

A Visual Catalog  
of Spanish  
Frontier Missions,  
16th to 19th Centuries



# A Visual Catalog of Spanish Frontier Missions, 16th to 19th Centuries

By

Robert H. Jackson

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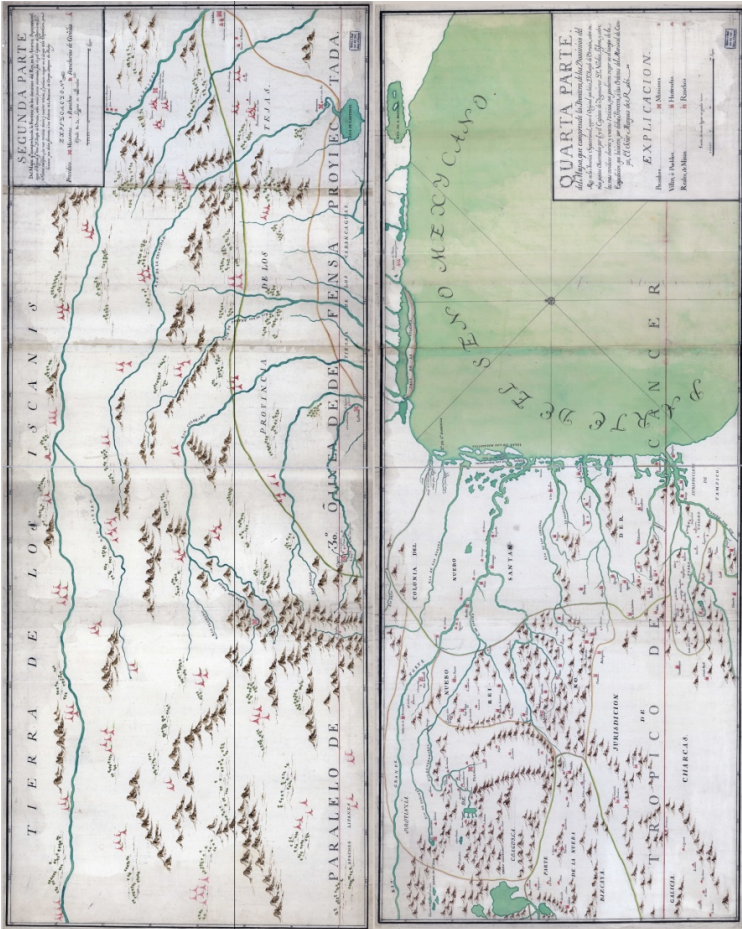
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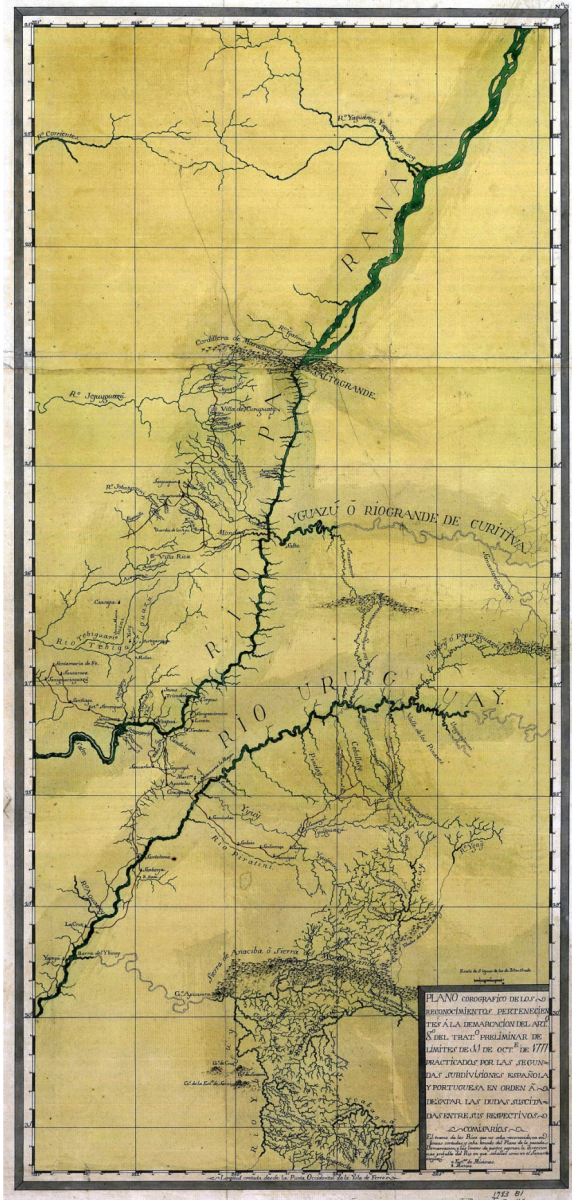
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A 1769 map of the northern frontier of Mexico.



A c. 1780 map of the Jesuit missions in the Rio de la Plata region.





An historic map of the Chiquitos and Moxos missions.





# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

When I was a child I learned the ditty “In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” Little did I realize at that time that I would dedicate my adult life to the historical inquiry as to the consequences for the indigenous populations of the Americas of the establishment of sustained contact between the Old and New worlds. One of the topics that have occupied my attention has been the efforts to colonize and control the indigenous populations on the frontiers of Spanish America, and particularly the institution of the mission staffed by members of religious orders but that functioned as a government institution. Royal policy was to reshape indigenous societies. The Spanish encountered sophisticated hierarchical state systems with functioning tribute and labor systems in central Mexico and the Andean Highlands. They subjugated these states and adopted and modified the tribute and labor systems to suit their own purposes in a system of indirect rule that functioned for some three centuries.

The indigenous peoples the Spanish encountered on the fringes of the hierarchical state systems were very different, and their subjugation proved to be more difficult and time consuming. They were folk that did not live in hierarchical state systems that were easy to control. Rather, they were nomadic hunter and gatherers that live in small bands, or lived in clan or tribal societies and practiced different forms of agriculture supplemented by hunting and the gathering of wild plant foods. Some lived in more or less permanent villages and practiced shifting swidden (slash and burn) agriculture. Others grew crops in more permanent fields in river beds. The Spanish Crown created the mission as an institution to integrate these indigenous peoples into colonial society in a cost effective way.

The objective of the mission as a colonial institution was straight forward. Indigenous populations were to be transformed into fully sedentary folk living in stable communities and practicing agriculture. They were to pay tribute to the Crown and provide labor, and to go to war when necessary. Moreover, they were to be converted to Catholicism which was the official state religion. Members of different religious orders

staffed the missions as representatives of both Church and the Crown, which was a legal reality based on the so-called papal donation to the Crown of Castile. The Pope theoretically was responsible for evangelizing non-Catholics, but at the time of the first phase of Castilian colonization of the Caribbean the Borgias Pope Alexander III was involved in Italian wars and other political entanglements and did not have the resources or the ability to launch a massive evangelization campaign. The quick and dirty solution, so to speak, was to grant the Crown of Castile authority over the Church in the Americas, and to let the Crown organize evangelization. On the frontiers the mission evolved as the state-Church institution responsible for accomplishing the goals of evangelization and social engineering.

Over the last forty years I have researched a variety of issues related to the development of missions on different frontiers of Spanish America in Mexico and South America from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Erick Langer and Robert H. Jackson, eds., *The New Latin American Mission History*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Robert H. Jackson, *Indian Demographic Decline :the Missions of Northwestern New Spain, 1687-1840* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994); Robert H. Jackson and Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans, and Spanish Colonization: The Impact of the Mission System on California Indians* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Robert H. Jackson, ed., *New Views of Borderlands History* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); Robert H. Jackson, *From Savages to Subjects: Missions in the History of the American Southwest* (Armonk: E. Sharpe, 2000); Robert H. Jackson, *Missions and Frontiers of Spanish America: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Environmental, Economic, Political, and Socio-Cultural Variations on the Missions in the Rio de la Plata Region and on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Scottsdale: Pentacle Press, 2005); Arno Alvarez Kern and Robert H. Jackson, *Missoes Ibéricas Coloniais: Da California ao Prata* (Porto Alegre: EDIPUCRS, 2006); Robert H. Jackson, *Conflict and Conversion in Sixteenth Century Central Mexico: The Augustinian War on and Beyond the Chichimeca Frontier* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2013); Robert H. Jackson, *Visualizing the Miraculous, Visualizing the Sacred: Evangelization and the "Cultural War" in Sixteenth Century Mexico* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014); Robert H. Jackson, *Demographic Change and Ethnic Survival Among The Sedentary Populations On The Jesuit Mission Frontiers of Spanish South America, 1609-1803: The Formation and Persistence of Mission Communities in a Comparative Context* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2015); Robert H. Jackson and Fernando Esparragoza Amador, *A Visual Catalog of Sixteenth Century Central Mexican Doctrinas* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016); Robert H. Jackson, *Pames, Jonaces, and Franciscans in the Sierra Gorda: Mecos and Missionaries* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017);

My interest in the missions has included historical demography, architectural, geographic and urban development, social, cultural, and religious change and the persistence of pre-Hispanic religious beliefs, and the economic organization and financing of the missions, among other topics. I have combined this with the importance of presenting a sense of place, that is of the varied landscapes and environments the Spanish attempted to colonize that ranged from deserts to tropical rain forests. This has allowed me to combine the practice of history with my interest in photography which has also evolved over the last four decades. I purchased my first sophisticated SLR camera in 1974, and over the years have incorporated my photographs into my publications. The development of increasingly sophisticated digital cameras and agile computer programs to edit photographs has virtually eliminated one of the limitations on old-style print photography, namely the cost of buying and developing print photographs. This new technology allows the photographer to take unlimited numbers of photographs, and to perfect those photographs through editing. These advances in photographic as well as printing technology allowed me, for example, to co-author an encyclopedic visual book titled *A Visual Catalog of Sixteenth Century Central Mexican Doctrinas* that contains more than 2,000 photographs.

The purpose of this book is straight forward. It is to present a visual record of the architectural patrimony of missions on selected Spanish frontiers in the Americas. It does not pretend to be comprehensive, but rather is idiosyncratic in the sense that it focuses on the mission frontiers that I have studied over the years. However, it is still representative of the mission architectural heritage, a heritage that has experienced change over the centuries and at times is at risk as in the case of central Mexico following damage sustained in the earthquakes of September 7 and September 19, 2017. It is my hope that the presentation of this book provides useful information for researchers.

I have included historical and contemporary images of mission structures in both Mexico and South America, and background information that place the images and the missions into historical context. The first chapter presents an example of a mission frontier among sedentary peoples living in hierarchical state systems in sixteenth century Mexico. The co-authored

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Robert H. Jackson, *Frontiers of Evangelization: Indians in the Sierra Gorda and Chiquitos Missions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017); Arturo Vergara Hernández and Robert H. Jackson, *Las doctrinas franciscanas de México a fines del siglo XVI en las descripciones de Antonio de Ciudad Real (O.F.M.) y su situación actual*, forthcoming (Pachuca: Universidad Autónoma Estado de Hidalgo).

2016 publication *A Visual Catalog of Sixteenth Century Central Mexican Doctrinas* provided extensive coverage to the missions in this region, and this book includes a new case study of Chiapas missions that did not appear in the previous book.

As the Spanish advanced northward in Mexico in the mid-sixteenth century they encountered growing resistance from bands of nomadic hunters and gatherers known by the derogatory generic term *chichimecos* that at times was shortened to *mecos*. The Spanish first attempted to militarily subjugate the nomadic bands in a long conflict known as the Chichimec War (1550-1600) that attempted to impose order and secure the supply routes to Zacatecas and the other northern silver mines. The military solution proved elusive, so royal officials turned to missionaries to attempt to “civilize” the chichimecas. They established communities and settled sedentary natives to serve as role models and help colonize the region. The Sierra Gorda was one region inhabited by chichimecas that was the focus of missionary activity from the mid-sixteenth century to the early nineteenth century. Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans, and Jesuits attempted to change the way of life of the Pames and Jonaces, but it proved to be an exercise in futility.

The scene then shifts to lowland South America and the Jesuit missions established among the Guaraní in what today are parts of Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil, and in the Chiquitos and Moxos regions of what today is Bolivia. The natives congregated on these missions lived in clan-based societies, and were more or less sedentary. They practiced shifting swidden (slash and burn) agriculture. These missions left a unique architectural heritage. The missions among the Guaraní inspired the mistaken image of a socialist utopian society. Voltaire based his novel *Candide* on these missions, but the reality was quite different. Royal officials used the Guaraní as cannon fodder in a long series of wars with the Portuguese, and a series of crises such as those of the 1730s tested the strength of the Guaraní-Jesuit alliance. In the space of seven years more than 80,000 Guaraní died from epidemics and famine. Although also located on the frontier with the Portuguese, the Jesuits did not organize and maintain a formal military structure on the Chiquitos and Moxos missions as they did on the missions among the Guaraní.

The final five chapters return the reader to the northern frontier of colonial Mexico to missions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Beginning at the end of the sixteenth century Jesuit missionaries established missions in northern Sinaloa, and then expanded into Sonora. At the end of the sixteenth century Franciscans established missions in New Mexico. A massive uprising in 1680 temporarily ended their tenure,

but they returned in 1696. In terms of organization the New Mexico missions closely resembled the sixteenth century central Mexican missions, and the central Mexican *Santo Evangelio* province administered the missions.

The Spanish expansion into Texas at the end of the seventeenth century came in response to a failed French effort to colonize the mouth of the Mississippi River that went wrong. The French expedition got lost, and instead landed on the coast of Texas. The colony languished for several years, and finally collapsed because of the hostility of the native peoples and divisions within the French group. The survivors eventually walked back to Canada. The Spanish missions established among the Caddo tribal confederation in 1691 failed, but the Spanish and Franciscan missionaries returned in 1716. The Caddo had no need for the Spanish, and the missions failed to achieve their goal. The other Texas missions, particularly those on the San Antonio River, were on a hostile frontier, and Apaches and Comanches raided the missions and other Spanish settlements. The threat of attack resulted in the incorporation of military architectural elements such as bastions into the mission complexes.

The last two mission frontiers were in Baja California and California. Spanish efforts to colonize Baja California failed, and in 1685 the Crown wrote the region off. The Jesuits, however, convinced royal officials to let them try to evangelize the natives at their own expense. For seventy years the Jesuits administered the Peninsula missions, and paid for the missions with funds from properties in central Mexico, pious donations, and from surpluses produced by the Sinaloa and Sonora missions. Franciscans from the apostolic college of San Fernando in Mexico City led by Junipero Serra, O.F.M., replaced the Jesuits on the Peninsula missions, but because of shortages of missionary personnel they had to allow the secularization of the Sierra Gorda missions they administered. In 1773, the Franciscans ceded the Peninsula missions to the Dominicans, who then established new missions and presided over the continued demographic collapse of the indigenous population.

An implied English and Russian threat in the Pacific Northwest led the Spanish to organize the colonization of California, the last frontier in northern Mexico. José de Gálvez organized the expedition, and procured supplies by stripping the Baja California missions of livestock and stored grain the Jesuits had carefully built up. Serra headed the Franciscan missions. The California frontier and mission system was unique in that it came into existence during the so-called Bourbon Reforms. Gálvez, who eventually became Minister of the Indies, and other royal officials sought to assert more control over the Americas and improve military defense, but

in a cost-effective way. The California missions were to pay their way, and Serra created a system that produced surpluses that helped cover the costs of the military garrisons. However, it was a system that required a disciplined labor force, and the Franciscan missionaries used different measures of social control including corporal punishment to make sure the natives congregated on the missions worked. It was a harsher system when compared to other missions, such as the Jesuit missions among the Guaraní.

The enlightenment and the development of ideas now known as liberalism challenged the basic assumptions of the mission as a colonial institution, and eventually resulted in its lapse as a frontier institution. Growing anticlericalism challenged the role of the missionaries, and royal officials criticized the missions for not integrating indigenous peoples into colonial society. Liberal politicians secularized the north Mexican missions in the 1830s as part of a general attack on the Church. Indigenous population decline had already left most of the missions dysfunctional, and the secularization decree had its greatest effect on the California missions. In South America the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1767 and the implementation of civil administration founded on Bourbon notions of self-sufficiency transformed the mission communities. The Chiquitos and Moxos missions generally continued to exist as stable communities, but the warfare that had forged the unique mission system and identity among the Guaraní also resulted in the destruction of most of the ex-missions. Conflict in the early nineteenth century left most of the ex-missions in ruins as the countries emerging into independence contested territory in a process of carving out new boundaries. Warfare and the destruction of the missions also resulted in the dispersion of the Guaraní populations. The ultimate objective of establishing stable communities failed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FIRST MISSIONS: SIXTEENTH CENTURY DOMINICAN *DOCTRINAS* IN CHIAPAS

In 1526, the first group of Dominicans arrived in Mexico and established a convent in Mexico City. There was a division of labor between the major religious orders involved in the evangelization of Mexico that is the Franciscans who arrived in 1524, Dominicans, and Augustinians who arrived in 1533. The Franciscans had the largest number of *doctrinas* in central Mexico, and focused their attention on a large area that included what today are Puebla-Tlaxcala, Michoacán, Hidalgo, and the Yucatan.<sup>2</sup> The Augustinians had missions along and beyond the Chichimeca frontier in what today is Hidalgo and Michoacán, along the Pacific Coast in Guerrero, the area known as the *tierra caliente*, and what today is Morelos.<sup>3</sup> The Dominicans staffed *doctrinas* in the Valley of Mexico, Morelos, and several communities in Puebla, but their most important missions were in the south in Oaxaca, Chiapas and neighboring parts of Tabasco, and Guatemala.<sup>4</sup>

Different ethnic groups inhabited the area of Chiapas and highland Tabasco in the sixteenth century. The O'depüt (Zoques) were culturally

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Jackson and Fernando Esparragoza Amador, *A Visual Catalog of Sixteenth Century Central Mexican Doctrinas*. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016); Robert H. Jackson, "The Huatápera and the Sixteenth Century Franciscan and Augustinian Doctrinas among the P'urepecha of Michoacan," *Boletin Journal of the California Missions Studies Association* 31:2 (2016), 31-57.

<sup>3</sup> Robert H. Jackson, *Conflict and Conversion in Sixteenth Century Central Mexico: The Augustinian War on and Beyond the Chichimeca Frontier*. (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2013); Jackson, "The Huatápera," Jackson and Esparragoza, *A Visual Catalog*.

<sup>4</sup> Robert H. Jackson, "Dominican Missions in Mexico: Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century," *Boletin Journal of the California Missions Studies Association* 31:1 (2015), 114-129; Jackson and Esparragoza, *A Visual Catalog*.

and linguistically related to the Mixes and Popolucas, and inhabited parts of Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Tabasco. There were also Maya groups that included the Chol, Tojolabal, Quiché, Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Mam, Lacandón, Chuj, and Q'anjob'al. The Tzotzil, for example, occupied the area around Ciudad Real (San Cristobal de las Casas) including San Juan Chamula and Zinacantán. The ethnic and linguistic diversity posed a challenge to the Dominicans.

The Dominicans arrived in Chiapas in 1545 with Bartolomé de las Casas, the first bishop of Chiapas. Up to that point secular clergy had had the main responsibility for the evangelization of the indigenous population. In 1551, the Dominicans organized the Province of San Vicente Ferrer which included their missions in Chiapas and Guatemala. The ecclesiastical organization of southern Mexico was the cause of some friction between the missionaries as seen in the case of Oxolotán in highland Tabasco. It first fell under the jurisdiction of the Bishopric of Tlaxcala, but was then transferred to the newly created Bishopric of Chiapas. However, it was later shifted to the Bishopric of Yucatán which was a Franciscan dominated jurisdiction, and the Franciscans also staffed missions in Tabasco.<sup>5</sup> Several chronicles document the development of the Dominican missions in Chiapas and Guatemala. Antonio de Remesal, O.P. wrote two. One was a history of the province to the early seventeenth century that was published in Madrid in 1619. The second titled *Historia General De Las Indias Occidentales, Y Particular De La Governacion de Chiapa, y Guatemala* has appeared in several modern editions. Francisco Ximénez, O.P. authored a later chronicle entitled *Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala de la Orden de Predicadores*.<sup>6</sup> These chronicles focus on the activities of the missionaries themselves, but do provide details of the chronology and organization of the *doctrinas*.

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<sup>5</sup> Peter Gerhard, *The Southeast Frontier of New Spain*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Antonio de Remesal, *Historia de la provincia de S. Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala de la orden de nro. Glorioso Padre Sancto Domingo: escrivense juntamente los principios desta religion de las Yndias Occidentales y lo secular de la Governacion de Guatemala*. (Madrid: Francisco de Angulo, 1619); Antonio de Remesal, *Historia General De Las Indias Occidentales, Y Particular De La Governacion de Chiapa, y Guatemala. Escrivense juntamente los principios de la Religion de Nuestro Glorioso Padre Santo Domingo, y de las demas Religiones*. 2 volumes. (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1932); Francisco Ximénez, *Historia de la Provincia de San Vicente de Chiapa y Guatemala de la Orden de Predicadores*. 3 volumes. (Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1929-1931).



## The Organization of Evangelization

In their writings and reports the missionaries provided small details that can be analyzed and interpreted to better understand the dynamic of the evangelization campaigns, and their limitations. Such is the case for the Chiapas and Guatemala *doctrinas*. In one of his chronicles Antonio de Remesal summarized information on the Guatemala and Chiapas missions that included the number of missionaries and lay brothers stationed on each of the *doctrinas*, and the names of the subject communities or *visitas* (see Table 1). What does this information show? For one it suggests that the Dominicans used a different strategy in Chiapas when compared to Oaxaca and Guatemala, and that the limitation in the number of missionary personnel dictated the different approach. Oaxaca appears to have been the more important missionary frontier in the late sixteenth century. The Dominicans established 25 *doctrinas* in Oaxaca from the 1530s to the 1580s, and stationed from two to six missionaries on each mission. The Franciscans also established a larger numbers of missions in a number of regions. For example, there were ten in what today is Tlaxcala in the 1580s. The Franciscans administered 26 in the Yucatán in the 1580s, and elevated some *visitas* to the status of independent *doctrinas* in the seventeenth century. In 1570, the Franciscans administered 11 *doctrinas* in Michoacán, the Augustinians eight, and secular clergy paid by the Crown or the holders of *encomienda* grants other communities.<sup>7</sup>

The Dominicans established only six *doctrinas* in Chiapas and six in Guatemala, and within the Province of San Vicente Ferrer they assigned more missionaries to Guatemala (see Table 1), such as the *doctrina* at Cobán. In 1611, there were 63 Dominicans and 19 lay brothers in Guatemala as compared to 43 and seven in Chiapas. Moreover, the Dominican headquarters in Guatemala Santo Domingo Guatemala counted more personnel than Santo Domingo in Ciudad Real, 34 missionaries as against 20. Some 35-40 Dominicans resided in the headquarters in Antequera (Oaxaca City) in the 1580s. The majority of the missionary personnel came from Spain. Dominican officials had to go to Spain to recruit missionaries, and obtain Crown permission and subsidies to bring the new missionaries to the Americas. The process could take several

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<sup>7</sup> Robert H. Jackson, *Visualizing the Miraculous, Visualizing the Sacred: Evangelization and the "Cultural War" in Sixteenth Century Mexico*. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 61-66; Jackson, *Conflict and Conversion*, 34; Robert H. Jackson, "Franciscan Missions in the Yucatan," *Boletín Journal of the California Missions Studies Association* 30:1 (2014), 28-45; Jackson, "The Huatápera," 67-70.

years, and in some instances there were mishaps at sea. For example, Remesal reported the death in 1617 of 38 Dominicans in the sinking of a ship lost in a storm.<sup>8</sup>



Figure 1: The Dominican *doctrina* in Cobán, Guatemala. It was the head mission for the evangelization of the frontier of Verapaz in the 1540s. The Dominicans assigned a larger number of missionaries to the Guatemala missions.

With the smaller number of *doctrinas* in Chiapas, the Dominican missionaries assigned to each mission had to visit many other communities administered as *visitas*. The six missionaries stationed on Chiapa, for example, administered six *visitas*. Travelling to visit these communities was not as difficult in comparative terms, because the mission at Chiapa and the *visita* communities are located in a broad valley. The nine missionaries stationed on Tecpatán, on the other hand, administered 24 O'depüt communities as *visitas* scattered across a rugged mountainous district. Although disease and other factors had reduced the size of the indigenous community, the Tecpatán district and other districts in Chiapas still had large indigenous populations<sup>9</sup> reported the number of indigenous families at the end of the sixteenth century, and in the following century. I have used a conservative multiplier of x4 to estimate the total population based on the number of families (see Table 3). The Tecpatán district, for example, had a population of 4,618 families and some 18,472 people in 1595, and was the most populous in Chiapas. Church officials attempted to resettle the population in a smaller number of communities.

Scholars have documented what the missionaries classified as “idolatry,” the persistence of traditional religious beliefs, and the incorporation of indigenous iconography in what ostensibly was Christian sacred space.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Remesal, *Historia General*, II: 612.

<sup>9</sup> Gerhard, *The Southeast Frontier*, 139.

<sup>10</sup> Eleanor Wake, *Framing the sacred: The Indian churches of early colonial Mexico*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010); David Tavárez, *The*

(Wake, 2010; Tavárez, 2011; Jackson, 2014A). The missionaries introduced a new faith and naively believed that the indigenous populations automatically abandoned their old beliefs that had ordered their lives and the cosmos for centuries. Native peoples, however, incorporated the Catholic deities into their world view on their own terms, and saw no contradiction in continuing to practice their traditional rites alongside Catholic rituals. Megged documented the continued practice of traditional rites in Chiapa in 1546 and 1547 following the arrival of Dominican missionaries.<sup>11</sup> While the Dominicans were involved in jurisdictional disputes with colonial officials, natives engaged in “idolatry” under their noses. In recent years scholars have challenged the earlier interpretation of a quick and facile conversion of the indigenous populations, and have presented ample documentary and visual evidence of the persistence of pre-Hispanic religious beliefs. Mesoamerican religion was much more flexible than Iberian Catholicism, and there was a long history of the incorporation of new deities as different groups migrated within the larger region. Moreover, the new gods failed to provide for the indigenous peoples as had the old deities. Rain and fertility deities such as Nadana, Tláloc and Xipé Totec had sustained Mesoamerican communities for centuries prior to the arrival of the missionaries. The initial belief held by the missionaries in the 1520s and 1530s that the native had embraced the new faith gave way to the reality that the initial wave of conversion had been superficial at best. Several high profile idolatry cases such as that of Don Carlos, an indigenous noble from Texcoco, and the inquisition investigations at Yanhuitlán and Coatlán in Oaxaca in the 1540s showed otherwise.

Two factors certainly contributed to the inability of the missionaries to eradicate pre-Hispanic religious beliefs. One was what we can call a “knowledge gap,” borrowing a phrase that has come into use in some academic circles. A handful of missionaries such as Bernardino de Sahagún and Diego Durán compiled information about pre-Hispanic religious beliefs and practices in the sixteenth century. However, their texts were not published until years later, and the rank and file missionaries did not have access to this information and did not know much about indigenous religion. Spanish officials prohibited the most overt elements of pre-

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*invisible war: indigenous devotions, discipline, and dissent in colonial Mexico.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); Jackson, *Visualizing the Miraculous, Visualizing the Sacred.*

<sup>11</sup> Amos Megged, “Contrasting Resistance and Alliances in the Ethnic State of Napiniaca, Chiapas (Mexico)(1521–1590): The Anthropological and Historical Aspects.” *History and Anthropology* 27:3 3 (2016): 313-337.

Hispanic practices such as human sacrifice, although some inquisition investigations such as that at Yanhuitlán included allegations of human sacrifice and particularly the sacrifice of children. The second was the reality of the small number of missionaries assigned to districts with large native populations dispersed, in some instances as in the case of Tecpatán, in many communities. Even if the missionaries had an idea of the forms and practices of pre-Hispanic religious beliefs, the reality was that the majority of the indigenous population lived with only minimal contact with and supervision from the missionaries, and were largely free to organize their round of rituals as they saw fit.

The *mudéjar* fountain in Chiapa offers an example of a solar event related to pre-Hispanic religious beliefs. The designers of the fountain incorporated an alignment that results in the first light of the morning sun illuminating one of the water spouts. This is one example of the alignment of pre-Hispanic and colonial buildings that Eleanor Wake links to the sacred geography that defined the indigenous world before and after the conquest.<sup>12</sup> Wake focused on pre-Hispanic stones with religious significance embedded in colonial-era structures and particularly churches and convents. The stones served as markers to identify sight lines to geographic features such as sacred mountains, or as markers for solar events on specific dates such as the equinox.

### ***Mudéjar* Influence in the Chiapas Convents**

The *mudéjar* were Muslims who lived under Christian rule in southern Spain during the *reconquista*.<sup>13</sup> The term also identifies Islamic influence on Spanish Christian architecture and art, and in particular the use of geometric designs and *alfarje* which was a form of wooden ceiling.<sup>14</sup> (Bobadilla A; Bobadilla B; Bobadilla C; Bobadilla 2008). The *alfarje* was perhaps the most important *mudéjar* influence on sixteenth century central Mexican convent architecture and art. There are examples in the ceiling decoration of the *alcázar* in Sevilla. This was the royal palace of the

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<sup>12</sup> Wake, *Framing the Sacred*.

<sup>13</sup> Sidney David Markman, *Architecture and urbanization in colonial Chiapas, Mexico*. Vol. 153. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1984), 87.

<sup>14</sup> Inés Ortiz Bobadilla, "Derivaciones de la arquitectura mudéjar en el estado de Michoacán, México." *Sharq Al-Andalus: Estudios mudéjares y moriscos* 19 (2008): 237-278; Inés Ortiz Bobadilla, "Del mudéjar en Chiapas," unpublished paper; Inés Ortiz Bobadilla, "Derivaciones de la arquitectura mudéjar en Yucatán," unpublished paper; Inés Ortiz Bobadilla, "Presencia de la arquitectura mudéjar en el Estado de México y en Morelos," unpublished paper.

Muslim rulers of Sevilla. There are other examples of Muslim architecture in Sevilla such as a tower that now is the bell tower of the cathedral and a watch tower located on the Guadalquivir River. There are numerous examples of *alfarje* in central Mexican convents, such as the church of the Franciscan convent Asunción Tlaxcala and the *visita* chapel of Tizatlán, also located in Tlaxcala. *Alfarje* is found in the seventeenth century cathedral of Ciudad Real. The form and decoration of the façade of the convent church Santo Domingo Chiapa is also an example of *mudéjar* art and architecture, and the church ceiling is another example of *alfarje*. A third example is the fountain located in the main square of Chiapa, which is *mudéjar* both in its architectural form and its decoration.



Figure 2: The solar event incorporated into the fountain in Chiapa. The first light of the morning sun illuminates one of the water spouts.

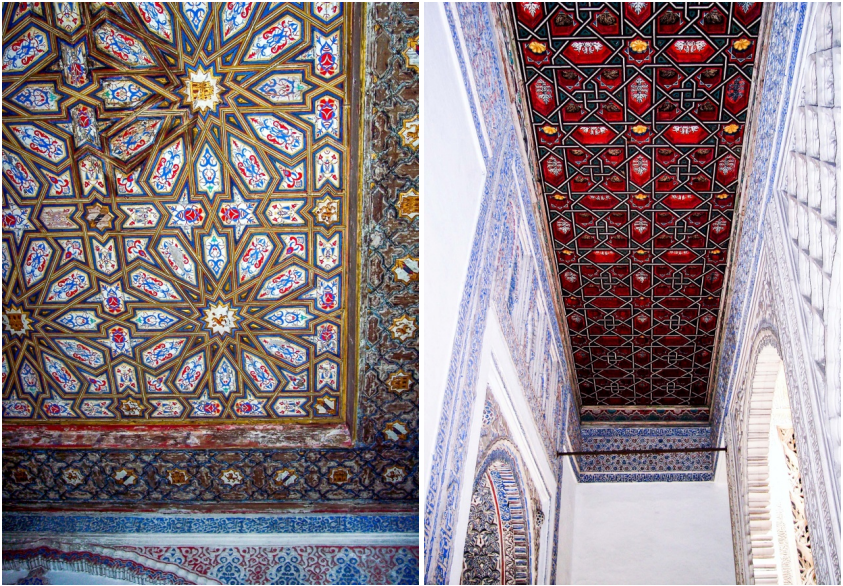


Figure 3: Ceiling decoration from the *Alcázar* (royal palace) in Sevilla, Spain.