Some Ethnographic Problems of Southern Guyana

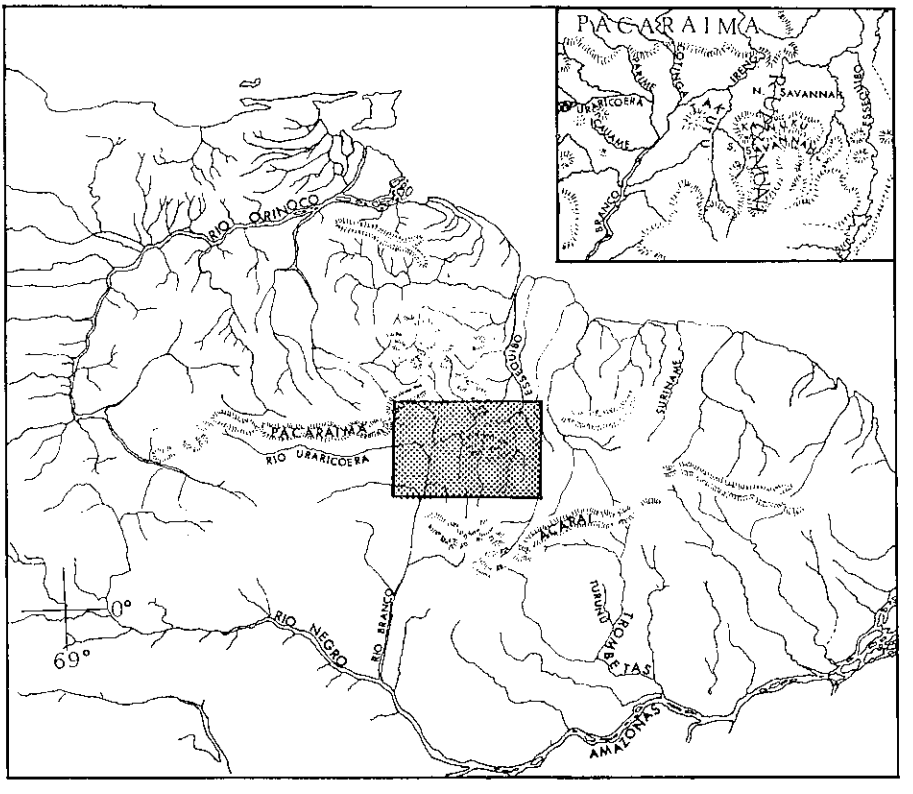
By P. G. Rivière

In an edition of *Folk* dedicated to Dr. Jens Yde nothing would seem more appropriate than to examine a point made by him in his recent monograph 'Material Culture of the Waiwai.' He writes, "A solution of the Tarúma question is of great importance to the understanding of the cultural situation in the region [Sierra Acarai]" (1965: 281). A certain assumption has sprung up about the origin of the Taruma, and in this paper I wish to query it by the simple expedient of reviewing the evidence. The assumption is that a people called the Taruma who are reported living near the mouth of the Rio Negro around 1700 later migrated to the Upper Essequibo. In the last part of this paper I extend my examination to the Rupununi Savannah region in order to question certain conclusions relating to that area which have been arrived at through archaeological investigations.

I

The existence of a tribe called the Taruma living near the mouth of the Rio Negro during the second half of the XVIIth. century is not in doubt. The exact date at which the Portuguese first came in contact with them is less certain, but 1657 seems probable. In that year two Jesuit priests, Francisco Velozo and Manoel Pires, who are said to have been the first Portuguese to enter the Rio Negro (de Barros 1746: 250-2), held mass and erected a cross in a Taruma village before returning to Para (Soares Leite 1943: 370). The historian Ribeiro de Sampaio in his *Diário da Viagem* of 1774/5 places the first Portuguese entry into the Rio Negro slightly later, in 1669 (1825: 89). Mello Moraes prefers the earlier date, and suggests moreover that from 1657 until 1690 when a decree was passed to found a permanent mission station the Taruma were visited by travelling priests (1859: 495). However, there is no mention of such a mission in 1691 when the Spaniard, Father Samuel Fritz, met the Taruma at the mouth of the Rio Negro. The Taruma asked him to remain amongst them as their missionary (1922: 73). The Jesuit mission was founded among the Taruma and christened Nossa Senhora da Conceicao, but it was shortlived for as a result of a redistribution of territory among the competing missionary orders, the Carmelites took over the station in 1794 and renamed it Santo Elias dos Tarumas (Mello Moraes 1859: 495).

The existence of this mission is confirmed in 1709 by Father Fritz who wrote,



"From here there is no other settlement until the Taromas of the Rio Negro, where Fr. Juan Guillerme is serving" (1922: 124). It is just at this critical point in the history of the tribe that the evidence grows weaker; in 1715 the Captain of the Fort on the Rio Negro in a letter to the Governor of Grão-Para implies that all the Indians have deserted the vicinity (Brit. C-Case Notes 1903: 30). This can have been only a temporary state of affairs since two years later Father Jeronimo Coelho is officially appointed to Santo Elias dos Tarumas (Brit. C-Case Notes 1903: 31). Ribeiro de Sampaio, who, it must be remembered, was engaged in making a case for Portuguese rights to the territory, claims that for a number of years after 1720 Coelho was trading in company with the Taruma up the Rio Branco as far as the Takutu River (1850: 208). Without dating it, the same historian tells how the Taruma were transported to the village of Ayrão which is on the southern bank of the Rio Negro almost opposite the mouth of the Rio Branco (1825: 96). Mello Moraes dates this move as 1732, and says that it was done by Father José da Magdalena in order to get away from the unsettling neighbourhood of the fort (1859: 496). This fits with the story told by Monteiro de Noronha who, in his account of a journey in 1770/1, states that the village of Ayrão was first founded with Indians of the Taruma and Aroaqui nations, but

at the time of his visit only the latter remain since the Taruma have become totally extinct[1] (1856: 64). This is the sum total of the relevant information concerning the Taruma of the Rio Negro.

The earliest date at which a tribe called the Taruma is mentioned as living on the Upper Essequibo is 1764 when the Director-General of the Essequibo station of the Dutch West India Company reported to his directors that he has given orders to the Arinda Postholder[2] to go up the Essequibo and visit the numerous and powerful nation called the Taruma who live there (Brit. Case Ann. 1 1903: 72). After 1764 the existence of a tribe called the Taruma in the Upper Essequibo became fairly general knowledge; they are shown in this location on the 1775 map of the Spanish cartographer Juan de la Cruz Cano y Olmedilla, and on Luis de Surville's map of 1778. The ethnographic information for both these maps may have come from Father Antonio Caulin for although his book was not published until 1779 it was completed in 1759. Certainly there is a strong similarity between the distribution of tribes as described in Caulin's text (1779: 86) and as shown on the above mentioned maps. However the reverse is equally possible and Caulin, in the revisions which he made before the work finally went to press, may have included information from the two maps. If Caulin is the original source it pushes back the known existence of a tribe called the Taruma living in the Upper Essequibo by some years, but it leaves open the question of Caulin's source of information since he himself was never anywhere near the area.

The first actual contact with the Taruma was not made until 1837 when Robert Schomburgk visited them (1841: 167).

There seems singularly little evidence, other than an identity of names, to support the assumption that the Taruma of the Upper Essequibo are the descendants of the Taruma of the Rio Negro. If we are to accept a similarity of names as evidence, then the Turroomaes reported by Major John Scott to be living in the upper part of the Suranam (Suriname River) in 1669 (the same date as a people of the same name are recorded as living on the Rio Negro) seem to have a much better claim (Scott 1669: Fol. 39). Furthermore, if we accept certain orthographic equivalents, a continued residence of such a tribe on the southern side of the Sierra Acarai can be traced. A priest, Francisco de San Mancos, in his account of a journey up the Trombetas in 1725 refers to the Xuruma living on the Urucurin (Braz. 1st Mem. Ann. 1 1903: 40). Robert Schomburgk notes that the Pianoghotto call the Taruma, Xaruma (1845: 83), and Farabee that the Waiwai call the Taruma, Tcaruma (1918: 195). Roth concludes that, "There would appear to be little room for doubt that these Taruma are identical with the Saloema or Saluma of Surinam" (1929: ix–x). Protasio Frikel also reports a similar name, Charuma, and describes it as a collective term for several Carib groups in the vicinity of the Turunú River (1957: 544). By 1961 he had modified this view and wrote that the Charuma are also called Tunayana (1961: 11). Information gathered during my own fieldwork among the Trio of Surinam in

1963/64 adds a little to this. There were, at the village of Alalaparu, some Indians whom I was told were Mawayenas, but when I questioned them directly on this point they said that they were Tunayana. Living Trio Indians could remember trading with the Saluma who lived away to the west, but said that this trade had ceased some years ago. A similar story was told to Lodewijk Schmidt in 1941, and the reason given for the break in contact was fear of 'coughingsickness' (Schmidt 1942: 00). It is noticeable, and perhaps coincidental, that the break in contact between the Trio and the Saluma is more or less contemporaneous with the extinction of the Taruma in the Upper Essequibo.

If this demonstrates anything it is how unreliable as evidence tribal names are, but it seems likely that there existed from an early date, in the general area of the Sierra Acarai, an identifiable group which is known by a generic term which has been variously reduced to European script as Taruma, Saluma, Xaruma, and Charuma. However, this is merely replacing one unproven assumption by another although in this case no hypothetical migration is needed, and the next step would seem to be to examine the story that the Taruma migrated from the Rio Negro to the Upper Essequibo.

The first time this story appears in print would seem to be in an article by Adam de Bauve published in 1837, but written in 1833. "Après quelques explorations dans les environs de Manau, et notamment au bourg de Tharaumas, pour voir les anciennes sculptures des Indiens de ce nom, qui se sont retirés depuis longtemps sur l'Essequibo" (1837: 145). Either de Bauve made this story up, or else he was told it on the spot. There is some circumstantial evidence to support the former view since von Spix and von Martius who were far more thorough and conscientious collectors of information make no reference to such a story, and their comments on the Taruma are taken straight from Ribeiro de Sampaio (1831: 1125). There is more to it than this since in the writings of von Martius can be traced a development of this story by a dialogue with Robert Schomburgk. In an essay dated 1832 von Martius dismisses the Taruma as no longer heard of (1832: 19). Robert Schomburgk, after he had met the Taruma, wrote, "Von Martius in his enumeration of Indian Tribes considers the Tarumas or Tanuma extinguished. It appears they have retreated from the mouth of the Rio Negro, which they formerly inhabited, to the headwaters of the Essequibo" (1840: 50 fn.). Von Martius in his main ethnographic work repeats that the Taruma have disappeared from the Rio Negro, but now states that they continue to live in the Upper Essequibo, attributing this information to Robert Schomburgk (1867: 567–8, & 683–4).[3]

There is no clue as to where Schomburgk obtained this story; perhaps it was from Adam de Bauve, but Alexander von Humboldt, from whom Schomburgk copied so many mistakes, does not seem to be the culprit on this occasion since I can find no reference to the Taruma in his writings. It may well have been Schomburgk's own invention, but the wording of the footnote does give the

impression that the author was making a guess. Only a few years later, in the hands of Brett, it became a statement of fact.

"The Tarumas formerly lived near the mouth of the Rio Negro. The Carmelites had a Mission among them as early as 1670. Disagreeing with other tribes, and being ill-used by the Portuguese, a portion of them fled northward, and settled near the headwaters of the Essequibo" (1851: 299).

II

This assumption has been accepted virtually unquestioned by almost every author since then, and perhaps in no case more disastrously than by the American archaeologists Clifford Evans and Betty Meggers (1960: 191–246). Their investigations in the Upper Essequibo during 1952/3 gave hope that some objective assessment of the Taruma's prehistory would be forthcoming. This hope remains unfulfilled since the conclusions published took the assumption, as formulated by Brett, and used, together with another rather doubtful source (Nery 1901), to reach an interpretation of the archaeological finds. Indeed the situation is worse than this since it is admitted that the analytic result which best suited the ethnographic evidence was chosen (1960: 240). Accordingly the conclusions from the archaeological evidence can only reaffirm the ethnography, and does nothing to question it. It is true that the dates (1715–21) given by the archaeologists for the arrival of the Taruma in the Upper Essequibo are not contradicted by the more detailed examination of the literature, but nor is there any evidence that such a migration took place.

The question which must now be faced is whether there is any local ethnographic evidence which has been overlooked by the archaeologists, but which might help with the interpretation of their archaeological finds. In fact there is, and the clue to it exists in the pages of Evans and Meggers' work. In describing the various sites investigated they write of E-29: Wana Wana, "This site was identified by our guide as one visited by a "Father", for whom the Taruma built a church" (1960: 206). The archaeologists ignore this invaluable remark in their attempts to date specific sites by ethnographic evidence (1960: 264–8). The answer is that a Roman Catholic Priest, Father Cary Elwes, visited the Upper Essequibo in 1919 and again in 1922. On his second visit he mentions a big building which John Melville built for him at the Taruma village of Wanawanatuk three years previously, and that he uses it as a church.[4] Both the location and name fit well with the archaeologists' site E-29. In both these qualities it also fits well with Roth's Wannawantuk, but which the archaeologists identify with their site E-30 as being the only site far enough down river. They further state that "Its [E-30] seriated position is perfect for this identification, but the description deviates slightly from Roth's" (268). It is not easy to understand why the archaeologists should have ignored E-29 since it is only 20 minutes' paddling from E-30 (207), and Roth's description fits E-29 just as well as it does E-30, and perhaps even a

little better since the hill at E-29 is three meters higher than that at E-30. However, a date of occupation for E-29 near the end of the Taruma Phase is totally unacceptable according to its seriated position which suggests a date of occupation sometime near the middle of the XIXth. century.

Certainly this fact calls for further inspection of Taruma Phase seriation as computed by Evans and Meggers, and with due regard to the ethnographic evidence on which they based their results the presence of a basic fallacy cannot be ruled out. In a recent exchange of papers in *American Antiquity* Lathrap has suggested that Evans and Meggers in their conclusions about the Mabaruma Phase of Northwestern Guyana have underestimated the time scale by 1,000 years (Lathrap 1964 & 1966, Evans & Meggers 1964). This disagreement has been based on certain points of archaeological technique and method in which I am not competent,[5] but the ethnographic evidence from the Upper Essequibo area leads me to suggest that with reference to the sites *investigated* the duration of the phase may have been overestimated. I think what is called for is a reinterpretation of the archaeological data without reference to any unproven assumptions, but taking into account the facts which are known.

III

The use to which the two American archaeologists put ethnography in the interpretation of material collected on the Upper Essequibo induced me to examine their conclusions from a similar investigation in the Rupununi Savannah region (Evans & Meggers 1960: 271–332). In this area also they have relied on ethnographic material to reach an interpretation of their archaeological finds, but they have been equally unfortunate in their choice of sources. They quote extensively from Farabee, but without attempting to verify the accuracy of his statements regarding the location of the two tribes concerned, the Macusi and the Wapisiana. For example this sentence, quoted by Evans and Meggers (1960: 327) is entirely unsupportable: "A map by Nicholas Horstman published in 1748 shows the Macusi occupying the area north of the Takutu River and the Kanuku Mountains and the Wapisiana on the Brazilian savannas south of the Takutu and Uraracuera Rivers" (Farabee 1918: 13).

It seems likely that Farabee took his account of Horstman's expedition at least partly from Brett who wrote that Horstman found the Macusi settled round Lake Amucu in 1749 (1868: 478). It is difficult to see whence exactly Brett got this information, or why Farabee elaborated on it. Horstman's letter and map which he gave to La Condamine in 1743 (La Condamine 1745: 130) mention only one tribe by name, the Parahans (Harris & Villiers 1911: 167–174).[6] Horstman's sketch map was incorporated into Jean d'Anville's map of 1748, but neither the Macusi nor the Wapisiana are marked on this map.

Another piece of ethnographic evidence which the archaeologists regard as important is the 1775 map of Juan de la Cruz Cano y Olmedilla, and they claim

from this that the Macusi once inhabited the region south of the Kanuku Mountains, the southern Rupununi Savannah (1960: 327). This seems to be a case of special pleading since the delineation of this area is very poor and it is difficult to identify any particular point. The Kanuku Mountains are not shown, and the name Macusi (Macusia, Macusis) appears twice; once to the west of Lake Amucu and near the River Mahu, and once to the east of the Essequibo. Neither location is readily identifiable as the southern Rupununi Savannah.

The only thing to do is to proceed in the same way as has been done with the Taruma, and review the evidence which exists concerning the Macusi and the Wapisiana. The first definite reference to these two tribes is in 1753 when the Director-General of Essequibo reports that the Wapisiana have been killing the Macusi on the Essequibo (Brit. Case, Ann. 1 1903: 61). In 1765 the same two tribes are reported as fighting each other on the Rupununi, and that this has prevented the Postholder from ascending this river (Brit. Case, Ann. 1 1903: 79). In 1769 the Postholder Jansse meets the Macusi on the Rupununi River, and the Wapisiana on the Mahu-Ireng River (Brit. Case, Ann. 1 1903: 86).

From the Portuguese side Monteiro de Noronha records in 1770 that the Macusi are living on the Uraricoera River, and the Wapisiana on the Maruwa (Parime) River (1856: 67). The surveyors Franco de Almeida Serra and Antonio Pires da Silva Pontes found the Macusi in the Pacaraima Mountains in 1781, but do not refer to the Wapisiana (Braz. 1st Mem. Ann. 1 1903: 156). In 1786 the naturalist Alexandre Ferreira met the Macusi on the Mahu-Ireng, and the Wapisiana near the Surumu and Takutu Rivers (Braz. 2nd Mem. Ann. 3 1903: 52). This information agrees well with that provided by Lobo de Almada in 1788 who found the Macusi in the Pacaraimas to the east of the Surumu, and the Wapisiana between the Mahu-Ireng and the Maruwa (1861: 675).

This is only a fraction of the evidence which places these two tribes in the general area of the Uraricoera, Maruwa, Surumu, Mahu-Ireng Rivers, and the Pacaraima Mountains during the second half of the XVIIIth century. After 1790 the evidence becomes slightly more meagre during the next 50 years. A traveller, Francisco José Rodrigues Barata who passed through the region twice in 1798–99 met a few Wapisiana on the Mahu-Ireng but mentions no other Indians (Braz. 1st Mem. Ann. 4 1903: 16). An Englishman, John Hancock, recalled, many years after his visit to the area in 1810, finding a Macusi village at the head of the Surumu River (Brit. Case, Ann. 2 1903: 54). His map of 1811 is particularly interesting since the Wapisiana are shown on it as living south of the Kanuku mountains.[7] In 1833 Adam de Bauve found some Wapisiana living on the Cauame River, and in the area west of the Mahu-Ireng and north of the Uraricoera (1837: 150 & 155).

Soon after de Bauve's visit Robert Schomburgk began his travels, and a complete picture of the distribution of these two tribes is revealed in his writings. He summed up the Macusi as living "on open country and savannahs of Rupununi

and Parima, and the mountain chains Pacaraima and Kanuku" (1840: 50). He reported the Wapisiana as inhabiting the area of the Cotinga (1841a: 212), as having a village on the northern Rupununi Savannahs (1836: 252), and as thickly populating the southern Rupununi Savannahs (1841: 166 & 189). He refers to Macusi and Wapisiana Indians living in the same village (1841a: 229), and intermarrying (1843: 54). Schomburgk estimated there to be 500 Wapisiana living in British Guiana (1840: 50).

The distribution of the Macusi has remained virtually unchanged since Schomburgk's time, but that of the Wapisiana has undergone some slight but important modifications. After Schomburgk's time there is no mention of a Wapisiana village on the northern Rupununi Savannah, and from the mid-XIXth century onwards the two tribes are, within the boundaries of Guyana, territorially separate. In Brazil, however, the villages of these two tribes have remained intermingled. A movement in the distribution of the Wapisiana in Brazil did take place during the second half of the XIXth century. A census taken in 1903 shows that the largest number of Brazilian Wapisiana was living south of the Cotinga mouth to the west of the Takutu, and between the Takutu and the Rio Branco opposite the Kanuku Mountains (Braz. 2nd Mem. Ann. 2 1903: Appendix). This latter area, although one frequented by Europeans from an early date, is not one in which the Wapisiana had previously been recorded as living. It is perhaps diagnostic of a migration of Wapisiana from the Uraricoera area, where they were found in the XVIIIth century, to the southern Rupununi Savannah where they are first reported in 1811. A further clue to this movement is that between 1840 and 1945 the number of Wapisiana in Guyana quadrupled (Baldwin 1946: 53), and this during a period when Amerindian populations were generally declining. There is a strong tradition that the Wapisiana had migrated into the southern Rupununi Savannah from the west, and this movement may well have been started by the Portuguese *descimentos* on the Rio Branco during the last quarter of the XVIIIth century. In this context one can refer to numerous statements made by Wapisiana Indians at the time of the Brazil/British Guiana boundary dispute in which they claim that either they or their parents had moved from Brazil (Brit. Case, Ann. 2a 1903: 1–19). While there is a certain amount of circumstantial evidence to support a Wapisiana migration from the west, there is no evidence to support Farabee's claim, adopted by Evans and Meggers (1960: 327), that the Wapisiana had forced the Macusi northwards (1918: 13). Once again Brett seems to be the source of this particular assumption (1851: 276).

Although there is no sound evidence that the Macusi ever lived south of the Kanuku Mountains, it is on the assumption that they once did that Evans and Meggers have interpreted the material collected in the savannah region. They conclude that "it seemed possible that the archaeological remains of all Rupununi sites belonged exclusively to the Macusi" (1960: 328). Beyond the lack of evidence that the Macusi ever dwelt south of the Kanuku mountains there is one curious

flaw in their argument. Assuming that all the sites south of the Kanuku Mountains are older than those to the north of that mountain range, and that the most recent site in the southern area is pre-1835, it is difficult to understand the coincidence whereby no sites post-1835 were found in the southern savannah, and no pre-1835 sites in the northern savannah. This is particularly baffling in view of the fact that while we know the northern area was inhabited before 1835, it is only from 1835 onwards that it is known for certain that the southern savannah was inhabited.

In an attempt to resolve this problem I would like to offer an alternative interpretation of the archaeological data. The Rupununi Phase is marked by two main pottery types; Kanuku Plain which was most popular at the beginning of the period and is more closely associated with the sites south of the Kanuku Mountains, and Rupununi Plain which grew in popularity through the duration of the phase and is commonest in the northern sites. The dating of the seriated sequence of the Rupununi Phase was carried out by reference to articles of European origin that were found in association with indigenous material. This was done almost exclusively with sites from the northern area where European trade goods were more abundant. There seems no reason to challenge the conclusions arrived at for the northern sites, but nor is there reason to assume the same pottery change to have taken place in the southern savannah. All the sites were too shallow for any stratigraphic evidence, and the only datable item of European origin was a coin marked 1809. This was found, very worn, in a funeral urn and can imply nothing more important than a date after 1809. There seems no objection on archaeological grounds to turning the pottery seriation sequence of the southern sites the other way op so that the Kanuku Plain increases and the Rupununi Plain wanes in popularity. In fact at none of the sites on the actual savannah, rather than in the Kanuku Mountains, do the total number of Rupununi Plain sherds account for much over a third of the total find, and therefore the culture south of the mountains is very strongly related to the Kanuku Plain pottery. The site in the northern area which has the largest proportion of Kanuku Plain sherds is located on the northwest corner of the Kanuku Mountains.

The other suggestion which I have to make is that the southern sites are not older than the northern ones but are contemporaneous with them.

If one now turns back to the ethnographic evidence it will be found that this interpretation of the archaeological data fits well with the known facts. Documentary evidence indicates that during the second half of the XVIIIth century the Macusi and Wapisiana lived intermixed in a region stretching from the Maruwa in the west to the Rupununi mouth in the east, and bounded by the Pacaraima Mountains on the north and the Kanuku Mountains on the south. Around the year 1800 a part of the Wapisiana started migrating south and eastward to settle on the southern Rupununi Savannah, and later in the XIXth century had completely abandoned the northern savannah to the Macusi. As these two tribes became territorially distinct within the boundaries of Guyana,

their own particular pottery style, that is to say the Kanuku Plain of the Wapisiana and the Rupununi Plain of the Macusi, became gradually more pronounced in the respective areas. The reason why both forms of pottery are found in each area is that, prior to migration, the two groups lived in close contact with each other, still did so in the northern savannah at the time of Schomburgk's travels, and still do so in Brazil.[8] The site (R-2) to the northwest of the Kanuku Mountains which contains a high proportion of Kanuku Plain pottery (i.e., that associated with the Wapisiana) fits in well with the overall picture since this region lies directly athwart the path of migration.

This alternative interpretation also disposes of the embarrassing absence of any sites in the southern savannahs after 1835, the year from which the Wapisiana are known for certain to have been living there.

In this paper I have tried to examine the validity of certain assumptions about some groups of Indians in Southern Guyana, and in so doing have reviewed, in as much detail as space allows, the evidence for making them.[9] I am now certain that no further help is available from documentary sources in reaching a solution either to the Taruma problem which Dr. Yde seeks, or to the Macusi and Wapisiana one. If an answer is to be found, archaeology must provide it, but only by taking into account the reliable ethnographic sources which exist.

NOTES

1. There is no reason to disbelieve this since the extinction of complete Amerindian groups by slavery and disease is a well enough documented occurrence (cf. Sausse 1951).
2. The Dutch maintained various trading posts in the interior of their Colony. The Arinda post was on the Essequibo, and over the years was located in a number of different sites. The furthest upstream that it was placed was near the mouth of the Rupununi River.
3. Von Martius adds a rider to this by suggesting that those who lived on the Rio Negro may have been an outlying group of the Upper Essequibo tribe (1867: 568).
4. It is true that the diaries of Father Cary Elwes are not published but enough people are aware of them for simple enquiry by the archaeologists to have unearthed their existence. I am grateful to Father Brinkman of Heythrop College, Oxford, and to Dr. Audrey Butt, who is at present preparing the diaries for publication, for permission to consult them.
5. There is one small point in the computation to which I think it is worth drawing attention. The total pottery change in E-9, Cut 1 is 25.1 percent. in the case of Yochó Plain, and 14 percent. for Kalunye Plain (1960: 327). The pottery change rate is estimated at 1 percent. each 3.26 years (241). Thus based on pottery change rate the duration of E-9 Cut 1 is 81.8 years according to Yochó Plain and 45.6 years according to Kalunye Plain. Neither of these figures agree very well with the 128.8 years duration as worked out by sherd refuse accumulation in Table I (239).

   A similar discrepancy can be noted with reference to E-19, Cut 2. The sherd accumulation figure is 104.5 years, but by pottery change rate Yochó Plain gives 57.4 years, and Kalunye Plain 50.5 years.
6. Horstman's manuscript is in the Klaprot Collection, in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, However, there are several more easily accessible facsimiles of the map and copies of the letter. For example, in Harris & Villiers 1911, and in both sets of the Brazil/British Guiana boundary dispute papers.
7. Admittedly European intrusion into the area south of the Kanuku Mountains is relatively late, and the majority of early travellers (including Horstman, in spite of what Schomburgk,

who copied von Humboldt, wrote (1845:15)) crossed from the Essequibo to the Rio Branco by way of the Pirara portage, and not by the Sauriwau creek. The first recorded use of the latter route, which joins the Takutu and the Rupununi south of the Kanuku range, is by members of Lobo de Almada's expedition of 1787 (Braz. 1st Mem. Ann. 1 1903: 236–40), but neither they nor Barata who traveled this way twice in 1798–99 mention meeting any Indians. However it is known that the most southerly part of this region was inhabited because soldiers, engaged in bringing down Indians for the settlements on the Rio Branco, refer to Atorais and Paravilhanos villages near the Quitaro River (Braz. 1st Mem. Ann. 1 1903: 210–12). Lobo de Almada reports that the Atorais live in the mountains between the sources of the Takutu and Rupununi Rivers (1861:674). By the time Schomburgk visited them they are living in the same general area, but very few of them remain (1845:26).

8. It should thus be possible to confirm or refute my interpretation by archaeological investigation on the Brazilian side of the border.
9. The evidence, in far greater detail, can be found in my unpublished B. Litt. thesis (Rivière 1963).

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P. G. Rivière

Institute of
Latin American Studies,
University of London.