

Arawak vs. Lokono. What's in a name?

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ARAWAK VS. LOKONO. WHAT'S IN A NAME ?

Denomination of one of the largest and geographically most extensive family of the Americas, « Arawak » comes from the name given by the Europeans at a very early age of the Columbian era to a specific Amerindian group living in the Guianese coastal area in Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana and Venezuelan Guayana.

Borrowing from European languages - mainly Spanish, English and Dutch - integrated into the Guianese Arawak lexicon has been previously mentioned and analyzed in several studies. May be less known is the reverse, although a big amount of scientific names of the original flora and fauna of the area that belong now to the universal knowledge and a significant number of vernacular names have been adopted by the European travellers who discovered simultaneously the name and the thing often through contact with the Arawaks.

Now that the Guianese Arawaks join efforts in order to promote and develop a written literature, the name of the group is being discussed within the community and the denomination **loko** (plural **lokono**) – which means: 1. person as a member of the Arawak/Lokono group; 2. Amerindian; 3. human being – is sometimes preferred since it is perceived as a genuine autochtonous denomination.

I. THE GUIANESE ARAWAKS

1. Location and history

The people known as "Arawak" have been in contact with the Europeans at a very early age of the Colombian era. They are mentioned as early as the beginning of the XVIth century. Their name is differently written *Arawagoe, Arwacca, Arowacca, Arowak, Arrowouka, Arwac, Arawaca, Arauca*, *Arrouagues, Allouagues, Allouages*… depending of the origin of the writers, English, Dutch, Spanish and French; it has been retained in the litterature as *Aruak* or *Arawak.*

The Arawaks are reported to have been living in a vast area which extended from Orinoco Valley up to Oiapoque river, from what is now Venezuelan Guayana up to Brazilian Amapa state, in the coastal area and in the Guianese lowlands nearby the mouth of the rivers; but their travelling traditions extended their zone of influence over Guianese inland and the neighboring islands.

They live now in villages alternating and sometimes coexisting with Kali'na, another Amerindian group speaking a language belonging to another stock. In Guyana, where they are the most important Amerindian group, the global Arawak population is estimated 15,000; in Suriname, the 1980 census gives the figures of 700 speakers out of 2,051 individuals; in the French Overseas department of Guiana there are about 150 to 200 speakers out of a total population of 1,500 and the 2009 Ethnologue reports "a few" speakers in Venezuela[1]. They and their language have been named *Lokono* since some decades[2].

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[1] Source: Lewis, M. Paul (ed.). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Sixteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. 2009.

[2] First mentions in scholar studies are to be found in the fifties. See for example N. Hickerson (1954) and D. Taylor (1955).

The archaelogical and linguistic studies highlight the role of the Arawaks in the area. Although several hypothesis as their origin have been advanced, the Central Amazon seems to be most plausible[3]. There the Proto-Arawakan would have developed Tropical Forest agriculture and would have subsequently moved in different directions, pushed progressively by demographic pressures, presumably using the waterways and travelling by canoe[4]. It is assumed that the Guianese Arawak/Lokono are descended from the migratory group that moved down the Orinoco and established in the Guianese lowlands.

In pre-Columbian times, the Guianese region was closely connected with Amazonia, characterized by a complex ethnic and linguistic plurality. This ethnical diversity favoured dense commercial and war contacts that allowed the extensive circulation of prestigious goods such as the Amazonian green stones and the famous *kalikuli* – gold plates of low degree- from Upper Orinoco river, that would be exchanged for culturally important manufactured goods, that every tribal group would specialize in. Motivated by war or trade, the expeditions were long distance, using preferably the hydrological network and following specific routes by river or by sea.

According to A. Boomert[5], the Lower Orinoco was a strategical position long before the arrival of the Europeans: in between the Caribbean islands and the Amazonian Highlands, it was the point where coastal and insular products such as salt and pearls would be exchanged for inlands products.

Neighboring Trinidad, called *Kairi* ('island') in the Arawak language, controlled Paria gulf and the mouth of the Orinoco river. During centuries the Europeans would follow the routes, experienced previously by the Amerindians, in order to find the kingdom of Eldorado. One of them, sir Walter Raleigh, publishes in 1596 *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana*. There he mentions the name of the aboriginal people of Trinidad:

> *This Iland is called by the people therof* ***Cairi****, and in it are divers nations: those about Parico are called Iaio, those at Punta Carao are of the* ***Arwacas****, and betweene Carao and Curiapan they are called Saluaios, betweene Carao and Punto Galera are the Nepoios, and those about the Spanish Citie tearme themselues* ***Carinepagotos***.[6]

Arwacas and *Carinepagotos* are undoubtedly the ancestors of today Guianese *Arawaks* and *Kali'nas*, belonging to different linguistic stocks. The Kali'nas were called Galibi by the French, *Carib* by the English and the Dutch. Traditional enemies, Arawaks and Kali'nas were fighting for hegemony in the coastal area of Guiana, in the mainland and in the neighboring islands. As in other parts of America, the Europeans took advantage of this competition for land.

Apart from Trinidad island, contemporary records locate the Arawaks in the lowlands of the Guianese seashore. This position made them at an early stage of the

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[3] One of the authors who defends this thesis is D. Lathrap in *The Upper Amazon*. London:Thames & Hudson. 1970.
[4] In D. Lathraps's words: "The distribution of Arawakan speakers argues that canoes were the major means of dispersal." *op. cit.*:73.
[5] *Trinidad, Tobago and the Lower Orinoco Interaction Sphere*, Cairi Publications:Alkmaar. 2000.
[6] *op. cit.*:p.3. The underlining is ours.

Columbus era in contact with the Europeans. Even though these contacts were many a time far from peaceful, the latter learned much from the former's experience.

Toponymy confirms the presence of the Arawaks in the area. The name of many rivers can be interpreted as a compound where the second element *uni* is translatable in Arawak by "water" as in *Marowini* (Marowine)*, Dumaruni* (Demerara), *Cussewini*, *Cuyuni, Mazaruni, Rupununi, Corentini* (Courantyne) ... or *aima ~ eima* "mouth": *Coppename*, *Suriname*…

Similarly, the description of the local fauna and flora would often report its indigenous name, which has been retained up to now. So, **hau**, a word for "sloth" in the Arawak language, has certainly generated Guianese French *aï*, with the same meaning. This is also the case for a species of heron, known in Arawak/Lokono by the name **honoli**. This word has to be compared with *onoré* which is said to have been a generic term denoting the heron in French Guiana[7]. It is retained nowadays in vernacular French as for example *onoré rayé* (striped *onoré*). "*In the past, the word onoré denoted all species of heron in Cayenne* [French Guiana]." Another example is the Scarlet Ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*), a species of ibis that inhabits tropical South America and also Trinidad and Tobago; its Arawak name, possibly an ideophone, **korokoro**, is reflected in Venezuelan *corocoro* and in Guyanese English *curriecurrie*. The trajectory of a denomination is frequently difficult to trace: a small insect known as 'firefly' in English is called **kokuyo** in Arawak and *cocuyo* in Venezuela; this name has been recorded in Taino, another Arawakan language, once spoken in the Greater Antilles. In this case, should we assume that it entered the Guianese Arawak lexicon via Spanish?

Although it is often difficult to assess the origin of a word in a multilingual society poorly historically documented, it is at least plausible that a good number of vernacular terms in the Guianese region are derivative from the Arawak language. The name *marail* (*Penelope marail*), for example, which denotes a bird found in Brazil, French Guiana, Guyana, Suriname and Venezuela, can be compared with Arawak **marodi**. This bird is called in Dutch: *marail* (or *sjakohoen*); in French: *marail*; in Surinamese: *marai* (or *busikrakun*) and in Kali'na: *malai* (or *poli*). In other cases, the original name has been lost in the Arawak language and replaced by another one: the word **kibiole** registered by the eithteenth century Missionaries is now forgotten and Arawaks use nowadays **kibiwarha** (derived from *kapiÿva* in the Guarani language, reflected in English "capybara" and *capivara* in Portuguese) or **kapoa**, while the French *cabiaï* reminds the ancient Arawak designation.

The local flora and fauna has been thoroughly studied in Guyana by the *Guyana Forestry Commission* since the forties of the XXth century. In his analysis, the botanist D-B Fanshawe (Glossary of Arawak names in natural history. IJAL vol XV. 1949. 57-74) gives an abundant list of plants' names taken from the Arawak lexicon. As he points out himself: "*it is largely these names or their derivates which are in current usage in the colony*" (ie Guyana, by then British). More recently, an inventory of Surinamese woody plants gives a list of vernacular names and an index of scientific names[8]. Tropical trees found in Guyanese forest are may be best known because of their trade value. Among them, the scientific name *Kakaralli Eschweilera spp*. and the

[7] A. Le Dreff & R. Le Guen, Les Hérons, Aigrettes et Ibis de Guyane, ed. R. Le Guen. Gaviès. 2004:30

[8] R. W. den Outer. Vernacular names of Surinam woody plants. Wageningen Univ. The Netherlands. 2001.

vernacular names *Kakaralli* or *Kakeralli* come from Arawak **kakarhali**[9]; similarly, *Wallaba Eperua spp*. and the vernacular term *Wallaba* show to be connected with Arawak **walaba**; *Carapa guianensis*, vernacular *Carapa* in Venezuela, *Krapa* in Surinam with Arawak **karapa**; *Simarouba amara* and vernacular *Simaruba* in Venezuela and *Soemaroeba* in Surinam, with Arawak **shimarupa**; *Shibadan Aspidosperma album* and vernacular *shibadan* from Arawak **shibadan** -actually a compound formed from **shiba**, 'rock' and **dan**, 'tree'.

More often, the Arawak designation is retained in one or several of the vernacular names given to a species: for example a tree named 'greenheart' (scientifical denomination *Ocotea rodiaei*) has several common names among which *bibiru* in Guyana and *beeberoe* in Surinam, from Arawak **bibiro**. Another example is the species *Dicorynia guianensis* (or *Dicorynia paraensis*): its common name *basralocus*, reflects its Arawak origin **barhâkarhobali** -from **barhâ** 'sea', **karho** 'pebble' or 'pearl', **bali** 'similar to'- better captured in one of its vernacular name in use in Surinam: *barakaroeballi.*

2. Etymology

The origin of the name "Arawak" is not firmly established. Some scholars explain it as a compound that would mean "manioc eater" (from Guianese Arawak *aru*, today **harho**, 'manioc starch'), which would be a reference to the agricultural tradition of this people ; others connect it with *arhoa* which means 'jaguar' in the language. It is more likely though - as A. Boomert[10] (1984:123-188) suggests - that this denomination originated in an establishment named *Aruacay* situated on the left bank of Lower Orinoco, north to the present day city of Barrancas in Venezuela. By extension, the denomination would have spread in such a way that it referred not only to the inhabitants of Aruacay but also all the individuals speaking the same language – an important population permanently connected by sea or by river.

Nowadays the word *arawak* refers also to a large linguistic stock which brings together numerous languages – not equally known and studied – largely disseminated on the American continent from Belize up to northern Argentina southwards, and to the mouth of the Amazon eastwards. (see map, next page)

The word refers thus to a specific Guianese people, its language and the family it belongs to.

3. The Arawaks and the Arawak stock

Mostly based upon the Missionary texts, the XIXth century comparatists such as the German Karl von den Steinen (1855-1929), the French Paul Rivet (1876-1958) and Lucien Adam (1833-1918) situated the Guianese Arawak/Lokono language in the linguistic family it belongs to, named after this specific language.

The first who ideated this notion is the Italian Jesuit priest F. S. Gilij who lived almost twenty years in the Middle Orinoco second half of the XVIIIth century. In his

[9] Kakaralli trees (*Eschweilera spp*.), are also known for their various medicinal properties.
[10] The Arawak Indians of Trinidad and Coastal Guiana ca 1500-1650. Journal of Caribbean History. 19:2. 123-188. UWI.1984.

Ensayo de historia americana[11] he mentions 45 languages spoken in the region. He discovers through comparison that some languages have as much similarity than there is between Italian and French, or even between different Italian dialects. It is thus convenient to distinguish between *matrix* languages and those which are dialects of the former. The "Carib" language (Kali'na) is considered as a matrix. Another "matrix" is Maïpure having seven *dialects* in the region and he connects them to the Bolivian Mojo. He classes apart Guianese Arawak (*Aruáco*) for lack of good knowledge of this particular language[12].

The linguistic work of Gilij is a pioneer one. His groupings of the Orinoco languages are still valuable. In particular, his discovery of the "Maipure" family (which would be called later "Arawak" or "Arawakan") allowed the following developments in the comparison of this language stock. The name "Maipure" has been retained by further researchers, like the French L. Adam and the Dutch C. H. de Goeje (1893-1955). Nowadays it is taken up by some north American linguists to refer to the well-established related languages; they then adopt "Arawakan" to refer to a vaster grouping[13]. The denominations used in this paper are "Arawak" in concurrence with "Lokono" to refer to the Guianese people and its language, and "Arawakan" for the stock of well-establisehd related languages.

II. THE TAINOS IN THE GREATER ANTILLES

Among the Amerindian tribes living in the Greater Antilles at the arrival of the Europeans, the Tainos occupied a dominant position. Although the documents left by the Spaniards, chroniclers, friars and soldiers, give us a fragmentary and often biased vision of this highly sophisticated society, they nevetheless give us .

When the Europeans land to America, the aboriginal people they got acquainted with they would call "Tainos" occupied great part of the Great Antilles, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola (Santo Domingo and Haiti) and the eastern region of Cuba. They were also present in the other islands, particularly Jamaica, the Lucayan islands (the Bahamas) and the south of what is now Florida. They had developed from Arawakan groups that had migrated from the mainland. It is generally believed that they had penetrated the Antilles about 1500 years before the Europeans, introducing agriculture and ceramic in the islands. They are thus responsible for the adaptative process that resulted in the emergence of the Taino culture, about 300 years before the arrival of the Europeans.

The rather complex social, political and religious organization of the Taino people led them to reach the highest degree of civilization of the Antillean region. They had developed an economic system that was based essentially on agriculture, what led them to live in big villages, ruled by a leader or *cacique*, assisted by a high

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[11] Filippo S. Gilij (1721-1789). *Sagio di storia americana; o sia, storia naturale, civile e sacra de regni, e delle provincie spagnole di Terra-Ferma nell' America Meridionale descritto dall' abate F. S. Gilij* (Vols. 1-4). Rome: Perigio. 1780-1784.
The edition consulted is: Gilij, Filippo S. (1965). *Ensayo de historia americana*. Tovar, Antonio (Trans.). Fuentes para la historia colonial de Venezuela (Vols. 71-73). Caracas: Biblioteca de la Academia Nacional de la Historia.

[12] "*No tengo conocimiento del guaraúno y del aruáco, pero semejan dos lenguas diversas." Ensayo…* vol. III, IInd part, chap. III *"Del número de las lenguas americanas" op. cit.*:205.

[13] See: D. L. Payne "A Classification of Maipuran (Arawakan) Languages Based on Shared Lexical Retentions". In Desmond C. Derbyshire and Geoffrey K. Pullum (eds.), *Handbook of Amazonian Languages*, vol. 3, 355-499. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. 1991.

rank cast named *nitaino*, while the *naboria* class was devoted to agricultural tasks and other services and integrated a lower degree in society. From *nitaino* comes *Taino,* the name by which they would go down in history.

Our knowledge of the aboriginal people at the time of the arrival of the Europeans depends essentially upon the records made by those who are responsible of their collapse. Although archeology helps in completing the image of this lost world, we must take into account that these societies had developed a culture based upon a perishable material production. The archeological remains cannot but little reflect the high degree of civilization they had reached.

These contemporary records give us nevertheless many clues, together with elements of the lexicon. In a recent study, J. Granberry and G. Vescelius (2004)[14] take these elements up again to formulate new hypothesis of the origins and migrations of the aboriginal peoples of the Greater Antilles. For the purpose of this study, we note some Taino words that have been adopted in the European languages and belong now to the universal knowledge and some others that are remembered in vernacular languages, mostly in Caribbean Spanish, in coastal Colombia and Venezuela.

1. Taino contribution to universal lexicon and knowledge

The first travellers found in the Islands a new environment; in their reports they often gave the indigenous name when they described animals, trees, plants and natural elements which were new for them.

Taino words denoting species of the local fauna such as **iguana** (T.[15] *iwana*), **caiman** (T. *caimán*), and **manatee** (T. *manati*). have been borrowed and subsequently adopted by the European languages.

Fruits like **papaya** (=T.; *Carica papaya*) and **guava** (T. *wayaba*) were described, and imported with their aboriginal name. Of great importance was the cultivation of manioc or **cassava** (T. *cazabi*). It is believed that it was imported in the Antilles from Amazonia, by the Arawaks. Corn or **maize** (T. *mahici*, *mahiz*; *Zea mays*) is another important contribution to the world food resources; it was cultivated in Central and South America and was known by North American natives ; it was first discovered in the Caribbean islands and its most common vernacular term in several European languages (Spanish, German, Dutch, Italian, French) has a Taino origin.

Natural elements unknown to them drew the attention of the chroniclers: the term **savannah** (T. *sabana*), designating extense herbaceous grasslands poor in high vegetation and in flowers, now denotes this natural ecosystem typical of Tropical regions in any part of the world. Similarly, the excepcional violence of the **hurricanes** (T. *huracán*) motivated the importation of the Taino word to many European languages.

Manufactured goods, like the **canoe** (T. *canoa*) - in fact a vessel that could contain several dozens of individuals, meaning which has been retained in Arawak/Lokono **kanoa** - and the **hammock** (T. *hamaca*), quickly adopted by the sailors, were perfectly fitted to the environment: the Europeans learnt these techniques and passed on to the next generations.

2. Taino in Caribbean Spanish

[14] Julian Granberry & Gary S. Vescelius. *Languages of the Pre-Columbian Antilles*. The University of Alabama Press: Tuscaloosa. 2004.
[15] "T." stands for "Taino".

Caribbean Spanish which developed in a similar ecosystem, has retained in its lexicon more Taino words. Many of them belong to the botany lexical field: some of them are both vernacular and scientific denominations. Examples are: **ceiba**, a genus of trees whose seeds are enveloped in silky hairs, or "silk-tree" (*Ceiba pentandra* is the national tree in Guatemala); **hobo** (Spondias mombin), fat-pork tree (T. **hicaco**; (*Chrysobalanus icaco* L., also *icaquier* in French). The soursop is known in the Caribbean by its vernacular name in Spanish *guanábana* (T. **guanábana**) and French has derived *anone* from another Taino word, which is also retained in the scientific denomination, **annona**.

The same holds for other botany terms. Some of them belong to the culinary legacy. Hot pepper, cultivated and so important in Central and South America customary food, is known in the Caribbean region as *ají* (T. **ahí**). The peanut, which was, and already is, used in Mexican dishes, is called after Taino **mani** in Caribbean Spanish.

Most of these words, if not all, have probably entered the regional Spanish language at a very early stage of Spanish installation in the Caribbean islands and in the neighboring Mainland. This applies also to other items: a kind of vine or reed named **bejuco**; a rope or cord, especially one made from pita fibre, **cabuya** (or **buya**, that would then be associated with attributuve **ka**-), or animals, such as **cocuyo**, 'fire fly', or **comejen**, 'termite'.

The **bija** (*Bixa orellana*), a shrub or small tree from the tropical region of the American continent, was culturally important as the source of the natural pigment called also *bija* or *annatto* (Spanish *onoto*), produced from the fruit, which was used in bodypainting.

The processing of the bitter manioc, in Caribbean Spanish **yuca** (T. *yuca*), is a technique that requires some specific tools that have been retained in Spanish: the **sebucán** (T. *cibucán*), a kind of basketwork muff open at its upper and closed at its lower end where the grated cassava is pressed in order to eliminate the toxic juice; the **batea**, a trough where the dough obtained is stored; the **budare** (T. *buren*), a flat plate of clay – or metal, nowadays – used over an open flame to griddle the cassava.

From Taino agricultural and housing patterns come: **conuco**, small holding in Venezuela, **bohío** (T. *bohio*), hut, shack; **caney**, large shed with a roof made of thatch or palm. The manufactured **cayuco**, a small canoe, is still remembered in coastal Venezuela where a similar item is still used and known by the same word.

Taino **caya** (or *cayo*) 'island' is reflected in Spanish *cayo*[16], English *Key*, in toponymic compounds to designate Florida small islands in, for example, Key West, Key Largo. Similarly, **xagüe**(**y**), 'natural sink-hole', has been retained in Caribbean Spanish with the form *jagüey*, 'natural or artificial well'.

III. THE « CARIBS » OF THE LESSER ANTILLES: KALINAGOS AND GARIFUNAS

Another group of Arawakan descent that inhabited the Lesser Antilles in Columbian era had a better destiny than the Tainos.

This indigenous human group is known in the literature as "Island Caribs" and "Black Caribs", after Father Raymond Breton, the first man who described their

[16] El diccionario de la lengua española de la Real Academia española gives the following definition: *(voz antillana) cualquiera de las islas rasas, arenosas, frecuentemente anegadizas y cubiertas en gran parte de mangle, muy comunes en el mar de las Antilllas y en el golgo mejicano.*

language that he called "*caraïbe des îles*" (Island Carib). He is the first to state that the men called themselves **Kalinago** and the women **Kalipuna**. Their story is a good illustration of the cultural and ethnic complexity of the region.

The Amerindians named **Eyeri** (or *Iñeri*, *Igneri*...) are said in historical records to be the first inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles. The linguistic data, as meager as they are, allow us to classify the language as Arawakan. The estimated time of their arrival in the Lesser Antilles is the first centuries a.c. It is not known whether the **Eyeri** preceded or followed the Proto-Tainos.

Maybe in the course of the XVth century, not very long before the arrival of the Europeans, warlike sailors Kali'na invade the Lesser Antilles. The legend tells that they exterminated the Eyeri men and married the women. But it is now considered that another scenario is also possible: this people speaking another language and traditionally opposed to the Guianese Arawaks progressively established in the Lesser Antilles, reducing the Eyeri population in a less radical but as much effective way.

Anyhow, the invading Caribs set up home and start families with the Eyeri women, Arawak islanders. This starts a process which has been much commented and diversely interpreted. These invaders belong to a prestigious warlike group, traditionally opposed to the Guianese Arawaks. It is believed now that their language is best considered as a trade jargon based on the Kali'na language[17]. It certainly gained social prestige as the invaders gained power in the land.

In these islands, there is thus the language of the defeated *Eyeri* (Arawak stock) spoken by the islanders, in any case the women, born and educated in the Lesser Antilles. The sons of these women and of the *Kaliña* warriors coming from the mainland, (Carib stock), are educated by the women. When they grow up, the young boys follow their father and accompany them in their activities and learn with him the specific lexicon recorded in Breton's writings as "men's language".

The descendants of the Guianese Carib warriors recognize themselves as members of the paternal branch and identify themselves as Carib. But in early childhood, youngsters, boys as well as girls speak *Eyeri*, their mother's language. Later on, when they start being iniated into masculine activities in company with their father's generation, they would learn (become acquainted with) elements of their father's language - or jargon. As soon as the first generation generated by the union between the victors - the mainland Caribs - and the vanquished - the island Arawaks - the so-called "men's language" spoken by the young men was certainly greatly influenced by the maternal language, the Arawak language originally spoken in the islands.

Elements of the language of the Lesser Antilles have hardly been recorded because in the first times of the Conquest, those islands did not interest the Europeans but as port of call towards the continent. The first substantial records of linguistic data are dated XVIIth century, when the aboriginal populations are besieged by the Europeans, Englishmen, French, Spaniards and Dutchmen. The "Island Carib" described by Father Breton (1609-1679) who lived in Dominica between 1641 and 1653 and published his « *Grammaire caraïbe* » fourteen years after having left the Antilles, is an Arawak language with loans from Kali'na lexicon.

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[17] B. J. Hoff "Language contact, war, and Amerindian historical tradition - The special case of the Island Carib" in *Wolves from the sea*, N. L. Whitehead ed., Leiden:*KITLV*. 1995:37-59.

Chroniclers describe the life in the islands. The economy is essentially based upon slash and burn culture. The production, mainly cassava, the basic agricultural product, is taken by the women and the slaves, the men devoted to hunting, fishing, house and boat construction and war. The society is based upon a clear sexual division of labor. The women make the cooking, the education of children, the weaving of cotton, while the men make the tools for their activities. The sexual division is intensified by the existence of a good number of taboes such as those that forbid the men to do some female tasks and those about the anthropophagous rituals.

This clear sexual division of labor and the hierarchy between sexes are certainly partly responsible for the perpetuation of a linguistic situation which has been much discussed. This linguistic community is known as illustrating a specific case of bilingualism: the existence within the community of "two languages", the "men language" and the "women language". It appears more likely though to be a special type of diglossia in which in which one of the variants, prerogative of the male population, differs mainly from the other one by a relatively small part of the lexicon.

The so-called "Caribs" resisted best to Europeans in two islands, Dominica and St Vincent. In 1635, two boats loaded by black slaves run aground near Saint Vincent. The hospitality of the aboriginals towards the shipwrecked Blacks drew the fugitives of the neighbouring islands. This mixing gave birth to the community called **Black Carib**. Even though they are more Black than Amerindian from a biological point of view, and even if their language is basically Arawak, the Black Caribs who designate themselves as **Kalinago**, recognize themselves culturally and linguistically as Caribs.

They are about 10,000 in the middle of XVIIIth century. Some of them incorporate to the soldiers of the French Revolution and attack the English soldiers. About 5,000 of them are transported by the Englishmen in 1797, in Honduras, by then British. Now, a community called **Garifuna**, totals possibly 190,000 individuals[18], in Honduras, Belize, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

In the meanwhile, in the Lesser Antilles, the "Carib" communities are progressively absorbed by a mainly black population. At the end of the XIXth century, they are some hundreds. The language has disappeared in the first half of the XXth century. About 3,000 people living now in Dominica and St Vincent call themselves Kalinago.

IV. ARAWAK vs. LOKONO

The denominations "Island Carib", "Black Carib" are thus misleading, from an historical and linguistic point of view. Taken up by the modern society living now in Dominica, the adoption of the self-denomination Kalinago has certainly been motivated by the symbolic value of the word and the positive self-image it casts, both internally and externally.

In the case of the Guianese society, a discussion has arisen recently as which name should be uniformly adopted as self-denomination. Altough both names "Arawak" and "Lokono" have been present since several decades in the social sphere

[18] 1997, SIL estimation. Other estimates give a much higher figure, up to 600,000 including Mexico and USA.

where the language is spoken – mainly Guyana, Surinam and the French Overseas Department of Guiana – it is now much debated whether it is convenient to choose one or another designation. Some leaders dismiss the former because they consider it has been externally attributed. This is the case for example of the GOIP (Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous People) association in Guyana: « We don't say "Arawak" in the GOIP since that word started after Columbus in 1492 » declares one of its leaders. Others, aware of the polysemy it contains.

In any case, the Kalinago example shows that, as is often the case, the adoption of an ethnonym is seldom motivated by linguistic factors. It raises the issue of the constitution of a society and its foundation basis, correlated to its self-image, where social prestige and position in the larger, dominant society play a significant part.