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INDIGENOUS ETHNIC AND INTERETHNIC RELATIONS IN THE SPANISH/MEXICAN BORDERLANDS: THE CHUMASH REVOLT

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Indigenous Histories and Traveling Languages

This essay examines the California borderlands through the indigenous ethnic and interethnic groups whose interactions enabled things Spanish, like the borderlands missions, to be infused with a strong indigenous content. Focusing on indigenous perspectives grounded in ethnic languages, territorial identities, and cultural practices, it seeks to explain how Catholicism and the missions became known, in part, through the multiple translations and interpretations conducted by native scholars, authorities, and common people.[1] The translation of pre-colonial and Spanish belief, ideas, and social and material practices developed a significant interethnic content. This derived from the Spanish practice of using native allies in their conquest, and congregating native peoples from distinct territories into colonial institutions like the missions. The massive 1824 Chumash revolt illustrates the crucial role of ethnic and interethnic relations in sustaining an extraordinary act of resistance to conquest.[2] The alliances that operated during the revolt also helped limit Spanish and Mexican expansion on the California borderlands long after Mexican Independence from Spain in 1821.

Spanish colonial and Mexican society rested on interethnic relations, but the categories used to define people's status obscured ethnic differences. Colonial policy initially posited two legal and social groups, the Spaniards and the Indians, with particular rights and responsibilities pertaining to each. Expansion rapidly brought Africans and Asians into the colonial order, while forced or consensual liaisons and

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[1] From the growing body of literature on native perspectives within the Spanish colonial world see, for example: Serge Gruzinski, *La Colonisation de l'imaginaire* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1988,); Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma and His Illustrated Chronicle from Colonial Peru: From a Century of Scholarship to a New Era of Reading* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, University of Copenhagen & the Royal Library, 2001); and Stephanie Wood, *Transcending Conquest: Nahua Views of Spanish Colonial Mexico* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2003).

[2] Mexico's independence from Spain initiated a difficult period for the Missions. Since the Mexicans identified the Missions with the imperialism of Spain, the Missions were ignored and allowed to deteriorate. Antagonism grew as the soldiers compelled the Mission Indians to work overtime without pay over the objections of the Mission fathers. Ill-tempered and discontented because they themselves were without pay and supplies, many soldiers allowed their frustrations to affect the way they treated the Indians. In 1824 events and emotions were pushed to the boiling point.

marriages in the Spanish Americas created a mixed race society by the mid-sixteenth century. At the end of that century, the Spanish government had elaborated a *casta* system that designated a person's status in one of a series of purported racial groups derived from indigenous, African, Asian, and European descent.[3] While the *casta* system marked difference, it lumped vastly distinct historical and social groups into a single category. As a mode of social identification, it functioned as one system among others.

On the borderlands, settlers generally found ways to accrue greater power by using categories of identity based on binary relations between themselves and the indigenous populations under conquest. In California the designation *de razón* (of reason/Christian settlers) contrasted to that of *sin razón* (the non-Christian Indians). These bifurcated identities enabled the many indigenous soldiers, settlers and other colonists with low status, to step beyond the limitations imposed by their *casta* standing.[4] The language of the missionaries, who wrote of the *Indios* as a single group rather than identify and address the specific indigenous ethnicities they confronted in California, also sustained the idea of sharp distinctions between the settlers and the native population. But such distinctions functioned at the level of discourse only.

On the California borderlands, settled very late in the colonial period (around 1769), indigenous ethnic and interethnic realities infused the very Spanish language spoken in the missions. The vernacular speech common among the soldiers embodied words, concepts, and modes of perception derived from many indigenous groups. Fragments of speech from native languages and indigenous ethnic translations of Spanish concepts shaped the vernacular native people learned from the soldiers. This meant that indigenous responses to centuries of conquest formed part of what native Californians understood as the Spanish language. In responding to a questionnaire about whether the missionaries compelled native Christians to speak Castillian, missionary Gregorio Fernandez acknowledged the prominence of the vernacular. He wrote, "we fathers speak Castillian to them . . . They speak their tongue, and the fathers, soldiers, and Indians speak another mixture of Mexicano, Otomite, Lipan, Apache, Comanche, etc., which is the one known among those in the army." One missionary wrote that this vernacular "is the one known among those in the army."[5]

This vernacular acquainted native peoples in California with a long history of colonialism that began in Central Mexico and embodied the interethnic histories of warring and trade in Northern Mexico. 'Mexicano' incorporated words from many

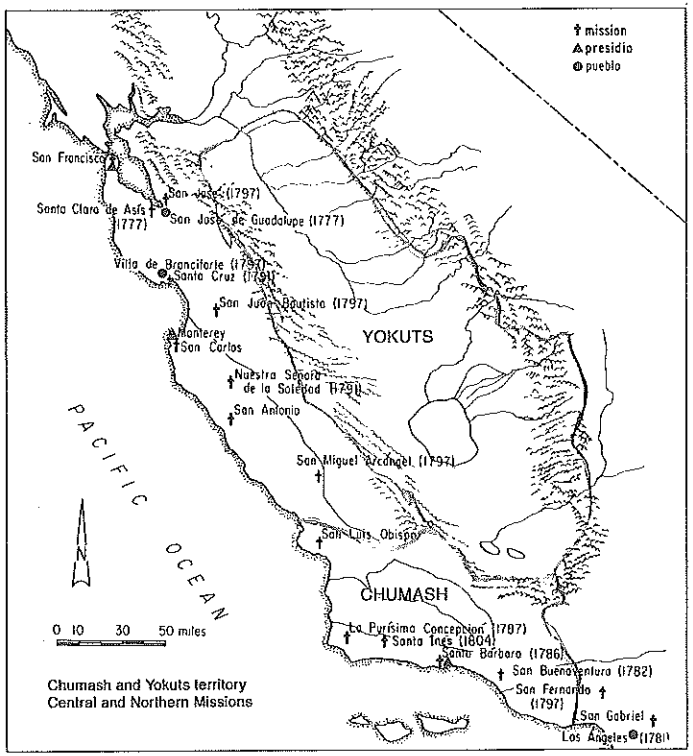
[3] See the classic Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967) and Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660-1720* (Madisón, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).

[4] On the changing meaning and significance of *casta* identity and other categories of social and regional affiliation, see Lisbeth Haas, *Conquests and Historical Identities in California, 1769-1936* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and Ramón Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

[5] Interrogative points raised by Señor Governor of California de Borica to the Comandantes, and replies by Fathers of Mission La Purisima. 1800. Bancroft Library, ms. CC-216, 58.

indigenous languages spoken in the Valley of Mexico. Otomite derived from the language of Otomi soldiers from the Tlaxcala region of central Mexico, who acted as subordinate allies in the conquest of other indigenous peoples. 'Apache' derived from the presence of Apache-speaking auxiliary soldiers who worked with the army in northern Mexico, especially in Sonora. This area remained outside of the political control of the Spanish and Mexican armies and received the designation 'Apacheria'.[6]

Apache, Lipan, and Comanche soldiers and auxiliaries proved crucial to the Spanish and Mexican armies in their fight against the many bands of native people who resided within and beyond the 'Apacheria'.[7] The expansion, raiding and trading



"Chumash and Yokuts Territory—Central and Northern Missions"; Adapted from George H. Phillips, Indians and Intruders in Central California, 1769-1849

[6] The name 'Apache' however, does not reflect the indigenous nomenclature for the many bands of Indians whose villages extended through the vast territory that extended from Sonora, Mexico, northward into Arizona and New Mexico.

[7] See Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwesten Mexico, 1700-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 277-279.

practices that took the Lipan and Comanche from far north and east of the Rio Grande into colonized areas of northern Mexico involved the taking and exchange of captives with settlers and other native groups. This system of captivity and indigenous slavery grew out of the interethnic encounters that took place in the borderlands; it influenced many aspects of regional society such as the composition of the army and the language of its soldiers.[8]

The Spanish vernacular native people learned within the missions reflected the words and perspectives of other indigenous ethnic groups as they came to terms with their existence in colonial society, yet the predominant languages spoken in the multilingual missions derived from California. The indigenous ethnic languages of California also traveled. They moved across the boundaries of the politically autonomous territories that constituted California's densely populated pre-colonial society. Within each territory, most groups maintained their own variety of speech, and yet many people knew more than one language or dialect even prior to conquest.[9] Ethnicity derived from membership in family groups that structured lines of descent within each territory, and entailed identification with that territory, its history and specific mode of speech and cultural practices. The descendants of many groups resided in those territories for hundreds of years prior to the Spanish invasion, and sometimes lived within the vicinity for thousands of years previously. Each territory held most of the resource base of its population, something which sustained their political autonomy. Yet the trade in goods, marriage patterns that generally brought wives into their husband's territory, ceremonial events, and trade fairs, built ethnic and interethnic affinities that extended beyond each territory.

The missions constituted new spaces of interethnic interaction. Each mission eventually occupied many former territories as they drew territorial populations into these centralizing institutions only after the Spanish undermined the basis of native society. The process generally took at least twenty years, or a generation of an occupation that spread outwards from the mission. Many stayed within their territories until they could no longer sustain their lives or political autonomy.[10] Life in the missions proved terribly brutal. Illness and death wiped out entire groups of

[8] On the system of slavery forged through interethnic interactions in the vast territory extending north and south of the current US borderline, see James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2002).

[9] See Leanne Hinton, *Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages* (California: Heyday Books, 1994). Six stocks with multiple language families within them (from which derives the particular language spoken in each territory) defined California at the time of conquest. These stocks connect indigenous Californians to migrations and local origins that extend as far back as 10,000 B.C.

[10] For a discussion of those territories and the reasons that people joined the missions, see Thomas Blackburn and Kat Anderson, eds., *Before the Wilderness: Environmental Management by Native Californians* (Menlo Park, Ca.: Ballena Press, 1993) and Randall Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: the Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1769-1810* (Menlo Park, Calif.: Ballena Press, 1995).

people, leaving others living with fragments of their former communities within the mission nearest to their former territory. Yet many survived, continued to speak their own languages, and translated the new realities into understandings quite distinct from those fostered by the missionaries. They did so under conditions of coercion, as once baptized, they could not leave their mission without a pass giving them permission to do so.

The importance of interethnic relations within this setting stood prominently in the language adopted by each mission population. The most common vernacular derived from the language spoken by the largest group. Yet the promise the missionaries delivered, that Christian Indians could return to their territories once they demonstrated their Christian and Hispanic ways, remained central to the politics of native leaders. Their demands to reclaim their land persisted to the end of the Mexican period in 1848. Yet, this promise generally failed to materialize with the emancipation and secularization decrees that freed native people and placed the missions in the hands of the state during the 1830s. In response, native leaders often claimed land and buildings in the multi-ethnic spaces of their mission, built as they were by their labor, or and that of their ancestors.[11]

Translation—Making the Colonial Indigenous

The very translations of Christian ideas and principles rendered that which was Spanish into an indigenous framework.[12] The translators worked among themselves to arrive at a word intelligible among dialects, and closest to rendering the European concept. In 1810 at Mission La Purisima, for example, Missionary Payeras recounted that in the last years "in conjunction with interpreters I have drawn up a large catechism with the acts of faith, hope and charity, and another with the prayers needful for our salvation, a complete confessional . . . all in the language of these natives."[13] In that mission, the upper class from various Chumash territories had learned Spanish and spoke it quite well by 1798. From the perspective of interethnic relations, they learned Spanish not to assimilate into a hostile Spanish society ignorant of their practices, but to retain power amongst their people and within the interethnic community of the mission.

In the highly stratified world of mission authority, translating and interpreting for others offered an opportunity to negotiate diverse realities and to influence belief, concepts, and regulations. The translator gained a heightened ability to negotiate in a world in which the missionaries, soldiers, and settlers needed them to convey their ideas

[11] See Lisbeth Haas, "Emancipation and the Meaning of Freedom in Mexican California" in *Boletín: The Journal of the California Mission Studies Association*, 20.1 (2003): 11-22.

[12] On translation, see Vicente Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), and Louise Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989).

[13] Father Mariano Payeras, "Report of the State of the Mission." 1810, Bancroft Library, ms. CC216, Vol. 4.

and intentions, and to mediate conflict. Indian officials elected within the missions sometimes represented the largest ethnic group, but as often the population selected the person who best moved within and between various ethnic communities, and who dominated vernacular Spanish and more than one indigenous language or dialect.

The power to translate Catholicism and watch over the well being and transition to Spanish ways within the missions also fell to indigenous godparents (*padrinos* and *madrinas*) from the same or another ethnic group. *Padrinos* often came from among those who demonstrated the greatest ease in multilingual and multicultural settings, or indigenous people who arrived in the area with the conquering force. As the soldiers, settlers, and settler elites, these indigenous godparents held the responsibility to make their charges Catholic and Spanish in belief and practice, but they did so from perspectives developed within indigenous communities. Because these varied widely in California, indigenous translators and interpreters often played the initial function of creating interethnic understandings.

Specific ethnic practices related to the sacred, such as dance and mourning persisted within the missions. Baskets, which constituted the objects used for nearly every function—including eating, storing water and flour, and cooking—continued to be woven within the missions. That often meant weavers returned to their territories where their female ancestors had cultivated the various plants, sometimes for centuries. Yet that cultivation sometimes became too difficult under mission work regulations, or the ancestral lands were too distant for the proper cultivation of the plants. A typical mission basket developed with one layer of crosses along the upper rim as decoration. That suggests new practices shared across ethnicity, even as some weavers continued to produce family designs on a less frequent basis.

Painting constituted a powerful medium to convey ideas in a colonial society in which visual images of saints and biblical scenes taught Christianity. The missions ordered thousands of prints to circulate images that included those of martyrs, who as early converts still living among gentiles, had offered their lives by dying at the hands of their own people rather than renounce their new faith. The Church considered the painted image so powerful that it regulated painting to avoid natives and heretics from imbuing it with their own interpretations of biblical stories and the lives of saints. Hence, indigenous painters throughout the Americas produced work that followed the iconographic guidelines set by the church. Yet if one looks to influences in pre-colonial iconography, their work attains an entirely different set of meanings. And in colonial Peru, Andean painters often used religious painting to vie for power between competing indigenous ethnic groups.[14]

In Chumash territory, well connected through a system of trade that created greater wealth and a more socially differentiated society than existed elsewhere along the coast, a painter offers one of the rare examples of such a translation. He painted the Archangel Rafael in the semblance of a Chumash leader, thereby attributing the latter the power of the Archangel, and similarly gave the Archangel the powers of a

[14] For an important text representing this type of work, see Diane Fane, ed., *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America* (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1996).

Chumash leader (see below). In the painting, Rafael carries a New World fish distinguished by its size and darkness from European depictions that commonly portrayed a slim fish hanging from a string. The image resembled innovations made by Andean artists, who frequently painted Rafael and the other Archangels because

Chumash Rafael: Courtesy of Bellerophon Books (painting hangs at Mission Santa Ines)

they militantly avenged wrongdoers in their role of warrior and, in the case of Rafael, healer. They too painted innovative representations of Rafael's fish, portraying it slung across his shoulder, or dragged on the ground behind him.

The fish in the Chumash painting resembled the whale icon that spread centuries earlier across the 6,500 square miles of Chumash territories. United through an extremely prosperous trade, people in each territory might have spoken distinct dialects, but wide regions within the area shared ethnic similarities. Followers of the '*antap*' cult, a sacred society that spread over the region, used whale icons carved in smooth black steatite stone resembling the one the Archangel Gariel held in the Chumash painting, in rituals they continued to practice covertly in the missions. The whale in the painting of the Archangel Raphael inserts one of the cult's icons into the image of a Catholic saint.

The painting offers an indigenous record of a Chumash leader and territorial space. The painter very likely represented the geographic area that pertained to this leader through his representation of the archangel's cape, which he outlined in red, and via his depiction of the expanse of water on which Rafael stands. The painter translated Chumash and Christian ideas about power and the sacred to create a painting in which they co-exist. He painted the work at Santa Ines or La Purisima during the 1820s. In representing the sacred and social hierarchies that pertained to leadership, land, and belief, the image suggests the persuasive influence of particular leaders and native religious practice at these missions. Rather than the vying for power among ethnic groups, the revolt suggests the power of a unified leadership that gave rise to powerful indigenous politics.

Ethnic Ties and Interethnic Solidarity in the Chumash Revolt

On February 21, 1824 a revolt began at Mission Santa Ines and soon engulfed the three California missions with the strongest ethnic ties within and between them. At Santa Ines, the population of 554 Ineseños took up arms, tried to kill the missionary Uria, and burnt down the mission buildings, except for the church. The population ultimately fled to find exile at Mission La Purisima, about one hour to the west of Santa Ines on horseback, where people had risen in coordinated rebellion that same afternoon. Instead of burning down the mission, many of the 722 Purisimeños fought with and then expelled the soldiers, their families, and one of the two missionaries. They welcomed the exiles from Santa Ines and together created a spectacular, unprecedented occupation of a California mission. In a colonial society that prohibited all Indians from riding horses unless they worked as cowboys, the rebels gained control of the mission herds. In a region whose settlers consistently feared the armed rebellion of Christian Indians and their alliance with non-Christians, the rebels took possession of the soldiers' guns, and the ammunition and small canons from both missions. They actively sought allies from the unconverted populations who lived in the Tulares, a vast valley over the coastal mountain range to the east.

Ineseños and Purisimeños controlled Mission La Purisima and a large swath of the countryside until late March, when 109 Mexican soldiers stormed the mission,

killed sixteen and wounded many of the 400 Christian Indians who fought against them. The latter's muskets, machetes, small canons, and bows and arrows could not form a sufficient opposition to the regular military. Yet, as long as the revolt continued elsewhere, the occupying forces found it impossible to re-exert firm control over the region. In the ensuing months, many Ineseños remained at mission La Purisima instead of returning to rebuild Santa Ines, and others fled eastward where Barbareños (from Mission Santa Barbara) had taken exile, together with individuals and small groups of rebels from other missions. Complaining about the ample freedoms taken by the Ineseños and Purisimeños who stayed at the mission, the commander wrote "all the horses" at Mission La Purisima "are in the possession of the Indians and that most of the time they are on horseback."[15]

Mission Santa Barbara, many hours away to the south of these missions, joined the revolt the morning after it began. Though having a large population that ranged over 1,000, the mission's location near the *presidio* (the soldier's fortress) made it impossible for them to occupy it. Most of the women and children fled into the interior early in the morning, while men battled the soldiers and looted the mission before retreating, driving cattle with them as they headed eastward. Some fifty persons also escaped by canoe to their territories off the coast of Santa Barbara, returning to island villages some had abandoned only ten years previously. The majority headed for exile among the Yokut people who resided at about a five days' walk from Mission Santa Barbara.

In seeking exile in the Tulares, they moved toward territory that some missionaries designated as an 'Apachería',—i.e. a region in which native people successfully impeded colonial and Mexican settlement. The terrain aided their resistance. The dense, swampy marsh lands of the Tulares with its many waterways offered abundant food and islands on which people could take refuge and live upon attack. The Spanish could neither penetrate the area to wage conventional warfare with their horses nor starve people out of their places of refuge. Interethnic maroon colonies composed of people who ran away from the missions and other established groups began to sprout throughout the area surrounding Yokuts country.[16]

Some Yokuts who had fled Mission La Purisima years before and had in the meantime returned to their villages around Buena Vista Lake, took in exiles.[17] But the negotiations to find them a place of exile remained on-going via messengers and clandestine meetings. The rebel leader Andrés Sagimomatsse, an *alcalde* elected at Mission Santa Barbara by the people, sent a delegation ahead to negotiate for a place of refuge. Hilarión Chaaj, a Yokut born at a village on Buena Vista Lake, José Venadero, and Luis Calala, from a Chumash village just south of the lake, secured them shelters, including a place to locate their own temporary village. Luis Calala and

[15] Pardo to Noriega, Abril 27, 1824 p. 179. De La Guerra Collection, Mission Achives, Santa Barbara.

[16] Mariano Payeras, *The Writings of Mariano Payeras*, translated & edited by Donald Cutter (Santa Barbara: Bellerphon Books, 1995), 184-185, 197.

[17] Mariano Payeras, *The Writings* 120.

his wife had fled Mission Santa Barbara a few years earlier and, by 1824, lived in a maroon society, thus illustrating the influence attained in the region by escaped mission Indians.

Prior to the revolt, leaders from La Purisima had sent bags of beads to at least five Yokut territories north of Buena Vista Lake in an effort to persuade their populations to join them against the Spanish. They directed gifts to some of the villages recently frayed by the recruitment efforts of three northern missions. Mission Santa Cruz had engaged in a five-year campaign in the northern Tulares from 1817 to 1821. Mission San Juan Bautista began a four-year campaign to get Yokuts to join that mission beginning in 1819, and Mission Soledad began its campaign in that region in 1820. All three missions experienced a large population increase due to the numbers of Yokuts who agreed to travel westward with the missionaries and their armed guard.[18] Some of the recent recruits had already returned to their villages in the Tulares by 1824. For the missionaries and the Mexican government they now held the status of fugitives, and soldiers followed to retrieve them, creating an increasingly violent set of encounters in the region.

According to messengers sent by a missionary, people from the two territories of Taché and Telamé refused to receive the beads, while those from Notontos took the presents but purportedly did not join the rebellion. People from Bubal and Suntaché accepted the gifts and, together with Kitanemuk to their south and the Tubatulabal to the east, they aided and sometimes gave refuge to the exiles.[19] Maria Ignacia recalls her relatives' exile a few years before her birth and the tremendous fear and suffering it involved, but also the crucial importance of interethnic solidarity in relieving that suffering and offering shelter and sustenance. She pointed out that "the Tulareños received the Santa Barbara Indians well" while the Tubatulabal who resided beyond the Tulares gave them "many things and treated them finely, even better than the Tulareños did."[20]

Fears of a general rebellion supported by thousands of Chumash Indians and their allies mounted among the missionaries and soldiers during these four months, until the governor finally issued a general pardon, thus clearing their way back to their missions.[21] Once the leaders of the rebellion agreed to the pardon and signed a truce, Indian leaders and the soldiers called the dispersed exiles to a meeting point at Buenavista Lake from where they headed west. Those who resisted were rounded up by force. After a long and debilitating walk home, the military staged dramatic celebrations of a dual victory—for rebels and the state—as part of the process of reconciliation. They invited some of the Yokuts and others who had been involved in

[18] Robert Jackson, Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans and Spanish Colonization* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 55-56.

[19] Fray Juan Cabot to Governor Argüello, Februry 28, 1824. Mission Archives, Santa Barbara.

[20] Luisa Ignacia Harrington, 1127-1128 No.1-3. See also the published and edited: Travis Hudson, "The Chumash Revolt of 1824: Another Native Account from the Notes of John P. Harrington," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, 2.1 (1980): 123-125.

[21] The pardon failed to exonerate leaders of the revolt caught earlier at Mission la Purisima.

the interethnic alliance to attend these events. The Chumash painting of the Archangel Rafael represented as a powerful leader was either done the year previous to the revolt at Mission La Purisima or as part of the reconciliation that involved the elaborate decoration and painting of the church and sacristy in Santa Ines.

"If They Shoot Me, Water Will Come Out of the Canon"

The seeds for this massive revolt had been planted twenty years earlier, in 1804, when Christian Indians from the older missions of Santa Barbara and La Purisima founded Santa Ines under the authority and in the company of two missionaries and soldiers. Many of these founders came from villages in the Santa Ines watershed region. Many of their relatives eventually entered Santa Ines. At the same time, pre-colonial and Mission-era ties continued to flourish among the populations of the three missions, and the back-and-forth movement from one to another remained very common.

These cultural ties enabled pre-colonial religious practices and thought to persist, sometimes in their original form and at others, in translation. The spiritual leadership of the Wot, whose precolonial authority extended over many villages and territories, persisted within the mission. Moreover, the powerful *'antap* cult that united men from these missions into a secret religious organization, enabled them to organize and coordinate the rebellion. Some of the most important rebel leaders such as Andrés Sagimomatsse (the *alcalde* from Santa Barbara mentioned earlier) actually held the highest positions within the missions. The *alcalde*, a leader elected by the native population, gave orders at the mission and often mediated between the missionary and the native community. He proved most able to translate and interpret ideas and to negotiate interethnic political action. The leadership of the revolt came from among those Indians who held the highest positions at the missions. Sometimes they were members of the cult known as healers and spiritual leaders, such as Jaime, a well known singer at the mission and leader of the revolt. These people coordinated the revolt and negotiated its termination.[22]

The cult generated political ideas that mobilized leaders and the general population. Members of the *'antap* cult were widely known to have the power to make themselves disappear and to be impervious to bullets when they had a sacred *'atiswin* of woven human hair about their neck. In one account a leader died only after the soldiers "broke the *'atiswin*. When all shot at him again, the man died."[23] In another, one man died because he forgot to wear his *'antiswin*, while "the one with the necklace was fired at but became invisible for a stretch and . . . he got away into the mountains."[24] At Santa Ines, if not also La Purisima, a widespread belief had taken hold that these powers generally held by cult members extended throughout the population. Those involved in the rebellion later told Maria Solares that the Ineseños

[22] Harrington, *op. cit.*

[23] Harrington "How They Burnt the Youth at Santa Barbara Mission," 690520 Reel 55, (105) p. 1/2.

[24] Ibid.

were all saying, "If they shoot me, water will come out of the cannon; if they shoot at me, the bullet will not enter my flesh."[25]

Native sources on the revolt emphasize the power of the ethnic leaders, of native thought, and of interethnic alliances, whether they speak of unity or betrayal as part of what motivated the rebellion. The political and interethnic basis of the revolt as narrated in native sources fails to appear in the missionaries' accounts. Soldiers and settlers similarly failed to grasp the internal workings of the native community.

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As indigenous inter-ethnic experiences defined the Spanish language learned in the missions, it remains consistent that indigenous stories offer quite distinct narrative accounts from those of other sources one finds in the archives. A vernacular inflected with traces and fragments of native languages and histories was the common version of Spanish learned by Indians at the missions. Within the missions, Christian Indians generally spoke many dialects, but they also spoke the dialect of the largest or dominant group among themselves, thus forging a new basis to express both ethnic and inter-ethnic realities. Yet that language remained outside the written record; knowledge of that community, as it might have told its story, remains fragmentary.

Translation of words and concepts through language and material objects enabled native peoples to imbue even the dominant institutions and forms of colonial power with an indigenous content derived from ethnic and interethnic experiences within the missions. The structure of native belief and practice often prevailed within the missions as parallel structures, sometimes gaining overt recognition, such as in dance. At other times they persisted as covert practices, such as those that transpired within secret religious organizations and movements.

Indigenous perspectives also found their way into translated mediums, such as religious dogma and painting. However, they made history not on their own terms, but in relationship to the set of possibilities imposed in the colonial world. The attempts to entirely disrupt those structures, such as during the revolt, ultimately failed under the duress of exile. Negotiated terms of truce under a general pardon represented the best solution the leadership could propose. The basis for that political action, present in native accounts, is obliterated in the Spanish sources.[26] It didn't fit into either the colonial or the enlightenment logic that defined Spanish accounts: the latter typically obscured native histories and political sensibility, while they supported the eradication of indigenous societies that resided outside colonial space. Fortunately, neither the Spanish empire nor the Mexican republic could achieve that erasure, especially in regions like those discussed here, where ethnic groups persisted largely through the power of interethnic alliances.

[25] Maria Solares, 690520, Reel 7, *Harrington Papers*, Smithsonian.

[26] For a discussion of mythographies and other versions of history, see Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," in Vinayak Chaturvedi, ed., *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial* (London: Verso, 2000).

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