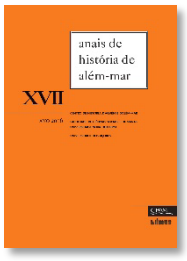

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Maria F. Wade*

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Resumo

Desde o final do século XVII até ao século XIX, missionários jesuítas e franciscanos estabeleceram missões para populações ameríndias no norte do México, no Novo México, no Texas e na Baixa e Alta Califórnia. A instrução e a formação económica, cívica e religiosa dependeram, sobretudo, de intérpretes nativos, mas as exigências da vida religiosa tornaram problemáticas a interpretação linguística e a tradução. Para resolver esses problemas, os missionários prepararam manuais de confissão em algumas línguas indígenas. Estes manuais reforçam a preocupação dos missionários com certos mandamentos da igreja, particularmente aqueles associados às práticas sexuais dos indígenas e ao xamanismo, consideradas como pecaminosas e desviantes. Este artigo serve-se de diversos manuais de confissão, conservados em arquivo, para analisar as implicações socioculturais das questões confessionais para as vidas das populações ameríndias durante o período da missão, bem como as suas consequências para as gerações futuras. O artigo também trata a ambivalência das atitudes dos missionários no trabalho de conversão, à medida que se confrontam com as culturas indígenas.

Palavras-chave: América do Norte, populações indígenas, missões, conversão, sacramentos.

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Abstract

From the late 17th through the 19th centuries Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries established missions for Amerindian populations in Northern Mexico, New Mexico, Texas and in Baja and Alta California. Economic, civic and religious instruction and training relied mostly on indigenous interpreters, but the requirements of sacramental life made linguistic interpretation and translation problematic. To address these problems missionaries prepared confessional manuals in some indigenous languages. These manuals emphasize the missionaries' preoccupation with certain church commandments, particularly those associated with indigenous sexual and shamanistic practices, and marked such practices as sinful and deviant. This paper uses several archival confessionary manuals to discuss the socio-cultural implications of the confessional questions for Amerindian practices during the mission period as well as their consequences for future generations. The paper also explores the ambivalent attitudes of missionaries toward conversion work as they encountered indigenous cultures.

Keywords: North America, indigenous populations, missions, conversion, sacraments.

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A Background Sketch

Spain's conquest of the Americas relied on two institutions, the Catholic mission and the military presidio. Establishment of missions and presidios accompanied the Spanish colonial move northward from Mexico City since the mid-sixteenth century, though missionary efforts often preceded Spanish settlements. Within the northern frontiers of New Spain, a territory that encompassed modern Northern Mexico, Texas, New Mexico and the Californias, the presidio protected Spanish settlements and missions from Native American[1] groups of hunters and gatherers or agriculturists whose territories the colonists invaded, or usurped. The Catholic mission's role was to Christianized the native populations and make them productive subjects of the Crown of Spain. These processes, often subsumed under the notion of *reducción*, implied teaching the natives the catechism, prepare them to receive the sacraments, teach them the rudiments of the Spanish language, and make them farmers and ranchers.

Missions were to be economically self-sufficient, and aside from crop raising, animal husbandry and fishing, the native residents were taught a variety of crafts, from construction techniques and water management (*acequías* or irrigation ditches), to weaving, leather working and blacksmithing. With few exceptions, the native populations were responsible for all the economic activities associated with the running of the missions and the missionaries had to have the knowledge to teach the natives the necessary skills, or find someone who could do so. A guidebook a Franciscan friar prepared in 1787,[2] after most of the Texas missions had been either closed or secularized [1689-1773], makes clear the complexity of the job and the tight schedule missionaries had to follow to make sure the mission could provide for its residents and keep a surplus for trade with the presidio and the settlers. The instructional guidebook also implies that a native population of about 200 to 250 people was needed to perform the

[1] Native Americans and Amerindians are used interchangeably in this paper.

[2] Benoist and Flores 1994.

various tasks and make the mission economically viable. This is born out by the normal native population present at the missions, and also means that when the mission resident population dropped below certain thresholds, friars and soldiers traveled to the hinterland (*tierra adentro*) to round up a new group of Amerindians, whether or not they wished to join the mission.

During the Spanish Colonial period, several religious orders were involved in the Christianization of Amerindians in the New World. Jesuits and Franciscans worked in Alta and Baja California, in Northern Mexico and in New Mexico at different times. In Texas, only Franciscans friars operated. The basic tenets of Christianity were obviously the same for both religious orders, but their approaches to the Christianization of native populations were different. These differences reflected the institutional background and foundational principles of the orders,[3] as well as the period when the orders were established and the people they attracted.[4]

Missions and cultural change

Missionaries were charged with changing the Native Americans' culture, from their language and beliefs to what they ate and how they dressed. Most of the missions established for Amerindians in Northern Mexico, Texas and the Californias were set up for peoples who made a living by hunting game and gathering wild plants, fruits and nuts. In general, these groups lived in temporary settlements; constructed dwellings of small tree limbs covered with grass or animal pelts, wore no clothing except for a loincloth and in cold weather an animal pelt cape, and used sandals made of vegetable fibers. Ethnic groups were very numerous, spoke different languages or dialects of a language family, identified themselves by specific names, were organized in kin related extended families, and each group had generally between twenty and one hundred members. From archaeology and from European archival records, we know little about their original territories and even less about their beliefs.[5]

In the missions created for hunter-gatherer Amerindians, they had to work to ensure the economic sustainability of the mission and learn the crafts needed to build and maintain the mission structures as well as the complex network of crafts needed to sustain the mission population.

[3] Polzer 1976.

[4] Wade 2008, 33-47.

[5] Wade 2003, 56-57.

These missions were constructed as walled, gated, compounds in which Amerindians were kept, and if they left without the friar's permission they were considered fugitives and generally pursued, captured, and forced to return to the mission. Commonly, the mission compound included the church, the friar's convent, the soldiers and the Amerindians' houses, granaries, craft shops, storehouses, wells, ovens, stables and animal sheds (Fig 1). In most cases, the mission's agricultural fields and cattle ranches were located at considerable distances from the mission compound. Natives, mostly males, farmed the fields and traveled to the mission ranches to tend to the cattle. Adult women and girls remained in the mission compound. They ground the corn, cooked, washed clothing, cleaned, sewed, and were employed in several tasks such as weaving and candle making. At best, there were two friars and two soldiers at each mission, which means that the indigenous population performed all the labor. The native mission population, willingly or not, sustained the mission as a concept, an institution, a set of buildings, and as a religious-economic enterprise.[6]

Missions established for indigenous agriculturists, such as those in East Texas and in New Mexico, were created for large tribes and the mission church and the friars dwellings were inserted *into* the Native American settlements that had existed for millennia and were fully functioning and self-sufficient. Natives lived in their own houses and maintained the same extended family social arrangements and activities as before the mission church was built. Natives worked their own land, grew crops, made exquisite pottery and had a rich ceremonial life anchored on native beliefs. These were agricultural autonomous villages with organized civic and spiritual leadership. Under such logistic arrangements, the friars could not compel the local natives to attend Catholic ceremonies, learn the catechism or take the sacraments. More important, the friars and the soldiers depended on the local natives for food, shelter, clothing, often for protection and generally for just about everything else. Nevertheless, while the Franciscan missions in East Texas were doomed to failure almost from the beginning and were eventually removed or closed, most New Mexico missions continued to the present day and are important parish communities.[7]

Notwithstanding how today one understands the resiliency and revival of Amerindian cultures and beliefs, the fact is that the changes brought about by the colonial period were radical. At the end of the mission period,

[6] Wade 2008, 121-130.

[7] Wade 2008, 107-112.

the majority of Native Americans relied on farming for their subsistence, wore Western clothing, spoke Spanish and practiced the Catholic religion. Indeed, most of them today are Catholic, or identify with Christianity. Even when Amerindian tribes rightfully decry the results of colonialism on their culture, they acknowledge and rely on the baptism, marriage and burial archival records the missionaries kept which are crucial to identify individuals and establish personal genealogies and membership in a group or tribe. For instance, without this type of documentation, United States Federal Recognition of a tribe or community is very difficult.[8]

Missionaries and the work of conversion

At sunrise the church bells tolled calling the mission residents to Mass. Everyone was required to attend and failure to do so resulted in physical punishment, such as lashes. Recitation of portions of the catechism followed Mass. Afterward all natives tended to their assigned chores. Most males twelve years or older worked in the farms or took care of the herds of cattle and horses. The youngest boys slept and lived in the friary and received special instruction in the Spanish language and in catechism. Young and older females remained in the mission compound and worked at the chores the missionaries considered appropriate for women such as cooking and washing. This separation of the family members and the way in which the division of labor was organized were antithetical to Native American social arrangements and behavior prior to entering the missions.

After the main meal at noon, some natives enjoyed a short siesta and then returned to their tasks. At sunset the church bells rang again calling people to the evening prayers, religious hymns and catechism. On Sundays, holy days, and special festivities, such as that of the patron saint of each mission, everyone attended the religious services. These religious ceremonies included performances by proficient native musicians and male and female choir singers.[9]

Aside from Mass, a good deal of time was dedicated every day to the learning of the Catholic Doctrine. On Mondays and Wednesdays the natives learned the catechism using a question-answer system though a young male well versed on the catechism posed all the questions and likely guided the answers. On Tuesdays and Thursdays teaching concentrated on

[8] For instance, see the BIA requirements for Federal Acknowledgement at http://www.bia.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/OFA/OFAGuidelines/index.htm. Accessed December 8, 2015.

[9] Wade 2008, 194.

learning the basic Catholic prayers such as the Lord's Prayer, the description of the Sacraments and the Act of Contrition. Fridays were dedicated to enacting the Way of the Cross and on Saturdays they recited the Rosary. Again a young male led the recitations. Sunday Mass and associated ceremonies preceded the weekly distribution of meat rations and other goods or gifts.[10] The conjugation of religious ceremonies with ration distribution and gift-giving guaranteed native attendance but the association of economic wants and needs with religious events was a constant in mission life.

The friars' training of young males in the Spanish language and the leadership the latter were allowed to take in catechism teaching and in religious ceremonies upended basic native customs because such leading roles and associated statuses belonged to the group's elders and possibly to the spiritual practitioners (shaman) due to the association between rituals, esoteric languages (Spanish and Latin) and the spiritual realm, characteristic of shamanic practices.[11] These same young men, often called ladinos, served as translators of religious concepts and Catholic doctrine from Spanish to the predominant native language spoken in the mission. This also means that native mission residents who spoke languages other than that of the interpreter received, learned and comprehended complex doctrinaire concepts filtered through at least three languages – Spanish and two native languages. The semantic problems of translation of complex doctrinal ideas, as well as of behaviors such as sexual acts or cultural customs indigenous cultures sanctioned, occurred frequently in many missions throughout the Spanish colonial world.[12]

The Sacraments

The variety of aboriginal languages complicated learning and internalization of religious concepts, whether or not the natives were willing to accept Christianity. More significant was the need for interpreters to teach the doctrine and administer the sacraments. The language issue was irrelevant for all indigenous people baptized at the deathbed, or for infants or toddlers, but many natives entered the missions as adults and were baptized soon after, often after receiving rudimentary Catholic teachings. Still, the majority of baptisms occurred at death both of infants or adults, and in those cases baptism could be administered without the individual's

[10] Xavier Ortiz, 1745

[11] Durston 2007, 282; Hanks and Severi 2014, 7.

[12] Harrison 2014, 121-125.

consent making the language problem void. The archives consulted are silent about the language issues related to baptism, though the sacrament was essential to receiving any other sacrament: without being baptized an Amerindian was a 'gentile' (non-Christian).

Once baptized, the Catholic Sacrament of Confession was essential to receive all other sacraments, and it required the active participation of the native. It also necessitated a fairly good command of the Spanish language and an equal understanding of the Ten Commandments. Given that the majority of missionaries in the areas discussed did not speak any native language and Native Americans had a rudimental knowledge of Spanish at best, before the preparation of native language confessional manuals confession could only be accomplished through interpreters, which means the confession was shared with a third party.

Despite demands that missionaries learn native languages, many did not or experienced great difficulty learning them. Also, in areas like Texas or California the multiplicity of languages and language families present at the missions made the problem that much worse. The close relationships between the native tribes in New Mexico ensured that different tribes spoke or understood the languages of other tribes, making it possible for a missionary to master one language and be understood by different groups, facilitating communication. The frequent use of Nahuatl as a lingua franca in Northern Mexico, also eased communication and Jesuits and Franciscans generally had a working knowledge of Nahuatl. Also the Society of Jesus compelled its members to master native languages and submit to examination, but the Franciscan Order did not.[13] That said, missionaries came from all over the world and though they learned Spanish, for many that was their second language and their linguistic proficiency was relative. They were, therefore, already translating concepts such as God, the Holy Trinity, divinity, sin, and the soul from their own mother language and conceptual world to that of Spanish. In the best of scenarios, religious ideas and concepts underwent two translations as they were conveyed to Amerindians but often those concepts were filtered through more than four different languages. Such multiple translations resulted in interpretations of Catholic concepts that characterize later Native Americans' practices and understandings of religion. These understandings and practices reflect integrative processes merging Western and Native American cultural and conceptual viewpoints, particularly as the interpreters were

[13] Burrus 1984, 224-25.

second and third generation mission residents who had to find ways to translate that which was not possible to translate as it did not have linguistic and culture system equivalents.[14]

Aside from those thorny issues, self-confessing implied being able to recall what 'sins' one committed, how many times, under what circumstances and who was involved in those events. These were very complicated problems for Native Americans, particularly those who lived by gathering and hunting as time reckoning was done by seasons, the availability of plant resources and by the movements of herd animals. In some cases, such as some of the Coahuilteco or Apache groups in Texas, we know that time reckoning was also done using the moon cycle. These time divisions did not help track down when one committed a sin or answer the specific questions confessionary manuals posed.[15]

Confessionary Manuals

The Spanish colonial missions in Northern Mexico, New Mexico, Baja California and Texas spanned about the same period, from the late seventeenth through late eighteenth centuries. Northern California's (modern California) Spanish missions were established in the late eighteenth century and remained under control of Spanish missionaries until 1833.

The confessionary manuals discussed in this paper were created at different times during the mission period and addressed specific needs related to the groups housed at different missions. The *Cuadernillo de la Lengua de los Indios Pajalates de la Misión de la Purísima Concepción del Río de San Antonio (Tejas)* was prepared by the then President of the Texas Missions Fray Gabriel de Vergara in 1732. Fray Vergara was also the missionary in charge of Mission Concepción in Texas. Vergara was born in Orense, Galicia, in 1673.[16] Attached to the *Cuadernillo's* manuscript were 40 handwritten pages titled *El Confesionario de Indios en Lengua Coahuilteca*. While the *Cuadernillo* reflects the need to master some basic knowledge of the Pajalate language, the *Confesionario* is clearly a language guide for confession. In addition, the *Cuadernillo* was prepared for the Pajalate language with Spanish translation, while the *Confesionario* is in

[14] Baegert 1979, 102.

[15] Wade 2008, 239-242.

[16] Hoyo 1965, 16.

the Coahuiltecan language with Spanish translation. The documents were published together but the same person did not pen both documents.[17]

The Pajalate (Pajalat) were a group of Native Americans represented in several Central Texas missions, though most entered Mission Concepción, located in San Antonio, Texas (Fig. 2). About 33 Pajalat appear in the Texas Missions records. They spoke a dialect of the larger Coahuiltecan language family.[18] The *Cuadernillo* includes translations of nouns, some simple phrases and verbs such as to cut, to burn, to obey, to forgive and to be sorry. A few of the short sentences have to do with being unable to recall. The *Confesionario* on the other hand focuses on specific questions such as: with how many married women did you fornicate? Were these women kinfolk? How many times and with how many women kinfolk did you fornicate? Did you use obscene words? How many people heard you? At the end of the confession and after an explanation of heaven, purgatory and hell, the missionary commanded the penitent to confess within one, two or three moons.[19] The emphasis of the confessional's questions is on the Commandments, and on when, how, with whom and how many times a 'sin' had been committed but also on reporting on others regarding sexual and shamanic practices. While it seems that Native Americans understood the basic notions behind the Commandments, recalling when and how many times they had 'sinned' constituted a problem.

Despite the Council of Trent dispositions,[20] there is little information on *where* confessions took place and *how* were confessions heard. The confessionary manuals I consulted as well as those used in this work are silent on the manner of confession, though it is clear that it was auricular. While some confessional manuals were introduced and used in the early 17th century, such as the *Confesionario of Fray Francisco Pareja* published in 1613,[21] those discussed in this paper were used later. Some authors suggest individual, private confession,[22] and it is possible that screens or some sort of confessional booths were used but the acknowledged need and practice of using interpreters would indicate face-to-face confession and at best relative privacy.

[17] Ibid., 5.

[18] Campbell and Campbell 1985, 31-32; Hoyo 1965, 22-23.

[19] Hoyo 1965, 83-85.

[20] Harrison 2014, 8-9.

[21] Milanich, and Sturtevant, 1972.

[22] Durston 2007, 277; Harrison 2014, 8.

The *Confesionario*, and other similar manuals, targeted Native American cultural customs such as having sexual relations with single, 'married' or kinfolk since the missionaries were interested in containing sexual intercourse and procreation within the Western Catholic version of the nuclear family. We know that members of the hunter and gatherer groups who entered missions, such as the Pajalat, partnered with members of other groups. In same cases we also know that endogamous partnerships were taboo, while in other cases those female/male relationships were encouraged and desirable for intergroup alliances and personal status.

Amerindians may not have abided the rite of confession, but those groups discussed in this work generally did not refuse confession. That said, there is a substantial difference of intent between failure to confess and refusal to confess. Several did fail to confess because they were absent hunting or gathering, left the mission either temporarily or permanently or for other reasons the archives do not specify. Regardless of the reasons or intent, failure to attend religious ceremonies and sacraments resulted in stiff penalties that ranged from whippings to irons and stocks.[23]

The *Manual Para Administrar los Santos Sacramentos de Penitencia, Eucharistia, Extrema-Uncion y Matrimonio* was composed and published by Fray Bartholomé Garcia in 1760. There are very close similarities between Garcia's *Manual* and the *Confesionario*, attached to Vergara's language manual though Vergara's was published earlier. Eugenio Hoyo suggests that the missionaries used Garcia's *Manual* before it was published or, conversely, that Fr. Garcia incorporated pieces of the earlier *Confesionario* the missionaries were already using.[24] Regardless, the *Manual* was prepared for the Texas Missions and their native residents, who the Spanish called 'nations'.

Fr. Guadalupe Prado, who reviewed Garcia's *Manual*, stated that the most proficient interpreters approved Garcia's translations, and that most of the young men spoke or understood the *Manual*'s language. According to Fr. Prado, these young men were the target and hope of the friars for the future of Christianity. Fr. Prado also noted how dangerous it was to rely on translators. He stated, "There is every reason to distrust them when they teach the divine law, glossing it with the first thing that comes to their mouths [Con quanta razon debemos desconfiar de ellos quando enseñan la ley divina, glossandola segun lo primero, que se les viene â

[23] Adams and Chavez 1956, 254-256; Wade 2008, 188, 257.

[24] Hoyo 1965, 7-8.

la boca]. [25] Prado and others were well aware of the intended and un-intended problems of translation and the risk of introducing heretic principles into Catholic Doctrine. [26] Prado noted that the lack of equivalent concepts or ideas led to paraphrasing and inherent errors, and added that given the complexity of the translation issues, missionaries could only rely on the interpreters' good faith but even in that case missionaries had no way to be sure of the fidelity of the translations since they did not know the native language.[27]

In the First Commandment the *Manua*l asks if the penitents believe in anything special when they hear the birds sing, if they believe in dreams, if they have called on the devil, have practiced witchcraft, if any of those bewitched died and to how many the penitents have taught witchcraft. The confessor asks what things were used in witchcraft and compels the penitent to bring those items to the friar to receive absolution.[28] There are few questions for the Second and Third Commandments. The questions related to the Fourth Commandment conflate the penitent's parents with the friars whereby the latter supersede the former's authority. Questions about fornication are addressed specifically to males and females and most inquire if the penitent's offspring witnessed sexual acts. Likewise there are questions about domestic violence addressed to males.[29] The Fifth Commandment returns to questions of curses and spells and asks if the penitents have killed anyone and if so, how many. The confessor also asks if the penitents have eaten human flesh, if they have ingested peyote or the little bean (*frixolillo* – the hallucinogenic mesquite bean), and asks women if they have done anything to abort.[30]

The Sixth Commandment asks individual questions to males and females about sexual partners and the type of sexual relations. The *Manual* notes the problems natives had in describing grades of kinship and since males had relations with many different women, Fr. Garcia suggests that an all-embracing question be asked about sexual partners. The *Manual* asks specific questions about touching breasts and sexual organs, about masturbation, sexual relations in church, anal relations between males and between males and females, as well as questions about the desire to

[25] Prado 1760, 6.
[26] Durston, 2007, 283.
[27] Prado 1760, 7-8.
[28] Garcia, 1760, 7-8.
[29] Ibid., 12-13.
[30] Ibid., 14-15.

copulate and if others witnessed the penitents' sexual acts (voyeurism). The *Manual* also asks about bestiality and the frequency of those acts. The same queries are asked of females including same-sex questions, though there are none about bestiality.[31]

The Seventh Commandment asks questions about stealing and includes thefts of cattle from other missions and from Spanish settlers. The Eighth Commandment asks about lying and whether or not the penitent is making a complete confession of all the sins "the penitent has committed while in this world" and if the penitent is fully contrite.[32] The final pages of the *Manual* speak of the devil and of hell as a place where one cannot eat, sleep or rest and from where one cannot escape – a cataclysmic, scorching place of untold misery.[33]

Garcia's questions highlight the missionaries' obsessive preoccupation with sexual behavior, but they raise a pertinent inquiry about whether those questions reflect the missionaries' knowledge about Native American behavior or if the missionaries were transposing Western versions of what was considered abhorrent sexual conduct and in the process introduced those behaviors to the indigenous populations. The ritual uses of specific hallucinogenic plants (see Fifth Commandment) such as the peyote buttons and the mesquite bean (*frixolillo*) were documented as practices among Native Americans in Texas and Northern Mexico.[34] This indicates that at least some of the sexual behaviors questioned in the confessionary were practiced, and that the missionaries prepared those questions on the basis of prior knowledge. Likewise, confessional questions prepared for other native populations (see below) reflect knowledge of cultural systems and traditions different from those of Texas and Northern Mexico.

The *Ventureño Confesionario* of Fr. José Señán was prepared between 1797 and 1823; the date Fr. Señán was deceased. Fr. Señán was one of the Franciscan friars who worked at Mission San Buenaventura in Alta California. He was born in 1760 in Barcelona and was knowledgeable in the Chumash languages, the language of the manual.[35] Unlike the confessionary manuals discussed before, Señán's informs the penitent that a confessor

[31] Ibid., 15-23.

[32] Ibid., 26.

[33] Ibid., 27-30.

[34] Cabeza de Vaca, 1542/2003, 132-3; Wade 2003, 64.

[35] Beeler 1967, 2.

cannot divulge what he hears in confession.[36] Similarly the friar allows the penitent to confess to those sins he or she remembers, though he insists the penitent must remember all the sins to obtain absolution.[37]

The First Commandment covers the usual questions about faith, but Fr. Señán intercalates questions and answers about differences in counting (counting by tens or using ten plus four as a solution for fourteen). This commandment includes culture specific questions that did not appear in other confession manuals, such as "did you scattered seeds and beads, and did you believe that by doing so you would kill fish?' or that by scattering seeds and beads "there would be plenty of seeds, deer and rabbits and jackrabbits?" The manual also asks if the penitent believed in dreams, or if shamans made it rain, made acorns grow and healed the sick, or if the penitent was a shaman.[38]

The questions for the Second, Third and Fourth Commandments include missing Mass, or talking during religious celebrations, but also ask about fasting and eating meat during Lent. The Fourth Commandment's questions collapse friars with parents just like Garcia's *Manual* did, and also includes queries about physical violence against women.[39] The Fifth Commandment concentrates on questions about killing others, but includes killing using poison, beating a person to death, using malicious gossip and being high on tobacco. Male penitents were asked if they had persuaded a woman to abort or, if the penitent was a woman, if she had done so. The women were also asked if during sexual intercourse they had "spilled the body's seed" to avoid pregnancy. Several questions about loss of semen during intercourse stress the missionaries' preoccupations with low birth rates and depopulation.[40]

The Sixth and Ninth Commandments emphasize sexual relations between various partners including kinfolk. Unlike Garcia's, Señán's *Manual* goes into great detail about different kinfolk grades of relationship, including incestuous and adulterous sexual encounters as well as those that took place before a penitent became a widow or widower. Some of these questions seem intended to track an individual's sexual history beyond the actual and potentially sinful sexual encounters. Like Garcia's this manual asked about masturbation but placed the emphasis on the loss

[36] Ibid., 15.
[37] Ibid., 21.
[38] Ibid., 25-27.
[39] Ibid., 29-35.
[40] Ibid., 39.

of semen. Questions about intercourse between 'married couples' again reflect the friars' preoccupation with low birth rate. The manual asks about 'improper' intercourse to avoid pregnancy but also about male and female willingness to engage in sexual relations any time either partner was willing. The questions on sexual intercourse and bestiality include voyeurism and the notion of pleasure as well as the sex of the animal.[41]

A series of questions relate to males lending their wives to other males, and three questions address intercourse with a woman by force (rape). Same-sex questions to males discriminate between intercourse with a male and intercourse with a two-spirited person (sometimes called a berdache) differentiating between a society's recognized and specialized two-spirited role and a male who did not play that role.[42] The questions specifically created for women parallel those asked of males, including those that addressed avoidance of pregnancy, desire, and bestiality but there is only one question about same-sex intercourse and there is no reference to a two-spirited female role.[43]

The Seventh and Tenth Commandments deal with stealing and again incorporate in the questions material culture rather specific to the Chumash tribes, such as seashells, basketry and fish, but particularly those about beads and bone beads on which the Chumash were specialists. The manual includes questions about gambling, which we know groups in Texas and Northern Mexico practiced, though no questions were asked about that in Garcia's *Manual*. The Eighth Commandment includes only a few questions about lying and reiterates the admonition to confess all the penitent's sins and repent to obtain absolution.

Analysis

The Sacrament of Confession enabled baptized Native Americans to receive other sacraments such as Communion, Marriage and the Last Rites. While all other sacraments were received generally only once, confession and communion were received multiple times. Confessions were repetitive tests of the natives' s knowledge of the Catholic Doctrine, but they were also teaching moments for the natives as well as the friars. For the indigenous populations the need to recall sins in detail and in time and space, in addition to the fear instilled with the imagery of the devil

41 Ibid., 50-51.

42 Ibid., 53.

43 Ibid., 59-63.

and hell, could not be easily rejected or kept out of the mind. Nevertheless, natives either learned and accepted the sacramental demands, or they developed ways to manipulate the system and sidestep confessional answers.

For the friars, confessions were regular instances to learn about the natives' cultural customs and to hone the missionaries' policies to undermine native traditions. In fact, confessions worked like ethnographic 'interviews' that permitted the friars to target interventions and update confessional knowledge but also allowed the traditional anthropological 'informant' (i.e. the penitent) to mislead the interviewer. The emphases on specific practices in different areas and indigenous cultures make it clear that such was the case, though certainly not the primary intent of confession.[44] Knowing kinship systems, cultural customs, shamanic practices, the objects involved in shamanistic practices and even the identity of the shamans, made it possible for the missionaries to monitor and curtail shamanic influence, one of the most powerful forces against acceptance of the Catholic faith. Likewise, the native jokes played on friars indicate the extent to which some Amerindians could nuance situations and explore their language understandings to embarrass the friars or challenge their teachings.[45]

When comparing Vergara and García's manuals to the *Ventureño Manual*, the overall tone and the addition of certain questions, particularly those about telling time, recalling and certainly those about abortion indicate the friars' awareness of deep seated cultural problems that affected the indigenous communities, some specially relevant at the end of the mission period such as the low birthrate. The *Ventureño Manual* shows a greater preoccupation to identify specific kin relationships between the penitent and her or his sexual partners, to gauge the degree of the sin committed and promiscuity, and evidently also to become aware of a native group's acceptable mating partners. Most questions were the same for males and females, though those dealing with shamanism were addressed to males. Indeed most ethnographic information about shamans or other spiritual practitioners indicates they were males and very likely experienced and advanced in age. In California, however, there is some historical evidence for women shamans.[46]

[44] Harrison 2014, 141.

[45] Durston 2007, 283-285.

[46] Geiger and Meighan, 1976, 49.

The daily physical separation of young indigenous females from males was meant to be strict, though they certainly found ways around it. Still, the fact that the friars made the natives' actions unlawful and subversive, tainted normal social intercourse and did not help the low birthrate. While young females remained with their parents and extended family, young males slept and spent most of their time at the friary or were assigned to chores that kept them apart from their families. The missionaries deliberately kept males away from their fathers to minimize the influence they could have on youngsters and to prevent the fathers from teaching indigenous norms and traditions to their children.[47] Boys were taught Spanish, became interpreters and guides, had greater freedom to leave the mission as they did errands for the friars, and went to the presidio where they had opportunities to engage in trade and work for the military and the settlers. Male adolescents and adults worked in the fields, and as shepherds, ranch hands as well as fishermen.

Young females were seen as potential procreators and domestic workers and trained to provide for the males and the family, but they also were viewed as a problem for young males lest they attracted their attention and disrupted the friars' plans for the young males' education. Women were constantly accused of talking too much, being vain and troublesome. Conversely and because of the patriarchal approach the missionaries took, women were less likely to be closely supervised, and I believe profited from that to subvert the limitations the mission system imposed on them. The fact remains that women were the biological and cultural reproducers and because they were not chosen to learn Spanish and had less contact with the friars and settlers, women likely were adept to keep indigenous traditions alive.

The strong emphasis on sexual conduct and specific sexual acts was similar in other parts of the colonial missionary world. The 1613 Pareja *Confesionario* was prepared for the Timucuan Natives of Florida and asked similar questions about sexual behavior and abortion, but tailored its queries to local native cultural traditions such as agricultural practices, the use of fire or specific herbs.[48] In Peru, the confessional manuals of the seventeenth century also stressed the first, fifth and sixth commandments, but the number of sexual conduct questions sharply increased after the

[47] Wade 2008, 196, 223, 231.

[48] Milanich and Sturtevant 1972.

sixteenth century.[49] Likewise, in colonial Brazil, the issues and practices related to sexual behavior were central to confession as they were to indigenous alliances, personal native status, as well as essential to the missionaries' background knowledge.[50]

Conclusions

Spanish colonial missions constituted an institutionalized patriarchal domain ruled by patriarchal rules and perspectives. The religious concepts and teachings the missionaries brought to the Americas' missions were no different from those used in European convents, religious schools or parishes of the same period and even much later. The difference resides in the imposition of religious, social and economic principles on societies with very different socio-cultural trajectories and the systematic intent to erase indigenous cultures and languages. While Native American societies through millennia had incorporated gender and age arrangements that balanced out power disparities, the missions' structure created gender and age inequalities atop of those inherent to colonial institutions.

Females, young and adult, were taken for granted in their labor and procreative capacity and considered troublesome otherwise. For hunting and gathering societies, females were denied their traditional role as primary gatherers to become mainly food processors (grinding corn). Though males became mostly gatherers (farmers), some were allowed to continue hunting practices through their chores as ranch hands (kill and butcher cattle). These roles' erasures and reversals affected and upended indigenous social structures, value systems and identities well beyond the imposition of the Catholic religion.

Elder males were loathed for their problematic attachment to indigenous traditions and their unnerving power to teach younger generations. In the missions, their role as the experiential memory bank of the group in terms of environmental and hunting information became irrelevant. Their social value was restricted to ritual and healing practices and, to some extent, to knowledge of group alliances and enmities, and even those roles were curtailed. Shamanic and healing practices were anathema to missionary work, and missionaries rightfully considered shamans the greatest obstacle to Christianization. The institutionalized spatial separation of families contributed to diminish or eradicate the influence of elders, the

[49] Harrison 2014, 119.

[50] Castelnau-L'Estoile 2013, 74-82.

affective and teaching ties between parents and their male children, and those between mothers, female youngsters and their respectively male offspring and siblings.

It is within such socio-cultural erasures and disruptions that one needs to consider the forceful introduction of a new religion, a sacramental schedule, concepts of God and sin and alien behaviors such as those regarding sexual customs and associated penalties. And as if this was not enough, old and new ways of living had to be expressed in a new language that subverted the old while polluting the new. Native Americans laughed it out, joked about it, but it penetrated.

Translation goes beyond language. "It designates the exchange not only of words, but also of values, theories and artifacts from one culture to another, for instance in such processes as religious conversion."[51] Regardless of the field of study or the time period, translations of words and concepts and attendant semiotic processes have preoccupied scholars. A recent article on such preoccupations asks "how communicative processes create equivalencies and organize connections among practices and how such processes can also produce incommensurabilities, disjunctures and power differentials."[52] Colonial Christianization projects produced registers, "sets of linguistic and multimedia signs…culturally associated with particular social practices and with the person-types understood to engage in such practices,"[53] that reflected innovative indigenous understandings of Christian doctrine and practices as they did of secular day-to-day activities. After the missions closed in Northern Mexico, New Mexico, Texas, and in the Californias, indigenous groups were left to their own devices to sort and blend old and new practices to construct an ethos that denoted their particular experiences. This task was mostly left to the later generations and it produced a metalanguage of conversion and associated practices, still poorly understood for many Native American groups but which characterizes indigenous Catholicism in the Americas. As Hanks notes for the Maya, the language resulting from those processes "became native."[54]

Colonialism affected the colonized and the colonizer. The cultural trajectory the colonial missions heralded brought about socio-cultural changes that continue to mark the lives of indigenous peoples and certainly that of

[51] Hanks and Severi 2014, 8.

[52] Gal 2015, 226.

[53] Ibid., 230.

[54] Hanks 2014, 29-30, 32-33.

the Catholic Church, as Pope Francis' emphasis on the importance of the Americas to the church demonstrates. The cults of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico, the Virgin of Macana in Mexico and New Mexico, pilgrimages and saint devotions, elaborate shrines on the sides of the road with crosses, skulls and piñatas, and innumerable other signposts perform this colonial décalage. Regardless of the historical and political reasons behind these adoptions, perhaps the most telling example is represented by the Día de los Muertos celebrated on the first of November in most of Latin America. November 1 is All Saints Day in the Catholic Church while the Day of the Dead in the Catholic Church is celebrated on November 2.

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