

1976

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### Recommended Citation

Purdy, Barbara A. (1976) "Weapons, Strategies, and Tactics of the Europeans and the Indians in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 55 : No. 3 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol55/iss3/3>

## WEAPONS, STRATEGIES, AND TACTICS OF THE EUROPEANS AND THE INDIANS IN SIXTEENTH- AND SEVENTEENTH- CENTURY FLORIDA

by BARBARA A. PURDY\*

**T**HE INDIANS OF FLORIDA were hostile to white explorers, adventurers, colonists, and missionaries from the time of Ponce de León's encounter in 1513 until 1710 when it was reported, "there remains not now so much as one Village with ten Houses in it, in all Florida, that is subject to the Spaniards."<sup>1</sup> These were the Apalachee and Timucua Indians of northwest and central Florida, but it is known that the Tocobago Indians had been destroyed by 1709.<sup>2</sup> The Ais, never many in number, seem to have disappeared sometime during the first half of the eighteenth century, and the Tekesta were finally exterminated by bands of raiding Creeks.<sup>3</sup> Some historians believe the last remnants of these and the Calusa Indians went to Havana with the Spaniards in 1763, but there is evidence that a few Calusa Indians remained near Charlotte Harbor and later supported the Seminoles.<sup>4</sup>

Indian hostility might be attributed to fear of enslavement or the natural tendency for all people to protect their homes

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1. [Nairne?], *A Letter from South Carolina* (London, 1710), 34, quoted in Verner W. Crane, *The Southern Frontier, 1670-1732* (Ann Arbor, 1929, 1956), 81.
2. Crane, *Southern Frontier*, 81. The Tocobago were an Indian group (possibly Timucuan speakers) who lived on the Gulf near Tampa Bay early in the historic period.
3. Eugene Lyon, "More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast" (research paper, University of Florida, 1967), 2, copy in P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville; John Mann Goggin, "The Tekesta Indians of Southern Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XVIII (April 1940), 278.
4. William C. Sturtevant, "Chakaika and the 'Spanish Indians': Documentary Sources Compared With Seminole Tradition," *Tequesta*, XIII (1953), 35-73; Wilfred T. Neill, "The Identity of Florida's 'Spanish Indians,'" *Florida Anthropologist*, VIII (June 1955), 43-57; John R. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States* (Washington, 1946), 102.

and families. Since the way of life of the intruders was vastly different from the aborigines, resistance should have been expected. Despite eventual changes in Spain's policy regarding slavery and treatment of the Indians, and her attempts to pacify the Indians through the mission system, the Florida natives continued their resistance.<sup>5</sup>

The material culture of the Indians was not greatly altered, mainly because there was so little access to European goods. Florida served as a buffer "for Spain's richer possessions to the south," and the crown was little interested in expending any more time or money than was necessary.<sup>6</sup> In many areas, white contact was not sustained, and the social life of the Indians endured. The Indians seemed satisfied with their traditional ways; there was no reason to introduce anything new. For example, when the chief of Acuera was asked by De Soto to come forward, he noted proudly that he was king in his own country, and that there was no necessity for him—who had as many subjects as he possessed—to become another's subject.<sup>7</sup> The Indians remained nomadic, wore only skins or moss, used bows and arrows, kept their language, planted crops, prepared foods, and hunted as they did before Europeans arrived.<sup>8</sup> Despite efforts to abolish certain habits, either by instilling Christian ideals or through force, the Indians continued to scalp and hack up their enemies, practice premarital

5. On the Spanish missions in Florida, see Mark F. Boyd, Hale G. Smith, and John W. Griffin, *Here They Once Stood: The Tragic End of the Apalachee Missions* (Gainesville, 1951); Michael V. Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513-1870* (Gainesville, 1965); Robert Allen Matter, "The Spanish Missions of Florida: The Friars Versus the Governors in the 'Golden Age,' 1606-1690" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 1972).
6. Lillian M. Seaberg, "The Zetrouer Site: Indian and Spaniard in Central Florida" (M.A. thesis, University of Florida, 1955), 109.
7. Garcilaso de la Vega, *The Florida of the Inca*, John Grier Varner and Jeanette Varner, trans. and eds. (Austin, Texas, 1951), 118.
8. Seaberg, "Zetrouer Site," 123; Lucy L. Wenhold, transl. and ed., "A 17th Century Letter of Gabriel Díaz Vara Calderon, Bishop of Cuba, Describing the Indians and Indian Missionaries of Florida," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, vol. 95, no. 16, publication 3398 (Washington, 1936), 12; Jonathan Dickinson, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal, or, God's Protecting Providence. Being the Narrative of a Journey from Port Royal in Jamaica to Philadelphia between August 23, 1696 and April 1, 1697*, ed. Evangeline Walker Andrews and Charles McLean Andrews (New Haven, 1945), 28; Robert Allen Matter, "Missions in the Defense of Spanish Florida, 1566-1710," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LIV (July 1975), 33; John Tate Lanning, *The Spanish Missions of Georgia* (Chapel Hill, 1935), 148.

sex and polygamy, conduct inter-tribal warfare, build new fires, observe first fruit rites, hold the ballgame, consult the shaman, pay tribute to the cacique, paint themselves red and black, and retain other characteristics.<sup>9</sup>

Bernard Romans, in the eighteenth century, described these Indians: "what a people do we find them, a people not only rude and uncultivated, but incapable of civilization: a people that would think themselves degraded in the lowest degree, were they to imitate us in any respect whatever, and that look down on us and all our manners with the highest contempt: and of whom experience has taught us, that on the least opportunity they will return like the dog to his vomit."<sup>10</sup>

It is likely that the Indians permitted the Europeans to gain a foothold in Florida only because they coveted their material possessions. Likely the Indians had already learned of white activity in the Caribbean and had salvaged goods from shipwrecks. They realized the advantages of metals, and at least by 1565, Hawkins found that they were using "piked pointes of kniues, which hauing gotten of the Frenchmen, broke the same, and put the points of them in their arrowes heads."<sup>11</sup>

The ships were of little use to the Indians except to strip them of materials to be converted into serviceable implements. They would hardly have known how to operate and maintain a fully-rigged ship. Also, the horse was not a popular innovation; it did not fit their already established pattern of life. Firearms might have been functional, but the Indians could not repair them or replenish needed accessories, nor could they produce gun flints.<sup>12</sup>

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9. Seaberg, "Zetrouer Site," 121-28; Michael Kenny, *The Romance of the Floridas, The Finding and the Founding* (New York, 1934), 350-51. See also numerous references throughout Lyon, "More Light on the Indians of the Ays Coast"; Dickinson, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*; and Albert Samuel Gatschet, "The Timucua Language," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, XVI (April 1877), 626-42; XVII (April 1878), 490-504.
  10. Bernard Romans, *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida* (New York, 1775; facsimile edition, Gainesville, 1962), 39.
  11. Clements R. Markham, *The Hawkins' Voyages During the Reigns of Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth, and James I* (London, 1878), 53.
  12. Luis Geronimo de Ore, "The Martyrs of Florida (1513-1616)," *Franciscan Studies*, XVIII (July 1936), 93; Lucy L. Wenhold, transl. and ed., "The Trials of Captain Don Isidoro De Leon," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXV (January 1957), 253, 262.

They seemed to be fascinated with mirrors, glass beads, and other trade gadgets, but for nearly 200 years apparently European clothing was the most sought-after item. The first mention of Indians dressed in European clothing is in the account of Lucas Vasquez de Ayllón's expedition of 1521. The Spaniards captured two Indians and, in order to gain their good will, "clothed them in doublet and hose like themselves."<sup>13</sup> Garcilaso de la Vega, in his chronicle of De Soto's expedition, says that when Grajales was captured, the Indians stripped him of his clothing, and "dressed him in some loin cloths."<sup>14</sup> In 1566, Pedro Menéndez "clothed Hotina in a shirt, for he was naked, with only a belt round his loins, . . . and he clothed him in a pair of breeches and a doublet of green silk, and put a hat on his head."<sup>15</sup> The Adelantado "clothed them [the Ais] many times," and the Indians ransomed their prisoners for "cloth, linen, and hatchets."<sup>16</sup> In 1559, Don Tristán de Luna's group "bartered their clothing for corn, as the Indians of the place had no desire for money."<sup>17</sup> During the Guale Revolt of 1597, when Father Francisco Avila's habit was taken from him, even though covered with blood, the Indian put it on.<sup>18</sup> Later during the trial, an Indian was wearing the tunic of a slain Franciscan.<sup>19</sup> In 1604, Governor Pedro Ibarra gave "presents of clothes," and in 1696, the clothing of Jonathan Dickinson and his shipwrecked party was taken by the Ais.<sup>20</sup>

History has not recorded the Florida Indians' impressions of the Europeans. Contemporary accounts, however, relate that

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13. Woodbury Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements Within the Present Limits of the United States*, 2 vols. (New York, 1905; facsimile edition, New York, 1959), I, 156.
  14. de la Vega, *Florida of the Inca*, 91.
  15. Gonzalo Solís de Meras, *Pedro Menéndez de Aviles, Adelantado, Governor and Captain-General of Florida, Memorial*, transl. Jeanette Thurber Connor (DeLand, 1923; facsimile edition, Gainesville, 1964), 208.
  16. Jeanette Thurber Connor, transl. and ed., *Colonial Records of Spanish Florida*, 2 vols. (DeLand, 1925-1930), I, 41.
  17. Herbert Ingram Priestly, transl. and ed., *The Luna Papers: Documents Relating to the Expedition of Don Tristan de Luna y Arellano for the Conquest of La Florida in 1559-1561*, 2 vols. (DeLand, 1928), I, xli.
  18. Ore, "Martyrs of Florida," 77.
  19. Maynard Geiger, *The Franciscan Conquest of Florida (1573-1618)* (Washington, 1937), 113.
  20. Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia*, 139; Dickinson, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, 30-32.

the explorers found a people generally taller than themselves, scantily dressed, but adorned with paint, tattoos, and various ornaments. They were armed with bows and arrows, reed knives, and sometimes clubs and spears. The Indians wore breastplates that were probably more decorative than protective, and their hair style functioned, at least in some areas, to hold extra arrows. They possessed canoes.<sup>21</sup>

The Europeans were equipped with weapons—firearms, cross-bows and quarrels (arrows), swords, pikes, and other pole arms—made wholly or partially of metal. They carried leather or metal shields and wore chain mail shirts or full suits of plate armor and helmets. Their horses also wore armor made usually of leather. Sometimes dogs trained to kill were used to subdue the Indians. The Europeans arrived in the New World in a variety of sailing vessels—galleons, caravels, and brigantines, some armed with cannon.<sup>22</sup>

If the Spaniards with their garments, weapons, horses, dogs, and ships startled the Indians, the use of paint as helmet, shield, and breastplate by the natives seemed to have interested the white men only slightly.<sup>23</sup> The Indians used bows and arrows with great skill, and to adjust to this expertise, the Europeans had to change their fighting techniques.

The principal weapon of Florida Indians was the bow and arrow. According to contemporary narratives the bow was large, made of hardwood, and strung with animal gut or skin; the cane arrows might be tipped with that material or the harder sections of palmetto, wood, deer horn, turkey cock spurs, vipers teeth, the sting of the stingray, tails of the horseshoe

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21. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, I, 50-52, 140; Charles E. Bennett, comp., *Settlement of Florida* (Gainesville, 1968), 19, 31, 32, 35, 39, 55, 58, 67, 80, 220; Jean Ribault, *The Whole & True Discouerye of Terra Florida* (London, 1563; facsimile editions, DeLand, 1927, Gainesville, 1964), 69, 73, 79-81; Gannon, *Cross in the Sand*, 64-65; Swanton, *Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 43-53, 571.
  22. Harold L. Peterson, *Arms and Armor in Colonial America, 1526-1783* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1956), 1-151; Carl P. Russell, *Guns On The Early Frontiers: A History of Firearms from Colonial Times Through the Years of the Western Fur Trade* (Berkeley, 1957), 26-30; Bjorn Landstrom, *Sailing Ships in words and pictures from papyrus boats to full-riggers* (Garden City, New York, 1969), 86-113, 155.
  23. Alonso Gregorio de Escobedo, *Pirates, Indians and Spaniards, Father Escobedo's "La Florida"* ed. James W. Covington, transl. A. F. Falcones (St. Petersburg, 1963), 136.

crab, animal bones, bird bills, fin bones, fish teeth, scales of the great brown spotted gar, and stones.<sup>24</sup>

The earliest description of an encounter with clubs was in 1513 when one of Ponce de León's seamen was struck "in the head with a stick, from which he remained unconscious."<sup>25</sup> Le Moyne pictures the use of the club in warfare and for in-group punishment.<sup>26</sup> In 1597, during the Juanillo revolt, Brother Antonio was killed by a blow with a large wooden knife (*macana*) edged with flint.<sup>27</sup> In 1696, Jonathan Dickinson's shipwrecked party was attacked with "truncheons" near Jupiter Inlet.<sup>28</sup> Escobedo says, "The macaña is made of a strong and thick piece of wood only four palms long (twenty-eight inches) and pebbles or small stones are encrusted in it. Thus, there is nothing, no matter how hard it is, that will splinter it. It will kill the best armored man and anyone who hesitates and is struck with the macaña will surely be killed. The blows of the Indians are so accurate that they are able to crush the stones of a seawall."<sup>29</sup> Father Louis Cancer was struck on the head with a club at Port Espiritu Santo on Florida's west coast, June 26, 1549. After he was knocked down, he was set upon and killed.<sup>30</sup> Garcilaso de la Vega related that the Indians used their bows as clubs, and since their bows were "as thick as an arm, six or seven feet long," his remark is believable.<sup>31</sup>

There is scant mention of the use of spears or lances in any of the Florida literature, nor does Le Moyne picture them extensively.<sup>32</sup> Two of Ponce de León's men were wounded "by

24. Bennett, *Settlement of Florida*, 55, 65; Swanton, *Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 571-82.

25. Edward W. Lawson, *The Discovery of Florida and Its Discoverer, Juan Ponce de Leon* (St. Augustine, 1946), 16.

26. Bennett, *Settlement of Florida*, 29, 67. While the authenticity of Jacques le Moyne's drawings is questionable because they were made from memory after he returned to France, they can probably be considered as accurate as other documents of the time written from memory.

27. Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia*, 89.

28. Dickinson, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, 50.

29. Escobedo, *Pirates, Indians and Spaniards*, 136.

30. Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables, 1971), 25.

31. Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Adventures in the Unknown Interior of America*, transl. Cyclone Covey (New York, 1961), 42.

32. Bennett, *Settlement of Florida*, 63, depicts Indians running from the fortified town carrying spears but in the accompanying narrative he says "they set up a cry which summons those within the town to the defense, armed with bows and arrows and clubs." *Ibid.*, 62.

the natives' darts and arrows.<sup>33</sup> The darts might have been lances since Juan Ortiz, held captive by Indians near present-day Tampa Bay, was given four darts to throw at lions who tried to steal the corpses he was instructed to guard.<sup>34</sup> Pedro Menéndez was wounded by a javelin thrust in his chest by Carlos' Indians (Calusa) and would have died except for his armor.<sup>35</sup> The lack of references to spears and similar weapons is probably because they served little function in the type of warfare conducted by the Indians.

Canoes were used extensively, and were constructed by hollowing out a tree with the aid of fire and adze. A large canoe may have been fifty feet long and as deep as a split tree trunk. According to Jean Ribault: ". . . they went thither in there boates, which boates they make but of one pece of a tree working yt hollowe so cunyngly and fyttely, that they put in one of these thus shapen boates or rather great troughes, XV or XX persons, and go therwith verry swiftly. They that rowe stand upright having there owers short, made after the fashyon of a peelee [*pelle* or shovel]."<sup>36</sup> They sometimes were lashed together and covered with mats to form decks to carry goods.<sup>37</sup> The canoes were very maneuverable and essential for transportation along the coasts and inland waterways.

The Europeans, wearing heavy suits of armor and carrying shields and other paraphernalia, were ill-equipped to trudge through swamps, dense forests, and across rivers. The dysfunctions of such military materiel have been noted by one writer: "In America where the whole white population was outnumbered and continually on the defensive, where wars consisted of ambushes, forays, and surprise attacks, at night and in the rain; different and superior weapons were needed. The armor was discarded as too burdensome for the long treks and rapid movements of woodland warfare. Polearms were found to be of little use against an enemy who would neither charge nor stand against a charge. In addition they were too unwieldy for use in rough and forested country. The crossbow and matchlock were too clumsy and slow for use against an enemy

33. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, I, 140.

34. de la Vega, *Florida of the Inca*, 66.

35. Connor, *Colonial Records of Spanish Florida*, I, 67.

36. Ribault, *Whole & True Discouerye*, 80-81.

37. de Meras, *Pedro Menéndez de Aviles*, 193.

who refused to stay in one place long enough for such a weapon to be discharged in his general direction."<sup>38</sup>

Members of the Narváez expedition built rafts to carry the shirts of mail, the weapons, what other baggage they bore, and the non-swimmers so they could cross what is believed to have been the Withlacoochee River.<sup>39</sup> *The Florida of the Inca* describes the hardships suffered by De Soto's group including those arising from the disadvantages of sixteenth-century accoutrements of war.<sup>40</sup> In addition to its cumbersome weight and resulting loss of mobility, the problems of wearing armor must have been compounded by heat, humidity, and insects.

There were advantages, of course, in being protected from the arrows which the Indians shot so rapidly that they could discharge six or seven while a Spaniard was reloading his musket, and with such force that they sometimes penetrated coats of mail and inflicted severe wounds.<sup>41</sup> Soon, padded cloth armor, called *escaupiles*, was worn in addition to metal armor. Padded protective garments had been worn by the poorer classes in Europe, but *escaupiles* were patterned after those worn by the Aztecs. Made of canvas and stuffed with cotton, this clothing was light, easy to wear, and effective against Indian arrows.<sup>42</sup> They were used at least as early as 1539 because Rodrigo Ranjel returned to De Soto and had him draw out more than twenty arrows which he bore fastened in his armor, which was a loose coat quilted with coarse cotton. By 1578, *escaupiles* were the only kind of armor listed in the official stores at the Florida ports with the exception of one buckler.<sup>43</sup> According to John Tate Lanning, "These padded cotton jackets were reported to be the only armor of value in Indian warfare. The leathern coat could be pierced very easily from the front, while the armor of the heavy corselet only turned the arrows, splitting them into splinters which, frequently striking persons near by,

38. Peterson, *Arms and Armor in Colonial America*, 5.

39. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, I, 183.

40. See numerous examples throughout de la Vega, *Florida of the Inca*.

41. James Alexander Robertson, transl. and ed., *True Relation of the Hardships Suffered by Governor Hernando de Soto & Certain Portuguese Gentlemen During the Discovery of the Province of Florida. Now newly set forth by a Gentleman of Elvas*, 2 vols. (DeLand, 1932-1933), II, 37.

42. Peterson, *Arms and Armor in Colonial America*, 124-25.

43. *Ibid.*, 125.

did more damage than the arrow itself. The arrow simply struck fast in the *escapil [sic]*.<sup>44</sup> Le Moyne's drawings do not portray the French wearing heavy armor, but they do appear to be wearing padded clothing.<sup>45</sup>

Horses arrived with the first explorers. On Ponce de León's second voyage to Florida, "he took with him mares, calves, swine, sheep, goats, and all manner of domestic animals useful to the service of man." There were "200 men and 50 horses" in the ships.<sup>46</sup> In 1528, Pánfilo de Narváez's expedition set sail with eighty horses, but only forty-two horses survived the voyage.<sup>47</sup> On the journey inland there were 300 men and forty horses. Later, when the Spaniards were in need of food, raids were made into Aute using all the horses available. Still later the animals were slaughtered and eaten.<sup>48</sup>

De Soto's 1539 expedition disembarked 213 horses near Tampa Bay.<sup>49</sup> According to Garcilaso, 350 horses sailed from Cuba with De Soto. Since some horses were left at Tampa Bay and others killed during the inland trek, Garcilaso probably exaggerated the number of horses.<sup>50</sup> After De Soto's death, his men built brigantines to carry them down the Mississippi to the Gulf. "They put twenty-two horses aboard—the best ones in camp—and the rest were made into salt meat."<sup>51</sup>

Tristán de Luna had 240 horses aboard in 1559 when he embarked for Pensacola Bay. Enroute 100 animals died; those remaining were used for exploring inland. Even though the Spanish faced famine and were reduced to boiling and eating the leather straps of their armor, their boots, and the lining of their shields, there is no mention that they ate their horses. Later, an Indian warrior in Alabama was permitted to ride one of the animals into battle.<sup>52</sup>

Ayllon's expedition in 1526 to Carolina included eighty-nine

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44. Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia*, 117.

45. Bennett, *Settlement of Florida*, 29, 35, 39, 67, 71.

46. Lawson, *Discovery of Florida*, 53.

47. Cabeza de Vaca, *Adventures in the Unknown*, 30.

48. *Ibid.*, 43, 46.

49. Robertson, *True Relation*, II, 31.

50. Bonita Brunson Lewis and Warren H. Wilkinson, transl., *La Florida del Inca* (? , 1936), xxiii. These translators contend the actual sum of the numbers given is 250, not 350. *Ibid.*

51. Robertson, *True Relation*, II, 271.

52. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, I, 357, 358, 357-69.

horses.<sup>53</sup> No horses are mentioned in the Ribault, Laudonnière, Le Moynes, Menéndez, or Dominique de Gourgues accounts, nor does Le Moynes picture them in any of his drawings. Menéndez had planned to secure 200 horses from the West Indies for his operations against the French, but he was afraid that the delay would permit the enemy to better fortify themselves, so he headed straight for Florida from Spain.<sup>54</sup> Later when journeying from St. Augustine to Ays Indian territory after learning that Frenchmen were there and building a fort, he marched "for he had no horse."<sup>55</sup> Actually horses had been sent from Puerto Rico, but only one survived the stormy sea voyage. The fate of the remaining horse is not known.

Horses could be used for open field combat to run down the Indians— either to kill or capture them— and for transporting goods and men. But they also had to eat, and it was difficult to move them through dense forests and across waterways. An example is found in the Hernando de Soto narratives. Soon after landing on the west coast of Florida on May 30, 1539, Vasco Porrallo with seven horsemen discovered six Indians who tried to resist their landing with arrows. The horsemen killed two Indians, but the other four escaped because the country was "obstructed by bushes and ponds, in which the horses bogged and fell."<sup>56</sup> As the settlement of Florida proceeded, horses and other livestock were owned by Indians and Spaniards. In some cases, horses were utilized along with Indians as pack animals. In areas where water transportation was convenient, horses were not as useful, particularly in the kind of warfare being instigated by the Indians.<sup>57</sup>

Ponce de León employed greyhounds which "proved such serviceable allies [against the Indians of Hispaniola] . . . that their use in war soon became general and even led to the coining of a new word, *aperrear*, to cast to the dogs."<sup>58</sup> Ponce apparently did not bring dogs with him to Bimini, but gruesome tales of the use of dogs to track down the Indians are

53. *Ibid.*, 164.

54. de Meras, *Pedro Menéndez de Aviles*, 72.

55. *Ibid.*, 128.

56. Edward Gaylord Bourne, ed., *Narratives of the Career of Hernando de Soto*, 2 vols. (London, 1905), I, 22.

57. Verne E. Chatelain, *The Defenses of Spanish Florida, 1565 to 1763* (Washington, 1941), 39, reaches the same conclusion.

58. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, I, 134.

to be found in narratives of De Soto's expedition.<sup>59</sup> One account attributed to a dog owned by De Soto and described by Garcilaso is almost identical to Herrera's story of a dog owned by Ponce de León!<sup>60</sup> The use of dogs to subdue the Indians does not last or, at least the practice is not referred to often by later chroniclers. Cabeza de Vaca's account of the Narváez expedition does not mention dogs, but Garcilaso reported that the mother of the chief who held Juan Ortiz captive had been thrown to the dogs by an earlier group of explorers.<sup>61</sup> Perhaps this cruel tactic of the conquering nations ceased because of the efforts of Fray Bartolome de Las Casas, champion of the Indian.<sup>62</sup>

The Indians used watercraft and were probably better seamen than was generally believed, but they must have been amazed, frightened, and curious at their first sight of European ships anchored off their shores. Descriptions of preparations for exploring and colonizing expeditions mention the various types of vessels employed, and often include their sizes and weights. Ponce de León on his first voyage to Florida commanded a galleon, a caravel, and a brigantine.<sup>63</sup> In 1562, Jean Ribault had "two royal *roberges* resembling Dutch three-masters of one hundred and sixty and of sixty tons, one large sloop and two small ones which were kept on the large ships during the ocean crossing."<sup>64</sup> Laudonnière, in 1564, had three ships weighing sixty, 100, and 120 tons.<sup>65</sup> Large craft were not always the most serviceable in Florida waters. There was the fear that they might ground on some unknown bank or sandbar close to shore.<sup>66</sup> Le Moyne's drawings show the French leaving their ships in boats, one manned by oars and another rigged with a small sail.<sup>67</sup> Frequent mention is made of the difficulty in crossing the bar at St. Augustine.<sup>68</sup> There were many ships

59. Robertson, *True Relation*, II, 56, 250.

60. Lewis and Wilkinson, *La Florida del Inca*, 87.

61. *Ibid.*, 68.

62. Lewis Hanke, *Bartolome de Las Casas: An Interpretation of His Life and Writings* (The Hague, 1951), *passim*.

63. Lawson, *Discovery of Florida*, 20.

64. Ribault, *Whole & True Discoverye*, 4.

65. Laudonnière, *Three Voyages*, 53.

66. Lawson, *Discovery of Florida*, 32, says the large vessels kept near the eight fathom line and left the "seeking" to the brigantine.

67. Bennett, *Settlement of Florida*, 9, 11.

68. For example, see de Meras, *Pedro Menéndez de Aviles*, 90.

wrecked during this period with resultant loss of men and supplies. A frequent location of wrecks was near Jupiter Inlet, and the cruel treatment of surviving crews by the Indians in that area was the basis for conflict between the natives and the Europeans over a 200-year period. Menéndez requested permission to enslave the Ais, since they would not obey him.<sup>69</sup> In 1696, Jonathan Dickinson's party was harassed by Indians in this area.<sup>70</sup>

Animals died during Atlantic crossings and food supplies spoiled, navigational equipment was crude by today's standards, and there were no reliable charts to follow since many of the voyages were made to areas not yet known by people with written language. Nevertheless, men and equipment did arrive in the New World, and vessels were able to return time and again bringing in new forces and supplies. When Menéndez sailed for Florida in 1565, one of his galleons weighed 996 tons.<sup>71</sup> It possibly had six decks and may have been over 150 feet long.<sup>72</sup> Ribault mentions the ship.<sup>73</sup> A variety of provisions could be transported in such a vessel, including smaller boats to be used for special assignments. This aspect of European technology was probably the single most important factor empowering the explorers to reach and remain in the New World. Until the intruders learned to survive by utilizing the products of their new habitat, the vessels were their lifeline.

The Florida Indians did not wage war to subjugate their foes or to govern their lands. They were a "stone-age" people. They practiced horticulture, but they continued to rely on hunting and gathering for a substantial part of their food supply. The occupation of their villages, therefore, was only semi-permanent; nomadism varied from a few to many months depending upon the area in question and the account being consulted.<sup>74</sup> Juan Rogel wrote: "Nine out of the twelve months they wander about without any fixed abode. Even then, if they only went together, there would be some hope. . . . But each one takes his own road. [Even] . . .if they were willing, the

69. Connor, *Colonial Records of Spanish Florida*, I, 41.

70. Dickinson, *Jonathan Dickinson's Journal*, passim.

71. de Meras, *Pedro Menéndez de Aviles*, 75.

72. Landstrom, *Sailing Ships*, 95.

73. Ribault, *Whole & True Discoverye*, 18.

74. Wenhold, "17th Century Letter," 11-12.

nature of the soil would not permit it, as it is poor and barren and easily wears out.<sup>75</sup> It was difficult to wage war on the Indians because they were not sedentary: "Besides a war has no effect on the Indians, for in their towns they have neither buildings nor property that could be destroyed. Moreover, they change their abode from one place to another, a change of habitation to a distance of ten leagues is nothing, and since they are swift in flight and the land is forested, they would necessarily cause us more harm than we could cause them."<sup>76</sup> Most importantly, there was little division of labor. The man who tilled the fields (without the benefit of animals), also hunted, fished, manufactured weapons, and raided his enemy. Under these circumstances, individuals could not be released from the food quest long enough to maintain a standing army. There was institutionalized intertribal hostility which served as both an advantage and a disadvantage to the Indians. It prevented them from making a united effort to expel the Spaniards, but it also did not permit the Europeans to wage a conquer-one, conquer-all type of war as had been done in the Caribbean, Central America, and South America.

The Indians recognized a leader who seemed to have a great deal of power and, throughout the region, everyone knew who this person was.<sup>77</sup> There was different terminology denoting various ranks.<sup>78</sup> Leaders exacted tribute from their own people and from less prominent groups. Bishop Calderon observed, "they bring [the game] to the principal cacique, in order that he shall divide it, he keeping the skins which fall to his share."<sup>79</sup> Sometimes they gave prisoners as gifts to other caciques.<sup>80</sup> The coastal Indians, exalting in victory over the inland chiefs, their enemies, told them that the Spaniards were their slaves, and that for this reason the inland caciques must obey them.<sup>81</sup> The right to rule was probably inherited, and may have been con-

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75. Juan Rogel, "Rogel's Account of the Florida Mission (1569-70)," *Historical Magazine* (November 1861), 329.

76. Geiger, *Franciscan Conquest*, 244.

77. Bennett, *Settlement of Florida*, 24-35.

78. Albert Samuel Gatschet, *The Timucua Language* (New Haven, 1956), passim, microfilm roll 180-A, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

79. Wenhold, "17th Century Letter," 13.

80. Connor, *Colonial Records of Spanish Florida*, I, 41.

81. *Ibid.*, 80-81.

sidered semi-divine. The leader, however, was essentially only a first among equals. He had no authority to use force, and he maintained his exalted position through charismatic persuasion and by seeing to it that the rewards he provided his subjects exceeded the sacrifices they made.<sup>82</sup>

The Indians quit playing follow-the-leader on a number of occasions. They gained individual glory by counting coup in a way attributed much later to the tribes of the Plains. They carried home trophies of scalps, legs, or arms hacked from their victims.<sup>83</sup> The trophies proved that they had accomplished their goals. The prestige of the entire group was raised by the success of the warriors.

The Indians were not interested in mass slaughter of the enemy; victory to them was drawing the first blood. This system of warfare, as opposed to the annihilation method of the Spaniards, put the Indians at a disadvantage. Le Moyne recorded that "they never saw a regular battle; all the military operations were either secret forays or light skirmishes, with fresh men constantly replacing the fighters. Whichever side killed the first enemy claimed the victory, even though it had lost the greater number of soldiers."<sup>84</sup>

The tactics of the Indians were ambush and surprise. The Indians practiced a guerilla warfare that shook the stoutest nerves. Arrows would fall from nowhere, would suddenly stick quivering in a tree trunk by a man's head. To take the horses to water was a dangerous ordeal. A volley of arrows would fly from a clump of rushes; and when the soldiers had beaten their way to ambush, they would find no living soul. The marauders had swum away under water, or had slipped off through the impenetrable marshes. These tactics, described by a member of the Narváez expedition, were repeated eleven years later, in the same place, against the troops of De Soto, but with less success.<sup>85</sup> The Indians had advantages over the Spanish because of their nakedness, mobility, knowledge of the terrain, control of the food supply, and probably because they were

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82. Romans, *Concise Natural History*, 39.

83. Bennett, *Settlement of Florida*, 92-93.

84. Seaberg, "Zetrouer Site," 91.

85. Cabeza de Vaca, *Adventures in the Unknown*, 41; Timothy Severin, "The Passion of Hernando De Soto," *American Heritage*, XVIII (April 1967), 30.

bigger. The enemy's horses, dogs, and guns frightened them, but they made rapid adjustment to the situation. Since the horses were of little use except in open field combat where they could charge the enemy, the Indians refused to fight under such conditions. Wherever possible they would hide under a tree or in the brush and were safe from mounted cavalymen and their steeds. The natives aimed their arrows at the horses' necks rather than at the men because if the horse was downed, the heavy armor of its rider rendered him virtually helpless.<sup>86</sup> The Indians tried to hit the areas of the body unprotected by armor, and the armor itself was often not adequate protection.<sup>87</sup> Even though Spanish guns could penetrate where the arrows could not, the rapidity with which the arrows could be discharged was a decided advantage.

Often the Indians deceived the enemy by feigning friendship and then attacking when the Spaniards' guard was down. In 1513, Ponce de León was twice deceived into believing the Indians wanted to trade gold, and found himself the victim of savage attacks. An example of deceit occurred at the beginning of the Guale revolt. The Indians tricked the Spaniards into putting out the fuses for their arquebuses, and then attacked them.<sup>88</sup> De Soto had similar experiences during his journey. The Indians burned their own villages and food supplies to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy.<sup>89</sup> Both groups were hurt, but the greater hardship was endured by the Spanish, who had no other way to provide shelter or procure food for themselves. Later, after the construction of forts or blockhouses, the Indians frequently attacked whites when they went out to search for food.<sup>90</sup> The result sometimes was near starvation, and at least once the crisis led to cannibalism.<sup>91</sup>

Captured Europeans were sometimes subjected to cruel torture. Ortiz told how the Spaniards were shot at with arrows as they were forced to run the length of the town square. He was saved from death, but often wished himself dead because

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86. Lewis and Wilkinson, *La Florida del Inca*, 263-65.

87. Markham, *Hawkins' Voyages*, 56.

88. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, I, 142-43; Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia*, 60.

89. Severin, "Passion of Hernando De Soto," 30.

90. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, II, 239-40.

91. Swanton, *Indians of the Southeastern United States*, 134.

of the harsh treatment he received.<sup>92</sup> Father Francisco de Avila was handled brutally during his captivity following the revolt of 1597.<sup>93</sup>

A tactic often employed by the Spanish was to take hostages to ensure their own safe conduct, and to procure interpreters.<sup>94</sup> They frequently resorted to cruelty to force the Indians to obey them. De Soto cut off noses and hands, and often kept hostages in chains.<sup>95</sup> Later the garrot was used at St. Augustine.<sup>96</sup> The Spaniard "was a child of his environment— exacting, cruel, and intolerant. He was not, however, unique; French and English leaders were also guilty of cruelty and bigotry. His was not an age of mercy for enemies or for minorities and his brutality is dwarfed by the inhumanity of many men of the so-called enlightened twentieth century."<sup>97</sup> Trade items were given to appease and impress. This practice worked against the Spaniards occasionally. When goods were not available for whatever reason, it was no longer expedient for the Indians to cater to the white man, so they quit supplying food and sometimes attacked him.<sup>98</sup> The Spaniards, like the Indians, destroyed food supplies and burned villages in an attempt to subdue the enemy.<sup>99</sup>

The Spanish employed a number of tactics to "pacify" and control the Indians: taking hostages to Spain or Havana to impress them; rewarding them with presents for complying, brutal retaliation for not complying, and establishing missions throughout the region to make Christians of them. The Spaniards were ethnocentric and assumed the Indians would consider them superior, although the Indians had no way of knowing of all the splendors in Europe. Menéndez took Carlos to Havana and the "Adelantado has taken Indians many times to Havana, caciques and special individuals, from this whole coast, to show them the fleets and the fortress of the Spaniards, and he clothed them many times and made them gifts; and in spite of all this, it has been of no use."<sup>100</sup> Laudonnière "decided

92. Lewis and Wilkinson. *La Florida del Inca*, 7.

93. Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia*, 98-101; Geiger, *Franciscan Conquest of Florida*, 94-99.

94. Robertson, *True Relation*, II, 35.

95. *Ibid.*, II, 65, 241.

96. Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia*, 208.

97. de Meras, *Pedro Menéndez de Aviles*, xi.

98. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, II, 224.

99. Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia*, 95.

100. Connor, *Colonial Records of Spanish Florida*, I, 41.

that it would be good to take a few Indians, men and women, to France, so that if a return voyage were to be made, they could tell their kings of the grandeur of our king, . . . country, and the fashions of life in France."<sup>101</sup> When the Spanish were going to Tama, forty leagues from St. Augustine, they gave the Indians that accompanied them "Spanish blankets, knives, fish-hooks, scissors, elegant glass beads, sickles and hatchets in order to inject fear as well as to arouse admiration in the pagan Indians of the interior."<sup>102</sup>

The Spanish retaliated brutally on many occasions against native hostility. There were many reasons for Indian antagonism. They did not like the restrictions the priests placed on their ancient customs, and they resented giving part of their food supply as tribute to maintain the presidio. Revolts in the form of revitalization movements occurred among the Guale, Timucuan, Ais, and others. After the Timucuan uprising of 1656, the warriors claimed that "they sought only to improve their low state and relieve the continuous abuses."<sup>103</sup> The Indians sometimes became overconfident because there were no permanent Spanish forces except near St. Augustine, but they underestimated the abilities of their enemy. The Spaniards had adapted somewhat to their new environment. One writer noted that the success of the Spanish defense of Florida was the speed with which their mobile patrol units were organized and put into operation. The Spaniards took advantage of available water routes, and constructed small vessels called *piragues* (pirogues), hardly larger than canoes, but equipped with sails and oars. Traveling in these squadrons, and carrying light baggage, a detachment of soldiers could be transported rapidly through the inland waterways, or along the rivers into the interior.<sup>104</sup>

In 1579, Pedro Menéndez Márques, nephew of the Adelantado, wrote: "After his Majesty sent me the succor which I had entreated him to send, I set about overrunning the country of the enemy who had done the damage in these provinces, and in forty-five leagues of their land which I overran, I burned

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101. Laudonnière, *Three Voyages*, 146.

102. Geiger, *Franciscan Conquest of Florida*, 82-83.

103. Lanning, *Spanish Missions of Georgia*, 206.

104. Chatelain, *Defenses of Spanish Florida*, 40.

nineteen villages, and some Indians were killed, without my receiving any injury beyond two soldiers being slightly wounded. Great was the harm I did them in their food stores, for I burned a great quantity of maize and other supplies, . . . and for this I have need of the horses for which I am asking, because to think of overtaking these Indians on foot is impossible. . . . In this province of St. Augustine the people are peaceful, and although they were so previously, they are much more so now since they have seen the war I made on the other Indians."<sup>105</sup>

The Spanish were never able to subdue completely or to control the Indians; they "remained perpetually puzzled and irritated by the acts of what they called 'treachery' on the side of the Indians. All the Indians were doing was temporarily yielding ground when confronted by an immediate and present force of arms, and then returning to their ways when the threat was gone. . . . There never was any surrender."<sup>106</sup> The Spaniard and Indian remained apart in habit and environment, in traditions and conceptions of life.

The Spaniards were able, of course, to see the totality of Indian culture in a way that the natives could not view that of the Europeans. But the white men did not recognize the Indian way of life as a fully integrated, adequate, and satisfying adjustment to their environment given the socio-economic level they had reached. The invaders were aware of broader horizons, but they did not understand or care that the Indians' value system was different and one which they were unwilling to give up. Because of their superior, specialized technology, and their diversified social system, the Spanish could have conquered and dominated the Florida Indians, but they did not. Eventually, disease, warfare, and emigration depleted the native population. Of the thousands of Indians who were living in Florida when Europeans first arrived in the sixteenth century, only a scattered remnant remained 200 years later.

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105. Connor, *Colonial Records of Spanish Florida*, II, 225.

106. Lyon, "More Light," 11.