

1980

A Marriage of Expedience: The Calusa Indians and Their Relations with Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in Southwest Florida, 1566-1569

Stephen Edward Reilly



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Reilly, Stephen Edward (1980) "A Marriage of Expedience: The Calusa Indians and Their Relations with Pedro Menéndez de Avilés in Southwest Florida, 1566-1569," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 59 : No. 4 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol59/iss4/3>

A MARRIAGE OF EXPEDIENCE: THE CALUSA INDIANS AND THEIR RELATIONS WITH PEDRO MENÉNDEZ DE AVILÉS IN SOUTHWEST FLORIDA, 1566-1569

by STEPHEN EDWARD REILLY*

MARRIAGES have always offered architects of empire a means of creating political alliances between peoples. The wedding of Ferdinand and Isabella in 1469 brought together the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, unifying Spain and making it a great power in Europe. In American colonial history, the marriage in 1614 of John Rolfe and the Indian princess Pocahontas bridged cultural differences to help create a brief era of peace between the English settlers in Virginia and the Powhatan Indians. Another example of intercultural union from American colonial history was the marriage in 1566 of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the adelantado of Florida, and an Indian princess known to the Spaniards as Doña Antonia, the sister of the Calusa Indian chief, Carlos. The wedding took place on what is now known as Mound Key on the southwest coast of Florida and was quite an intercultural event, including both Calusa and Spanish foods, choruses of Calusa maidens, and a performance by a dancing dwarf. It did not, however, produce political results of global importance as did that of Ferdinand and Isabella, nor even a child as did that of Pocahontas and John Rolfe. The significance of this union, which Carlos forced upon an unwilling Menéndez, lies in what it reveals about the Calusa and their world.

When the Spanish arrived in Florida in the early sixteenth century, the Calusa inhabited the southwest coast of the peninsula from what is now Boca Grande Pass south.¹ Archeological

* Mr. Reilly is a Ph.D. candidate in American history at Duke University and teaches history at Chatham Hall, Chatham, Virginia. The author wishes to express his thanks to Laird Ellis, Duke University, for translating the letters of Father Juan Rogel, and to Drs. Peter H. Wood, Bill Pencak, and Josephine Tiryakian for their help.

1. John M. Goggin and William C. Sturtevant, "The Calusa: A Stratified Nonagricultural Society (with Notes on Sibling Marriage)," *Explorations in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. Ward H. Goodenough (New York, 1964), 182.

research indicates men lived in this area as early as 3,000 to 4,000 years ago.² Anthropologists have estimated the population of the Calusa at the time of European contact at between 4,000 and 7,000.³ Lacking agriculture, they subsisted primarily on fish and lived mainly along the coast.⁴ Hernando d'Escalente Fontaneda, a Spanish castaway among the Calusa from 1549 to 1566, described all the Indians of southern Florida as "great anglers [who] at no time lack fresh fish." Archeologists have recovered fragments of Calusa nets complete with shell weights and floats made of wood and gourds.⁵ The "wedding feast" the Calusa served to Menéndez "consisted of many kinds of very good fish, roasted and boiled; and oysters, raw, boiled and roasted, without anything else."⁶ According to Fontaneda, deer, birds, rodents, alligators, snakes, tortoises, "and many more disgusting reptiles" provided the little meat in their diet. He mentioned only two plant foods, a root used to make bread and the mud potato.⁷

While the Calusa lacked agriculture, anthropological and archeological research indicates that they were not culturally primitive. The Calusa chief took a sister for a wife by custom, a practice that anthropologists John M. Goggin and William C. Sturtevant interpret as suggesting a society comparable to the Incas and Aztecs in social stratification and political integration.⁸

-
2. Carl E. Guthe, "Introduction," *The Florida Indian and his Neighbors*, ed. John W. Griffin (Winter Park, 1949), 11; Clifford M. Lewis, "The Calusa," *Tacachale: Essays on the Indians of Florida and Southeastern Georgia during the Historic Period*, eds. Jerald T. Milanich and Samuel Proctor (Gainesville, 1978), 42.
 3. Goggin and Sturtevant, "The Calusa," 187, 209.
 4. *Ibid.*, 183; Alex Hrdlicka, *The Anthropology of Florida* (Deland, 1922), 19; John R. Wadton, *The Early History of the Creek Indians and their Neighbors* (Washington, D.C., 1922), 387.
 5. Hernando d'Escalente Fontaneda, *Memoir of Do. d'Escalente Fontaneda respecting Florida, written in Spain, about the Year 1575*, trans. Buckingham Smith (Washington, 1854; reprinted, Miami, 1944), 17, 21, 25; Marion Spjut Gilliland, *The Material Culture of Key Marco, Florida* (Gainesville, 1975), 186, 237-46, 257.
 6. Gonzalo Solis de Merás, *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés Memorial*, trans. Jeannette Thurber Connor (Deland, 1923; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1964), 148.
 7. Fontaneda, *Memoir*, 14. See Gilliland, *Key Marco*, 245-46, for possible uses of gourds as food by the Calusa.
 8. Father Juan Rogel to Father Geronimo Ruiz del Portillo, Havana, April 25, 1568, in *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, ed. Felix Zubillaga, S. J. (Romae, 1946), 309-11; Goggin and Sturtevant, "The Calusa," 192, 207.

The show pieces of Calusa art, their carved wooden figures and painted wooden masks, are "without known parallel in North America."⁹ They had made pottery for at least 2,000 years, improving it artistically and technologically over that period. Their technology, which included bone implements and the spear thrower usually associated with the Archaic period, was remarkable for the variety of artifacts it left. Moreover, it was clearly dynamic, for the Calusa readily developed procedures such as hammering and embossing the gold, silver, and copper retrieved from Spanish shipwrecks.¹⁰

The implications of these shipwrecks for the Spanish empire and concern for the surviving castaways were what brought Menéndez to Calusa country in 1566. Between 1520 and 1564 the coast of Florida peninsula claimed at least twelve Spanish ships.¹¹ The Spanish crown wished to see what is now the entire southeastern United States, then called La Florida, conquered and settled in order to insure the safety of future castaways and to secure Spanish shipping routes and possessions in the Caribbean by denying France a potential base of attack. After a number of attempts at conquest had failed, Philip appointed Menéndez adelantado in 1564, charging him with the conquest and settlement of Florida and the conversion of the Indians there. Menéndez, an experienced sailor and leader, had good reason to accept the task. One of the Spaniards lost off the Florida coast was his only son whom he hoped to find alive among the Indians. In addition, Menéndez stood to gain wealth and rank by the successful conquest of Florida just as Hernando Cortés had in Mexico. Nevertheless, one should not doubt the sincerity of his desire to convert the Indians. In today's secular world it is easy to make the error of denigrating the religious faith and zeal of men of the sixteenth century and to view with

9. H. Newell Wardle, "The Pile-dwellers of Key Marco," *Archeology*, IV (Autumn 1951), 181. See also Goggin and Sturtevant, "The Calusa," 202. The most complete collection of photographs and drawings of Calusa art and artifacts is to be found in Gilliland, *Key Marco*. Pictures of two pieces of Calusa art can be found in *National Geographic*, 142 (December 1972), 798-99; two other pictures and descriptions are in "Fourteen Eyes in a Museum Storeroom," *University of Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin*, XVI (1952), 22-23, 38-39.

10. Goggin and Sturtevant, "The Calusa," 200-02.

11. Robert F. Marx, *Shipwreck of the Western Hemisphere, 1492-1825* (New York, 1971), 195-96.

cynicism their expressions of religious motivation for what appear as essentially political and economic acts. Historian R. C. Padden took pains to point out that for Cortés in the conquest of Mexico religion and sovereignty were so inseparably mixed as to make the idea of conquest without conversion unthinkable. The same must be granted for Menéndez. He believed that the religious beliefs of the Protestant heretics of France and the Florida natives sprouted from the same Satanic roots and must be countered by Catholic evangelism if these two branches were not to come into contact, entwine, and become forever inseparable.¹² Menéndez commented in a letter from Spain in 1574 to his nephew in Florida: "there is nothing in the world I want more than to be in Florida, to end my days saving souls."¹³ Having heard on his arrival in Florida in 1565, of a Cacique Carlos who held some Christian captives, the adelantado sailed from Havana for the Gulf coast of Florida on February 10, 1566, after praying to Saint Anthony for his aid in rescuing the castaways.¹⁴

The adelantado located some of these castaways on February 18 when, after leaving his larger ships in deeper water, he sailed close in to shore in two smaller vessels with a total of sixty men and was met by a Spaniard in a canoe. It was Fontaneda. After all the Spaniards had joined in prayers of thanks, Fontaneda told Menéndez that over 200 Spaniards, shipwrecked twenty years before, had been brought to the Calusas by their subjects. Most had been sacrificed at feasts and dances, but a few remained. The adelantado anchored his ships a half a league from the nearby Calusa village and sent Fontaneda to tell the Calusa chief that he brought many gifts for him.¹⁵

Menéndez had happened upon the most impressive Calusa town. The Indians were the builders of extensive earthworks, in-

12. Eugene Lyon, *The Enterprise of Florida: Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and Spanish Conquest of 1565-1568* (Gainesville, 1976), 17, 42-53, 205; Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 26; Foneaneda, *Memoir*, 35, 55; R. C. Padden, *The Hummingbird and the Hawk: Conquest and Sovereignty in the Valley of Mexico, 1503-1541* (Columbus, Ohio, 1967), 134-38.

13. Albert C. Manucy, *Florida's Menéndez* (St. Augustine, 1965), 94.

14. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 138-39.

15. *Ibid.*, 139-41; Lyon, *Enterprise of Florida*, 147-48. For corroboration on the sacrifices of Spanish castaways, see Jacque Le Moyne, "The Narrative of Le Moyne," trans. Fred B. Perkins, in *Settlement of Florida*, comp. Charles E. Bennett (Gainesville, 1968), 105.

cluding flat-topped mounds, rows of conical mounds, semi-circular and parallel ridges, and canals. Their mounds, most of them purposefully built rather than simple refuse dumps, covered areas as large as fifty acres.¹⁶ The town off which Menéndez anchored became known to the Spaniards as Carlos. It was probably on the island later known as Mound Key in Estero Bay near present-day Fort Myers. This island contains seventy to eighty acres of dry land and a series of high mounds. Goggin and Sturtevant described it as "dominated by the most impressive temple mound in South Florida, made of shell, symmetrical, and with an elevation of 31 feet."¹⁷ The island is nearly bisected from southwest to northeast by a fairly straight canal fifty feet wide that still fills with water at high tide. Anthropologists estimate Carlos may have had a population of as many as 1,000 people.

Carlos was the seat of a Calusa empire that included most of the neighboring Indians. According to Fontaneda, the Calusa dominated fifty villages and "were masters of a large district of the country, as far as a town they call Guacata, on the lake of Mayaimi, which is called Mayaimi because it is very large." The Mayaimi Indians lived on the shores of this lake, now known as Okeechobee, and paid tribute in food and skins to the Calusa.¹⁸ The inhabitants of the keys were also subjects, as was a chief who lived "four or five days journey from Calos [Carlos]" near Cape Canaveral.¹⁹ Subject villages each sent a woman to become a wife of the Calusa chief as a sign of vassalage. The Tocobaga to the north of Carlos on what is now Tampa Bay, however, were independent and great enemies.²⁰

Archeological evidence confirms Calusa power. Fontaneda stated that when the Ais Indians, on the east coast across the peninsula from the Calusa, salvaged from Spanish shipwrecks

-
16. Goggin and Sturtevant, "The Calusa," 194, 196-97; Hrdlicka, *Anthropology of Florida*, 10-11, 48; Lewis, "The Calusa," 37.
 17. Lewis, "The Calusa," 39, 183, 187. Edward W. Lawson, *The Discovery of Florida* (St. Augustine, 1946), 55. A map of Mound Key can be found in Rolfe E. Schell, *1,000 Years on Mound Key* (Fort Myers, 1962), 16.
 18. Fontaneda, *Memoir*, 13-14, 17.
 19. *Ibid.*, 17; Le Moynes, "Narrative," 105-06.
 20. Rogel to Portillo, Havana, April 25, 1568, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 310; Fontaneda, *Memoir*, 15; Solis de Merás, *Menéndez*, 223.

“perhaps . . . as much as a million dollars, or over, in bars of silver, in gold, and in articles of jewelry made by the hands of Mexican Indians, which the passengers were bringing with them,” the Calusa cacique took as tribute or extorted “what pleased him, or the best part.”²¹ Goggin and Sturtevant offer archeological data that bears this out: “Nearly all the known excavated gold and silver artifacts came from former Calusa and Mayaimi territory, rather than from the east coast and Keys.”²² Fontaneda leaves no doubt as to the source of these riches: “there is neither gold nor silver native to the country, and only that of which I have spoken as coming by the sea.”²³

Even their name bespoke the Calusa’s power. Fontaneda translated it as meaning “a fierce people, they are so-called for being brave and skillful as in truth they are.”²⁴ The interview René de Laudonnière, leader of the French settlement on the St. Johns River near present-day Jacksonville, had with two Spaniards ransomed from the Indians in 1564, after fifteen years of captivity, supported this characterization. They stated that the “*Calos* were reckoned the bravest of all that region.”²⁵ The difference in spelling is significant. Father Juan Rogel, a Jesuit missionary to the Calusa from 1566 to 1569, noted that originally the chief’s name was not Carlos but “Caalus, whom the Spanish, corrupting the word, called Carlos.”²⁶ John Swanton, an ethnologist who linked the Calusa with the Choctaw, noted that the original name suggested the Choctaw word “kallo” meaning “strong, powerful, or violent.”²⁷ Rogel’s description of the Calusa as “energetic, turbulent, and intractable” seems to corroborate this interpretation.²⁸ Fontaneda’s definitions of Indian titles reinforce the impression of the power of the Calusa. He defines the title

21. Fontaneda, *Memoir*, 20.

22. Goggin and Sturtevant, “The Calusa,” 188-89; Lewis, “The Calusa” 40.

23. Fontaneda, *Memoir*, 21; Irving Rouse, *A Survey of Indian River Archaeology* (New Haven, CT, 1951).

24. *Ibid.*, 12-13.

25. LeMoyne, “Narrative,” 105. Emphasis added.

26. Goggin and Sturtevant, “The Calusa,” 210, fn. 5. Daniel G. Brinton, *Notes on the Floridian Peninsula* (Philadelphia, 1859; reprint, New York, 1969), 112-13, suggested that “Charlotte,” as in Charlotte Harbor and Charlotte County, Florida, may be a corruption of “Carlos”.

27. Swanton, *Early History*, 29-30.

28. Rogel to St. Francis Borgia, Havana, July 25, 1568, in Reverend Ruben Vargas Ugarte, S. J. “The First Jesuit Mission in Florida,” *Historical Records and Studies*, XXV (New York, 1935), 81.

"Certepe" as comparable to king or "chief and great lord" and uses the Carib Indian term "cacique" to mean "the greatest of the kings, having the renown of Montesuma." A little later he refers to "cacique Carlos," verifying the Calusa chief's political importance.²⁹

The Calusa maintained their dominance by military might. The Indians of Spanish Florida were "great bowmen" according to Fontaneda. "That people," he said referring to the Calusa, "understood the greater part of our strategy and are men of strength."³⁰ That the Tequesta near present-day Miami clearly feared them appears in a letter of January 1568, sent from a priest at Tequesta to Father Rogel at Carlos. The writer intended to deliver some supplies personally to Carlos, "but the Indians told me they were afraid to go there and that ten Indians and two canoes would be necessary for this trip."³¹ Even as late as 1680, people under Calusa rule would not let missionaries settle in their villages for fear of angering the Calusa chief, who they knew as "Not loved."³²

Early Spanish visitors had felt the Calusa's military might. On his first trip to the Florida coast in 1513, Ponce de León encountered a Spanish-speaking Indian who told him that the Calusa possessed a great amount of gold.³³ The Spaniard sailed to the vicinity of Carlos and landed near the town of Carlos, but met fierce resistance and returned to Puerto Rico empty-

29. Fontaneda, *Memoir*, 14, 16; Padden, *Hummingbird and the Hawk*, 226.

30. Fontaneda, *Memoir*, 17, 21.

31. Robert E. McNicoll, "The Caloosa Village Tequesta: A Miami of the Sixteenth Century," *Tequesta*, I (1941), 14.

32. Swanton, *Early History*, 343.

33. Woodbury Lowery, *The Spanish Settlement with the Present Limits of the United States: Florida 1513-1574*, 2 vols. (New York, 1901, 1905; re-published, New York, 1959), I, 142. This Indian probably learned Spanish on one of the islands occupied by the Spanish in the Carribean. According to Fontaneda, travel by Indians between Cuba and the mainland must not have been difficult because he relates that during the reign of Carlos's father, natives from Cuba arrived in large numbers in search of what he called "the River Jordan" but what sounds like our fountain of youth fable. These people settled with the Calusa. See Fontaneda, *Memoir*, 15, fn. 21. James W. Covington, "Timucuan Indians and the French and Spanish," in Charles M. Hudson, ed., *Four Centuries of Southern Indians* (Athens, GA, 1975), 13, suggests that slave hunters from Cuba may have preceded Ponce de León to Florida, which could explain the hostility later Spaniards encountered. Perhaps this Spanish-speaking Indian had been a slave and escaped.

handed.³⁴ In 1517, the Calusa received a visit from the Cordoba expedition. Cordoba and his men—including Anton de Alaminos, pilot for Ponce de León in 1513, and Bernal de Diaz, best known as chronicler of Cortés in Mexico—landed to replenish their water supplies at a place Alaminos recognized as the same harbor he had visited with Ponce de León. The Spaniards had been on shore about an hour digging wells and drawing water when the Calusa suddenly attacked. Diaz described his attackers: “These Indians carried very long bows and good arrows and lances and some weapons like swords, and they were clad in deerskins and were very big men. They came straight on and let fly their arrows and at once wounded six of us, and to me they dealt a slight arrow wound.”³⁵ The Calusa drove off these Spaniards, and Cordoba died of his wounds soon after in Cuba.³⁶ The same fate befell Ponce de León on his second voyage to this area in 1521. Again he was met by hostile Indians, but this time he was fatally wounded.³⁷

Menéndez had sent Fontaneda to tell the Indians he was there, sixty men he prepared to give them the same sort of reception the Calusa had given Ponce de León and Cordoba. Gonzalo Solís de Merás, Menéndez’s brother-in-law and chronicler who was there with him, recorded that Carlos appeared at the ships with “about 300 Indian archers.” Judging by the number he brought, Carlos must have planned to rout the Spaniards. Menéndez made defensive preparations, ording all the ships’ artillery moved to the landward side and loaded with hail shot, and took thirty arquebusiers with their fuses lit and ready to fire their weapons with him when he disembarked to speak with Carlos. Solís de Merás described Carlos as “very much of a gentleman . . . about

34. Lawson, *Discovery of Florida*, 55; Lyon, *Enterprise of Florida*, 148, fn. 37.

35. The quote is from Alfred P. Maudslay, trans., *The True History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Diaz del Castillo, One of its Conquerors*, ed. G. Garcia, 5 vols. (London, 1908), I, 29. Background information was drawn from Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, I, 148-89, and Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The True History of the Conquest of Mexico*, trans. Maurice Keatings (New York, 1938), 35-36. The “weapons like swords” were probably similar to the sabreclubs fitted with sharks’s teeth found at Key Marco; see Gilliland, *Material Culture*, 123 and plate 80, for a description and photograph.

36. Carl Ortwin Sauer, *Sixteenth Century North America* (Berkeley, 1971), 30-31.

37. *Ibid.*, 35; Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, I, 446-47; Lawson, *Discovery of Florida*, 55.

25 years old.“³⁸ A Spanish captive among the Calusa described him as “the handsomest and largest of all that region, and an energetic and powerful ruler . . . held in great veneration by his subjects.“³⁹

The adelantado managed to lure Carlos aboard his ship and thereby gain the advantage. He gave Carlos “a shirt, a pair of silk breeches, a doublet and a hat, and other things for his wives,” as well as biscuits and honey which the Indians “ate very willingly.” In return Carlos “bestowed on the Adelantado a bar of silver worth about 200 ducats, and asked him to give him more things, and more to eat.” Cleverly, Menéndez replied that “he had not food enough for so many people,” but that if Carlos and his lieutenants would come on board the ships he would give them more food and gifts. Carlos fell for the bait and boarded the brigantine with twenty men. Menéndez now controlled the situation. He quietly ordered a man to be stationed near each Indian and ordered that the lines be loosened so the ships would drift out from shore. This upset the Indians, but the interpreter told them this was simply a precaution to keep others from trying to climb aboard and upsetting the ships. Reassured, the Calusa ate their fill, and finally Carlos wished to go. Menéndez sprung his trap, employing a carrot and stick stratagem: “The Adelantado told him that the King of Spain, his Master, had sent him for the Christian men and women whom he [the cacique] held prisoners, and that if he did not bring them to him, he would order him to be killed; that he prayed him to give them up, and would bestow on him many things in exchange for them and would be his great friend and brother. The cacique said that he was satisfied and would go for them. The Adelantado told him that if he went, his [Menéndez’s] men would kill him because he was allowed to go; that he entreated him to send some Indians for them. The cacique did so because of fear, and within an hour they brought 5 women and 3 Christian men.“⁴⁰

38. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 141.

39. LeMoyne, “Narrative,” 104-05.

40. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 141-42. The sources differ on the total number of castaways rescued at this time, the highest number being eighteen. Lyon, who accepts this number, says that this figure included “five men, five *mestiza* women from Peru, and one black woman.” Lyon,

Carlos, trying to make the best of a bad situation, told the adelantado that he would have three more Christians who were being held captive elsewhere brought to him within three months, and he then invited the Spaniards to visit his town the next day. Menéndez agreed and sent Carlos home "very well pleased." However, after being warned by Fontaneda of a possible ambush at the town, he decided to weigh anchor and rejoin the rest of his fleet which he had left waiting in deeper water off the coast. Not finding his other ships, he sailed north in search of them.

Carlos, outwitted in this first encounter, but refusing to admit defeat, soon got a chance to regain the advantage. Shortly after Menéndez left, his five other ships appeared at the town of Carlos. The arrival of so many ships must have made Carlos rethink his strategy. As head of an empire, politics and diplomacy could not have been unfamiliar to him. How could he turn the Spanish presence into a political asset? By the time Menéndez returned from the north only to find his fleet anchored off the town of Carlos, Cacique Carlos had hit upon a plan and lost no time putting it in action. When Menéndez reappeared, Carlos met him with only six Indians, and again invited him to visit his town, but this time there was a new twist. According to Solís de Merás: "[H]e wanted to take [Menéndez] for his older brother, to do all that he should command him to do, and that he wanted to give him for a wife a sister he had, older than he, whom he loved very much, in order that the Adelantado might bring her to a land of Christians, and if he should send her back, that when she returned, he would go likewise and become a Christian, with all his Indians; that it appeared better to him than being an Indian."⁴¹

His previous contacts with Carlos, should have made Menéndez suspicious of his all too simple offer to surrender his sovereignty. Cortés in Mexico less than fifty years earlier had had to provide concrete demonstrations of Spanish military power to win over and hold peoples who had powerful reasons

Enterprise of Florida, 149. At least two of the women decided to stay with the Calusa because of children they had there, Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 151. Apparently life with the Calusa compared to that with the Spanish was not so bad for a black or mestiza woman that she would abandon her children to escape it.

41. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 144.

to support him against Montezuma.⁴² Carlos gave no reasons why he should wish to subordinate himself to Menéndez other than the unctuous flattery that being a Christian “appeared better to him than being an Indian.” Moreover, if Menéndez had had an opportunity to read volume two of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés’s *Historia General y Natural de las Indias*, published in Spain in 1557, he would have realized that Carlos’s offer ran counter to Calusa tradition. Oviedo, drawing from interviews with men who had encountered the Calusa with Ponce de León and Cordoba, characterized them as “a very rough and savage and warlike and fierce and indomitable people, unaccustomed to quietude or to yield their freedom readily to the will of others.”⁴³

Menéndez played right into Carlos’s hands, apparently without an inkling that he might be tricked just as he had tricked Carlos earlier. Solís de Merás says the adelantado went to Carlos’s town the next morning simply “to dine with him.” Menéndez went prepared for festivities, taking along gifts, food, a small band, and “a very small dwarf, a great singer and dancer.” He also went prepared to fight his way back to the ships, “taking 200 arquebusiers with him.” At Carlos they found many Indians gathered there and a great house where “2,000 men might gather therein without being very crowded.” The adelantado stationed his arquebusiers outside “ready for any emergency, with their fuses lighted” and entered the hall with about twenty men. Once inside Carlos seated Menéndez on a raised platform with himself and a woman whom the Spaniard took to be the cacique’s wife. Before them “were about 500 principal Indian men and 500 Indian women; the men were near [Carlos] and the women near her.” Carlos then, without any prompting, went “through a certain ceremony which is like kissing the King’s hand here; no greater mark of deference can be given among them, and it is that which Indian vassals are in the habit of giving to their caciques.” All the other Calusa in the great hall followed Carlos’s example.

42. Padden, *Hummingbird and the Hawk*, 148-51, 209, 216-18.

43. Quoted in Sauer, *Sixteenth Century North America* x, 35; Oviedo, *Natural History of the West Indies*, trans. and ed. Sterling A. Stoudermire (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1959), vii.

Obviously, Carlos was carefully orchestrating the day's events so as to flatter and woo the observers from outside the tribe, capitalizing on Spanish ethnocentrism. Outside the great house a chorus of "more than 500 Indian girls, from 10 to 15 years . . . began to sing and other Indians danced and whirled." Later, when some of the Spaniards, "who had very good voices," sang, Carlos "told the young girls to stop singing for they knew little and the Christians knew much." The more important Calusas who were seated inside the great house also danced and sang. Solís de Merás reported the significance of all this: "According to what was afterward found out, . . . this was the greatest demonstration of rejoicing, for a ceremony of allegiance, that that cacique or any other of that country, could give the Adelantado, because the brothers of the Cacique danced, and his uncles and aunts; for there were some who danced among those principal Indian women, who were 90 or 100 years old: they all showed themselves very pleased and joyful." When the food was served the Calusa offered a variety of "very good" seafood and the Spaniards provided some "very good biscuits, one bottle of wine and one of honey," plus quince preserves and sweetmeats for the important Indians. According to Solís de Merás, Carlos and his relatives "well understood that our food was better than theirs."⁴⁴

Menéndez also had a turn at ceremony and display. He had brought "many written words in the Indian language, which were very polite and friendly." Thinking the woman seated with Carlos on the dais was his principal wife, he addressed her as such only to learn that she was Carlos's sister, "the one whom he had given the Adelantado for a wife." Solís de Merás described her as "about 35 years old, not at all beautiful, although very grave, so much so that as time went on we were all surprised at this, because it seemed as though they had trained her from birth to know how to keep silence." Menéndez quickly switched to the comments prepared for the sister and then asked Carlos to call his chief wife, who proved to be "very comely and beautiful." Menéndez gave both women blouses, gowns, mirrors, and other things. The Calusa were delighted with all of this. They were

44. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 145-46, 148-49.

surprised by the remarks Menéndez read out; Solís de Merás claimed "they thought that the paper spoke." The reaction of the women when they saw themselves in the mirrors amused the other Indians, who "laughed greatly." As everyone ate, the small band that Menéndez had brought played and the Spanish dwarf danced.⁴⁵

After the meal, when Menéndez announced he wished to go, Carlos sprang his trap revealing his own carrot and stick strategem: "The cacique told him that he should go and rest in a room which was there, with his sister, since he had given her to him for his wife, and that if he did not do this the cacique's Indians would be scandalized, saying that the Adelantado was laughing at them and at her and held her to be of little account; and there were in the pueblo more than 4,000 Indian men and women."

Carlos now had Menéndez in an embarrassing situation. He had feted and honored the Spaniard but now made it clear that to reject the proffered honor could be dangerous. It is not clear from the document whether Carlos pointed out that the Calusa greatly outnumbered the Spaniards or whether Solís de Merás simply stated a fact which weighed heavily on his mind. Certainly, Menéndez with his 200 arquebusiers could not risk "scandalizing" 4,000 Calusas. The parallel with their first encounter on board the Spanish ship is striking; Carlos had done unto Menéndez what the adelantado had done unto him, only in spades.⁴⁶

Menéndez squirmed momentarily but soon saw that he had to go along with Carlos. At first he "showed a little perturbation," and objected that Christian men could not sleep with non-Christian women. "The cacique replied to him that his sister and he and his people were Christians already since he had taken him for his elder brother." Menéndez launched into a lengthy explanation of the precepts of Christianity, but it was futile. "Carlos replied that as he had observed from the customs of the Spaniards, their music and their food, that their religion was better than his, he wanted to adopt it; and that he had given him his sister, and was giving her to him again, that he

45. *Ibid.*, 147-48.

46. *Ibid.*, 149.

might take her away; wherefore the Adelantado was compelled to take her to the harbor."⁴⁷

Back at the ships Menéndez consulted with his captains and decided he had to go along with Carlos. He pointed out that if he did not take Carlos's sister as his wife "that it seemed to him there might come a break with the Indians . . . and that would not do because of the Adelantado's plans." The officers suggested that much attention should be paid to the Calusa woman "and they should baptize her and give her a name; and the Adelantado should sleep with her, for this would be a great beginning to their trusting him and other Christians." Ironically, Solís de Merás, the brother of Menéndez's wife and the author of these quotes, was probably among the captains urging Menéndez to commit adultery. Menéndez was reluctant and wanted "to try some other expedient, but as none could be found, it was decided that thus it should be done." The woman was baptized and given the name Doña Antonia in honor of Anthony, the saint to whom Menéndez had appealed for aid in locating the castaways. That night the "marriage" was consummated.⁴⁸

Events the following day revealed that Carlos needed a powerful ally in order to consolidate his political position at home. He and other Indians came the next day to see Doña Antonia. Menéndez took the opportunity to proselytize the Calusa: he urged Carlos to give up his idols and gave him a large cross for the Calusa to worship each morning. Carlos replied that it was too soon for him to give up his idols; he would await Doña Antonia's return and she would tell him what to do. In the meantime, Menéndez had the cross set up, and with "great devotion he knelt before it and kissed it." All the Spaniards followed his example, and then the Calusa, led by Doña Antonia and Carlos did the same. The cross was then turned over to the Calusa: "This Carlos had a captain, a very good Indian, who was married to a sister of Carlos and Doña Antonia, and the cacique had married the captain's sister; and the Indians apparently, according to what the Christians said, feared that captain more than the cacique. He told his cacique that he must be the captain of that cross, in order that all of them should do

47. *Ibid.*, 149-50.

48. *Ibid.*, 150; Lyon, *Enterprise of Florida*, 106, 224, 225.

what the Adelantado commanded, [that is] to go and kiss and worship it in the morning; and so the Adelantado delivered it to him and with great reverence he carried it on his shoulders to the canoes."⁴⁹ This "very good Indian" was Carlos's rival for power among the Calusa who became known to the Spaniards as Don Felipe.

Don Felipe later explained to Father Rogel that he was the rightful Calusa cacique and that Carlos's father, whose name was Senquene according to Fontaneda, had usurped the position for his son. Carlos and Don Felipe were both nephews of the previous cacique who had no son. This chief had a dispute with his brother, Senquene, and named Don Felipe, his sister's son as his successor. To confirm this arrangement, the cacique gave his daughter to Don Felipe in marriage while both were still children. When this man died, Senquene, the chief priest, and Don Felipe's father, the captain-general (the top military leader after the cacique), discussed which of them should rule as viceroy for Don Felipe. According to Don Felipe's account, Senquene bribed two villages to request that he be made viceroy. Don Felipe's father agreed to this provided that, after two years, Don Felipe would take over. Senquene, however, governed in such a way that Don Felipe could not take power; in fact, Senquene even managed to have the marriage between Don Felipe and the daughter of the dead cacique annulled and then married the girl to his son, Carlos. Don Felipe's father was enraged by this chicanery, but Senquene mollified him by promising that Don Felipe would be Carlos's captain-general and by giving him a daughter in marriage. The result was constant enmity between Carlos and Don Felipe, with the latter looking for a way to kill Carlos at the time Menéndez arrived.⁵⁰ The arrival of the Spanish had added a new factor to the political equation among the Calusa, and Don Felipe's insistence on being "captain of that cross" and his "great reverence" in carrying it off probably reflected a determination not to let Carlos's alliance with the Spanish be at his expense.

In view of his rivalry with Don Felipe, Carlos's immediate

49. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 151.

50. Rogel to Portillo, Havana, April 25, 1568, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 309-11.

objective in forcing Menéndez to take Doña Antonia as a wife must have been to use Spanish power to consolidate his political position at home. At the time of Menéndez's arrival, Carlos had been in a dangerous situation, the legacy of his father's political maneuvering. He first saw Menéndez's power as a threat that would have to be eliminated by direct confrontation or ambush, but later, after realizing the extent of that power, saw a way to use it to intimidate Don Felipe. He recognized Menéndez's deep interest in converting the Indians to Christianity and used vague promises of conversion to lure the adelantado into an alliance of his design, a marriage with his sister. Through the marriage Carlos must have hoped to gain some control over the use of Spanish power within his realm, enabling him to keep his domestic enemies in line. In addition, a child by this marriage would have had political potential within the tribe as long as the alliance with the Spanish lasted. Perhaps Carlos also thought that the alliance might be used against enemies outside the tribe, but there is no evidence that this was a motivating factor. Domestic politics seem to have been paramount.

Dynastic considerations offer the most plausible explanation for Doña Antonia's behavior. She must have understood the complexities of Calusa politics and succession since not only was she a princess but had also formerly been one of her brother's wives in accordance with the Calusa custom of sibling marriage for the cacique, a fact that horrified the Spaniards when they later learned of it.⁵¹ She certainly was capable of playing the role of a royal princess if we are to judge her by Solís de Merás's comments: she impressed the Spaniards with her composure and dignity, answering Menéndez's pleasantries at the wedding feast "so discreetly and in so few words, that we all of us marvelled at her." Menéndez also recognized her as "an important woman, of . . . good understanding, and knew she was not lacking in sense."⁵²

Doña Antonia's behavior reveals a strong desire to conceive a child by Menéndez. The morning after her "wedding night,"

51. Relation of the Mission in Florida by Father Juan Rogel, written between the years 1607-1611, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 610.

52. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 150, 190.

Solís de Merás reports, "she arose very joyful and . . . was very much pleased" and sent two Indians to tell Carlos to come see her.⁵³ Menéndez managed to leave her at Carlos in February, but he made a special trip in May to bring her and seven Indian companions to Havana where he left them with friends to receive instructions in Catholicism while he explored Florida. On his return to Havana in June, he found that five of the Calusa with Doña Antonia had died. Menéndez, fearing that if she and the remaining companions should die relations with Carlos would be ruined, decided to return her to her brother.⁵⁴

The day after his arrival, Menéndez called on the Calusa woman but found her sad and inconsolable: "she told him that she wished that God might kill her, because when they landed the Adelantado had not sent for her to take her to his house, to eat and sleep with him." Thinking quickly, Menéndez replied that Knights of the Order of Santiago such as himself could not sleep with their wives for eight days after their return from an expedition. Doña Antonia was skeptical but, "she said, beginning to count on her fingers, that 2 days were passed already, and she named the remaining 6; that when those were passed, she would go to his house." Menéndez urged her to do this and then promised to take her back to Carlos the next day. A little later he retired to an inn nearby to spend the night but awoke after midnight to find Doña Antonia, candle in hand, looking around the room and even under the bed "to see if any woman were in bed with the Adelantado."

One of the women who had been a captive among the Calusa and was now a companion of Doña Antonia was with her. Menéndez spoke to her: " 'What is this, sister?' Doña Antonia seated herself at the head of the bed with the candle, to see what the Adelantado was saying; the woman replied to the Adelantado that Doña Antonia had told her that his lordship had ordered that she be brought to him at that hour, and that she, believing this, had done so. The Adelantado, with a gay and amused countenance, laughing greatly at this, told her to tell Doña Antonia that he would be very glad if the 8 days were passed, so that she might lie there beside him. Doña Antonia said to him

53. *Ibid.*, 150-51.

54. *Ibid.*, 151-52, 188; Lyon, *Enterprise of Florida*, 158.

through the interpreter that she prayed him to let her lie in a corner of the bed, and that she would not come near him; in order that her brother Carlos might know that they had slept together, for in any other manner he would think that the Adelantado was laughing at her, and he would refuse to become a friend in truth of the Christians, or to become a Christian like herself, whereas she would be greatly grieved . . . and she said to the Christian woman who came with her that she had intended, if the Adelantado had not awakened, to put out the candle and lie down beside him.“⁵⁵

Apparently, her intention was to make herself available and hope for the best. Menéndez deflected this advance by giving both women some blouses, mirrors, and bead necklaces and sending them home.

Doña Antonia's persistence did not bear fruit. The next day Menéndez set out to take Doña Antonia back to the town of Carlos, and he arrived there in three days. He had only thirty men with him so he resisted Doña Antonia's urging that he should come ashore with her. He told her the relatives of Calusa who had died might try to take revenge on him and that he must go find Christians to come live at Carlos and convert the Calusa. Solís de Merás tells us that "she was very sorrowful because the Adelantado did not disembark and remain a few days on land, until the 8 days were over, in order that he might sleep with her; but that she likewise feared that the Indians might feel warlike and might do him some harm."⁵⁶ Father Juan Rogel, a Jesuit who later was a missionary to Carlos, provided a piece of information which explains Doña Antonia's persistence. Years later he wrote that the adelantado had told him that "he never knew her, except on the night of the nuptials itself."⁵⁷ Since the wedding was in February and it was now June, she must have realized that she was not pregnant. Menéndez probably guessed Carlos's intent in the forced marriage and consequently avoided Doña Antonia after the wedding. The fact that he had an illegitimate

55. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 188-92; the quote is from 191-92.

56. *Ibid.*, 193.

57. Relation of the mission in Florida, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 610.

daughter back in Spain indicates he was not rejecting her solely out of personal moral convictions.⁵⁸

The meetings between Menéndez and Carlos in the two days the Spaniards' ship was anchored nearby were full of political undercurrents. The first day revealed some of the domestic ramifications of Carlos's alliance. Carlos appeared with twelve canoes within two hours of Menéndez's arrival. With him was Don Felipe: "first he [Carlos] and the Captain, his brother-in-law, got into the patache with the Adelantado, [then] 6 other principal Indians." Don Felipe was not going to be left out, or perhaps Carlos felt he could not risk leaving him in the village while he was away. But Don Felipe could not have forgotten who was the prime beneficiary of the alliance with the Spaniards: "it was something to see how Doña Antonia and her brother received each other, and the ceremonies they performed." When Menéndez asked Carlos if, now that his sister was a Christian, he "would like to go to the land of the Christians as he had promised," Carlos withdrew and conferred with Don Felipe for more than fifteen minutes. Unfortunately, no record exists of what these two rivals said to one another, but Carlos's response to Menéndez was intriguing: he said that he could not go or become a Christian for nine months because his people might rise up against him, and, Solís de Merás adds without elaborating, "he justified [himself] with sufficient reasons." Carlos told Menéndez to return after that period.⁵⁹ It seems likely that Carlos had tried to convince Don Felipe to go alone to Havana with Menéndez or perhaps that both of them should go. Failing that he must have wanted time to see if Doña Antonia was pregnant. Carlos took his sister back to his town and told the adelantado he would return the next day with the additional Christian castaways he had retrieved from the interior as he had promised at their first meeting.

The following day Carlos saw his alliance almost break down and had to take a major risk in order to save it. Instead of bringing the captives to Menéndez as he had promised, Carlos sent six men with an invitation to come to dine with him. Menéndez fed them and presented each with a gift and then made a grand bluff. He told them that he considered Carlos a

58. Lyon, *Enterprise of Florida*, 16.

59. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 193.

liar who was plotting some treachery; if Carlos did not bring the castaways to him immediately he would have his soldiers decapitate Carlos and all his subjects, burn their villages, and "become a friend and brother to Carlos' enemies." Menéndez did not have to explain how he would do this with thirty men, his threats had the desired effect: "The Indians were thrown into a panic by these threats. And so Carlos came, after having first sent back the Christians. With twelve Indians he went aboard the patache; if Menéndez wanted to kill him, he said, he might so do, and he would also carry him away in his own country against his will."⁶⁰ Carlos must have figured that the threat of a coup within the next nine months was less of a risk to his plans than Menéndez's displeasure. It would be interesting to know if Don Felipe was among the twelve men accompanying Carlos. If Carlos was prepared to run the risk of being carried off, he certainly would not have wanted to leave Don Felipe at home. However, Carlos's gesture worked; Menéndez received him well. Carlos tried to smooth over the incident by sending his heir apparent, a cousin of twenty, later known to the Spaniards as Don Pedro, back to Cuba with Menéndez probably as a sign of good faith.

Don Pedro returned to Florida in September or October 1566, together with a garrison of soldiers. Menéndez planned to use his men to help discover a water route across Florida which would be valuable both for trade and military purposes as well as for opening up the interior to the Catholic faith.⁶¹ While exploring the St. Johns River, Menéndez had been told by a captive of the Ais Indians of the existence of such a water passage, supposedly connecting from Lake Mayaimi with the Gulf through a river in

60. This quote is from, and this paragraph is based on, Bartolome Barrientos, *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Founder of Florida*, trans. Anthony Kerrigan (Gainesville, 1965), 111. The Solís de Merás manuscript from which Connor made her translation was missing a leaf (see Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 193), but she did not use Barrientos to fill in as she had elsewhere (compare with Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 143). According to Lyle McAlister of the University of Florida, in his introduction to the facsimile edition of Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, xxii, Woodbury Lowery thought that Solís de Merás and Barrientos both drew upon a now lost report Menéndez made to the king in 1567. The former is more detailed and colorful.

61. Letter of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to Philip II, St. Augustine, October 15, 1565, in Bennett, *Settlement of Florida*, 171.

Calusa territory.⁶² He instructed Francisco de Reinoso, the captain in charge of the soldiers sent to Carlos, to find out if a river close to the village flowed from Lake Mayaimi. Menéndez would return in a few months to examine the route. Reinoso's other instructions were to build a fortified house at Carlos, to devoutly worship at the cross erected there and encourage the Calusa to do the same, and to send Doña Antonia back to Havana as a guarantee of the Spaniards' safety since Menéndez "had very little confidence in Carlos."⁶³

Relations between Carlos and Reinoso were not friendly. Although some of the Calusa seemed to worship devoutly at the cross, Reinoso reported, "Carlos was very troublesome and laughed at our ceremonies." Reinoso thought that Carlos had plotted several times to kill the Spaniards and once even "sent to tell his sister, Doña Antonia, and the other Indians [with her in Havana] that he had a very great desire to see them and they should return at once" in order to free his hand against the Spaniards. A major source of friction was the Calusa women who, from the Spanish point of view, "loved them greatly, to such an extent that if the Adelantado had not arrived there [in March 1567], Carlos and his Indians—even though they should lose Doña Antonia, the sister of Carlos, and the six Indian men and women she had with her—were determined to kill Francisco de Reinoso and all the Christians who were with him." Only the warnings by these women saved Reinoso until Menéndez's return.⁶⁴

One has little difficulty imagining that all of this was factional politics in which Don Felipe had a hand. Christianity would represent a threat to any Calusa cacique since he was the chief religious figure among his people. One Spaniard held captive among the Calusa explained that the cacique "was held in great veneration by his subjects, whom he made to believe that it was

62. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 205.

63. *Ibid.*, 219-20. Solís de Merás says Reinoso had command of thirty soldiers; Lyon, *Enterprise of Florida*, 170, states that records at the Archives of the Indies list only twelve soldiers and two interpreters. The river referred to is probably that known today as the Callosa-hatchie, although neither it nor any other river on the west coast connect with Lake Okeechobee.

64. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 221-23.

owing to his magical incantations that the earth afforded them the necessities of life."⁶⁵ Father Rogel discovered later from talks with Calusas commoners that the cacique and the chief priest controlled their religion and told the people what to believe.⁶⁶ So, the fact that Carlos's scorn was not enough to keep some Calusa from worshipping at the cross for which Don Felipe had earlier shown "great reverence" is evidence of the continuing struggle between the rival factions among the Calusa elite.⁶⁷ The attentions some Calusa women paid to the men of the Spanish garrison may also have been a function of this factionalism. Don Felipe could have used these women in the same manner Carlos used Doña Antonia, that is to create a tie between himself and the powerful strangers. That Carlos was willing to risk losing Doña Antonia to put an end to this fraternization indicates how much he feared an alliance of Don Felipe with the Spaniards. As for the women warning Reinoso of Carlos's plots, future events would show that Don Felipe himself was not averse to informing the Spaniards of Carlos's intentions when it would work to his advantage.

Meanwhile, there had been developments at Tequesta on the east coast. Prior to 1566 these Indians had killed all Spanish castaways. The Spanish believed that the Tequesta chief, known as Tequesta, was related to Carlos, and that after Menéndez's marriage to Doña Antonia, "they loved [the Christians] very much because they knew that the most important man among them had a relative of theirs for a wife, a sister of Carlos."⁶⁸ But it seems more likely that Tequesta, upon hearing of the Calusa alliance with the Spanish, recognized this as a chance to escape the Calusa dominance to which his people had been subjected. This interpretation is borne out by the Calusa-Tequesta war of late 1566 or early 1567. Carlos had learned that Tequesta was holding several Christians captive and requested that they be sent to him. Tequesta refused. Carlos then dispatched a detail

65. LeMoyne, "Narrative," 105. On the importance of religion to native American cultures, see Calvin Martin, "Ethnohistory: A Better Way to Write Indian History," *Western Historical Quarterly*, IX (January 1978), 41-56.

66. Rogel to Portillo, Havana, April 25, 1568, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 288-89.

67. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 151.

68. *Ibid.*, 210.

of Indians to kill the Christians, apparently hoping to rouse the anger of the Spanish and use his new allies to punish his former subjects. Tequesta discovered this plot and defended the Christians, killing two of his own men whom he suspected of complicity. At the same time, he sent one of his brothers on a passing Spanish ship to see Menéndez and tell him that Tequesta wanted to take him as his elder brother and that his people wanted to become Christians. The adelantado took this Tequesta representative with him on his last visit to Carlos.⁶⁹

Menéndez returned to Carlos in March of 1567, hoping to find the western outlet of the water passage across Florida and to negotiate a peace settlement between the Calusa and the Tequesta. With him came Doña Antonia, Father Rogel, and Tequesta's brother. His arrival momentarily eased the tension between Carlos and the Spanish garrison. Menéndez heard Reinoso's formal report of strained relations with Carlos and then inquired of Carlos about the location of the passage across the peninsula. Here Carlos saw a chance to use his alliance with Menéndez to his own benefit. He replied that there was no such outlet in his country, which was true enough, but that there was one in Tocobaga, the land of his enemies. The Spaniard stated that he was not sent to make war on Indians but would help arrange peace between Carlos and the Tocobaga. Carlos regretted this but asked to accompany Menéndez to Tocobaga with some of his men to make peace. This development pleased Menéndez and apparently Carlos as well; the cacique promptly settled affairs amicably with the Tequesta, an implicit release from their former vassalage.⁷⁰

Soon after, Menéndez set sail for Tocobaga taking Carlos and twenty warriors with him. Thanks to skillful navigation by an Indian pilot, they sailed right up to the edge of the village just before daybreak without being detected. This was Carlos's big chance: "Carlos prayed the Adelantado to let them land, burn the pueblo and kill the Indians." Menéndez's answer was that they had come to make peace not war. Carlos then "asked the Adelantado to land him and his Indians, [saying] that he would go and set fire to the cacique's house and would swim back to the

69. *Ibid.*, 222.

70. *Ibid.*, 223-24.

brigantines." Again, Menéndez said no, and the Indian saw this great opportunity evaporate: "Carlos was much angered thereat, and wept in his spite."⁷¹ According to Solís de Merás, Menéndez's promise of a just peace and the return of a dozen Calusa captives held by the Tocobaga consoled Carlos. What seems more likely to have assuaged his grief was some new plan, perhaps to join with the Tocobaga against the Spanish. If this were the case, Menéndez anticipated him by assigning two interpreters to accompany Carlos everywhere so that he could not plot with the Tocobaga against the Christians. Menéndez, Carlos, and Cacique Tocobaga finally made a peace. Cacique Tocobaga wished to take Menéndez as an elder brother and suggested that Spaniards be stationed at both Carlos and Tocobaga; the first to break this peace would face Spanish reprisal.⁷²

An incident occurred while returning to the town of Carlos that revealed Carlos's dissatisfaction with the outcome of the trip and marked the end of his alliance with the Spanish. A sailor passing by Carlos inadvertently let the end of a rope fall on his head. Carlos, thinking this was done purposefully, leapt up, struck the sailor, and tried to throw him overboard. Menéndez broke up the fight, but he told Carlos that if he were not honor bound to return him to his home he would hang him for that blow and for the threats Menéndez knew he was making against the Christians. After returning Carlos to his village, Menéndez left Doña Antonia with her brother: "He had no good opinion of her; she was much on the side of her brother Carlos, and very sad on account of the peace he had made with Tocobaga." Her reaction to the peace said much about the nature of her "marriage" to Menéndez: "She spoke very resentful words to the Adelantado because they had not burned and killed Tocobaga and his Indians, and burned the pueblo and the house of his idols; and [she said] that the Adelantado had two hearts, one for himself, and the other for Tocobaga, and that for herself and her brother he had none."⁷³ Father Rogel, who knew all the participants and facts of the wedding, later claimed that Menéndez

71. *Ibid.*, 224-25.

72. *Ibid.*, 225-28. Fontaneda was one of these interpreters; see Lyon, *Enterprise of Florida*, 177.

73. Solís de Merás, *Menéndez*, 229.

and Doña Antonia had only “married halfway.” It was a union of experience forced upon the adelantado by the wily Calusa cacique.⁷⁴

The consequences of the failure of Carlos’s policy gave Don Felipe the opportunity for which he must have been waiting. Father Rogel wrote in a letter to his superior that the peace with Tocobaga left Carlos “very disgraced and angry,” and “he always tried to revenge himself on us.”⁷⁵ Rogel detailed two of Carlos’s plots against the Spaniards at the Calusa town and stated “that he made many other deals and arrangements with his vassals to look for a way to kill us without harm to himself.”⁷⁶ Carlos’s vindictiveness was Don Felipe’s opportunity: “this captain and a few Indians, because they were at odds with Carlos, were friendly with us and gave us information about all the things that the other was doing.”⁷⁷ Sometime between April and early June 1567, Francisco de Reinoso, acting on information Don Felipe gave him of yet another plot, killed Carlos, and Don Felipe became the cacique.⁷⁸

The failure of Carlos’s strategy, and his subsequent murder, did not signal a lasting victory for Don Felipe. Even though the Tocobaga had taken advantage of the situation at Carlos and angered the new Calusa cacique by luring some Calusa villages away from his dominance, and had killed all the Spaniards left with them, Don Felipe failed to use the Spaniards at Carlos to his advantage against them or any other tribe.⁷⁹ Domestically, Don Felipe faced a dilemma. He was, at the beginning of his reign, dependent on Spanish might to maintain his position. Father Rogel wrote to his superior in November 1568: “Many of his [Don Felipe’s] captains and vassal chieftains so hate him that, were it not for the favor and support of the Christians, long since he would have been killed. Due to this support not only is he free, but has even put to death over fifteen vassal

74. Relation of the mission in Florida, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 610.

75. Rogel to Portillo, Havana, April 25, 1568, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 306.

76. *Ibid.*, 306-07.

77. *Ibid.*, 308.

78. *Ibid.*, 309. On the date also see Lyon, *Enterprise of Florida*, 178.

79. Rogel to Portillo, Havana, April 25, 1568, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 295, 297; Lewis, “The Calusa,” 26, 29.

chiefs who tried to kill him.“⁸⁰ These must have been men who had previously supported Carlos. As long as Don Felipe could invoke the threat of Spanish force, he could retain control. But to maintain his Spanish support he had to promise to accept Christianity, and this was the sticking point. In order to become a Christian he would have to break with the Calusa custom of the cacique taking a sister for a wife. His lieutenants within the tribe, however, expected him to marry one of his sisters, and, as he told Rogel, “he could not fail to do what his vassals asked of him.“⁸¹ The evidence indicates that Don Felipe was able to consolidate his support at home and thereby resolve his dilemma to the disadvantage of the Spaniards. He directed several attacks against the Spaniards, and finally Menéndez sent his nephew, Pedro Menéndez Marqués, “to work justice” on Don Felipe. Marqués reported that he “beheaded the said cacique and twenty other Indians among the most guilty.“⁸² But the Calusa did not tamely submit to this punishment; Marqués and some of his men returned from the trip wounded.⁸³

Nor did the Spanish make lasting gains at Carlos or elsewhere in southern Florida. By mid-June 1569, the Spaniards, faced with hostility at Carlos after the death of Don Felipe, abandoned their fort there. The fact that Doña Antonia later died in Havana as a Christian, according to Father Rogel, does not meliorate their failure among the Calusa. She may have been there simply because it was unsafe for her to return home after Carlos’s death.⁸⁴ In 1570 the adelantado also withdrew the

80. Rogel to Borgia, Havana, November 10, 1568, in Ugarte, “First Jesuit Mission in Florida,” 91.

81. Rogel to Portillo, Havana, April 25, 1568, in Zubillaga. *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 285-88.

82. Testimony of Pedro Menéndez Marqués, in Madrid, January 25, 1573, in Jeannette Thurber Connor, ed. and trans., *Colonial Records of Spanish Florida*, 2 vols. (Deland, 1925), I, 39, 45, 67, 73. Marqués speaks of “Cacique Carlos” which I interpret to refer not to Carlos himself but to his successor, Don Felipe, who had assumed the title “Cacique Carlos.” Rogel’s account of the death of Carlos, discussed above, lends credence to this interpretation.

83. Testimony of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the Younger, Madrid, January 25, 1573, in Connor, *Colonial Records*, I, 45.

84. On the abandonment of the fort at Carlos, see the Letter of Father Juan Bautista de Segura to St. Francis Borgia, Havana, June 19, 1569, in Ugarte, “First Jesuit Mission in Florida,” 107. On the death of Doña Antonia, see the relation of the mission in Florida, in Zubillaga, *Monumenta Antiquae Floridae*, 610.

garrison at Tequesta.⁸⁵ The Florida Indians had proved too much for the Spaniards. In 1574 Menéndez petitioned the king for permission to enslave the Indians of Florida, "whereby he could continue the conquest and settlement of that province."⁸⁶ The king refused to allow the enslavement of the Florida Indians, and the Calusa maintained their power in southwestern Florida. An expedition to Carlos in 1612 was met by more than sixty canoes, and a Spaniard who visited Calusa country in 1681 reported that they dominated all the other tribes of the southern part of the peninsula. Ethnologist John Swanton believes that, though their numbers dwindled, the Calusas did not disappear from Florida until the mid-nineteenth century.⁸⁷

Anthropologists and archeologists have shown that the Calusa were among the most advanced and creative of the native North Americans, both culturally and materially. Carlos's complex response to Menéndez's arrival and Don Felipe's maneuvering, both rooted in circumstances which predated the adelantado's appearance on the scene, indicate they were politically advanced also. The larger world of the Calusa was one of rivalry with another power in southern Florida, the Tocobaga, and of restless subject states, such as the Tequesta. Menéndez's arrival challenged the status quo throughout south Florida and Carlos, Don Felipe, the Tequesta, and the Tocobaga all tried to make the resulting change work to their own individual benefit. The marriage of Doña Antonia and Pedro Menéndez de Avilés and the subsequent events provide a brief but intimate look at an Indian people and their world heretofore little known to historians.

85. Lowery, *Spanish Settlements*, II, 345.

86. Report of Pedro Menéndez, the Adelantado, or the Damages and Murders Caused by the Coast Indians of Florida, in Connor, *Colonial Records*, I, 31.

87. Swanton, *Early History*, 343-45.