fetuses, yellow teeth of the sorcerer's ancestors, venom bags from poisonous jungle snakes, long crocodile teeth, and other ritual fetishes and symbols. On the fingers of his hands he bears, like thimbles, gigantic crocodile teeth, which open and close like crab teeth when he gestures. In his right hand he carries a long arrow on which a large spider monkey is impaled.

The beat of the drums rises in a crescendo and stops abruptly as Dama Suk-ya Tara raises his arms and circles in the air. All those present, already half drunk from the misla, are absolutely silent.

The Dama Suk-ya Tara approaches the bonfires with great strides and at a signal a long line of Sumu hunters, all adorned with their macaw feathers, their bodies glowing with coconut oil, also approach the flames.

At another signal, the bronze hunters form a great circle around the fires. Behind them are women and men too old to kill monkeys.

Words of enchantment come from the lips of Dama Suk-ya Tara in a language unknown to the Indians. For them, the sorcerer speaks to the spirits. The beating of the drums begins again and their regular, hypnotic notes carry over again.

Then, abruptly, the drums are silenced again, so in unison, that it gives the impression of being a single instrument that sounded.

Roasting the Monkeys

The Dama Suk-ya Tara leans parsimoniously and places his arrow firmly into the ground near the biggest bonfire. Then, with an abrupt gesture, he stands up and buries the staff on which the monkey is impaled deep in the ground in a grotesque position.

One by one, all the Indians go to the same place and bury one of their arrows there with the largest monkey they caught. Soon all the bonfires are surrounded by monkeys impaled on arrows, all facing the flames.

The men withdraw and, seized with anxiety, they all sit in a circle. Then the grotesque dance of the dead monkeys begins. That one twists a hand in a macabre gesture. That other one moves one shoulder and further on another throws his head back violently. Another raises one leg as if driven by a spring, or twists the body as if on a spit.

These ghostly effects produced at the same time in forty or fifty monkey corpses, in the light of a few bonfires in the middle of the jungle night, will give us a rough idea of what the Dance of the Dead Monkeys is.

The feast

When no corpse moves anymore, the dance ends and the monkeys are completely roasted. Each sumu takes his arrow and holding it aloft, approaches Dama Suk-ya Tara. One by one they face the sorcerer, who is sitting with a long hollow stem of bamboo in his hands. Every time a monkey is placed in front of him, the sorcerer inserts the bamboo tube through one eye of the animal and sucks the brain fluid. This operation, which the Indians call drinking the thoughts of monkeys, can only be done by Dama Suk - ya Tara.

After each warrior has placed his three monkeys before the sorcerer, the entire tribe eats of the animals.

Although the current tribes of Honduras - Los Mosquitos, Los Payas, y los Sumu - have never known the written language that could have served them to perpetuate the feats of their ancestral heroes, such

as the Hindu poetry of the Ramayana recounts the exploits of Hanuman , if they have legends that are highly revered.

A legend

One of the best is the story of "El Ave Sagrada de los Chorotegas." Here is the legend as told by "El Viejo Pio," the oldest of the Payas Indians.

Many years ago the great god Wampai of the Paya had the figure of a great upper white Paya. He was the best swimmer, the best runner, and the best warrior in all the land.

Wampai lived in the mountains and had his gleaming white palace near the green peaks. High white walls surrounded the palace and columns like milk, supported the ceiling. One day, Wampai went out in search of a wife worthy of his home.

In his search he came across a charming blonde maiden named Oru, who seduced him with her beauty, for which he required her love. They were married, and that was how Oru became the proud queen of all the Payas.

So beautiful was Oru that all the Payas spoke of her elegant bearing, her reed body, and her golden skin that shone like corn or ripe banana.

Even the evil spirit of the Payas, which Wampai had locked in the depths of the earth, in the "Dark Place," learned of the beauty of Oru and desired her.

So happy was the god Wampai with his magnificent palace and his young wife that, full of benevolence, he allowed the evil spirit, who was a liar, to live in his own home. Among the Payas it is customary even today that every man to whom a friend entrusts his wife automatically becomes his blood brother.

Even though the god Wampai knew that the evil spirit was a liar and completely untrustworthy, he trusted him. Legend has it that the evil spirit was a handsome man and Queen Oru shared her bed with him behind her husband's back.

Wampai's punishment

To facilitate adultery, the evil spirit practiced a cunning ruse, causing the god Wampai to go hunting. A rumor began to spread that a rare snow-white antelope was walking around. Wampai , the great hunter, had to go out in search of such precious prey, but upon reaching the river that crossed near his palace, he found that his great canoe had been stolen. He returned home, finding his wife Oru in the arms of the evil spirit.

When the god Wampai surprised his hot-blooded wife, his anger was great. His wrath rumbled from mountain to mountain, like thunder, frightening all the inhabitants of the kingdom. After a terrible fight, the god Wampai managed to throw the evil spirit back into the "Dark Place," warning him to never raise to the surface of the earth again.

The god Wampai first thought to kill his wife, as custom decreed, but she was so beautiful that he could not find the courage to do so. Thus, he resolved to turn her into the Margarita bird, forbidding her to leave the mountains and the headwaters of the rivers. Every year at the beginning of the rainy season, thunder renews the warnings of the god Wampi to his wife and rival.

Our expedition captured two of those Margarita birds, which caused consternation among the natives, since these birds are sacred to them. These birds are beautiful when, on spreading their wings in the style of peacocks, the sun reflects on them and produces shades of gold, bronze and black, which contrast with the plumage of the body, a mottled gray.

Again Hanuman

Let us now return to Hanuman the Monkey-God of India.

In our travels among the modern Paya and Sumu tribes that populate the territory of Mosquitia in Honduras, we have frequently encountered Indians whose features, with somewhat oblique eyes and high cheekbones, like the Chinese and the Hindus.

It is truly significant that in an American Indian people, with these oriental features on their faces, the monkey still has such great importance in their religious rites, evident proof that their Chorotegan ancestors probably worshiped animals.

Hanuman was in the East a kind of Paul Bunyan, for his amazing feats of strength and courage. But Hanuman received religious significance as the son of a nymph and Vayu, the god of the winds.

The life of the Monkey-God is recounted in the pages of one of the great sacred books of India, the Ramayana, which tells of the exploits and adventures of the mighty Prince Rama. As Rama's ally against the forces of evil, Hanuman, and his hordes of monkeys fought countless battles.

Hanuman was once commissioned to search the various Himalayan mountains for specific herbs with which to heal the wounds that warriors had received in the battle fought to rescue Rama's beloved wife, Sita, from the evil demons.

Adopting a gigantic size, Hanuman walked from mountain to mountain until he reached the one on whose slopes grew the medicinal herb that he sought. But Hanuman searched in vain for the foothills of the mountains. Realizing the urgency with which the herbs were needed, he uprooted the mountain and, holding it in one hand, took it to the doctor who treated the wounded, who quickly found the herbs and composed with them the potion with which he saved his patients.

The Monkey-God Hanuman is also credited with creating the series of islands that lie between Ceylon and the mainland and are known as the Rama Bridge.

The demon Ravana had kidnapped Sita, the queen of the stars, whose lover prince Rama was trying to rescue her. But Sita was confined to the island of Ceylon, which is sixty miles from the mainland. For Hanuman, these sixty miles were nothing more than a good stride, so he went to the island in question to make sure they had Sita there. This was verified and it was reported to Rama, who was waiting on

the mainland. Rama assembled an army to attack the island, but faced a problem similar to the one Hitler encountered when he tried to attack England from the European mainland.

For this reason, Rama's first step was to make sacrifices to the God of the Ocean, so that the waters would recede and allow his army to march to the island without getting wet. But the God of the Ocean, emerging from the depths of the waters, accompanied by some gleaming yellow snakes, addressed Rama with great respect and sorrow to tell him that he could not allow the passage of his army because the ocean, according to ancient laws, it was not fordable.

However, he recommended that Rama build a bridge to reach the island. Rama consulted the case with Hanuman and Nala , son of Wishwakarma, the divine craftsman. They all went to work with a large number of men, and in five days the chain of islands linking Ceylon to the mainland through the sixty-mile strait was complete.

Rama's attacking army, made up of great monkeys and bears, leapt from island to island and soon came unopposed to the capital of the wicked Rakshasa, the king of whom Sita was a prisoner. Rama was perched on Hanuman's shoulders and with a single step of this they were on the island joining his army.

King Rakshasa's army counterattacked riding on elephants, lions, camels, pigs, hyenas and wolves. They carried magical weapons, as well as arrows, maces, spears, tridents, swords, and beams.

Hanuman's army of monkeys uprooted trees to use as weapons and also threw great penalties on the enemy. Some of the members of the attacking army used their long nails as swords and their enormous teeth as arrows. Rivers of blood, legend has it, ran, but Rama was not afraid. He put his faith in the brave monkeys, knowing that they were all reincarnations of the gods.

In the same way that the ancient Dance of the Dead Monkeys still prevails among modern Indians in the Mosquitia region of Honduras, many of their other current customs have come from their ancestors. [Girard 1978: I, 204-5 reports much the same activity among the "Taoajkas".]

...

Needless to say, we can hardly wait for the remaining months to pass before we re-enter the city of the Monkey-God and begin to unearth the archaeological wealth of another kind that may exist there."

*** **

1940, October: *American Antiquity* (VI [2]: 180) in its "Notes and News section, Middle American Area" reports: "Mr. Theodore Morde made a preliminary survey in Honduras for the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation; it is hoped to follow this up with a fully equipped expedition."

1) *Museum News* (American Association of Museums) vol. 17 (October 1, 1940): 3, 10.

"Honduras.

An expedition from the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York, and the National Geographic Society, Washington, which has been in the Mosquitia Territory of Honduras exploring heretofore unknown land under the direction of Theodore A. Morde, has returned with several thousand objects of the Chorotegan civilization, including sculptures religious idols, stone household utensils, a six-tone flute, and primitive razor blades. The expedition mapped rivers and streams, and located "The Lost City of the Monkey God," which it is planned to excavate next season."

2) Raye E. Platt, "Expeditions," *Handbook of Latin American Studies* vol. 6 (1940): pp.

"Honduras.

Theodore A. Morde and Lawrence Brown, as co-leaders of the third Honduran expedition sponsored by the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, spent five months in the little known interior of the Mosquitia territory of Honduras. Mineral, zoological, and ethnological collections were made (the last including several thousand examples of the art of the Chorotegans, an agricultural people believed to be contemporary with the Mayans) and a number of rivers never before charted were surveyed."

[The online collection of the museum shows two artifacts from the trip up the Patuca: a small Tawahka mahogany canoe and a paddle.]

3) *The New International Year Book* for 1941. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. The section on *Exploration*, page 243, has the following entry:

"Central America.

In southern Honduras, in a jungle region known as the Mosquito Territory, a party of American scientists announced the discovery of the long-rumored "Lost City of the Monkey God" in an almost inaccessible area between the Paulaya and Plantano [sic, Plátano] Rivers. The expedition, headed by Theodore A. Morde and under the auspices of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, spent four months in the territory, living under native conditions, and traveling mostly by *pitpans* (40-ft. wooden canoes) with the help of Suma [sic, Sumu] guides.

Evidences were found of a once-thriving but now extinct civilization, that of the Chorotegans, which flourished at about the time of the Mayan culture. Many examples of

Chorotegan art and industry were found including sculptured religious idols, some stone household utensils, a six-tone flute, and primitive razor blades."

1940 Victor Wolfgang von Hagen (1908-1985), "The Mosquito Coast of Honduras and its inhabitants," *Geographical Review* 30 (2), April: 238-59. Amidst the flurry of popular press on Morde and his Lost City of the Monkey God, the legitimate scientist/geographer Victor von Hagen's report received little notice. Von Hagen preceded Morde by a couple of years. He spent five months in Mosquitia during the "second Honduran expedition" for the Museum of the American Indian in 1937-38 (von Hagen 1943: 2). **He reported nothing of a lost city.**

1943 Monseñor Federico Lunardi (1880-1954), who served as the first Papal Nuncio to Honduras 1939-48, was fascinated with past and present indigenous cultures and during his discussion of the ancient mounds that line the rivers throughout eastern Honduras he suggested that was evidence that ". . . the famous White City that exists in legend, has surely existed" ("Los Payas, documentos curiosos y viajes," *Boletín, Biblioteca y Archivo Nacionales* nú. 6. Tegucigalpa: Talleres Tipográficos Nacionales, 1943: 35).

1946 Morde's companion, Laurence C. Brown (1910-1974), published an item for the United States Board on Geographic Names. *Special Publication*, issues 58-91, Laurence C. Brown, "Terminology on Mosquitia, Honduras," pp. 4-6.

1946 Theodore Morde, "Los Misterios de la Mosquitia Hondureña. La Ciudad del Mono-Dios, 1939," *Revista de Archivo y Biblioteca Nacional de Honduras* (Tegucigalpa) 24 (11-12): 555-562; 25 (1-2): 83-87, is a reprint of the Morde story from 1940, above. Reprints were frequent in 1950s and 1960s in Honduras. Also, see *La Epoca* (Tegucigalpa) 23 de enero (y siguientes) de 1946.

1947 Zora Hurston (1891-1960), a writer who was once a student of Franz Boas in anthropology at Columbia University, became fascinated with the lost city of Honduras after it was brought to her attention in 1944 by an English gold miner, Reginald Brett. Letters collected by one of her biographers (Carla Kaplan. *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*. New York: Doubleday, 2002) expose Hurston as the absolutely **most naive person to ever seek the lost city.**

To fund her trip to Honduras she wrote the Guggenheim Foundation in September 1944 explaining that Brett claimed he "had discovered an Ancient Mayan city never seen." After that . . . Hurston's imagination, without any indication of any evidence whatsoever, took over. She wrote that "This town escaped all sight, and the ruins are undisturbed. Only one white man has ever seen it, and very few Indians. It is hidden in the deep jungles of the Mosquitia district of southern Honduras."

She wanted "To learn as much as possible about the mystery city. No one knows how long this group of people have lived in this place, nor what their history is. But this town in the mountains has been there for centuries. No outsiders have ever been allowed to enter this place, for any reason whatsoever. They even expell their own sick. I do not hope to enter, but if I can talk to some of the expelled ones, I plan to get a history of the people, and perhaps penetrate the mystery of their rigid isolation. They are a healthy, well-informed people."

Her request for Guggenheim support also noted that the Paya Indians are "the most primitive in all Central America," that "the Mayans now living on Roi Tan [sic, Roatán Island] . . . have disappeared everywhere else that they are known to exist . . ." and that "some very valuable historical and cultural material may be collected that will shed light on problems that have puzzled scientists in their investigations. Since this small residue of Mayan speak Mayan, some words may be found that could be used as keys to decipher the monuments of the ancient Mayan ruins." Further, she proposed work among "the Zambu Indians of southeastern Honduras. They have a very highly developed culture of their own. They have developed a language with a large and flexible vocabulary. They have a highly developed system of Astronomy that is comparable to our own."(pp. 505-506).

Not surprisingly, because nothing she wrote above was true, she never received institutional support for her adventures in Honduras.

Still, by September 3, 1947 Hurston wrote from Puerto Cortés that she was planning an expedition to find the lost city of Mosquitia (p. 555). "Travellers have heard about [it] for two hundred years, but [it] has not yet been seen. That is not because they searched and did not find. It is a forbidding area and for various reasons thay did not try it. I have been told by the Indians, the only ones who really know anything about that vast area, that it is there . . . I have been repeatedly warned not to venture there . . . The area(s) is even marked 'unexplored' on the maps. A very sparsely populated región. But as an anthropologist, these reports tell me certain things. The civilization that had vanished from that area even before the coming of the Spaniards disappeared for some reason. I rule out conquest by more powerful Indian nations, because those people then would have settled there."

She also had heard that "Dorothy [sic, Doris] Stone, daughter of Samuel Zamurry [sic, Zemmurray], Pres. of United Fruit, is interested in archeology in an amateurish [sic] way, tried to go there and her guides messed her up so that she spent a great deal of money but go [sic] nowhere. They persuaded her that there was nothing to see. She assured me that there was not because they had told her so. Ha!" (p. 556)

Hurston's letters from Puerto Cortés indicate she was in Honduras from late April 1947 until February 1948 (pp. 549-569). However, except for the letter of Sept. 3, 1947, when she wrote she planned an expedition, she did not mention that quest again.

Sadly, it is possible that Hurston was confused even about the country of the lost city. In those days many people knew British Honduras as "Honduras" and The Republic of Honduras was often called "Spanish Honduras." Another of Hurston's biographers wrote that Brett (Hurston's originating informant) was a miner in British Honduras (Robert E. Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1977: 301).

1950 *Boletín Mensual de Información*, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Honduras, nos. 11 y 12. Tegucigalpa: Julio y Agosto de 1950, pp. 12-17. At the initiative of Julio Rodríguez Ayestas, director del Archivo Nacional de Honduras, the Milwaukee Sentinel article of 1940 (above) was translated into Spanish as "**Los Misterios de la Mosquitia Hondureña: La Ciudad del Dios Mono, por Theodore Morde.**"

1952 The Swiss consul general in Honduras was a little slow in reporting the Morde trip. He published "Découverte de la civilisation précolombienne des Chorotegas dans la Province de Mosquitia (Honduras)," *Bulletin Societe Suisse des Américanistes* 4 (1952): 18-19, citing items 1946 and 1950 above.

1952 Another European claiming to have found the lost city appeared during the early 1950s. Hungarian-born "adventurer-geographer-etc." Tibor Sekelj (1912-1988), a prominent Esperanto language enthusiast, claims that during his Central American treks, 1951-1954, in Mosquitia he "managed to find an ancient city in ruins" – in Esperanto: "La Blanka Urbo" [The White City] (*Mondo de travivaĵoj, autobiography and adventures throughout five continents*. Pise: Edistudio, 1-a eldono 1981, 2-a eldono 1990, 284 pages, pp. 233-235).

1953 Geographer Karl M. Helbig conducts geographical and archeological research throughout eastern Honduras. Major publications are *Antiguales (Alttertumer) der Paya-Region und die Paya-Indianer von Nordost-Honduras*. Hamburg: Museums fur Volkerkunde und Vorgeschichte, 1956 and *Die Landschaften von Nordost-Honduras*. Gotha: Veb Hermann Haack, 1959. A Spanish edition of the latter appeared a few years later: *Areas y Paisajes del Noreste de Honduras*. Traducción de Guillermo Cano. Tegucigalpa: Banco Central de Honduras, 1965.

Helbig mentions the "lost city" up the Plátano with identical paragraphs in each of his works. In *Antiguales* (1956: 20) and *Areas y Paisajes* (1965: 189) he writes:

("El curso superior del río, al otro lado del Cerro de Guacipín, no parece a trechos presentar dificultad alguna, aunque nuestro viaje no llego hasta allí. Como afluentes mayores se mencionan: a la derecha el Sirimica [Silmika, Tjirimica] y a la izquierda el Barnikas, siendo el

primero llamado también Río de los Payas, en recuerdo a viejas poblaciones de estos en el sector superior del mismo. Se había igualmente de una «ciudad» perdida o «casa blanca» arriba de ambos afluentes, pero que nadie de la actual generación ha visto. Es posible que alguna formación rocosa simule un «palacio blanco» o que sencillos cimientos, como se encuentran muchas veces en la región de la «vieja cultura paya», dieran pábulo a exageraciones de tal naturaleza.”)

“The upper reaches of the river, across from Cerro de Guacipin, does not seem in places to present any difficulty for travel, although our group did not get there. Major tributaries are mentioned: on the right Sirimica [Silmika, Tjirimica] and on the left is the Barnikas, the former also being called the Río Paya, in memory of the old villages in the upper part of the river. There was also a "lost city" or "white house" upstream from those two tributaries, but none of the current generation has seen it. It is possible that some rock formation that looked like a "white palace" or simple foundations (of ruins), such as are often found in the region of the "old Paya culture" give fuel to exaggerations of this kind.

The Payas, as evidenced by the distribution of prehistoric artifacts, have also inhabited the mountains (or at least the valleys between the mountains), thus avoiding conflict with the Spaniards, on the one hand, and with the Miskito, on the other.”

[Jens Yde's review of Helbig's *Antiguales der Paya-Region* (1956) appeared in *American Antiquity* (1957: 196) and he applauded Helbig's "due criticism" of the "rumors of a reputed 'Ciudad Blanca' near the Río Plátano."]

1954 In his obituary ("Theodore A. Morde," *The Explorers Journal* 32 [4]: 58) Morde (March 17, 1911 - June 26, 1954) was remembered for his life, "rich in experience." During the 1930s he was a hometown sports reporter, an evening news broadcaster in Providence, a free lancer correspondent in the Spanish Civil War, and cruise ship director (1939). From January to August 1940 (sic) he "distinguished himself as the leader of the Third Honduran Expedition of the under the auspices of the Museum of the American Indian - Heye Foundation." Later that year he was dispatched to Egypt as a special agent in the US Military Intelligence Division. For a while he was war correspondent for *Reader's Digest* and a naval officer in all oceans.

1954 In the year of Morde's death Jesús Aguilar Paz's *Mapa General de la República de Honduras* (1933) is reprinted in Rome and for the first time includes the wording: "? Ruinas Ciudad Blanca?" east of "Mña Punta Piedra" in the uninhabited zone in Gracias a Dios above the headwaters of the Pao, Aner, Lagarto, eastern tributaries of the Paulaya, Plátano, Tuscruás, and Sicri rivers, about 30 km northeast of La Llorona.

On Charles Lindbergh and the White City

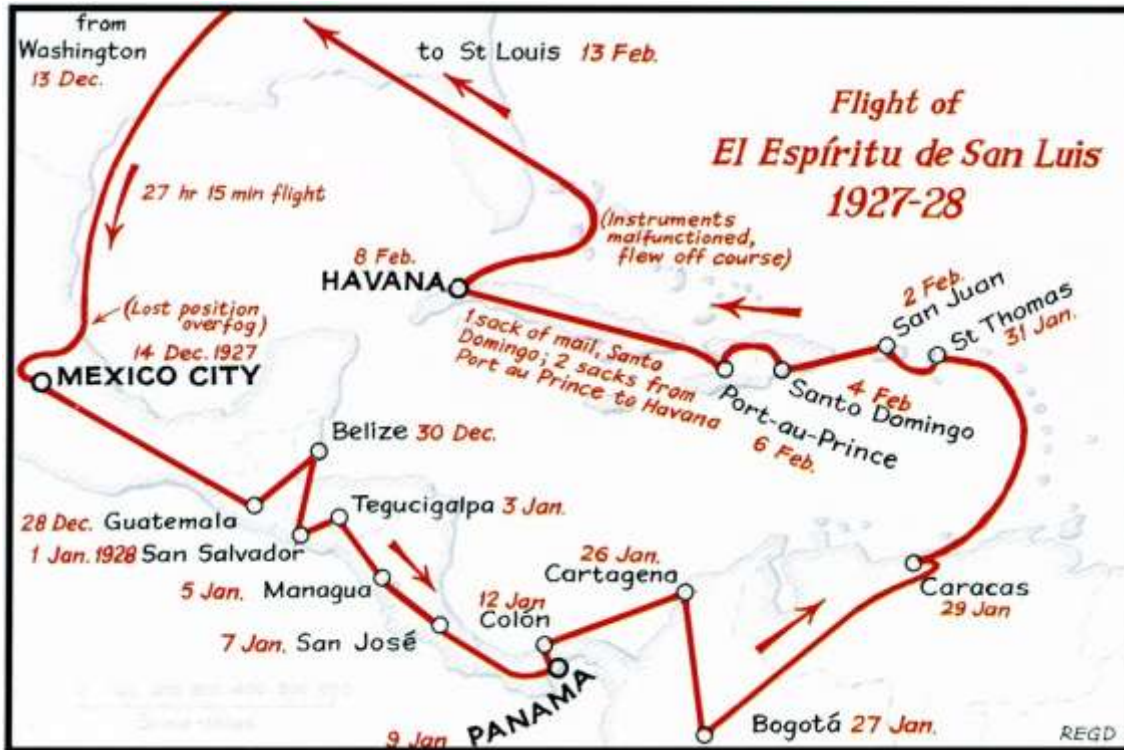
When Lindbergh returned from Europe after the first trans-Atlantic flight, he was the most famous man of his day. During the next few years he did fly over Central America and Yucatan three times, but as the reports below show, **he never flew over the interior of eastern Honduras and therefore could not have seen the “White City.”**

Trip 1. In late 1927 and early 1928, Lindbergh made a “goodwill” trip to Central America, his first flight to Latin America. According to his plane’s log, (see Charles A. Lindbergh (1902-1974). *The Spirit of St. Louis*. 1955/2002 New York: Scribner) Colonel Lindbergh flew around the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, late 1927- early 1928. The leg between San Salvador and Tegucigalpa on January 3, 1928 took 2 hours and 5 minutes. After being honored with keys to the cities of Tegucigalpa and Comayaguera (on arrival) and a gold medal presented by President Miguel Paz Barajona (on departure), Lindbergh flew directly to Managua via León in 2 hours and 35 minutes. Therefore, he **never flew over the Patuca, or the White City** -- as Chapman wrote.

Figure 21. Lindbergh’s plane at airport of Tegucigalpa, January 3, 1928. Foto: Juan Angel Irias.



Map 21.. Lindbergh's first Latin American route, 1927-28.



Trip 2. In February 1929 Lindbergh flew a Miami-Panama-Panama route through Central America for the first air mail delivery on behalf of Pan American Airways. He was a co-pilot. Between February 4 and 6, 1929, Lindbergh flew in a seaplane from Miami to Havana, then to Belize City for the first night. The next day, with a brief stop in the bay at Tela, Honduras, he reached Managua for the second night. After brief stops in Punta Arenas, Costa Rica and David, Panama, he landed in French Field in Colón, Canal Zone, Panama at 4 P.M. before flying on to Panama City for the third night. The return trip began on February 11 and reached Miami on the 13th via Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua, and Havana. (See Anon. 1929: "Lindbergh flies first air mail trip to Panama," *The Cornell Daily Sun* XLIV (92), February 6.) This route did fly north along the east coast of Honduras Mosquitia before heading over the Caribbean to Havana, but probably did not pass over the middle Plátano and **did not report seeing any ruins.**

Trip 3. A few months later, with his wife and archeologists A. V. Kidder and Oliver Ricketson, Jr., of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, Lindbergh made a groundbreaking aerial reconnaissance of Maya sites in Mexico, Belize, and Guatemala. For five days in early October, 1929 the "aerial expedition" flew over Yucatan, Belize, and Guatemala to photograph Maya ruins. **They did not fly over Honduras.** The expedition was sponsored by Pan American Airlines and C. I. W. See: 1930, Oliver Ricketson, Jr., and A. V. Kidder, "An archeological reconnaissance by air in Central America," *Geographical Review* XX (2) April:

177-206; 1930, A. V. Kidder, "5 days over Maya Country," *Scientific Monthly* (March): 193-205; and 1930, Madeira, Jr., Percy C. "An aerial expedition to Central America," *The Museum Journal* (University of Pennsylvania) v. 22 (2): 95-153. A map of his route over Maya lands in 1929 can be seen in Madeira 1930: map 1. Popular outlets for publicity of the Lindbergh - Kidder - Ricketson flights appeared in *Pan American Magazine*, *Journal of the American Ceramic Society*, and *Review of Reviews*.

It is probably from this last flight that Anne Chapman got her idea of Lindbergh seeing the ruins of a white city. BUT . . . where is the primary document that proclaims Lindbergh saw the "white city?" They did take a wonderful air photograph of Tulum.

Figure 22. Air photograph of Tulum, Quintana Roo, México. 1929. (Madeira 1930, plate 10)

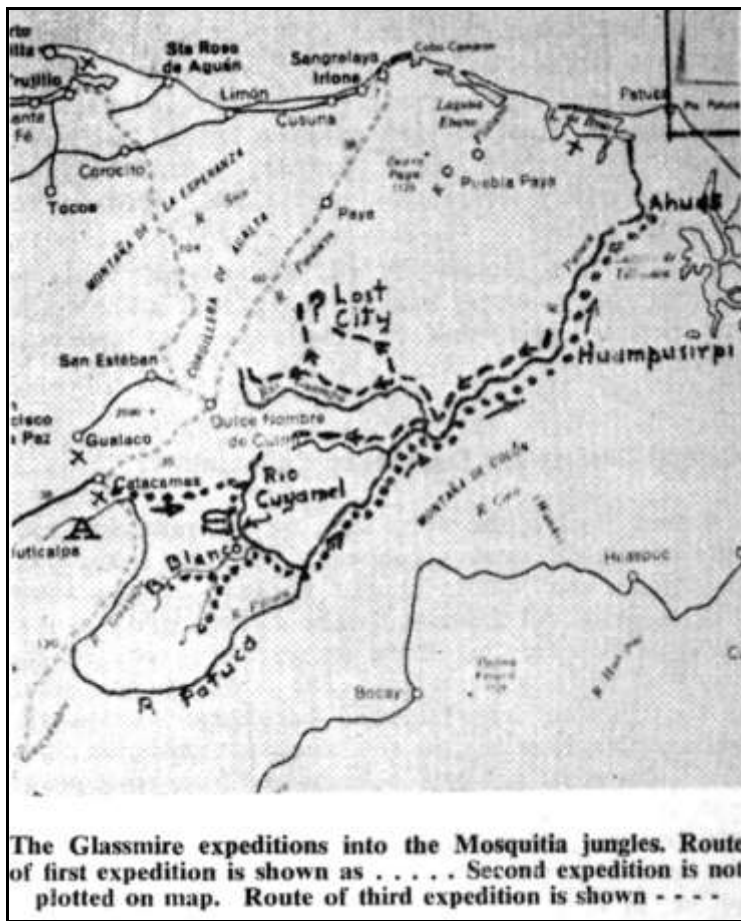


1959 A professional geologist from New Mexico, Sam H. Glassmire, apparently had a flair for romantic adventure along with his serious search for valuable minerals in Latin America. His departure for eastern Honduras, "with 16 men and 20 mules" was reported in a newspaper note: "Geologist off to jungle," *The New Mexican* (Santa Fe), March 22, 1959, p. 14. After his death in 2002, his daughter published a book he had written in 2000 about his life as a geologist in Latin America (see below Glassmire 2000).

1959 S. H. Glassmire, "Oro de Mosquitia," 17 page report submitted to the Pan American Union for publication, April 13, 1959. Non-romantic account of Glassmire's first expedition to eastern Honduras, a one-month trip in March-April, 1959. Pan American Union did not publish the report. Published in Glassmire 2000: 167-82.

1960 S. H. Glassmire, "Placer gold in Mosquitia," *The Mining Journal* (London) (November). (Reprinted in Glassmire 2000: 186-189.) Herein Glassmire published his map of three expeditions to Mosquitia, including the approximate site of Ciudad Blanca up a tributary of the Guampu, roughly in the area shown on the Aguilar Paz map of 1954.

Map 22.



1960 S. H. Glassmire and Hank Chapman, "I found a lost city," *Empire. The Magazine of the Denver Post*, November 27, 1960: 12-13 and December 4, pages 8-9. (Reprinted in Glassmire 2000: 87-91.) Glassmire's major account of his discovery of Ciudad Blanca, on March 10, 1960, describes his trip up the Guampu, onto a tributary, and a six day trek before finding the city. He was guided by Claudio Cordona, who remembered the ruins from a hunting trip with his father some 25 years ago (1935+/-), and five Sumus. During their five days on the site they found 50-

foot high mounds "bulging out of the boundless jungle," and artifacts everywhere (ornate *metates*, clay figurines, bowls, dishes, etc.). On occasion they found themselves standing atop ruins that had been buried by "jungle litter and rubble." From "a view higher up" he "outlined the rectangular shape of the city," which he estimated to "cover approximately five square miles." Glassmire's "guess" was that "the city was populated by the Mayas." "Organic material from the ruins . . . dated Ciudad Blanca at 500 A.D., at the time of the Classic period of the Maya." [How he dated the "organic material" to 500 A. D. is not disclosed.]

1960 S. H. Glassmire, "Finding the Legendary Lost City," in *The Bush* 2000: 84-86. Writing in 2000 the author recalls his 1960 trip up the Guampu with eight Sumus from Tucaron [Tukrún] in search of the Ciudad Blanca or Lost City. They passed río Pau, heading upstream, and when the natives said they were very near the site, they stopped and "cut our way through very thick bush for about an hour" before finding himself "on flat land beneath the white cliffs," "surrounded by hundreds of artifacts and several rectangular shaped mounds." Looking back, he now believes the site was "a pre-Maya village." Since his initial discovery forty years ago, he never returned and knew of no one who has visited the ruined city. He believed that Jim Woodman's group in 1977 flew over his site, but could never claim it. (See below, 1977 Jim Woodman).

1960 First official Honduran government recognition of Ciudad Blanca comes in 1960. By decree on November 13 the Honduran government established the "Ciudad Blanca Archaeological Reserve;" later the "National Archaeological Park Ciudad Blanca" was approved. (See below, 1982 *IUCN*, page 243). In the same year, the director of the national archives Julio Rodríguez A. re-published for the eighth time in Honduras the outlandish materials first produced by Morde in 1940. "Los Misterios de la Mosquitia Hondureña. La Ciudad del Mono-Dios - 1939," was published by the Honduran Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores in its *Boletín Mensual de Información*, núm. 11 y 12. Tegucigalpa.

The events of 1960 place a revealing perspective on locating the fictitious site -- the government's reserve and park lay up the Plátano, while Morde's site was up the Aner, in the Guampu-Patuca region.

1962 According to the son of Jesús Aguilar Paz, in 1962 at the age of 77, Dr. Jesús Aguilar Paz visited sites in Mosquitia in search of Ciudad Blanca with several colleagues (Aguilar-Paz Cerrato 1995: 128). J. Aguilar Paz himself wrote that various members of the Sociedad de Geografía e Historia intended to reach Ciudad Blanca during *verano* [the dry season], but were not successful. They entered by Culmí and a little ways forward they made only one discovery - a sacrificial stone near Pisigire (1969:10).

1968 Jesús Aguilar Paz, at 85 years old, wrote "Toponimias y regionalismos indígenas de Honduras," ponencias presentadas, Comisión de Geografía, Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, Tegucigalpa, 12 de octubre de 1968 y V Congreso de Academias de la Lengua Española Quito, Ecuador, 24 de julio al 1 de agosto de 1968. Printed version: Tegucigalpa: sin imprenta, sin fecha, 40 páginas. On page 36, he translates *Tlapalan*, a náhuatl (azteca, mexicana) term, as "Quiere decir tierra roja. Es el nombre más antiguo de Honduras." (It means red earth. It is the oldest name of Honduras.) He added: "Quizá varias de las voces aztecas vinieron de muy lejos y posiblemente emigraron de la perdida Atlántida." (Perhaps some of the Aztec words came from very far away and **possibly migrated from the lost Atlantis.**)

1969 Jesús Aguilar Paz, "Tlapa-lan, Huehuetlapal-lan, Ruinas de Ciudad Blanca," ponencia presentada, Primer Congreso México-Centroamericano de Historia, México, D. F., 10 de febrero de 1969; also published as a booklet in Tegucigalpa: Imprenta López y Cia, 16 de enero, 1969. Other versions were Anales del Archivo Nacional and Boletín de la Academia Hondureña de la Lengua. See Bonta 1999, "Jesús Aguilar Paz (1895-1974): Retrato de un geógrafo hondureño," *Revista de la Academia Hondureña de Geografía e Historia* 70: 48-56. (see below, and Litza Quintana 1992 (below).

To my knowledge, this is the first time that Tlapalan, the place mentioned in the Quetzalcoatl mythology of the Aztecs, is referred to as a specific site in Honduras.

In his presentations, Aguilar Paz presumes that the ruins of Ciudad Blanca are the remains of Tlapalan, supposed capital of the Kingdom of Payaquí o Hueitlato, thus fusing, **and confusing**, the notion originating with Palacios (1576) about the 1530 battle between Spaniards and Calel Capael, Payaqui leader of the ancient realm, which was supposedly near Copán Ruinas, some **300 miles to the west**.

Imaginative!

In his "Nota Final," written after his booklet was completed, J. Aguilar Paz reportedly learned from an unidentified, "respected person," that in New Orleans lived an engineer named D. W. Williams, who worked on the construction of the highway next to Lake Yojoa about 1940. Later, while searching for oil in eastern Honduras by air, Williams made a forced landing near Ciudad Blanca, which he visited. This yarn is exceedingly unbelievable given (1) the futility of searching for oil by air and (2) surviving a landing in the dense forests of eastern Honduras.

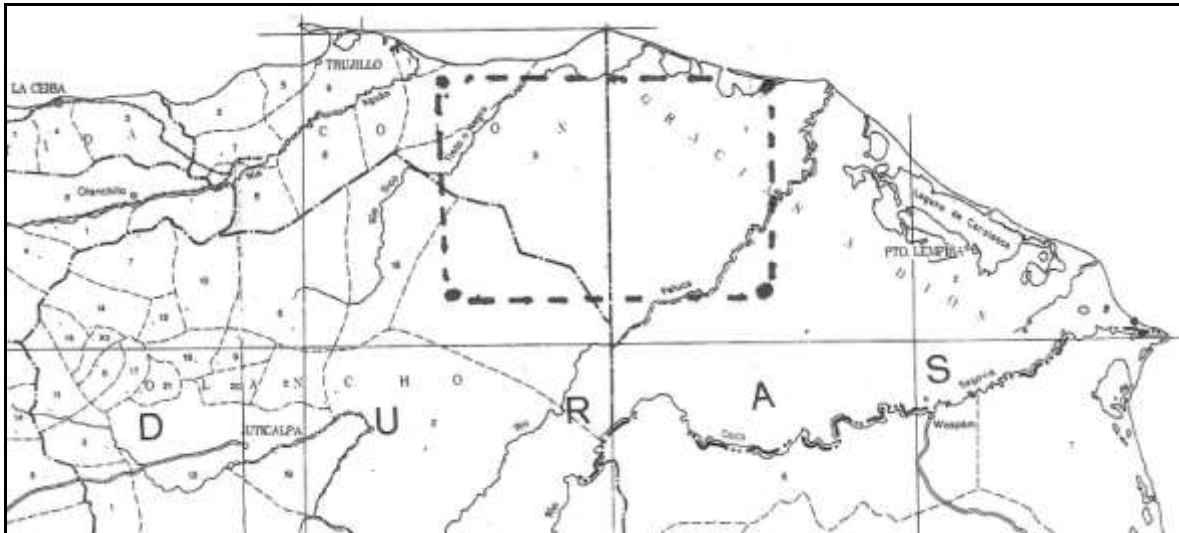
[Further, during my years as a professor [in Louisiana, I sought a "D. W. Williams of New Orleans" for the period . . . without success.]

1969 Santamaria y Zaldaña, A., "Ciudad blanca descubierta en selva de la Mosquitia," *Diario "El Día"* (Tegucigalpa), 24 de mayo. (Courtesy: Dr. Juan Carlos Fernández-Díaz)

Under the auspice of the Honduran Instituto Geográfico Nacional, four explorers "confirmed definitely" that they had discovered Ciudad Blanca in northwestern Mosquitia. They entered the forest via La Colonia, north of Culmí, and wandered in the headwaters of rivers Aner and Pao for 40 days in April and May, 1969. Following a quebrada they named in honor of their former director, Rivera Cáceres, the ruins were found in a valley they named "El Valle de la Expedición Geográfica." The old name of the ruins, they claimed (clearly following J. Aguilar Paz, above), was "Tlapal-lan-Huehuctlal-lan," part of the ancient realm of "Payaqui o Hueytlató."

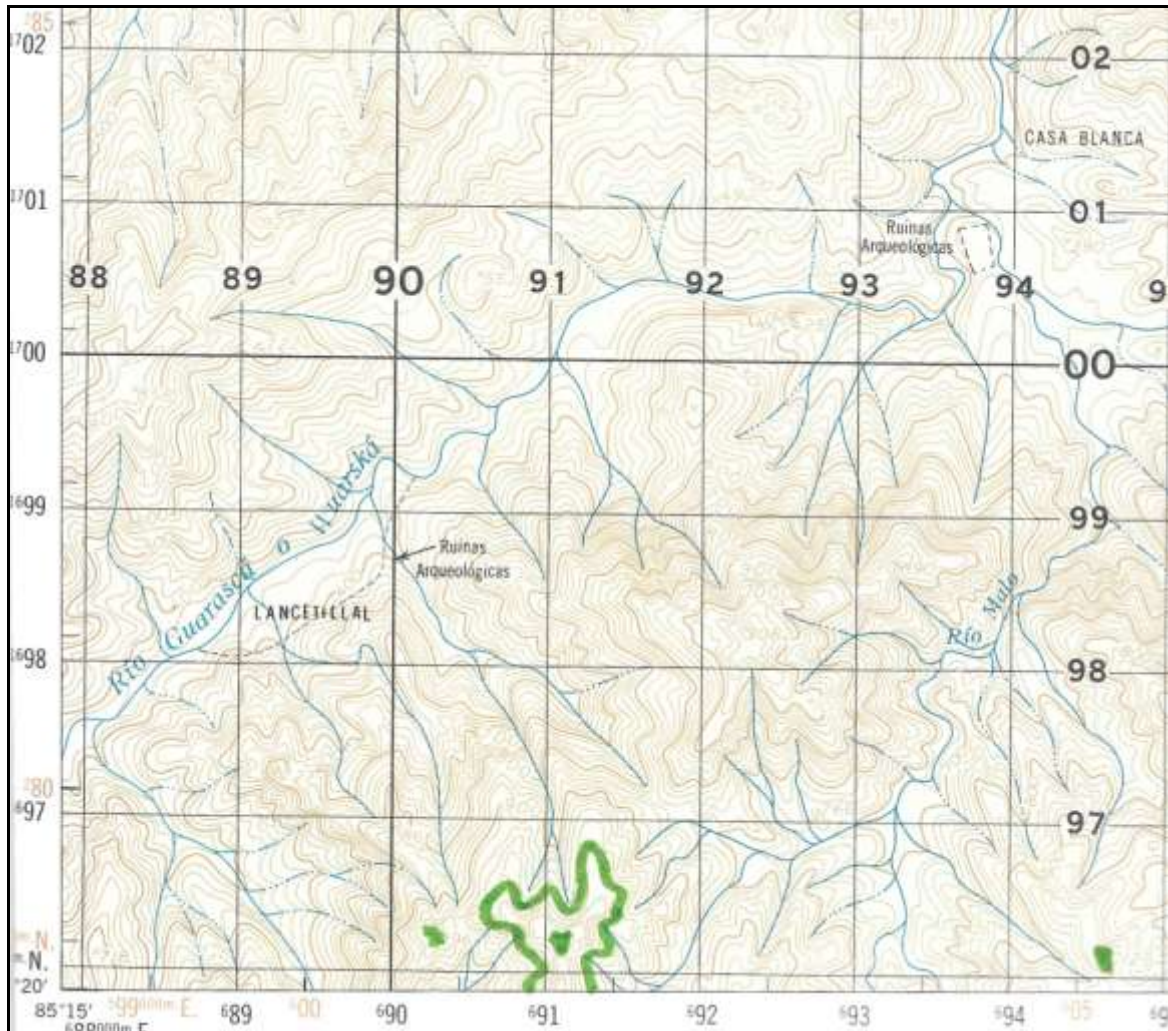
Based on this report, the National Congress on December 9, 1969, established the "Parque Arqueológico Nacional" and placed it under the auspices of the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History. The quite enlarged area included some 3,220 square miles of northern Mosquitia (figure w).

Map 23. The National Archeological Park established in 1969 (area within dashed lines).



1969 In this same year the Instituto Geográfico Nacional published the first edition of a sheet of their 1/50,000 series, "Cabeceras del Río Plátano" (IGN 3162 II), that places "casa blanca" in the headwaters of the Río Guaraská o Huarská. This location is near that of Aguilar Paz's "Ciudad Blanca" on his 1954 map.

Map 24. "Cabeceras del Río Plátano" (IGN 3162 II), 1969.



1969 Theodore Morde, "Los misterios de la Mosquitia Hondureña, la ciudad del mono-dios," *Anales, Archivo Nacional de Honduras* 6 (julio 1969): 42-49. Reprint of 1940 above.

1970 Jesús Aguilar Paz, "Tlapalan -- La Ciudad Blanca," according to the presentation, this is "a well-documented essay on the first name of Honduras and the true motive of Cortés' trip to Honduras" (p. 3).

1973 Richard M. Garvin. *The crystal skull: The story of the mystery, myth and magic of the Mitchell-Hedges crystal skull discovered in a lost Mayan city during a search for Atlantis*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday.

1974 Robin Moore and Howard Jennings. *The Treasurer Hunter*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc. Jennings, a Texas con-man and self-described "treasure hunter," was an absolute devotee of Mitchell-Hedges and was led to Roatán Island during mid-1960s to find the

treasure he thought left by Mitchell-Hedges in 1930s (see 1931 above). Jennings also dredged for gold in Mosquitia, well up the río Paulaya and elsewhere, but never mentioned Ciudad Blanca.

1975 Robert Levere Brunhouse. *Pursuit of the Ancient Maya. Some archeologists of yesterday.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press. Author includes Mitchell-Hedges, Morde, and Spinden trips in eastern Honduras. He notes Mitchell-Hedges' obituary mentions he had eight bullet and three knife wounds.

1976 Harvey K. Meyer. *Historical Dictionary of Honduras.* Latin American Historical Dictionaries, No. 13. Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., p.78). Dr. Meyer's entry on "ciudad blanca" is as follows:

"A presumably Mayan ruined city, visible from the air, on the slopes of Montaña Punta de Piedra, in the southern tip of Colón department, at an altitude of over 3,000 feet. Its shows up in the jungle because its structures are white, hence the name. It must be recognized that, as in the Maya areas of Yucatán, there are as yet a considerable number of sites undiscovered."

[The statement is not referenced, but seems to fuse the notion that Lindbergh saw Ciudad Blanca from the air with the location on Aguilar Paz's 1954 map.]

The second edition (Harvey K. Meyer and J. H. Meyer, *Historical Dictionary of Honduras.* Latin American Historical Dictionaries, No. 25. Metuchen, N. J.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994, pp. 148-49) is essentially the same, although rewritten.

"Ciudad Blanca ("White City"). A complex of ruined buildings, presumably Mayan, on the slopes of Punta de Piedra Mountain, at around 1,000 m (3,300 ft.) altitude. Viewed from the air it shows up in the jungle because of the light color of the structures, probably white limestone. It must be recognized in connection with the reported sighting that, while, as in the Mayan areas of Yucatán, there are also errors in reported sightings. A search of a team of adventurers for this lost city, in the southern tip of Colón department, was feature in *Sports Illustrated* 48 (2): 86-97 (January 9, 1978)." (see 1978 below)

1976-77 On December 3, 1976 a group of eighteen people associated with the International Explorers' Society of Miami (IES) flew to La Ceiba, Honduras to begin their search for Ciudad Blanca. The group included Frank G. Dawson (who later, in 1982-3, led the archeological project at the mouth of the Río Negro for Cambridge), see **1977, 1983** below. David D. Zink, Jim Woodman, Bill Spohrer, Edwin Shook (a well-known Mayan archeologist), Francisco Flores (representative of the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History in Tegucigalpa), and a TV crew from ABC. They are met in Palacios by a helicopter from Guatemala. Reports of the expedition are the next three entries. (The IES was organized in Miami in 1973 -- among the

founders were Bill Spohrer, president of TAN Airlines of Honduras and Jim Woodman, a local writer and publisher.)

1977 Frank Griffith Dawson, "The Ciudad Blanca quest," *Explorers Journal* 55 (2-4): 104-8.

The author began his search for Ciudad Blanca in Miami, in 1973, by "collating reports on the lost city." He then, with a small ground party, entered the Mosquitia in June 1976 to confirm local rumors of mounds and stone carvings near the Río Tinto and Wampú rivers. His main search occurred in December 1976, when he made base camp at Palacios along with U.S. archeologist Edwin Shook. An ABC-TV camera crew was present. Also in the group were "a professional photographer, an airline executive, an architect, a London investment banker, and an anthropologist from the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History." They were determined "to discover the factual basis, if any, of the Ciudad Blanca legend. ""The jungle area we entered is one of the least known and most hazardous 'last frontiers' of Central America." By helicopter they flew over the 40-foot-high, large white cliffs on the Wampú (known locally as "Casa Blanca") and along the Plátano, but eventually concluded that "We had not unraveled the mystery of Ciudad Blanca simply because **the city never existed**, at least not in the form suggested by legend. Ciudad Blanca is probably a composite of folk memories of ancient civilizations, glimpses of white cliffs in the inaccessible jungle, and inexplicably large carves stones found in the forest by Indians." Dawson returned to the Black River area in 1982 for an archeological project. (see **1983** below)

1978 John Underwood, "Quest in the jungle: Snaking up a wild tropical river two American adventurers seek a strange 'lost city' known as Ciudad Blanca," *Sports Illustrated*, January 9: 8 pp. The author, who probably did not visit Honduras, wrote about the trip through the eyes of Jim Woodman and Bill Spohrer, who cruised over the Plátano in a helicopter to seek the lost city. After their return to the U.S., several newspapers in the U.S. reported that Woodman "found a lost city in Honduras" (for example: *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, Sunday, April 3, 1977: 66). "Explorer Jim Woodman searches for lost city in jungles of Honduras" aired on the American Sportsman TV program, January 4, 1978. In 2012 Woodman uploaded a YouTube version of that program as "Ciudad Blanca 1977," 16 minutes.

1978 Rafael Girard, *Historia de las civilizaciones antiguas de América*, 3 vols. San Sebastian, Spain: Hyspamerica Ediciones. Re-states previous ethnographical notions for the Taoajkas and Payas, with some new support for Morde's ritual dance of the dead monkeys among the Taoajka-Sumu (vol. I: 204-5). He changed his location of the Paya Ciudad Blanca from "headwaters" (1938) to "middle" Plátano region (vol. I: 258).

1979 David D. Zink. "Ciudad Blanca," in *The ancient stones speak: A journey to the world's most mysterious megalithic sites*. New York: Paddington Press, 97-104; also E. P. Hutton and Musson

Press. Zink, one of the members of the December 1976 expedition to Palacios, notes in his 1979 book that the “quest for the legendary lost city, La Ciudad Blanca” failed, but that some of the early aerial reconnaissance was “assisted by a psychic, Karen Getsla,” who had worked with Zink in previous searches in Bolivia and Bimini Island.

1982 IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources). *Directory of Neotropical Protected Areas*. Dublin, Ireland: Tycooly International Publishing, Ltd., 1982, page 243. This group reported the Honduran government's approval of the Ciudad Blanca Reserve. (see **1960** above)

1983 Catherine M. Clark, Frank G. Dawson, *Archaeology of the Mosquito Coast: A reconnaissance of the precolombian and historic settlement along the Rio Tinto*. Cambridge (U.K.). The archeological survey organized from Cambridge (Operation Drake, reconnaissance for Operation Raleigh) completed their research **without making a comment on Ciudad Blanca**.

1985 However, Operation Raleigh, a British organization that organized and led young “adventurers” to northeastern Honduras during the spring/summer of 1985, did comment on the lost city. After their trip up the río Plátano, the London office of the Associated Press, quoted John Blashford-Snell, British “explorer” and director of operations of Operation Raleigh, under the headline “Expedition **believes it discovered lost city in Honduras**,” (AP May 11, 1985).

The *New York Times* (May 12, 1985: “Ruins are Discovered in Honduran Jungle”) moderates their text a bit with only: “A team of young explorers **may** have discovered the ruins of a legendary lost city in the jungles of Honduras . . . the Paya civilization's Ciudad Blanca, or White City,” quoting Col. John Blashford-Snell.

Also see Annie Robinson’s 1985 “Preliminary report: Operation Raleigh Survey of the Río Plátano,” a manuscript archived by the IHAH in Tegucigalpa. The small British expedition (Operation Raleigh) traveled up the río Plátano and in less than a month they located about 80 sites.

An anonymous blogger (one of the photographers on the expedition who claimed to have organized the Plátano trip that left Palacios on Monday, April 5, 1985) [“My adventures with Operation Raleigh – April 1 – June 23, 1985”] wrote that “Tullito was the rumoured site of the lost white city, 50-60 km inland.” His chapter three, which was to describe his adventure up river, was never put on-line. One indication of how far the group went up the Plátano can be found in Mark O’Shea’s blog on tropical herpetology. He mentions his trip to río Guaraska in 1985 with the group. The Guaraska enters the Plátano about 65 km (by direct air) from its mouth.

After a couple of years, when the final report of Colonel Blashford-Snell appeared (1987), his expectation of finding the lost city had moderated:

“For centuries rumours had circulated of a 'Lost White City' hidden deep within the mountainous jungles of Mosquita, one of the many El Dorados which had haunted the early Conquistadors and lured so many of them to their deaths. Ciudad Blanca had been the subject of search and speculation for the last four hundred years: local legends spoke of it lying somewhere in the sixteen thousand square miles of wilderness which lay over the mountains to the south-east of the expedition's camp. The patrol's archaeologist, Rowland Reeve, maintained a healthy degree of scepticism, doubting that a white-walled city of palaces and temples could still exist undiscovered even in so remote a region. Yet even he was eager to see what ruins, if any, lay on the far side of the mountains. So, on the morning of 19 April, the seven-member patrol set off upriver in search of '**the last great lost city of the Americas**'.

They never found it. Instead, their searches revealed something in many ways more impressive. When they staggered back into base camp they brought with them reports of not one, but a series of ruins, stretching from the coast to the uplands. This was to be our first indication that the Black River/Rio Paulaya region, long ignored as an archaeological back-water, had been the home of a sophisticated pre-Columbian culture similar in many respects to that of the neighbouring Maya.” p. 83

[Colonel Blashford-Snell in 1998 led the large British expedition to the Bolivian Altiplano in **search of Atlantis** (*The Times*, London: March 6, 1998, p. 2).]

1985 Eduardo Hernández Chévez. *Curiosidades y Bellezas de Honduras*. Colección Letras Hondureñas 24. Tegucigalpa: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras. This little book of Honduran folklore **does not mention Ciudad Blanca**.

1986 Rigoberto de Jesús Lanza, Marco Tulio Escobar, Mauren Denise Carías Moncada, y Rosa Carminda Castellanos. *Los Pech (Payas), Una cultura olvidada*. Tegucigalpa: Editorial Guaymuras. The first major study of the Pech and their culture by young Honduran anthropologists **does not mention Ciudad Blanca**.

1987 George Hasemann, of the IHAH, conducted archeological research at the Las Crucitas site on the Río Aner a few miles upstream from its confluence with the Wampú (see Hasemann y Lara Pinto 1991: 16-19; 1993: 170-71). Las Crucitas is perhaps the greatest concentration of large aboriginal structures in this zone and near the area where Keenagh (1937-8) said he went, Morde claimed he "found" his lost city of the Monkey Gods, and Glassmire mapped his route (see 1939 and 1959-1960 above).

1988 Gloria Lara Pinto y George Hasemann, "La sociedad indígena del noreste de Honduras en el siglo XVI: Son la etnohistoria y la arqueología contradictorias?" *Yaxkin* XI (2)1988: 5-28.

After introducing the notion of the legend of the so-called Ciudad Blanca, the authors discuss the archeology and ethnohistory of northeastern Honduras. Plans of Hasemann's ruin up the Aner, Las Crucitas I and II, are presented. The plots are about the same size: approximately 28,000 and 30,000 square meters, or about 5.8 hectares together (14.3 acres). The site, while important, is not as monumental as the perceived Ciudad Blanca. The authors have never claim that it is Ciudad Blanca.

1991 Gloria Lara Pinto y George Hasemann, " Leyendas y Arqueología: Cuantas Ciudades Blancas Hay en la Mosquitia?" en *Herencia de Nuestro Pasado: La Reserva de la Biosfera del Río Plátano*, pp. 16-19. Editado por Vince Murphy. Tegucigalpa: Ventanas Tropicales. Respected Honduran scholars begin with . . . "Legends are like the smoke from the fire that we cannot see . . . we believe that it reflects reality because of the unmistakable signs that testify to it. This could be the case of the legendary "White City" in Honduras. For decades the imagination of Hondurans and foreigners alike has been red hot for the legend of the "White City," the mythical ruins of a large settlement supposedly hidden in the jungles of eastern Honduras."

[1991] Lázaro H. Flores y Wendy Griffin. *Dioses, Héroes y Hombres en el Universo Mítico Pech*. [San Salvador, El Salvador]: Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas. After intensive fieldwork among the Pech, the authors learned that the group's myth about Ciudad Blanca is known as "Wahia-Patatahua." (pp. 59-61) The place was constructed by evil spirits, supernatural beings who had the power to cut stone with vines. The site is sacred, and known as "Casa Blanca, City of the Ancients, and Cerro de la Palmera." It is the final resting place of the culture hero, "el sacerdote que civilizó a la Nación pech." The ethnographers were told that while the Pech did not built the White City they were "to hunt while on patrol" because if they did not the primitive men who built the white city would eat the Pech.

The writers then introduce for the first time the outlandish notion that Ciudad Blanca **"is said to have served as a commercial center between Mesoamerica and the Andean culture realms during pre-Hispanic times."** As they put it: "The existence of a monumental archeological site with terraces and white stone buildings in the jungle region of Olancho and Gracias a Dios has been told in many versions by ethnologists and geographers. It is said [by whom?] that this site is very fabulous and that it served as **a center of pre-Hispanic trade between the Mesoamerican cultures and the Andean region.**" [Before this, who said it?] The anthropologists seem to support this notion because "the places inhabited by the Pech seem to be important sites for pre-Hispanic commerce between Mexico and South America because the Pech have influences from both regions, eating cassava and maize, being dressed in tunu and cotton."

The authors conclude that while the Pech have stories about an archaeological site with terraces and monumental buildings constructed of white stone, a tour of the archaeological ruins of the area, indicates that there is no single ceremonial city of white stone, but there are many.

1992 Litza Quintana. *500 Años Después*. Tegucigalpa: UNAH. Pp. 89-104. The author reprints in 1992 "Un sabio que amó a 'Tlapal-lan'," originally published weekly in *El Heraldito* (Tegucigalpa) between July 25 and August 15, 1987. These newspaper articles came from Jesús Aguiular Paz's 1969 booklet. (see above)

1992 Klemens von Klemperer. *German Resistance against Hitler: The search for allies abroad, 1938-1945*. Oxford, U. K.: Oxford University Press. Theodore A. Morde is described as a "bogus adventurer" and discredited OSS spy who served as Middle East correspondent for *Reader's Digest* (p. 405).

1993 David Hatcher Childress. *Lost Cities of North & Central America*. Stelle, Illinois: Adventures Unlimited Press. The chapter on "Honduras: Chinese Taoists & the International Jade Trade" (pp. 41-70) harks back to the era of Thor Hyerdahl and Erik von Daniken and their ilk (the "Diffusionists") who insist that people aboriginal to America could not have developed their own cultures *in situ* and produced any sophisticated material goods. The diffusionists imply, or state overtly, that "higher" cultures from across the oceans -- either one will suffice -- must have been involved in indigenous progress in America. Most of these writers are, not surprisingly, European, and not surprisingly are perhaps expressing their anti-Americanism. In this way Childress, who seeks a Chinese connection, is much like Morde, who seemed to make connections between Honduras' Ciudad Blanca and the religions of India.

Childress considers Ciudad Blanca "a curious legend." He repeats, without source, the unsubstantiated notion that "the Spanish invaders of Honduras were told of a mysterious white city lost in the rain forests of the interior." (p. 44) He concludes that "it would be curious indeed if this city was still inhabited . . . ! (p. 47) **Yes. Curious indeed !**

1993 George Hasemann y Gloria Lara Pinto, "La Zona Central: Regionalismo e Interacción," en *Historia Antigua*, tomo I, pp. 135-216. Editado por Robert M. Carmack. Serie *Historia General de Centroamérica*. Madrid: Editorial Siruela. Two 1985 drawings of ruins at Las Crucitas (p. 170-71), but no Ciudad Blanca.

1995 Enrique Aguilar-Paz Cerrato, physician son of Jesús Aguilar Paz, publishes *El alquimista de Gualala, vida y obra de Jesús Aguilar Paz*, the biography of his famous father. In the 26th essay in the volume, "Tlapalán," Dr. Aguilar-Paz C. writes of his father's meeting with Theodore Morde in 1939, after the young "North American explorer" had discovered the ruins of the city

where the monkey god was worshipped. In that same year, Francisco Martínez Landero, according to Enrique, told his father (Jesus Aguilar Paz) that two decades past, when the teacher was living on the Wampú, he had heard of such ruins. However, in none of his publications did Martínez L. (1910-1980) mention any ruins or Ciudad Blanca.

According to his son Enrique, Jesús Aguilar Paz (pp. 128-29) "believed Ciudad Blanca was the capital of the kingdom of Payaquí or Hueitlato, located in the modern department of Gracias a Dios. Of course, since the days of Palacios (1576) Payaqui is normally thought of as the Chiquimula-Copán area, some **300 mi/ 480 km to the west of La Mosquitia**.

In 1962, with several of his friends, at the age of 77, Jesús Aguilar Paz visited the region of the [upper] Wampú and found artifacts, "evidence of an ancient civilization." He "always insisted that the ruins of Ciudad Blanca were near Montaña Punta Piedra," an area Aguilar Paz never visited.

1995 Peruvian composer Rodolfo Holzmann presents "Concierto para la Ciudad Blanca" (Bethell, ed., *Cambridge History of Latin America* v. 10: *Latin America since 1930: Ideas, Culture, and Society*, 328. Cambridge, U. K.: Cambridge University Press.

1997 Dee Belveal (1918-2011), an Idahoan, who built a resort (Spyglass Hill) on the north central coast of Roatan in 1970 and lived there for several years, was fascinated with Mitchell Hedges and after discussing the Bay Islands as a possible "Atlantis," jumps into the Ciudad Blanca story with: "The only place I have heard of the Paya culture being found is in mainland Honduras. It is said that there is a lost city called the Ciudad Blanca or White City which is rumoured to be hidden on the 1.5 million acre Rio Plato (sic, Plátano) Biosphere reserve. The city is said to be guarded by living Paya vigilantes who will kill anyone who comes near the city." (see: "We set foot on Roatan for the first time" <http://texascoastgeology.com/stories/pirate.htm>)

1998 Wendy Griffin, "Legendary Ciudad de Mono Dios tells important stories," *Honduras This Week*, online edition, 128 (Monday, October 19, 1998). Article notes the similarity between the story told by Morde and folklores of Nahuatl origin in Mexico.

1999 Christopher T. Begley, "Elite power strategies and external connections in ancient eastern Honduras," PhD dissertation in Anthropology [archaeology], University of Chicago, 2 vols., 511 pp. Dr. Begley conducted investigations throughout eastern Honduras 1991-98, focusing on the regions of the Plátano, Waraska, Chilmeca, Paulaya, and upper Wampú (Culmí Valley) rivers. This research and subsequent visits qualify him as the foremost expert on the archeology of the region. He writes of ". . . the existence of legends of a lost city in the jungles of eastern Honduras, usually referred to as the *Ciudad Blanca*, or White City." that ". . . had been dismissed as pure fantasy until the discovery of large archaeological sites in eastern Honduras. "

. . . "This helped stimulate interest in the region to some degree." (p. 42). However, his main conclusion is clear: ". . . the prehistoric eastern Honduran populations represented by known archaeological sites are not Mesoamerican, and that . . . Mesoamerican architectural features do not represent enclaves of an intrusive population" (p. 47). In other words, he rejects the notion proposed by some that Cortés' "Tlapalan" refers to eastern Honduras.

2000 S. H. Glassmire, *The Bush. The life and adventures of a consulting geologist and professional mining engineer in Latin America*. n.l.: Brody-Stewart Publications.

2001 Henry B. Nicholson. *Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl: The once and future lord of the Toltecs*. Boulder: University of Colorado Press. The author comments on the contradiction between Alvarado and Cortés concerning the location of the mythical city of Hueitapalan. (see above)

2003 SEPH (Society for the Exploration and Preservation of Honduras). "Discover the Río Plátano Biosphere: In search of Ciudad Blanca." A documentary of 45 minutes produced by a group seeking the legendary lost city in vicinity of Río Plátano. Can be found on U Tube: 4 parts, total time is 45 minutes.

2004 Douglas Preston. *The Codex*. New York: Tom Doherty Associates, 2004. In his novel Douglas Preston writes of "Ciudad Blanca, a white city of demons from which no one ever returns." It was "built long ago by gods" and is "now in ruins." He concludes that "**it is real tho**" (pp. 183-184). Comment: Remember . . . this is a novel !

2005 Lucy Doncaster and Andrew Holland. *Greatest Mysteries of the Unexplained*. [London]: Capella. On page 35 the authors claim that Cortés was looking for city as important as Tenochtitlán.

2007 Thomas W. Cuddy. *Political Identity and Archaeology in Northeast Honduras*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado. This synthesis of archeological research in the region does not address Ciudad Blanca, except for passing along the incorrect passage from Chapman (1958: 37).

"The history of northeast Honduras is filled with tales of human peril and intrigue and has spawned various myths that remain pervasive in popular culture. Charles Lindbergh purportedly spotted an amazing ancient metropolis from the air, the "Lost White City," said to lie in ruins in the jungle" (pp. 5-6). (See above, 1958 Chapman)

2007 Christopher Begley and Ellen Cox, "Reading and writing the White City legend: Allegories past and present," *Southwest Philosophy Review* 23(1) January: 191-98. The foremost expert on archeology of eastern Honduras and colleague in Philosophy at Transylvania

University discuss the different approaches of treasure hunters and scientists to the oral tradition from eastern Honduras.

2007 Wesley Demarco, "Little white legends: Cox and Begley write the White City," *Southwest Philosophy Review* 23(2) July: 59-67. A Clark University philosopher comments.

2009 UNESCO. *World Heritage Sites: A complete guide to 878 UNESCO world heritage sites*. [Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada]: Firefly Books. The entry for the Río Plátano Reserve includes the following **irresponsible** statement: "The site of Ciudad Blanca (White City) within the protected area constitutes one of the most important archaeological sites of Mayan civilization" (p. 142).

2009 Wendy Griffin *et al*, *Los Pech de Honduras: una etnia que vive*. Tegucigalpa: IHAH. Griffin and her two Pech colleagues recall the olden days of a Pech spiritualist and curer (*watá*) who perhaps lived in Waraská. He knew the place called "Casa Blanca," which to the Mískitos is known as "Ciudad Blanca." (p. 73)

2010 Christoph Wiegand. *Aventuras en el Valle del Colca* (Peru). Berlin: epubli GmbH. A story of a ciudad blanca and the "patrimonio oculto" of the Incas.

2012 Christopher Stewart. *Lost*. New York: Harper. Forthcoming book advertised as "the search for the Honduran Ciudad Blanca."

2013 Douglas Preston, "The El Dorado Machine," *The New Yorker*, May 6, pages 34-40. A discussion of the Ciudad Blanca story as viewed by different proponents.

2014 Wendy Griffin, who teamed with Honduran anthropologists previously in discussions of Ciudad Blanca, wrote a blog piece on December 20 entitled "What is the Folklore Related to the Ciudad Blanca Area of the Mosquitia?"

(<http://healthandhonduranindiansblacks.blogspot.com/2014/12/folklore-of-ciudad-blanca-and-history.html>)

excerpts from her blog:

"The poisonous snakes of the Ciudad Blanca area, like the lance de fer (sic) snake, form a significant part of the folklore, medicine, and ceremonies of the Pech Indians. On the seal of the Pech Federation (FETRIPH) there is the head of Pech Indian and his head a hat with a snake on it. The face, hat and snake are half dark and half light. The light side shows the part of the Pech culture that the Pech are willing to share with outsiders, and the dark side shows the part they are not willing to share.

The location of "Kao Kamasa" (or, white house) where the Pech hero Patakako was buried is a part of their culture that the Pech have not been willing to share. The Pech oral

histories of “Kao Kamasa” or White House where the enemies of the Pech sacrificed the Pech and tore out their hearts and ate the Pech, is one of the origins of the current myths concerning the Ciudad Blanca -- supposedly a lost city in Rio Platano Biosphere area of the western Honduran Mosquitia area, now inhabited partly by the Pech Indians. This story is part of the greater legend of the Pech hero Patakako (His name means Our person who does, makes or who creates in Pech), and appears in other accounts like that of the Nine Brothers and Cacao and Jicaro, collected by Dr. Lazaro Flores and published in 1991 in the book “ Dioses, Heroes, y Hombres en el Universo Mitico Pech” (Gods, Heros and Men in the Pech Mythical Universe) coauthored with me and in Lazaro Flores’s 1989 book *Mitos y Leyendas de los Pech: Los guardianes de los Patahua* (Myths and Legends of the Pech, The Guardians of the Patahua). The Patatahua is the Pech name for the people who lived in the stone ruins like the Ciudad Blanca near them in the Mosquitia and Olancho rainforest. According to Pech Indian (unnamed here) Angel Martinez Patatahua means our ancestors, the grandfathers and great grandfathers who came before us.

The Nahua Indians of Olancho furthermore have oral history traditions related to the Ciudad Blanca. An elder of the community of Jamasquire, a community near Catacamas, Olancho, thought the Ciudad Blanca was a Nahua Indian city at the time the Spanish were attacking Honduras. The Indians of the Valley of Olancho, which includes the area between Juticalpa and Catacamas, sent their riches to the Ciudad Blanca to be protected from the Spanish offensive. The area near the Ruins thought to be the Ciudad Blanca is still a gold producing district like that in the head waters of the Rio Platano, reported Pech Indian (unnamed here) Juana Carolina Hernandez Torres. Torres describes her experiences panning for gold there in the book *Los Pech de Honduras* (The Pech of Honduras).

Nahua Indians in Central America, as evidenced by Nahua place names and certain artifacts and architectural styles, seem to have clustered around places with specific resources like obsidian, gold, cacao, tule or Carrizo to make petates and baskets to haul the products in, green feathers, the feathers of the scarlet macaw and the quetzal and the feathers at least 27 other kinds of birds, the parrots themselves, Central American cotton, dye plants or insects or animals in seashells used to make dyes, green stones, copper, quartz crystals the Indians called diamonds, salt, liquidambar, rubber, and jaguar skins and claws, big hardwood trees appropriate for making canoes, medicinal plants, which formed part of the long distance trade route that extended at least from Costa Rica to through the Aztec Empire in Mexico to the American Southwest at the time of the Spanish Conquest. For example, the feathers of scarlet macaws or parrots, native to Honduras and especially the Olancho and Mosquitia regions, were used in Pueblo Indian ceremonies in the US Southwest. The Indian slaves from other tribes were also known to form part of this trade between Mexico and Central America and between the different Central American polities.

The Ciudad Blanca area and Olancho in general was and is rich in many of these kinds of resources. The Nahuas were not the only merchants travelling along this trade route by canoe, as there is certainly clear evidence of Post Classic (900-1500 AD) Mayan long distance traders, too along the Yucatan, Guatemalan and Honduran coasts. Some ethnic groups active

along this trade route, such as groups called Puntun Mayas, Nonalacos, Toqueguas, etc. in colonial era Spanish or Mayan documents are thought by some people to have included both Maya and Nahua speakers and possibly people of other ethnic groups, too. Nahua is thought to have been an important trade language even before the Spanish came, and many Indian males in Central America were often bilingual (Nahua and other Indian languages) at the time of contact. The situation of Central American Nahuas is not unlike Honduras's position in international trade in the 19th and 20th centuries and the roles of gringo businessmen and English in international trade here.

One theory on why it is called the White City are the Nahuatl name Huehuetlapalan or Xucotaco in another language, a Mayan name according to the Wikipedia in English articles on Theodore Morde and Ciudad Blanca, which Hernan Cortes reportedly used to refer to the Ciudad Blanca area east of Trujillo. Jesus Aguilar Paz's son also associated Huehuetlapalan with the Ciudad Blanca in Honduras in Ted Danger's video on the Ciudad Blanca on Youtube, "Getting to Know the Rio Platano Biosphere in Search of the Ciudad Blanca", available in English in four parts and in Spanish in one part. According to the Ce Acatl article on Wikipedia in Spanish, Huehuetlapalan is where Ce Acatl, the Toltec king also known by the honorific title Quetzalcoatl, Naxcit (Precious stone) among the Mayas, or Son of Maguey (a plant the Maya Chortis use to make rope products like bags and ropes) among his descendants, died or disappeared after he left the Mexican coast.

The Ladinos of Honduras have different traditions concerning the Ciudad Blanca. Some Ladinos are descendants of the Indians who went to live in the Ciudad Blanca and related previously Nahua speaking areas, thus their input can be important in understanding the history of the Ciudad Blanca. One Ladino related that the person who is buried at the Ciudad Blanca is Quetzalcoatl and that there is a crystal skull decorating his tomb."

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For more thoughtful commentaries on the Ciudad Blanca phenomenon see Rus Sheptak (2012) "Mythical Ciudad Blanca" <http://hondurasculturepolitics.blogspot.com/2012/05/mythical-ciudad-blanca.html> , Mark Bonta (2017) "The Lost City of the Monkey God, A True Story; Jungland," *The AAG Review of Books*, 5:4, 276-280, DOI: 10.1080/2325548X.2017.1366845, and Chris Bagley (2016) "The Lost White City of the Honduras: Discovered Again (and Again)," in Card, Jeb. J.; Anderson, David S. (eds.). *Lost City, Found Pyramid: Understanding Alternative Archaeologies and Pseudoscientific Practices*. University of Alabama Press. pp. 35-45 and (2017) "The lost city that's not lost, not a city, and doesn't need to be discovered," *Sapiens, digital anthropology magazine* <https://www.sapiens.org/archaeology/la-ciudad-blanca-indigenous-collaboration/>

XII. Concluding Remarks

At the end of the Ciudad Blanca saga we have a confusing conglomeration of faith/beliefs in unbelievable myths as truths, in the possible ancient connection between south Asian and Mesoamerican cultures, in self-proclaimed "explorers" who know how to quickly publicize their supposed finds of the ruins of a God-build metropolis in a difficult-of-access area in eastern Honduras. Morde was probably the worst of the group. Before he left the US in search of the lost city he proclaimed in a quite unscientific method what his aim was: to find the metropolis of the monkey god. So, by golly, that is what he said he did. He said he was gone 5 months, but it can be shown he was gone only less than four. Very little he said was truthful, but he easily found followers to perpetuate his "big lie."

Throughout it all, probably, just probably, we can see how easy it is to embellish a story and to find an audience for nonsense. Unfortunately, we can probably also see the role of anthropologists and other "experts" in leading informants to relate a history that had to be invented.

Over the years several people have overtly claimed to have found the lost city of Ciudad Blanca. Who will be next?

Some proclamations, 1915-1999

- 1915 a ladino hunter (Nicolás Cardona) and his son found the lost city
- 1928 Charles A. Lindbergh sees Ciudad Blanca
- 1931 (Doc Brown) stumbled on it when penetrating an almost inaccessible region in Honduras
- 1940 Morde finds in Honduras a vanished civilization's prehistoric metropolis.
- 1952 Sekelj "managed to find an ancient city in ruins" - La Blanka Urbo (in Esperanto)
- 1960 I found a lost city.
- 1969 Ciudad blanca descubierta en selva de la Mosquitia.
- 1977 Woodman "found a lost city in Honduras"
- 1985 Expedition believes it discovered lost city in Honduras.
- 1999 A legendary lost city found in the Honduran tropical forest.

The good news is: Eastern Honduras still has plenty of mysteries to discover and try to understand. Let's spend some time studying those and not mentioning Ciudad Blanca any more. We just await well-meaning students who seek the truth and reality that Hondurans rarely hear.

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**RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
HONDURAN MYTH OF CIUDAD BLANCA –
THE LAST OF THE “GREAT LOST CITIES”
THAT NEVER WAS (1917-NEVER WAS)**



The author in stormy weather on Brus Laguna, 1994.



Church ruins at Cururu, 1987.

**The “Real” Lost Places:
Nueva Salamanca, Elgueta,
Teculucelo, Carcamo,
Munguiche, Quesaltepeque,
Cayngala, and Cururu.**



Geographers in search of the lost towns of Honduras, 2004.

Ruinas Ciudad Blanca