

Beyond Encounters: Religion, Ethnicity, and Violence in the Early Modern Atlantic World, 1492–1700

BRIAN SANDBERG
Medici Archive Project

In the aftermath of the 1992 quincentennial commemoration of Christopher Columbus's first expedition and the beginning of transatlantic contact, historian James Axtell assessed the explosion of new publications concerning the significance and historical legacy of the 1492 voyage: "One can safely predict that the most durable legacy of the Quincentenary will not be the mediated events of 1992, no matter how muted or serious, but the tremendous flow of scholarship on the wide range of topics encompassed by the now-familiar phrase Columbian Encounters, only some of which was prompted by the historical anniversary." Axtell concluded in 1995 that the concept of "encounters" clearly represented the most powerful way of understanding the historical processes contact initiated.¹

A decade after the quincentennial, our understanding of the early modern Atlantic world produced by the Columbian "encounters" has begun to shift. The cultural history and postmodern approaches to discourse, representations, and power that shaped the concept of "encounters" in 1992 have matured, increasingly recognizing the importance of setting discussions of power/knowledge into broader cultural frameworks, especially when considering intercultural violence. While Axtell's review of quincentenary scholarship included

¹ James Axtell, "Columbian Encounters: 1992–1995," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 52 (October 1995): 650, 695–696; see also James Axtell, "Columbian Encounters: Beyond 1992," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 49 (April 1992): 335–360.

some discussion of recent research on colonial expansion and warfare, not one of his eleven historiographical classifications dealt specifically with violence as an analytic category. Axtell dismissed discussions of atrocities by contrasting the “teachers, scholars, and activists” who condemned Columbus and Europeans for “genocide” and “ecocide” with those who “sought to complicate the moral and historical issues . . . by contextualizing events to avoid anachronism, by emphasizing the impartial role of disease, and by seeking understanding before, if not rather than, judgment.”² This attempt to defend Columbus and to contextualize Atlantic world colonialism unfortunately involved promoting neutral “encounters” and deemphasizing the often atrocious aspects of violence in the Columbian Exchange.

Since the quincentennial, horrifying episodes of ethnic and religious violence in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka, India, Palestine, Afghanistan, and other areas have awakened scholars to the dangers of ignoring conflict when studying intercultural exchanges. Acts of “terrorism” in cities such as Oklahoma City, New York, Jerusalem, and Tokyo have foregrounded atrocities and apocalyptic motivations for violence.³ Formulated partly in response to the killing and

² Axtell, “Columbian Encounters: 1992–1995,” pp. 650–651, 690–692, argues that “During the Quincentenary, teachers, scholars, and activists generally lined up on two sides to debate the nature and 500-year legacy of the Columbian Encounter. One camp blamed Columbus and his European successors for all the deaths and misery of America’s natives (and African slaves) to the present. . . . The other camp sought to complicate the moral and historical issues.” Axtell clearly depicts scholarship on European atrocities as relying on “broad generalities” and “emotionally charged historical vignettes.” In contrast, he associates historians who “complicate” issues and “contextualize” events with those who defend Columbus: “A number of articles defended Columbus and ‘the West’ against the historical attacks and ‘misperceptions’ of the counter-camp, some in mass media publications.” According to Axtell, “the most cogent response” was Robert Royal, *1492 and All That: Political Manipulations of History* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1992); and Robert Royal, *Columbus on Trial: 1492 v. 1992* (Herndon, Va.: Young America’s Foundation, 1992).

³ Mark Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, updated ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Dwight N. Hopkins, Lois Ann Lorentzen, Eduardo Mendieta, and David Bastone, eds., *Religions/Globalizations: Theories and Cases* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001); R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, Md.: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict and Rowman & Littlefield, 2000); Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, Mamphela Ramphele, and Pamela Reynolds, eds., *Violence and Subjectivity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Barbara F. Walter and Jack Snyder, eds., *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Religion, Ethnicity, and Self-Identity: Nations in Turmoil* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1997); Marc Gopin, “Religion, Violence, and Conflict Resolution,” *Peace & Change* 22 (January 1997): 1–31; Roy Licklider, ed., *Stopping the Killing: How Civil Wars End* (New York: New York University Press, 1993).

destruction witnessed over the past decade, new studies of ethnic and religious violence now provide a theoretical basis for reexamining such violence in comparative perspective.⁴

The articles in this issue represent a new wave of Atlantic world scholarship attempting to place violence at the center of the Columbian Exchange.⁵ The studies here focus on violence in the early modern Atlantic world—considered as a space with particular, though not entirely unique, cross-cultural interactions at the beginning of the period of true globalization.⁶ During the sixteenth century, the triangular transatlantic trading connections that increasingly linked Europe, Africa, and the Americas began to forge hybrid Atlantic cultures.⁷ Although the Atlantic world was created by European navigation and maritime connections that broke down the preexisting isolation of various societies ringing the great ocean, “the birth of an Atlantic world also involved a gigantic international migration of people,” that should be seen neither as Eurocentric nor as peaceful.⁸

Patricia Lopes Don, H. E. Martel, and Melanie Perrault situate their studies of religious and ethnic violence in a common setting: the borderlands and colonial frontiers within this Atlantic world. Historians have long portrayed frontiers as violent, seeing New Spain, for exam-

⁴ Much of the new anthropological, sociological, political science, and historical literature on religious and ethnic violence draws on the theoretical work of René Girard and Martha Nussbaum; see Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977). For a work that employs Girard’s critical theory in interpreting ritualized violence, execution, and family during the French Revolution, see Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 10–14, 53–64; Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*, pp. 78–80, critiques Girard’s theory.

⁵ The organization of an upcoming conference on “Warfare and Society in Colonial North America and the Caribbean” by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, in conjunction with the University of Tennessee Center for the Study of War and Society, suggests that a broad range of scholars are beginning to rethink the role of violence in the Columbian Exchange.

⁶ I am using the concept of an Atlantic world, despite the fundamental problem of geographic limits and periodization with all “waterborne” history. See Jerry H. Bentley, “Cross-Cultural Interaction and Periodization in World History,” *American Historical Review* 101 (June 1996): 749–770; Patrick Manning, “The Problem of Interactions in World History,” *American Historical Review* 101 (June 1996): 771–782; Gale Stokes, “The Fates of Human Societies: A Review of Recent Macrohistories,” *American Historical Review* 106 (April 2001): 508–525.

⁷ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 15–47.

⁸ John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 13–42.

ple, as an area in which “war and the frontier advanced together.”⁹ Recent borderlands studies offer new ways of considering intercultural violence and avoid casting violence as a mere by-product of disciplining discourse. Anthropologists R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead have theorized the “violent edge of empire” as a dynamic space of ethnic conflict and social reorganization. “That area continuously affected by the proximity of a state, but not under state administration, we call the ‘tribal zone,’” they explain. “Within the tribal zone, the wider consequence of the presence of the state is the radical transformation of extant sociopolitical formations, often resulting in ‘tribalization,’ the genesis of new tribes.”¹⁰ Ferguson and Whitehead’s useful conceptualization of borderlands as “tribal zones” allows a rethinking of ethnicity and conflict in the Atlantic world, especially if we inject religious violence into their model.

The authors in this issue offer cultural history reinterpretations of classic sources for borderlands studies and Atlantic world history. European travel narratives and cosmographical studies trace the broad outlines of the early modern Atlantic world, highlighting marvelous sights and monstrous creatures encountered by voyagers sailing the Atlantic Ocean or merely rumored by the people with whom they came into contact.¹¹ Such sources often sketch in few details of the peoples living along the Atlantic coast, but colonial chronicles and captivity narratives provide rich descriptions of prolonged interactions between Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans in the Atlantic world.¹² These sources offer details of cultural forms, behavior, and rituals. Inquisition records and missionary accounts delve into both colonial settlers’ and indigenous peoples’ religious beliefs and practices, allowing historians

⁹ Thomas D. Hall, *Social Change in the Southwest, 1350–1880* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), pp. 70–73. A global theory of this dynamic is provided by Geoffrey Parker, *The Military Revolution: Military Innovation and the Rise of the West, 1500–1800*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Parker’s arguments are slightly refined in “The Artillery Fortress as an Engine of European Overseas Expansion, 1480–1750,” in *City Walls: The Urban Enceinte in Global Perspective*, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 386–416.

¹⁰ R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead, “The Violent Edge of Empire,” in *War in the Tribal Zone: Expanding States and Indigenous Warfare*, ed. R. Brian Ferguson and Neil L. Whitehead (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1992), pp. 1–30.

¹¹ Laura Lunger Knoppers and Joan B. Landes, *Monstrous Bodies/Political Monstrosities in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2004).

¹² I will use the term “Native American” to refer to all indigenous Americans throughout this text, recognizing that some scholars prefer the terms “American Indian,” “Indian,” or “Amerindian.” For a discussion of the problems of Native American terminology and historiography, see R. David Edmunds, “Native Americans, New Voices: American Indian History, 1895–1995,” *American Historical Review* 100 (June 1995): 717–740.

to explore direct connections between religion and violence. Almost all of these texts are Eurocentric accounts that rely on linguistic interpretation for their depictions of Native American and African cultures, making it difficult, if not impossible, to access indigenous peoples' voices.¹³ The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century audiences for accounts of the Atlantic world were primarily European elites with strong political and religious agendas that probably framed the authors' approaches to their subjects. These fascinating texts, and the processes of their production, thus present complex problems of interpretation for historians attempting to tease out issues of religion, ethnicity, and violence in the early modern Atlantic world.

Obviously, the literature on ethnicity, religion, and violence in the early modern Atlantic world is too large to address comprehensively here; however, a comparative history of organized religious and ethnic violence in the Atlantic world becomes possible by focusing on the *actualization* of violence. In their work on violence and subjectivity, Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman emphasize examining "the processes through which violence is actualized—in the sense that it is both produced and consumed."¹⁴ All three of the authors in this issue attempt to deal precisely with the production of religious and ethnic violence by treating early modern Spanish, Native American, and English practitioners of violence as key historical actors operating through overlapping subject positions. This approach to violence fundamentally questions Michel Foucault's influential portrayal of violence as the inscription of power/knowledge.¹⁵ I will attempt to draw out some common themes from the three articles by situating them in relationship to recent research on ethnic and religious violence, then by discussing the contexts of captivity and atrocity that framed so much violence in the early modern Atlantic world.

¹³ One of the best concise analyses of the problem of Eurocentrism in history and text is Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 1–54. The tensions within subaltern approaches to Atlantic world history are discussed in Florencia E. Mallon, "The Promise and Dilemma of Subaltern Studies: Perspectives from Latin American History," *American Historical Review* 99 (December 1994): 1491–1515.

¹⁴ Veena Das and Arthur Kleinman, "Introduction," in *Violence and Subjectivity* (see n. 3), pp. 1–18.

¹⁵ Das challenges Foucault's theory of violence and power as she develops her own theory of subjectivity in Veena Das, "The Act of Witnessing: Violence, Poisonous Knowledge, and Subjectivity," in *Violence and Subjectivity* (see n. 3), pp. 205–225. A recent attempt to survey the problem of violence in early modern Europe also questions Foucault directly; see Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 6–7, 73–116.

ETHNIC IDENTITIES AND VIOLENCE IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD

From the earliest contacts between Native Americans and Europeans, ethnic identities shaped violence in the Atlantic World. Christopher Columbus's own reports of his expeditions began to mold Europeans' attitudes toward the inhabitants of the Caribbean islands and to construct ethnic identifications.¹⁶ Reports of Hernán Cortés's expedition to Mexico constructed elaborate conquest narratives and fixed representations of the Aztecs that would have a long legacy. Ross Hassig's recent work on the Aztecs challenges the entire notion of a Spanish Conquest, using ethnographic research on Mexico to show that the Aztec empire collapsed because of ethnic clashes among Mesoamericans, many of whom were willing to take advantage of Cortés's presence to attack their Aztec imperial rulers. Certainly Cortés's artillery and siege techniques played some role in the struggles for Tenochtitlán, but Hassig's analysis is convincing, and it demonstrates the effectiveness of ethnohistory approaches in reconceptualizing violence in the early modern Atlantic world.¹⁷

Borderlands studies are reconsidering ethnicity and violence, especially within the Spanish Empire. In Brazil and the Atlantic rim of South America, the processes of ethnic realignment were often linked to changing conditions of colonial expansion and warfare.¹⁸ Cynthia Radding's powerful study of the borderlands of the Spanish empire in northwestern Mexico demonstrates the effectiveness of considering ethnicity spatially. Radding examines the complex human and economic dimensions of Spanish mission communities, stressing Native Americans' shifting social groupings, cultural endurance, and resis-

¹⁶ Christopher Columbus, *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, trans. J. M. Cohen (London: Penguin Classics, 1992).

¹⁷ Ross Hassig, "War, Politics and the Conquest of Mexico," in *War in the Early Modern World, 1450–1815*, ed. Jeremy Black (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1999), pp. 207–235; Ross Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest* (London: Longman, 1994); Ross Hassig, "Aztec and Spanish Conquest in Mesoamerica," in *War in the Tribal Zone* (see n. 10), pp. 83–102; John F. Guilmartin, "The Military Revolution: Origins and First Tests Abroad," in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformation of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), pp. 299–333.

¹⁸ Neil L. Whitehead, "Tribes Make States and States Make Tribes: Warfare and the Creation of Colonial Tribes and States in Northeastern South America," in *War in the Tribal Zone* (see n. 10), pp. 127–150.

tance tactics.¹⁹ Radding's consideration of ethnicity, religion, and borderlands can usefully be compared with David Coleman's study of Granada as a "frontier city" in Iberia—highlighting the importance of transatlantic historical comparison.²⁰

Within the borderlands, individuals' identities seem to have been incredibly flexible and changeable. Studies of ethnicity and violence in the Atlantic world often oppose "colonizers" to "indigenous peoples," envisioning a statist imperial program suppressing resistance by the colonized. Yet, the importance of nonstate actors in early modern Atlantic world ethnic violence makes such a focus on states extremely problematic. Conquistadors, military adventurers, and privateers may have acted vaguely in the name of European states, but they also had their personal motivations and programs. Many European travelers, traders, fur trappers, merchants, and castaways were able to construct supple "chameleon" identities, as Hans Staden's identity performances demonstrate.²¹ Runaway slaves, castaways, and maroons could integrate into new communities. Borderlands also allowed people to discard unwanted identities, whether robber, cheat, rapist, or murderer.²² Native American societies' loose affiliations and permeability allowed flexible identifications, even when the proximity of European colonies prompted a more structured "tribalization." Native American war bands freely formed and re-formed around leaders. The identifications presented by individuals could be challenged and transformed through contact and conflict, and perhaps the most important factor in limiting or fixing ethnic identifications was violence.

Ethnic identification was often structured through language, but imperfectly. Communication between Native Americans and Europeans required linguistic translation and cultural explanation, as Tzvetan Todorov's provocative and fiercely debated work on interpretation

¹⁹ Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700–1850* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997), suggests that Native Americans creatively adapted Catholic religious practices, but her book focuses more on Jesuit missionaries' administration than on the production of syncretic religion in mission communities and the study could consider violence more directly.

²⁰ David Coleman, *Creating Christian Granada: Society and Religious Culture in an Old-World Frontier City, 1492–1600* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003).

²¹ Here, I am referring to H. E. Martel's description of Hans Staden as "a practiced chameleon."

²² Interestingly, much of the recent literature on identities seems to emphasize positive roles in identity construction. For an example, see Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist—Or a Short History of Identity," in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Guy (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 18–36.

and linguistic conquest suggests.²³ Interpreters such as Malinche, who served as Hernán Cortés's personal translator, had peculiar positions and could wield substantial power in the borderlands, where intercultural miscommunications and misunderstandings were routine. H. E. Martel suggests that in this context, Native American groups used cultural interpretive strategies to address the threat posed by the arrival of European colonists. Rumors, insinuations, and legends could be weapons used to defend against European incursions, at least for a time. Interpreters occupied ambiguous positions despite the vital importance of intercultural communication. On this point, Melanie Perreault cites the example of the violent abduction of several Native Americans by English explorers to serve as their informants. If Europeans were dissatisfied with the information supplied by such informants, they could apply brutal violence, as when English colonial leader John Smith whipped a Native American guide for supposedly misleading him. Such evidence fits well with Alfred Cave's research on the origins of the Pequot War, which shows that miscommunications and ethnic responses could also result in escalating violence and disastrous warfare.²⁴

Where Native American and European colonial communities lived in close proximity in borderlands, blurred cross-cultural identities and mixed-ethnic populations emerged. English colonial writings reflected their authors' conflicting impressions of Native American relations with early English colonies and the possibilities of assimilation of "noble savages" into a "civilized" transplanted English society.²⁵ Widespread evidence reveals communication, trading relations, cultural exchanges, and intermarriage between Native Americans and Europeans throughout the Americas. Negotiations, political alliances, and military cooperation between groups of Europeans and Native Americans provide more examples of constructive intercultural relations that broke down barriers, or at least allowed passages across them. In many colonial areas, different European ethnic groups mixed, further destabilizing identities. European settlement colonies promoted a

²³ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).

²⁴ Alfred A. Cave, "Who Killed John Stone? A Note on the Origins of the Pequot War," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 49 (July 1992): 509–521; see also Alfred A. Cave, *The Pequot War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996).

²⁵ For a study of the persistence of the notions of "noble savage" and of the possibility of Native American "assimilation" into the early nineteenth century, see Bernard W. Sheehan, *Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian* (1973; reprint, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1974).

“civilizing mission” that often challenged these cross-cultural identities, expecting conformity instead. Melanie Perrault’s reading of English travel narratives and settlement histories highlights the ironic vision of harmony promoted by early English colonists in Virginia and New England, as they envisioned a patriarchal dominion over subordinated, domesticated “noble savage” dependents.

The possibilities of harmony and assimilation often ran afoul of Europeans’ ethnic identifications, which defined their “civilized” societies in opposition to “barbarous” ones precisely by depicting “savages” as engaging in brutal, as opposed to legitimate, violence.²⁶ Ethnic identities, then, were also conceptualized and distinguished through the violent practices of warfare. The predominant analytical framework for understanding Native American forms of warfare until recently has been the theory of “primitive war,” which portrays “primitive” societies as waging a form of warfare that was irrational and fundamentally different from “real,” supposedly “civilized,” warfare that was fought for rational political goals.²⁷ Recent studies argue that nonurbanized societies’ forms of warfare were influenced by ethnic identities and culture in much more subtle ways. Lawrence H. Keeley heavily criticizes the concept of “primitive war,” showing how the notion perpetuates the stereotype of the “savages” as obeying a different “uncivilized” set of rules of war, yet somehow being “peaceful” by practicing a “more stylized, less horrible form of warfare than their civilized counterparts waged.”²⁸ Studies of the “skulking” way of war and Native American fortifications have shown the flexibility and adaptability of Native American warfare, suggesting that notions and practices of violence could change as ethnic identification shifted.²⁹

Extended contact between Native Americans and European settlers in North America during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

²⁶ For a consideration of the later eighteenth-century development of these notions, see Karen Halttunen, “Humanitarianism and the Pornography of Pain in Anglo-American Culture,” *American Historical Review* 100 (April 1995): 303–334.

²⁷ The concept of “primitive war” stems principally from two key theoretical works originally published in the 1940s: Harry Holbert Turney-High, *Primitive War: Its Practice and Concepts*, 2nd ed. (Columbia: South Carolina University Press, 1991) and Quincy Wright, *A Study of War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965).

²⁸ Lawrence H. Keeley, *War before Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 3–24; see also Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip’s War and the Origin of American Identity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), pp. 117–118.

²⁹ Patrick M. Malone, *The Skulking Way of War: Technology and Tactics among the New England Indians* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1991); Wayne E. Lee, “Fortify, Fight, or Flee: Tuscarora and Cherokee Defensive Warfare and Military Culture Adaptation,” *Journal of Military History* 68 (July 2004): 713–770.

allowed technology transfers and acculturation to gradually reshape both Native American and European colonial practices of warfare. Europeans and Native Americans certainly had differing cultural expectations about the practice of warfare, yet accommodation and cultural adaptation were at times possible.³⁰ In certain aspects of warfare, blurred ethnic identities could emerge. For example, many Native Americans acted as “ethnic soldiers,” providing auxiliary, mercenary, logistical, and reconnaissance services for European colonial military forces.³¹ The diffusion of European diseases, firearms, and animals forced Native Americans to adapt to increasingly deadly warfare. At the same time, European territorial encroachments and colonial economic priorities—especially fur trading and silver mining—intensified warfare among Native American societies.³² Native Americans progressively adopted firearms and certain European military techniques but maintained their “skulking” way of war, as the English described the stealth and ambush tactics employed by indigenous warriors. During King Philip’s War, “the Indian mode of warfare, actually a blend of aboriginal and European elements, proved so successful in numerous engagements that perceptive officers and government officials began to urge changes in colonial military doctrine,” according to Patrick M. Malone.³³ European coastal fortifications, trading factories, and military incursions forced social reorganizations and militarized Native American culture in the “tribal zone.”

Ethnic identifications were also defined by racial conceptions that justified violence. Slave labor provided logistical support for European colonial and military operations in the Atlantic world. Native Americans were enslaved in the growing Spanish *encomienda* system, forced to work in agricultural operations and silver mines in Central and South America. From the beginning of European imperialism in the Atlantic, enslaved Africans played a role in colonial expansion

³⁰ George A. De Vos, “Ethnic Pluralism: Conflict and Accommodation,” in *Ethnic Identity: Creation, Conflict, and Accommodation*, ed. Lola Romanucci-Ross and George A. De Vos (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1995), pp. 15–47.

³¹ Thomas S. Abler, “Beavers and Muskets: Iroquois Military Fortunes in the Face of European Colonization,” in *War in the Tribal Zone* (see n. 10), pp. 151–174; Richard R. Johnson, “The Search for a Usable Indian: An Aspect of the Defense of Colonial New England,” *Journal of American History* 64 (December 1977): 623–651.

³² For a study of the transformation of Iroquois warfare, see Daniel K. Richter, “War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 40 (October 1983): 537–544; on Spanish expansion into North America and the problem of Native American endemic warfare, see Hall, *Social Change in the Southwest*, pp. 70–86.

³³ Malone, *Skulking Way of War*, pp. 89–90, 96–98.

and mining operations. When European colonies' demands for labor exceeded what the available Native American slaves could provide, Europeans turned increasingly to African slave labor.³⁴

The ethnic violence discussed in this issue needs to be understood in conjunction with the contemporaneous gradual development of the plantation complex, an organization using slave labor and brutal violence to produce an agricultural cash crop for export.³⁵ Early European settler colonies used a mixture of indentured and slave labor. Then, as tobacco and sugar plantations spread through the Caribbean, African slaves became the key workers in the plantation complex. David Eltis offers a provocative explanation for this growing use of African slaves and for the emergence of racism in the early plantations by revealing the unwillingness of Europeans to consider the possibility of using white slaves.³⁶ Eltis's point is supported by the example of the Irish on Montserrat, who initially came to the island as indentured servants to work on tobacco plantations and gradually became "hard and efficient slave masters," overseeing African slaves.³⁷ The plantations seem to have produced their own forms of violence, involving racist attitudes and the physical domination of Africans. Slave masters employed rape as a sexual weapon and established "breeder women" to perpetuate the

³⁴ A recent reassessment, Massimo Livi-Bacci, "Return to Hispaniola: Reassessing a Demographic Catastrophe," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 83 (February 2003): 3–51, blames Native American population collapse in Hispaniola partly on the violence of the *encomienda* system. For a good case study of the complex transition from Native American to African slave labor, see Stuart B. Schwartz, "Indian Labor and New World Plantations: European Demands and Indian Responses in Northeastern Brazil," *American Historical Review* 83 (February 1978): 43–79.

³⁵ Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 73–85, 100–102; Sidney W. Mintz, "Pleasure, Profit, and Satiation," in *Seeds of Change: A Quincentennial Commemoration*, ed. Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 112–129; David Barry Gaspar, "Antigua Slaves and Their Struggle to Survive," in *ibid.*, pp. 130–138.

³⁶ David Eltis, "Europeans and the Rise and Fall of Slavery in the Americas: An Interpretation," *American Historical Review* 98 (December 1993): 1399–1423; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800* (London: Verso, 1996), makes a similar point about the development of racism in early modern slavery. This view has been questioned in a recent study of slavery in the Mediterranean world: Robert C. Davis, *Christian Slaves, Muslim Masters: White Slavery in the Mediterranean, the Barbary Coast, and Italy, 1500–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 190–193.

³⁷ Donald Harman Akenson, *If the Irish Ran the World: Montserrat, 1630–1730* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997); also, Jane Ohlmeyer, "Seventeenth-Century Ireland and the New British and Atlantic Histories," *American Historical Review* 104 (April 1999): 457–462.

slave population. European planters' racial fears prompted them to use brutal discipline, harsh punishments, and bodily mutilation implemented by dedicated overseers, who played significant roles in a plantation complex that was also sustained by religious values and beliefs.

RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATION AND VIOLENCE

Religion played an important role in shaping the Atlantic world from its inception, as extensive religious changes transformed religious beliefs and practices in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. R. Scott Appleby's analysis of the ambiguous nature of religious militancy, coupled with his distinction between religious extremists and fundamentalists, suggests that we consider a broad range of actors participating directly in diverse religious movements and accompanying violent causes in this period.³⁸ Crusading ideologies, religious prophecies, and the Mediterranean struggle between Islam and Christianity clearly motivated Christopher Columbus and his patrons.³⁹ A series of piety movements and religious reformations then swept through Europe, destroying the unity of Latin Christianity through religious conflicts and a gradual process of "confessionalization." At the same time, early European imperialism in the Americas and the epidemic diseases that accompanied colonists devastated Native American societies and destabilized their religious systems.

In central Mexico, however, the swift collapse of the Aztec empire did not bring a sudden end to Mesoamerican religious beliefs and practice. Instead, social and demographic crises prompted religious experimentation and syncretic fusions of Christian and Mesoamerican religions. Religious groupings in mid-sixteenth-century Mexico were fluid and decentralized, allowing shamans to promote various religious interpretations of the catastrophic violence that destroyed the Aztec empire. Martin Ocelotl, the shaman studied by Patricia Lopes Don, seems to have freely drawn from Christian and Mesoamerican sources for his prophecies, mixing political resistance and religious creativity. Don's methodological approach to the Ocelotl case shares much with studies of the "religions of the oppressed" that have recast religious

³⁸ Appleby, *Ambivalence of the Sacred*, pp. 8–15, 81–120.

³⁹ Pauline Moffitt Watts, "Prophecy and Discovery: On the Spiritual Origins of Christopher Columbus's 'Enterprise of the Indies,'" *American Historical Review* 90 (February 1985): 73–102. Axtell, "Columbian Encounters: 1992–1995," pp. 651–655.

nonconformists and heretics as members of movements combining piety practices with the advancement of social interests.⁴⁰

Patricia Lopes Don sees Christian missionaries as both proponents and enactors of religious violence. The Indian Inquisition of the mid-sixteenth century shows that Spanish missionaries often seem to have been more concerned with establishing “correct” religion and disciplining new Christians than with winning new converts. During the sixteenth century, Franciscan, Dominican, and later Jesuit missionaries fanned out across Spanish and Portuguese territories in Central and South America, promoting an increasingly militant Catholicism. With the papacy embattled in Europe, the threat of idolatry, blasphemy, and polygamy in New Spain could seem frightening to these missionaries. The Indian Inquisition officials who attempted to deal with these issues faced a dilemma concerning whether indigenous Americans should be treated like Jews or Muslims—two groups whose ethnic and religious identities had long been considered problematic in Spanish culture. Interestingly, Spanish Inquisition officials operating on the other side of the Atlantic seem to have been just as concerned about “the threat of religious enthusiasm,” as the case against Eugenia de la Torre in Madrid shows.⁴¹

Spanish missionary efforts demanded such discipline because of the paternalism that underlay most contemporary Christian attitudes toward Native Americans. Early modern Christian missionaries generally believed that they were acting to bring the “true faith” to child-like Native Americans who were paradoxically close to Eden.⁴² In the borderlands of the Atlantic world, Catholic missionaries soon competed over who would care for the souls of Native American “children” with Protestant evangelists, such as the Huguenots who were attempting to establish Calvinism in South America. English colonial

⁴⁰ The term “religions of the oppressed” is Vittorio Lanternari’s; Bruce Lincoln has proposed the term “religions of resistance” instead in *Holy Terrors: Thinking About Religion after September 11* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 77–79; one of the best early modern studies of this type is Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (New York: Viking, 1972). It would be interesting to compare religious/political resistance of Native Americans with religious aspects of African slave resistance; however, the literature seems more oriented toward eighteenth- and nineteenth-century examples, as in Walter Rucker, “Conjure, Magic, and Power: The Influence of Afro-Atlantic Religious Practices on Slave Resistance and Rebellion,” *Journal of Black Studies* 32 (September 2001): 84–103.

⁴¹ Andrew Keitt, “Religious Enthusiasm, the Spanish Inquisition, and the Disenchantment of the World,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65 (April 2004): 231–250.

⁴² On this paradox, see Jorge Canizares Esguerra, “New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600–1650,” *American Historical Review* 104 (February 1999): 33–68.

expansion began slowly, but Protestant missionaries increasingly aimed to create "Praying Indians" in New England.⁴³ Both Protestant and Catholic colonists recognized that Christian Native Americans might be more likely to support European colonial governments or seek accommodation with settlers during periods of warfare.⁴⁴ Although some pragmatic goals certainly motivated missionary activity, religious concerns for proselytism predominated. Conversion processes were hotly debated during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and only a public profession of a "conversion experience" would be accepted as sincere.⁴⁵

Missionaries operating in the borderlands often saw themselves as caught up in a great religious struggle, and they assessed Native Americans' religiosity according to their experiences with other non-Europeans. The missionary activity in New Spain coincided with other Catholic campaigns to convert heretics in Europe and to bring the "true faith" to "savages" in the Americas, Africa, the Indian Ocean, and Japan.⁴⁶ "From the perspective of the French Franciscans," Megan C. Armstrong suggests, "the Wars of Religion was one of several fronts in their global war on sin, a war that embraced the rise of an aggressive form of Islamic rule in the East and encounters with New World peoples as well as the spread of Protestantism in Europe."⁴⁷ These missionaries were not alone in conceiving of religion in terms of struggle.

Contemporary Christian laypeople who experienced the broad

⁴³ Johnson, "Search for a Usable Indian," pp. 627, 645–651.

⁴⁴ Armstrong Starkey, "European-Native American Warfare in North America, 1513–1815," in *War in the Early Modern World* (see n. 17), p. 249.

⁴⁵ Michael Wolfe provides an excellent overview of sixteenth-century Catholic notions of conversion in *The Conversion of Henri IV: Politics, Power, and Religious Belief in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 6–21. For a discussion of Protestant understandings of conversion, see Barbara B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 108–118.

⁴⁶ Luc Giard and Louis de Vaucelles, eds., *Les Jésuites à l'âge baroque (1540–1640)* (Grenoble: Editions Jérôme Millon, 1996); Christian Sorrel and Frédéric Meyer, eds., *Les Missions intérieures en France et en Italie du XVI^e au XX^e siècle* (Chambéry: Institut d'Études Savoisiennes, 2001).

⁴⁷ Megan C. Armstrong, *The Politics of Piety: Franciscan Preachers During the Wars of Religion, 1560–1600* (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2004), pp. 133, 170. While Armstrong's study is solidly focused on Franciscans operating within France during the religious wars, one hopes that she might develop this global insight in her future work. J. H. Elliott, "The Mental World of Hernán Cortés," in *Spain and Its World, 1500–1700: Selected Essays* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 38–40, shows that Franciscans in New Spain inspired Cortés's belief that "there would arise in Mexico a 'new church, where God will be served and honoured more than in any other region of the earth.' . . . The Franciscan vision was a world-wide vision."

religious transformations in the early modern Atlantic world often espoused eschatological visions, perceiving of their world as a “world turned upside-down.” Imagery portraying the symbolic inversion of worldly order was integral to Reformation-era propaganda and to widespread belief in the Antichrist and the impending Apocalypse. Many sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Christians believed that the unsettling “discoveries” of the Americas, the religious discord within Europe, and other portents signaled that the “Last Days” were near.⁴⁸ While Protestants and Catholics had different ways of understanding God’s power and human free will, almost all Europeans interpreted portents as evidence of Providence actively shaping the world around them.

European soldiers, clergy, and settlers all saw God’s agency at work in their Atlantic colonies.⁴⁹ Millenarian beliefs implied that colonists represented instruments in a divine plan and participants in a “cosmic war,” to use Mark Juergensmeyer’s terminology, that involved “martyrs” in the struggle against “demons.”⁵⁰ English colonists in Virginia, as Melanie Perrault points out, could genuinely believe that they were fighting “the Lord’s battles,” and many of their European contemporaries reported visions of cosmic battles in the heavens.⁵¹ H. E. Martel rightly places Hans Staden into the context of a religious iconography of martyrdom and sacrifice. Early modern imperial ideologies incorporated religious commitment, fusing colonial expansionism with engagement in “cosmic war.” An early seventeenth-century pamphlet celebrating the duc de Montmorency’s appointment as admiral of France linked his readiness to fight the “galleys of Mohammed” with his preparedness “to search for new kingdoms for his master, to found new Frances, and to plant *fleurs de lys* all around the world.”⁵² Similar religious discourses underpinned Spanish conquest and expansion in Central and South America. European colonists’ personal religiosity and faith became entangled in an all-encompassing struggle that provided powerful religious justifications for violence, and even holy war, in colonial warfare throughout the early modern Atlantic world.

⁴⁸ Andrew Cunningham and Ole Peter Grell, *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Religion, War, Famine and Death in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1–91; R. W. Scribner, *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 148–188; Hill, *World Turned Upside Down*.

⁴⁹ Esguerra, “New World, New Stars,” pp. 33–68.

⁵⁰ Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, pp. 145–63.

⁵¹ Cunningham and Grell, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, pp. 79–82.

⁵² Antoine d’Arnauld, *Presentation de Monsieur de Montmorency en l’office d’Admiral de France. 1612* (Paris: Denys du Val, 1612). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 8° Ln²⁷ 14695.

Settlers in Atlantic colonies often already had intimate personal experience with religious violence. Many colonists were religious refugees fleeing what they considered to be repressive persecution in their former homes. Others were refugees from the chaos, political disruption, epidemic disease, and famine that accompanied the European religious wars. Some of these refugees came from areas of Germany, the Netherlands, France, or the British Isles where different religious groups coinhabited the same geographic space and were therefore accustomed to daily struggles over sacred sites during religious conflicts, lasting in some cases for decades.⁵³ Europeans coming from such conflict zones had frequently witnessed, or even participated in, “mimetic violence” that imitated the forms of judicial punishment in order to rid their communities of pollution and ritually cleanse the world.⁵⁴

CAPTIVES AND RITUALIZED VIOLENCE

Organized violence in the early modern Atlantic world often involved captive-taking and prolonged confinement or forced reidentification.⁵⁵ Captured soldiers and civilians alike might experience resettlement, cultural assimilation, forced labor, and violence. In order to understand ethnic and religious violence, we must consider the treatment of captives and the meanings of pain inflicted on human bodies through mutilation, torture, and other ritualized violence.⁵⁶ The early modern accounts of torture tended to sensationalize brutality and depict practitioners of ritual violence as inhuman or monstrous. While captivity is often presented as a solitary episode, early modern captivity narratives

⁵³ Penny Roberts, “The Most Crucial Battle of the Wars of Religion? The Conflict over Sites of Reformed Worship in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 89 (1998): 247–267; see also Brian Sandberg, *Heroic Souls: French Nobles and Religious Conflict after the Edict of Nantes, 1598–1635* (forthcoming), where I also deal with this issue.

⁵⁴ The term “mimetic violence” is René Girard’s, but some of the best analyses of such violence can be found in studies of the French Wars of Religion. See Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, pp. 76–106; Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence,” in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 152–187; Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, pp. 1–38.

⁵⁵ I would like to thank Linda M. Clemmons for sharing her insights on captivity narratives with me.

⁵⁶ Elaine Scarry’s theorization of torture and warfare as bodily injury is especially pertinent here; Elaine Scarry, “Injury and the Structure of War,” *Representations* 10 (Spring 1985): 1–51.

can be read to suggest that “suffering is a social experience,” as Veena Das, Arthur Kleinman, and Margaret Lock have proposed.⁵⁷

Ritual human sacrifice and cannibalism have often been seen as the ultimate atrocities, perpetuated by monstrous beings. In this issue, H. E. Martel offers a rereading of the most infamous case of cannibalism in the early modern Atlantic world, that of the Tupinamba of Brazil. While some scholars have questioned whether the Tupinamba actually practiced cannibalism, the ritualistic violence reported by several sixteenth-century European observers has continued to fascinate historians, anthropologists, and social theorists.⁵⁸ The supposedly cannibalistic Tupinamba served as a model for the contemporary Catholic cartographer André Thevet’s cosmography, which has recently been reinterpreted by Frank Lestringant.⁵⁹ As Stephen Greenblatt notes, “the very incoherence of [Thevet’s] cosmography allows a jumbled confusion of remarkable observations, much like the unsystematized, wildly various contents of the ‘wonder cabinets’ beloved of Renaissance collectors. Thevet’s Tupinamba are like living wonder cabinets.”⁶⁰ One of the other key sixteenth-century sources on Tupinamba cannibalism, Calvinist Jean de Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil*, is central to Michel de Certeau’s analysis of ethnographic writing and voice. Certeau finds links between Léry’s descriptions of Tupinamba women’s eating of human flesh and contemporary European depictions of witches’ nighttime Sabbath revelry.⁶¹ Cannibalism

⁵⁷ Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock, “Introduction,” in *Social Suffering*, ed. Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. ix–xxvii.

⁵⁸ Descriptions of Tupinamba cannibalism were related in sixteenth-century travel narratives written by Europeans and diffused through seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts on marvels and monstrosities, such as Abbé Guyon, *Histoire des Amazones anciennes et modernes, enrichie de médailles* (Paris: Jean Villette, 1740). The influential anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss read many of these early modern accounts before conducting fieldwork with Native Americans in twentieth-century Brazil. He carried a copy of Jean de Léry’s account with him and thought of early modern travel narratives “as [he] set foot on Brazilian soil for the first time.” Interestingly, Lévi-Strauss mentions cannibalism, but avoids directly discussing Tupinamba cannibalism. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (New York: Atheneum, 1975), pp. 81–88, 326, 335, 351–353, 383–393.

⁵⁹ Frank Lestringant, *Mapping the Renaissance World: The Geographical Imagination in the Age of Discovery*, trans. David Fausett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

⁶⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, foreword to Lestringant, *Mapping the Renaissance World*, pp. vii–xv.

⁶¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 209–243; Jean de Léry’s account of Tupinamba cannibalism is doubly fascinating because he also describes European cannibalism at the siege of Sancerre during the French Wars of Religion; Robert M. Kingdon, *Myths About the St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacres, 1572–1576* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 58–62.

represented devilish gorging to European travel writers who were attuned to issues of feast and famine and who believed that “God’s greatest punishment with famine was to induce cannibalism, and especially to thereby induce starving mothers to eat their own babies.”⁶² Europeans describing cannibals in this period of frequent famines and religious conflicts often wanted to emphasize their pious fasting and their “correct” interpretation of the Eucharist. Literary critic René Girard, instead of focusing on European descriptions, treats Tupinamba cannibalism as a “real” practice. Rather than seeing ritualistic cannibalism as an aberration, however, Girard suggests that it is merely another form of ritualistic sacrifice—a fundamental purifying act common to all religious systems and necessary to remove the pollution of violence, or “mimetic desire,” from the community.⁶³ The very concepts of religion, violence, and ethnicity intersect in all of these readings of the Tupinamba.

Martel’s interpretation, based on Hans Staden’s captivity narrative, suggests that the Tupinamba probably were not cannibals but that they actively cultivated a cannibalistic image and successfully used the “subversive power of rumors in resisting imperialism.” Hans Staden’s religion-infused captivity narrative, intended for a Lutheran audience, provides the key source in this rereading of the Tupinamba’s supposed cannibalism. In an interesting move, Martel’s interpretation employs a Christian religious text to locate cannibalistic violence as an ethnic defensive smokescreen. Martel’s findings parallel Gananath Obeyesekere’s reading of Spanish descriptions of Aztec sacrifice and cannibalism, which concludes that “here is an excellent example of Aztecs manipulating a human sacrifice for political purposes, utilizing a conventional sign system to frighten the Spaniards, and no doubt succeeding.”⁶⁴

Captivity narratives written by Europeans seem to have misunderstood Native American ritualistic bodily mutilation practices and exaggerated their dimensions in their outraged descriptions of Native American “barbarities.” The Iroquois and other Native American societies placed great religious significance on captives, ritualistic torture,

⁶² Cunningham and Grell, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, pp. 200–246.

⁶³ Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, pp. 145–149, 274–308: “All religious rituals spring from the surrogate victim, and all the great institutions of mankind, both secular and religious, spring from ritual.”

⁶⁴ Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 16–18.

and mourning.⁶⁵ This issue becomes acute in the debate over the origin of the practice of scalping. Archaeological, linguistic, and textual evidence strongly suggest that scalping was practiced by pre-Columbian Native Americans, despite some previous claims that Europeans introduced scalping to Native American societies. However, European colonists clearly did encourage scalping and the mutilation of bodies in early modern colonial warfare through the use of bounties for scalps brought in by Native American warriors.⁶⁶ European religious leaders in North American colonies sometimes provided religious justifications for incidents of bodily mutilation and atrocities.

Europeans' captivity narratives can be compared with trial records of Native Americans who faced European judicial processes. Patricia Lopes Don's research on the Indian Inquisition in Mexico reveals the harsh punishments and executions meted out to Mesoamerican captives in an effort to halt what the inquisitors considered idolatry. Religious rationales sustained torture throughout European judicial systems and their colonial counterparts, not merely in Inquisition courts. A recent study of Catholic French torture finds that "much as chosen suffering sought to crush the rebellious will and thereby to make spiritual space for the indwelling truth of God, so too did judicial torture, by inflicting pain on an accused, seek to destroy the willfulness that diminished the truth of testimony."⁶⁷ European colonists subjected Native Americans to forms of judicial torture and execution that incorporated deliberate, ritualistic infliction of pain.

The most massive and systematic captive-taking operations in the Atlantic world arose in West Africa, as Europeans increasingly relied on African slave labor during the sixteenth century. Europeans' rising demands for African slaves in the seventeenth century seem to have fueled warfare among West African states and societies, encouraging slave-taking operations and supporting an "ideology of militarism [that] was founded in the political economy of the slave trade."⁶⁸ While European desires for slaves provided economic incentives for the slave mar-

⁶⁵ Richter, "War and Culture: The Iroquois Experience," pp. 537–544; Anthony F. C. Wallace, *The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca* (New York: Vintage Books, 1972), pp. 76–107.

⁶⁶ James Axtell and William C. Sturtevant, "The Unkindest Cut, or Who Invented Scalping," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 37 (July 1980): 451–472; Starkey, "European-Native American Warfare in North America, 1513–1815," pp. 248–249.

⁶⁷ Lisa Silverman, *Tortured Subjects: Pain, Truth, and the Body in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 8–9.

⁶⁸ Robin Law, "Warfare on the West African Slave Coast, 1650–1850," in *War in the Tribal Zone* (see n. 10), pp. 103–26.

ket, the actual enslavement of Africans stemmed largely from wars conducted among African political entities. John Thornton has persuasively argued that "African participation in the slave trade was voluntary and under the control of African decision makers."⁶⁹ If European slave traders had to compete with internal African economic use of slaves, they controlled the transportation and reselling of slaves. The Middle Passage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a cruel, deadly voyage that killed more than 20 percent of captive Africans shipped across the Atlantic.⁷⁰ Slaves challenged the plantation complex through subtle collective action, revolt, and flight. Africans who escaped from plantations often formed maroon communities in the Caribbean and South America, but they always risked capture and reenslavement. The enormous scale of the early modern slave trade and the intense organization of the violence suffered by its captives should be contextualized by an examination of contemporaries' understanding of atrocities.

MASS VIOLENCE AND ATROCITY

Perhaps no single source had done more to shape our images of atrocity in the early modern Atlantic world than Bartolomé de Las Casas's famous account of atrocities in New Spain.⁷¹ Travel narratives and polemical works written by Protestants built on critical Spanish accounts, such as Las Casas's, to fashion a "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty in the mines and *encomiendas* of New Spain. Hans Staden's narrative probably criticized Portuguese slavery in order to please a Lutheran audience, and many of the facets of the Black Legend were undoubtedly a product of the religious propaganda of European wars of religion.⁷² Yet, many of the atrocious episodes recounted in propaganda pieces did relate horribly real excessive violence practiced by Spanish colonial soldiers and settlers against noncombatants, as well

⁶⁹ Thornton, *Africa and Africans*, pp. 98–125.

⁷⁰ David Eltis, Stephen Behrendt, David Richardson, and Herbert S. Klein, eds., *The Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1562–1867: A Database CD-Rom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 130–160.

⁷¹ Bartolomé de Las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, trans. Nigel Griffin (London: Penguin Classics, 1992).

⁷² For a historiographical discussion of the Black Legend and the "decline of Spain," see Richard L. Kagan, "Prescott's Paradigm: American Historical Scholarship and the Decline of Spain," in *Imagined Histories: American Historians Interpret the Past*, ed. Anthony Molho and Gordon S. Wood (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 324–348.

as by other Europeans and Native Americans embroiled in conflicts in the colonial borderlands. Analyzing early modern atrocities is complicated not only by the outrage that accompanied most of these descriptions of atrocity, but also by ambiguous legal distinctions and gender conceptions that often made defining “noncombatants” very difficult.⁷³ Tracing the connections between religion and ethnicity can help in understanding the massive scale and disturbing character of the atrocities committed in the early modern Atlantic world.

The Virginia Massacre, as the Powhatan Confederacy’s 1622 attack on English settlers in Jamestown colony is generally known, and the reprisal massacres perpetrated by English colonists reveal the dynamics of mass atrocities in this period. Melanie Perrault shows that during the decade before the massacre, deep contradictions emerged in English paternalistic attitudes that portrayed Native Americans as “noble savages” who lived in an Eden-like paradise. English colonial voyager Thomas Harriot thought that Native Americans would eventually come to “honor, obey, fear, and love us.” Perrault reveals how such paternalistic attitudes created tensions in the Virginia colony and antagonized the settlers’ Native American neighbors. When intercultural violence did occur, English political culture sanctioned extreme forms of violence against Native Americans as a justifiable means of upholding the colonial community and maintaining social order.⁷⁴

The increasingly brutal character of violence between English colonists and Native Americans highlights the failure of restraints in colonial warfare in the Atlantic world during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. All wars involve the forging of conventions between groups of combatants regarding the appropriate means and forms of violence; however, these conventional practices of warfare and restraints on violence are periodically violated and can at times break down.⁷⁵

⁷³ A comparative approach to atrocity is provided by Mark Grimsley and Clifford J. Rogers, eds., *Civilians in the Path of War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002). There is not space here to develop the complexities of gender conceptions and relations in determining combatant/noncombatant status; however, I discuss this issue in a case study, Brian Sandberg, “‘Generous Amazons Came to the Breach’: Besieged Women, Agency and Subjectivity During the French Wars of Religion,” *Gender & History* 16 (November 2004): 654–688.

⁷⁴ Perrault’s analysis effectively explains the explosion of violence in Virginia, supporting interpretations that see the Virginia Massacre as a rupture in English policies toward, and relations with, Native Americans; see Alden T. Vaughan, “Expulsion of the Savages: English Policy and the Virginia Massacre of 1622,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 35 (January 1978): 57–84.

⁷⁵ The best introduction to the massive literature on the theories and the practices of “laws of war,” including the concepts of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, is provided by Michael

Differing cultural expectations about violence and communication difficulties seem to have exacerbated problems in maintaining restraints on intercultural violence in areas such as Virginia and New England. Colonial military and militia units seem to have accepted the routine use of excessive violence, as the images of self-defense used by early seventeenth-century settler colonies incorporated notions of a “militarized frontier” and a “militia myth.”⁷⁶

Europeans were increasingly accustomed to failures of restraints on warfare during the religious wars that engulfed vast areas of Europe from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. Cities in the conflict zones of the Dutch Revolt, the French Wars of Religion, the Thirty Years’ War, and the English Civil Wars could suffer catastrophic violence as the most extreme applications of the “law of the siege” became normal. European soldiers, who were often ill-supplied and underpaid, became habituated to pillaging and burning towns that attempted to resist them. Massacres of inhabitants and executions of civic leaders followed the end of many sieges due to the brutal conditions of early modern European warfare and the excessive zeal of many soldiers participating in religious warfare.⁷⁷

Strong religious motivations often underlay the atrocities committed by the European combatants who fought in colonial wars. Mark Juergensmeyer argues that “warriors” in religious conflicts experience symbolic empowerment through their performance of violence in what they perceive as a “cosmic war.”⁷⁸ This approach to religious conflict provides a way of interpreting early modern European soldiers’ commitment to a cause and their willingness to inflict violence. For combatants in the European wars of religion, heretics and infidels both

Howard, George J. Andreopoulos, and Mark R. Shulman, eds., *The Laws of War: Constraints on Warfare in the Western World* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994); see also James Turner Johnson, “Maintaining the Protection of Non-Combatants,” *Journal of Peace Research* 37 (July 2000): 421–448; and Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

⁷⁶ Don Higginbotham, “The Military Institutions of Colonial America: The Rhetoric and the Reality,” in *Tools of War: Instruments, Ideas, and Institutions of Warfare, 1445–1871*, ed. John A. Lynn (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 131–153.

⁷⁷ Geoffrey Parker, “Early Modern Europe,” in *Laws of War* (see n. 75), pp. 40–58; Mark Greengrass, “Hidden Transcripts: Secret Histories and Personal Testimonies of Religious Violence in the French Wars of Religion,” in *The Massacre in History*, ed. Mark Levene and Penny Roberts (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), pp. 69–88; Brian Sandberg, “‘Only the Sack and the Noose for its Citizens’: Atrocities against Civilians in the Wars of Religion in Early Seventeenth-Century France,” (forthcoming).

⁷⁸ Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God*, pp. 145–163, 187–215.

represented agents of the Devil, with shared abominable characteristics. Colonial encounters with indigenous peoples became sites of religious and theological dispute in confessional propaganda of the religious wars. If the Tupinamba could be compared to witches by the Protestant French writer L ry, so too could Huguenot “heretics” be portrayed as witches and sorcerers by Catholic polemicists in France.⁷⁹ For Christians anticipating the Apocalypse, waging warfare against the Ottomans in the Mediterranean or against the Powhatans in Virginia signified participating in the great struggle against the Antichrist. Many European soldiers and colonists who were directly involved in the production of violence in Europe’s global expansion exported religious warfare into colonial contexts. Incidents of religious violence erupted among Europeans in colonial territories, such as the conflict between French Calvinists and Catholics at Fort Coligny. The English colonial leader John Smith explained that “the Warres in *Europe*, *Asia*, and *Affrica* . . . taught me how to subdue the wilde Salvages in *Virginia*.”⁸⁰

A transatlantic comparative perspective can make Smith’s comment even more significant and the atrocities surrounding the Virginia Massacre more comprehensible. English colonization in Ireland and the Americas developed as serious religious divisions emerged in the British Isles in the sixteenth century between Catholic Ireland, Calvinist Scotland, and an Anglican-dominated but religiously mixed England. Elizabethan England seems to have become increasingly militarized just as it began its imperial policies in the Atlantic as a result of the pressures of fighting in religious conflicts in the divided Netherlands and in Catholic Ireland during the late sixteenth century. As Nicholas P. Canny points out, “We find the [English] colonists in the New World using the same pretexts for the extermination of the Indians as their counterparts had used in the 1560s and 1570s for the slaughter of numbers of the Irish.”⁸¹ Aggressive English colonization in Ireland continued during the religious conflicts of the mid-seventeenth-century civil wars, which involved so much atrocity that the violence in Ireland has recently been likened to late twentieth-century

⁷⁹ Luc Racaut, *Hatred in Print: Catholic Propaganda and Protestant Identity during the French Wars of Religion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 56–58, 77–79, 91–92.

⁸⁰ John Smith quoted in Vaughan, “Expulsion of the Savages,” pp. 62–63.

⁸¹ John S. Nolan, “The Militarization of the Elizabethan State,” *Journal of Military History* 58 (July 1994): 391–420; Nicholas P. Canny, “The Ideology of English Colonization: From Ireland to America,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 30 (October 1973): 596–597.

“ethnic cleansing.”⁸² English, Irish, and Scottish soldiers who experienced the atrocities of the civil wars in the 1640s and 1650s may have been even more prepared to practice warfare beyond restraint. They had witnessed the erosion of conventional limits on warfare among Christians and the infusion of bitter religious hatred into European conflicts.⁸³ The atrocious nature of this sort of conflict arguably shaped later English attitudes toward both Irish and Native Americans.⁸⁴ The combination of ethnic stereotypes, imperial ideologies, and religious justifications not only sanctioned atrocities but gave them expansive meaning.

THE ATLANTIC WORLD AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF VIOLENCE

This issue highlights the advantages of examining the perpetrators of violence carefully as historical actors adopting multiple subject positions: violence’s participant, manipulator, collaborator, witness, and even victim. The articles here are careful to explore the “gray zones” between oppressors and victims, and such an approach to the production of religious and ethnic violence offers new directions in the historiography of the Atlantic world that can complement studies of the “reception” of violence.⁸⁵

Understanding religious and ethnic violence comparatively can also help integrate the history of the Americas into broader world historical perspectives, avoiding the production of an America-centered Atlantic world.⁸⁶ When historians focus on the oppressive nature of European imperialism, they can best respond to Eric Wolf’s call to

⁸² Robin Clifton, “‘An Indiscriminate Blackness’? Massacre, Counter-Massacre, and Ethnic Cleansing in Ireland, 1640–1660,” in *Massacre in History* (see n. 77), pp. 107–126.

⁸³ Barbara Donagan, “Atrocity, War Crime, and Treason in the English Civil War,” *American Historical Review* 99 (October 1994): 1137–1166.

⁸⁴ Nicholas P. Canny, *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560–1800* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988); Harold E. Selesky, “Colonial America,” in *Laws of War* (see n. 75), pp. 60–62.

⁸⁵ This usage of “gray zones” is adapted from Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Vintage, 1989).

⁸⁶ Michael Adas, “From Settler Colony to Global Hegemon: Integrating the Exceptionalist Narrative of the American Experience into World History,” *American Historical Review* 106 (December 2001): 1692–1720, argues passionately that American historiography needs to overcome its central paradox of seeing America as an exceptional “city upon the hill” while also stressing America as a model for the rest of the world. For a historiographical study of American exceptionalism, see Daniel T. Rodgers, “Exceptionalism,” in *Imagined Histories* (see n. 72), pp. 21–40.

break down Eurocentric historiography by reconceptualizing Europeans' roles in the production of transatlantic and global violence, rather than by ignoring the European dimensions of early modern globalization.⁸⁷ After all, as Talal Asad argues, "Europe did not simply expand overseas; it made itself through that expansion."⁸⁸ The earliest and perhaps fullest combination of aggressive transoceanic imperialism, settler colonies, and racial slavery first developed in the Atlantic world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although the forms of ethnic and religious violence produced in this context were shaped by ongoing or contemporaneous imperial relationships in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, Eurasia, and Southeast Asia, the performances of violence in the Atlantic world arguably served as models for the globalization of violence throughout the early modern world.

Alfred W. Crosby's demarcation of a Columbian Exchange has provided a broad concept that continues to be useful, but we should remember that his depiction of the processes of transatlantic exchange emphasizes the violent, destructive clashes of conquering germs, plants, animals, and humans.⁸⁹ In contrast, the term "encounters," which seemed so dominant during the Columbian quincentennial, represents a problematic concept precisely because it obscures agency in the production of violence and deflects attention from the horrendous consequences of armed conflict. Moving beyond the notion of "encounters" requires inserting a comprehensive examination of violence into comparative histories and metanarratives of early modern globalization.

⁸⁷ Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

⁸⁸ Talal Asad, "Muslims and European Identity: Can Europe Represent Islam?" in *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 209–227.

⁸⁹ Consider Crosby's insistence on deadly disease, "biological imperialism," and "expansion," in Alfred W. Crosby Jr., *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) and Alfred W. Crosby Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1972).

Franciscans, Indian Sorcerers, and the Inquisition in New Spain, 1536–1543

PATRICIA LOPES DON
San Jose State University

In the years 1536–1543, the Spanish crown gave authority to the bishop of Mexico City, Fray Juan de Zumárraga, to establish an Episcopal Inquisition in Mexico City.¹ With the urging of the Franciscan community, the bishop used his inquisitorial authority to hold nineteen trials for religious crimes against mostly Indian leaders living in and around the Mexico Valley—a phenomenon called the Indian Inquisition.² Both before and after this brief campaign, the trials of Indians for paganism or idolatry were either absent or few and always sporadic and lacking the support of the crown in Spain. The Indian Inquisition, however, was the most concerted effort of the Spanish colonial authorities to apply the full powers of the institution to the indigenous population in New Spain. Indians suffered a range of punitive punishments from flogging and lengthy jailing to banishment and, in the case of one indigenous leader, Don Carlos of Texcoco, burning at the stake.³ No sooner had this small but well-sanctioned legal assault

¹ While there have been studies of the Spanish Inquisition in Mexico after 1571, the most comprehensive of which is Solange Alberro's *Inquisición y sociedad en Mexico, 1571–1700* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1988), the only really detailed treatment of the earlier Inquisition is forty years old: Richard Greenleaf, *Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition, 1536–1543* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1962).

² Probably using a reference common among historians by the 1960s, Greenleaf coined the phrase “Indian Inquisition” (*Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition*, p. 75).

³ The complete manuscripts of the trials have been transcribed and published in “Proceso inquisitorial del cacique de Tetzcoco,” vol. 1, *Publicaciones de la Comisión Reorganizadora del Archivo General y Pública* (Mexico: Eusebio Gómez de la Puente, 1910); “Procesos de indios idolatras y hechiceras,” vol. 3, *Publicaciones de la Comisión Reorganizadora del Archivo General y Público de la Nación* (Mexico: Guerrero, 1912).

on paganism begun, however, when questions emerged about its advisability. By the early 1540s, a consensus developed in councils of the Spanish government that the use of the Inquisition to induce religious orthodoxy among the new converts was inappropriate and possibly dangerous for the security of the colony. The Indian Inquisition ended when the Council of the Indies revoked the bishop's inquisitorial powers in 1543. In 1571, when Philip II formally established a Holy Office in New Spain, he specifically prohibited trials against indigenous colonists. Most historians have attributed this decision to the failure of the earlier Indian Inquisition.⁴

Why did colonial authorities regard inquisitorial actions against the Indians necessary in the Spanish colony of the 1530s but not forty years later? And, since the colonial authorities were so quick to undermine the bishop's campaign, how and why was Zumárraga led down the path of applying the heavy cudgel of Inquisition to the indigenous neophytes? This paper will answer these questions by presenting a narrative, including turning points and intellectual conditions that were present in the Mexico Valley, leading up to the first trials of the Inquisition. Additionally, it will examine more closely the second trial against the native sorcerer Martin Ocelotl. The Indian Inquisition resulted from a confluence of interrelated intellectual tensions. Questioning of the indigenous capacity to Christianize led Franciscans in New Spain to defensively and rigorously enforce Christian living among the indigenous in the Mexico Valley in the 1530s. The campaigns in the indigenous towns and villages created tensions that led to an antagonistic dynamic that pitted some indigenous nobles against the friars. The bishop Zumárraga implemented his Inquisition in this tense environment and was persuaded to bring Martin Ocelotl to trial. Ironically, in the trial, the friars learned how alive and well paganism was in the very communities on the eastern side of the Mexico Valley where they had invested most of their missionizing efforts. Tensions escalated, and a steady drumbeat of trials followed that were clearly leading to a potential holocaust of indigenous leaders, until the Spanish Old World authorities stepped in and removed the bishop's inquisitorial powers.

THE DILEMMA OF CONVERSION

As Spain began to cope with the concept of converting large numbers of indigenous people in its newly conquered territories, two intellec-

⁴ See Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad*, p. 22.

tual currents intersected that were critical to the emergence of the Indian Inquisition. One was Spain's perceived historical imperative to compel religious orthodoxy within its empire, in order to secure the empire. The other was the practical reality of converting people whose willingness and capacity to convert were in question and the more immediate concern of what this might mean for the security of an unwieldy empire. The Spanish monarchy's conversion policy often waffled between these two questions; the Inquisition in the New World was bound to become tangled in the process. Therefore, it is useful to review this conversion dilemma.

The sole object of the Spanish Inquisition in the early years of Ferdinand's and Isabella's reign (1476–1515) was to eliminate alleged crypto-Judaism on Spanish soil. The Catholic kings wanted to elevate the racial factionalism that Old Christians targeted against converted Jews in the fifteenth century to the level of Christian nationalism. By doing so they could unite their disparate kingdoms, deflect political tensions onto the Jews, and make the Spanish monarchy the vanguard of militant Christianity in Europe.⁵ They therefore demanded and received from the Vatican permission to found a Holy Office that was absolutely under their state power. Ferdinand famously boasted about the Spanish Inquisition, "In fact, it is all ours!"⁶ Therefore, the politico-religious-ethnic nature of the Spanish Inquisition was perceived as a powerful, if volatile, security institution for the Spanish monarchy.

Jews, however, were not the only potential national security threat from within. Throughout southern Spain, there was a much larger community of practicing Muslims, or *mudéjares*, and an even larger community of Muslims converted to Christianity, *moriscos*, especially in and near the newly conquered kingdom of Granada.⁷ When the crown initially applied pressure to compel religious orthodoxy in *mudéjar* and *morisco* communities, its efforts were met with mass revolts, rebellions, and resistance. In the early decades of the sixteenth century, the crown considered the use of Inquisition with the Muslims, but two factors

⁵ Stephen Haliczer, "First Holocaust," in *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Stephen Haliczer (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble, 1987), pp. 9–10, is very good in explaining the nationalist advantages of the Inquisition for Ferdinand and Isabel.

⁶ AHN Inquisition, libro 1275, f. 232, in Henry Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), p. 241, notes that Ferdinand prohibited a *corregidor*, government official, from "issuing a declaration saying that the Inquisition is of a different jurisdiction, because, in fact, it is all ours!"

⁷ Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition* (New York: New American Library, 1966), p. 3.

seemed to lead them away from that path. First, use of the Inquisition threatened to turn the Muslim resistance into massive revolt. Second, there were some doubts that the less urbanized Muslim converts were capable of assimilating Christianity quickly. The crown compromised, and the Concordia of 1528 was negotiated, stating that *moriscos* would not be subject to the Inquisition until the third generation after conversion, according to the Inquisitor General, "since it would be impossible for them to shed all their customs at once."⁸ As the application of Inquisition to ethnic groups was being sorted out in the Old World, a new Conquest population—the indigenous people of the New World—presented a new policy dilemma. In effect, should the Indians be treated like Jews or Muslims?

Pope Alexander VI's papal donation of the New World contained in the bulls *Inter Caetera* and *Dudum Siquidem* required Ferdinand and Isabella to take responsibility for the Indians by Christianizing them. In the Caribbean, however, questions began to emerge about whether the Indians had the "rational capacity" to Christianize, which would allow them to be assimilated into the empire. In her work on the Indian identity question, Patricia Seed has argued that rivalry between Franciscans and Dominicans, the leaders of the conversion effort in the New World, was the critical instigating factor for the debate.⁹ By custom, the orders staked out proselytizing territory wherever they went that could not be entered by a rival order. Dominicans found, when they came to both the Caribbean and New Spain, that the Franciscans had a tight hold on the best proselytizing territories.¹⁰ Moreover, the Fran-

⁸ Kamen, *Inquisition and Society in Spain*, p. 105, reports that the "Concordia" was originally negotiated between the *moriscos* of Valencia and Inquisitor-General Alonso Manrique, in 1526, as he said, "since it would be impossible for them to shed all their customs at once," and published in 1528. Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 74–78, also offers an interesting interpretation that posits that the Spanish legal tradition follows the Muslim legalistic strain in the Maliki school with regard to both conquest and religious conversions; both acts—submission to conquest and conversion—must be voluntary to be legal.

⁹ Patricia Seed, "'Are These Not Also Men?': The Indians' Humanity and Capacity for Spanish Civilisation," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 23, no. 3 (October 1993): 629–652; and further developed in Patricia Seed, *American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

¹⁰ In his book *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 94–97, Anthony Pagden explains the Salamanca debates that were testing the same proposition in court and university circles in the 1530s and 1540s, that is, the Indians appeared to have reason and the capacity to achieve "a full state of actuality through moral education." Pagden, p. 65, also noted that Zumárraga was acquainted with Fray Francisco de Vitoria, the philosopher at the heart of the Salamanca questions, and was most impressed with his arguments.

ciscans who came to New Spain were part of a reform order with a particularly zealous notion of their mission in the New World. The famous Twelve Franciscans who arrived in 1524 were from the provincial house of San Gabriel in Extremadura, which possessed an aesthetic and discipline that regarded the conversion of the indigenous peoples as a final millennial chapter to world Christianity and were especially jealous of their control of the New Spain mission.¹¹ In 1528, Charles V himself selected the first bishop of New Spain from the Franciscan convent of Abrojo, near Valladolid: Fray Juan de Zumárraga. Although they were joined by the first Dominicans in 1526 and Augustinians in 1532, the Franciscans retained significant advantages in numbers, influence, and leadership throughout the 1520s and 1530s.

Between 1531 and 1537, the generalized rivalry between Franciscans and Dominicans crystallized into an argument over the capacity of the Indians to convert to Christianity. Most Franciscan leaders argued that their work had been effective and that the Indians were fully capable of Christianization, though they acknowledged that indigenous conversion had proved a difficult road.¹² However, some Dominican friars, joined by almost the entire settler community, openly questioned the capacity of the Indians and the methods that the Franciscans employed. Most famously, Dominicans Fray Tomás de Ortíz and Fray Domingo de Betanzos made statements to the Spanish Council of the Indies that the “capacity” of the Indians was highly doubtful. They roundly criticized the Franciscans’ early missionizing efforts, which had led to massive baptisms of tens of thousands of Indians without the benefit of religious instruction.¹³

The anger of the capacity debate took on a life of its own and overwhelmed what might have been a more tolerant policy toward the Indians. Ironically, to prove their affectionate defense of the Indians (and the rationale for their own mission), the Franciscans gradually began to move in the 1530s toward a much tougher enforcement of religious life in the indigenous communities than they had in the early days. Between 1521 and 1525, Cortés had prohibited human sacrifice in the major population centers of the Mexico Valley, but, for security

¹¹ Linda Ann Curcio-Nagy, “Faith and Morals in Colonial Mexico,” in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, ed. Michael C. Meyer and William H. Beezley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 152.

¹² Lewis Hanke, *The First Social Experiments in America: A Study in the Development of Spanish Indian Policy in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), pp. 19–20.

¹³ Georges Baudot, *Utopia and History in Mexico: The First Chroniclers of Mexican Civilization, 1520–1569* (Niwtot: University of Colorado Press, 1995), pp. 276–277.

reasons, he was unable and unwilling to risk prohibition of any other aspect of indigenous religious expression; by all accounts, the pagan temples were in full operation until 1525.¹⁴ Beginning in 1525, the Franciscan Twelve began the drive to proselytize with a great show of baptisms in Texcoco, the second most powerful center of the old Aztec alliance. They continued to hold large baptismal events with very little religious instruction, especially of the adults, for the next five years. But from 1531, the Franciscans' detractors could still point to Indians with multiple wives, villages celebrating their pagan feasts each month, and what was perceived as multiple cases of backsliding everywhere in the Mexico Valley communities. The obvious recidivism of the Indians was generally blamed on the mass baptism practices of the Franciscans.¹⁵

In the 1530s, there were finally sufficient numbers of friars to enter into the major indigenous towns and to stay for the longer periods of time needed to discover paganism and deal with it. In 1532, Zumárraga ordered a series of *visitas*, or inspection visits, into the villages and towns of the Mexico Valley to check on the daily lives of Indians and enforce Christian living among the baptized.¹⁶ For some years, the Franciscans had compelled the celebrated Indian chiefs to send their noble sons to Christian convents for education and training in Christianity. By the early 1530s, the Franciscans were placing these child-enforcers back into the villages to take over religious practice from their elders and, effectively, snitch on their families. Several of these children were killed by their relatives, who feared their spying and lack of familial loyalty.¹⁷ Another very large and disruptive issue was the

¹⁴ Serge Gruzinski, *The Conquest of Mexico: The Incorporation of Indian Societies into the Western World, 16th–18th Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 16; Toribio de Benavente (Motolinía), *Historia de los indios de Nueva España* (Mexico: Porrúa, 1969), pp. 48–49, states, “but since each man had his own affairs to consider . . . , idolatry went on in spite of Cortés’s orders until the first day of the year 1525.”

¹⁵ Fray Juan de Zumárraga, *Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga, primer obispo y arzobispo de México, estudio biográfico y bibliográfico con un apéndice de documentos inéditos o raros*, ed. and comp. Joaquín García Icazbalceta (Mexico: Mario Andrade y Morales, 1949), 3:110–111, for the letter from the bishops to the Real Consejo on 30 November 1537 about the confusion and “*pasiones*” about this issue. See Joaquín García Icazbalceta, introduction to *ibid.*, 1:144, for García Icazbalceta’s opinion that the arrival of the other orders “elevated the question of baptism.” See also *ibid.*, 3:160–161, for the “Capítulos de 27 Abril 1539,” where the orders agreed to the conditions under which baptism could be provided to adults.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4: document 5, “Order from Zumárraga, Mexico 1532.”

¹⁷ Fray Pedro de Gante, *Cartas de Fr. Pedro de Gante, O.F.M., primer educador de América*, comp. Fidal de J. Chauvet (Mexico, 1947), p. 17, wrote to his fellow brothers in Flanders on 27 June 1529 that they were beginning to send their students into the villages to preach and destroy idols.

enforcement of monogamous marriage. In 1530, the Empress released a *cedula*, or royal order, requiring each Indian leader to choose one from among his many wives and concubines as his only legitimate wife and abandon the rest.¹⁸ The Franciscans followed with a very public campaign of forced marriages and infliction of small punishments and floggings of leaders who defied the marital laws.¹⁹

As the difficult 1530s campaign to extirpate paganism evolved and while the dispute about indigenous capacity raged, the Inquisition entered New Spain. It did so in an especially disjointed manner. There was no branch of the Holy Office in New Spain; the crown had simply extended the authority of the Seville Holy Office to the New World. Seville, in turn, gave extraordinary powers of inquisition to the bishop of Santo Domingo in the Caribbean in 1519, which was called an Episcopal or Apostolic Inquisition. The bishop of Santo Domingo then gave inquisitorial powers to various friars who were passing through on the way to New Spain. In the 1520s, a few dozen Spanish settlers and four Indians were hauled in for ad hoc proceedings before these successive appointed inquisitors in New Spain; the usual charge was keeping concubines or swearing.²⁰

After Zumárraga was appointed bishop of Mexico City in 1528, he became the presumptive Inquisitor Apostolico for the Mexico Valley. Zumárraga had himself been an inquisitor in Spain in 1528. Charles V personally requested that he handle a witch trial in his native Basque province of Vizcaya in early 1528.²¹ Yet, between 1528 and 1535, it appears that Zumárraga made no effort to use his powers of Inquisition either against the Indians or the Spanish settlers in New Spain, and

¹⁸ Woodrow Borah and Sherborne Cook, "Marriage and Legitimacy in Mexican Culture," *California Law Review* 54, no. 2 (1966): 955. Jerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana* (Mexico: Chávez Hayhoe, 1945), 1:181, maintains that the friars did not even begin to tackle this complex problem until 1529–1530, or after Zumárraga insisted on dealing with it. Archivo General de Indias, Mexico 2555, s.f., "Memorial del Obispo de Mexico al Rey, 1533," is a letter from Zumárraga asking that he be given amplification of his authority to deal with the marital affairs of the Indians.

¹⁹ Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain, 1523–1572*, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), p. 111, noted that in their meeting of 3 June 1534 the mendicants reported that their inability to surmount polygamy was their greatest problem.

²⁰ Greenleaf, *Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition*, pp. 7–13; J. Jorge Klor de Alva, "Martin Ocelotl: Clandestine Cult Leader," in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America*, ed. David G. Sweet and Gary B. Nash (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 131.

²¹ Fray Juan Ruíz de Larríaga, *Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga, Primer Obispo y Arzobispo de Mexico, Durangués, Franciscano y Servidor de la Patria al margen de su pontificado* (Bilbao, 1948), pp. 63–64.

Inquisition trials nearly came to a standstill.²² At this early stage, Zumárraga did not seem to view the Inquisition as a necessary tool for the extirpation of heresy in the indigenous community. Rather, like Charles V, who had received many reports of the secret immigration of European Jews, New Christians, and Lutherans to the New World, Zumárraga regarded Inquisition in the New World a necessity for monitoring the settler community, not the Indians.²³ His hesitance reflected his judgment that a vigorous Inquisition of the rowdy and independent conqueror community, which still dominated the politics of New Spain, needed careful planning and strong support from the Vatican and Charles V, neither of which was completely in place until 1535.

Why then did the otherwise cautious Zumárraga use the Inquisition cudgel against the indigenous community in the mid 1530s? The evidence suggests a kind of rolling juggernaut in thinking. The capacity debate led to the rigorous moral campaign of the 1530s; the difficulties of the campaign, in turn, moved the friars to step up the level of religious violence they were willing to use. Throughout the 1530s, indigenous religiosity was more and more shifting into a moral frame where the bishop and the Spanish authorities were forced to treat them more like Jews than like Muslims with regard to the Inquisition. Zumárraga's fellow Franciscans, particularly the father provincial and leader of the Franciscan community in 1536, Fray Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo, appealed to the bishop to help them forward their campaign to enforce Christian living among the Indians by employing the powers of Inquisition; the bishop was not in a position or a frame of mind to refuse. Indeed, the Franciscans' influence and their mission imperative were very obvious in the prosecution of the second trial against the native sorcerer Martin Ocelotl, who had become a serious irritant to the friars in the city of Texcoco, the heart of the Franciscan territory.

FRIARS V. JAGUAR

The Nahuatl word "Ocelotl" means jaguar. The Spanish at first did not know what the new species of animal was and in their early Nahuatl dictionaries translated it as "tiger" or "lion." But the American jaguar was a particularly fierce member of the cat species and, in the pantheon of most Mesoamerican religions, it was the most powerful religious

²² Greenleaf, *Zumárraga and the Mexican Inquisition*, pp. 12–13.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

symbol, precisely because it personified fierce and stealthy characteristics. We do not know whether Ocelotl was given this name or whether he took it, but he certainly presented a stealthy, shadowing figure to the friars and the indigenous. None was more concerned about Ocelotl's reputation in the indigenous villages than Fray Antonio de Ciudad Rodrigo. The anthropologist J. Jorge Klor de Alva said of Fray Antonio that he "marked" Ocelotl, and this seems like a very apt description for the way Ciudad Rodrigo orchestrated the charges against Martin.²⁴

Most accounts of Fray Antonio's character agree with Sahagún's assessment that he was "very fervent in the conversion of souls."²⁵ Like the other twelve Franciscans who arrived in 1524, he was a reformed Franciscan, preferring to lead a life very much in imitation of Saint Francis, in poverty, humility, and austerity. Fray Antonio clearly took his oath very seriously. When first offered a bishopric, he turned it down (although later he became a bishop in Nueva Galicia).²⁶ One Christmas, Zumárraga sent a bottle of wine to each of the friars and Ciudad Rodrigo sent it back.²⁷ Fray Antonio spoke passionately against the enslavement of the Indians and, interestingly, he blamed the indigenous leaders as much as the Spaniards for the maltreatment of the common people.²⁸ The order had sent him back to Spain in 1528 to ask Charles V to relieve the Indians from *encomendero* work and to recruit more Franciscans to the mission. He was highly successful only on the second count and became a father figure to the second wave of twenty Franciscans who came to New Spain in 1529. Unlike some of the earliest Franciscans, Fray Antonio was not very well educated.²⁹ Nevertheless, in late 1536, he was made the second provincial of the Franciscan order in New Spain. In this role, he pressed very hard for more missions, sending five missionaries to northern New Spain and five more in 1538 to the South Pacific, both very dangerous assignments of the time.³⁰ Fray Antonio was not one for making excuses for himself or accepting them in others.

Before he became provincial in 1536, he had spent most of the pre-

²⁴ See Klor de Alva, "Martin Ocelotl," in n. 20.

²⁵ José María Póu y Martí, "El libro perdido de las pláticas o coloquios de los doce primeros misioneros de Mexico," *Miscellaneous Francesca Ehrte* 3 (1924): 304.

²⁶ Antonio Rubial García, *La hermana pobreza: El franciscanismo de la Edad Media a la evangelización novohispana* (Mexico: UNAM, 1996), p. 137.

²⁷ Mendieta, *Historia Eclesiastica Indiana*, 2:160.

²⁸ Zumárraga also belied a lot of anger at the indigenous leaders, especially with regard to their taking multiple wives and especially very young girls; see Zumárraga, *Don Fray Juan de Zumárraga*, 4:61.

²⁹ Rubial García, *La hermana pobreza*, pp. 147, 164, 174.

³⁰ Mendieta, *Historia Eclesiastica Indiana*, 2:31.

vicious five years leading the convent and mission in Texcoco, where he became acquainted with Martin Ocelotl. In 1533, as part of the crack-down on polygamy, Ciudad Rodrigo compelled Martin to marry one of his wives. But the friar went a little further, which indicated his wariness about Martin's influence within the community. He made Martin announce himself publicly to be against bigamy and declare "to the entire village" in Texcoco that he had given up his old ways. A couple of years later, however, Fray Antonio suspected that Martin was simply ignoring his marriage vows and he summoned him for counseling. Apparently, this time Martin did not simply assent and comply. He disputed playfully with the saintly friar. Ciudad Rodrigo said that Martin gave him responses that were intended to "befuddle" him. Martin spoke very "wittily," said Fray Antonio, "like a theologian."³¹ Amazingly, the sorcerer was emboldened enough by that point to argue theology with the legendary friar.

To add to this, several other instances of Martin's impertinent conduct had come to Fray Antonio's attention in the months before his trial. Zumárraga's opening statement at trial suggested the influence of Ciudad Rodrigo's and other Franciscans' opinions. When Zumárraga announced the accusation on 21 November 1536, the record stated: "a notice has come to his [the bishop's] attention" that Martin was making predictions and bewitching people, dogmatizing, turning himself into an animal, claiming that he was immortal, and "had made and said many other things that were contrary to our sainted faith and a great danger and impediment to the conversion of the natives."³² The "many other things" were based on a troika of Spanish accusations against Martin. The first was made by a woman named Catalina Lopez, who breathlessly repeated the story of a near encounter she had with Martin. It was well known that a few months before the trial a prominent indigenous leader, Don Pablo Xochiquentzin of Mexico City, had died in his home. Don Pablo was not of the royal family of Tenochtitlán; however, he was the last of a series of three Aztec nobles whom the Spanish appointed to rule in Mexico City after the deaths of Moctezuma and his nephew Cuauhtémoc. Don Pablo had been *zan calpixcapilli*, a nobleman and head of noble clans in Mexico City before the Conquest, and could have been appointed only if the Spanish had great confidence in his collaboration with them.³³

³¹ For Fray Antonio's full account, see "Procesos," p. 25.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³³ Charles Gibson, *Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico, 1519–1810* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1964), pp. 168–169.

Catalina testified that she had visited Don Pablo's house several times during his illness with *beatas*, spiritual women, from the convent of Saint Isabel in Mexico City. In one visit, she recounted indignantly, she was refused entrance, because, as she later learned, Martin Ocelotl was inside ministering to Don Pablo and that he had told Don Pablo's guards to keep the *beata* and Catalina out. Two servants of Don Pablo's house told Catalina that Martin had proclaimed that if Don Pablo survived to the fifth day of his illness "that he will never die." Others said that Martin had also ordered Don Pablo to give him green stones and Martin rubbed the stones on Don Pablo's back and his belly to help cure him. Catalina reported that this was not the only time that Martin had been with Don Pablo in the last months of his life.³⁴ In effect, Catalina's testimony presented the possibility that the most prominent leader in the Mexico Valley had died in the pagan faith and under the influence of the stealthy jaguar.

Cristóbal Cisneros, the *encomendero* of Texcoco, gave alarming testimony about Martin's probable communion with the devil. He told the bishop at trial that he was concerned about reports he had heard from both Indians and Franciscans that Martin was a "perverse evil person against our faith." He reported that he himself had seen Martin going down to Lake Texcoco to pray to pagan gods. In order to catch Martin in the act of sorcery, Cisneros secretly planted a piece of gold on one of his own women servants. He then summoned Martin to his home and asked him to tell him which one of his servants had stolen the gold. When Martin singled out the correct woman, Cisneros was convinced that the sorcerer was actually communing with the devil. He told Martin that he had "made a statement against him to the *señores presidentes* and the *oidores*," referring to the Audiencia, the legislative and judicial chamber that ministered the laws of the colony. Another Spaniard, Pedro de Meneses, a settler in the local village, also reflected the growing belief of local Spaniards in Martin's satanic powers. He told the bishop that the indigenous villagers were in awe of Martin and that once Martin accurately repeated to Meneses what the Spaniard had said to an indigenous leader, even though the two of them were out of Martin's hearing when they had the conversation.³⁵

When Fray Antonio combined his own experience of Martin's brazenness with these Spanish accounts, he concluded that Martin was, by the friar's own words at the trial, "too malicious and astute" to

³⁴ "Procesos," p. 26.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–31.

tolerate anymore.³⁶ When the bishop began the inquisition saying that Martin was “a great danger and impediment to the conversion of the natives,” he was paraphrasing charges Ciudad Rodrigo made in the trial and no doubt made to the bishop in order to persuade him to use the Inquisition against Martin. In his testimony, Ciudad Rodrigo openly prescribed the preferred sentence of the trial, that Martin was “a danger to the natives because he has the *mana* of a dogmatizer and it would be a service to God that the natives not hear or see him.” He assured the bishop that Fray Pedro de Gante, “a person who has a great deal of intelligence of the Indians and knows the said Martin very well,” was in agreement with this opinion.³⁷ Obviously, they were referring to banishment, Martin’s ultimate sentence, and a pretty good indication, if one is necessary, that the sorcerer’s trial was indeed a show trial.

But the Martin influence was not over. In the course of collecting evidence of Martin’s sorcery, the bishop, the father provincial, and the Inquisition officers not only uncovered what seemed to them a network of pagan activities between Martin and the local nobility, they also discovered that he was an extremely wealthy man. Inquisition officers kept uncovering houses, properties, jewels, clothing, deer skins, large cargoes of cotton, blankets, pottery, furniture, gold, silver, wood, and untold other objects as well as slaves. Every time they questioned someone, some new valuable emerged. The last fifteen pages of Martin’s trial manuscript were filled with the tale of the slow but steady confiscation of more and more worldly goods.³⁸ They assumed that his wealth was in payment for his pagan medical practice and his predictions. Moreover, as they untangled his embarrassment of riches (an embarrassment at least to them), they learned that he was heavily involved in commerce with most of the major indigenous leaders of the valley who had been regarded as reliably Christian, not just the late Don Pablo. The reaction of the friars was further inquiries, and they began to take the recidivism risk even more seriously. Following Ocelotl’s trial, the bishops of Mexico, Oaxaca, and Guatemala were begging the king throughout 1537 to allow them “to take extremely rigorous measures against idolatry,” a problem which they now proclaimed, without shame, was “rampant.”³⁹

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 36–51.

³⁹ Ricard, *Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, p. 269, from a letter of the bishops dated 30 November 1537.

THE SELF-STYLED PRIEST

Martin Ocelotl's persecution, however, raises some questions about the indigenous side of this story. Who was Ocelotl? What was he trying to do? Did he actually pose a threat to the Franciscan mission? Previous historians who have analyzed the Ocelotl case have disagreed, suggesting alternately that he was an important Aztec high priest or that he was a wandering shaman, a pagan stalwart, or a synchronizer of religious philosophy, a serious threat or a minor character. These interpretations, however, have varied widely because they are not based on a very close reading of the trial transcript.⁴⁰ Such a reading leads to conclusions that Ocelotl was something of a self-styled and self-proclaimed priest spreading an innovative philosophy that was potentially much more dangerous to the Christian mission than even the friars realized in 1536 when they tried him.

The testimony given at Ocelotl's trial indicates that he did not fit into the mold of the pre-Hispanic priesthood but was more of a local shaman. And it is unclear whether he began his religious practices before or after the Conquest. Virtually no one at this trial could vouch for his origins. Ocelotl had moved into the Texcoco area on the eastern Mexico Valley sometime after the Conquest. Each person who testified about his previous life could only cite Ocelotl as the source for his or her knowledge. Ocelotl's servant claimed that Ocelotl's mother was a witch named Eytacli, insisting that she was "even more powerful than the son." The mother continued to live near Puebla, the servant proclaimed, which was where Ocelotl was from. His father had been a merchant, and Ocelotl was clearly knowledgeable and proficient at trade in the colonial indigenous economy.⁴¹ Testimonies of indigenous leaders said that, in his former home of Chinantla, near Puebla, he was a very important priest in the pre-Hispanic period. In fact, he was one of nine priests that the *tlatoani*, or leader, of Chinantla had sent to Emperor Moctezuma a full ten years before the Conquest, and it was said that he had informed the great Aztec leader that strangers with beards were coming and that they would defeat the Aztecs in battle and

⁴⁰ Besides Klor de Alva, the other authors are Jacques Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe: The Formation of Mexican Consciousness, 1531-1813*, trans. Benjamin Keen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 20-23; and Serge Gruzinski, "Andres Mixcoatl—1537," chap. 1 in *Man-Gods in the Mexican Highlands: Indian Power and Colonial Society, 1520-1800*, trans. Eileen Corrigan (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1989).

⁴¹ "Procesos," p. 47.

destroy Aztec civilization. Moctezuma was supposedly angry enough at this prediction to put all of them in jail. The other priests died, but Ocelotl managed to survive and got out of Tenochtitlán sometime during the siege of the city.⁴²

But the source for all of these stories was again Ocelotl himself. And it begs the question, if Ocelotl had been a prominent religious leader before the Conquest in Chinantla, which was some way from Texcoco, on the other side of the high sierras, why did he not stay there in his community and in the place where he had reputation in order to ply his religious practices and continue his trade? If his family was still there, why did he leave them? It seemed rather strange that, if he was a prominent Aztec priest and from a prominent family near Puebla, he would start all over again in an entirely different community. As for his Moctezuma claims, post-Conquest lore was filled with such apocryphal stories. To the Mexican mind, no event was random, and every catastrophe had an omen. Indeed, in the twelfth book of the *Florentine Codex*, in which Sahagún interviewed a number of old men in the 1560s about the Conquest, the first chapter was titled, "Here are told the signs which appeared and were seen, when the Spaniards had not yet come here to this land, when they were not yet known to the natives here." Indeed, eight omens of the Conquest were listed. The only evidence in the Codex that even remotely supports Ocelotl's story of holy people being summoned to Moctezuma was the seventh, where the emperor had had a strange dream and "summoned the soothsayers and the sages" from around the Mexico Valley to interpret the dream, which they were unable to do.⁴³ Nevertheless, none of the identified omens in the Codex said anything about a prediction of men with beards coming to destroy the Aztecs. Again, witnesses identified Ocelotl as the only source for the truth of this event.

The story about Moctezuma summoning "soothsayers and sages" from beyond his own priesthood, however, does suggest the rather fluid understanding of pagan religious authority that existed in the pre- and post-Hispanic period, which Ocelotl may have been using to his advantage. At the highest end of the priesthood were the temple priests of powerful political gods, such as Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochli. The high priests did not marry and lived in separate all-male compounds; the conquerors' accounts routinely accused them of homosexuality.

⁴² Ocelotl confirmed this part of the story for the bishop in *ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴³ Bernardino de Sahagún, *General History of the Things of New Spain*, 12 vols., trans. and ed. Arthur O. Anderson and Charles Dibble (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952–1980), 12:1–3.

Among their most important duties were human sacrifice and maintenance of the temple complexes. However, it is also apparent that the Aztec priesthood had not, at the point of the Conquest, been able to or had not attempted to take over exclusive disciplinary rights to the worship of the gods. Local communities had self-proclaimed soothsayers or shamans, whom Moctezuma himself often consulted; women were prominent in this group. They could become locally famous for weather and crop predictions or providing medical care. In short, the arts of worship were decentralized in Aztec society.⁴⁴

With the Conquest, the high political superstructure of Aztec society was defeated. Cortés immediately prohibited human sacrifices, one of the high priesthood's most important religious responsibilities. Between 1525 and 1530, the friars were destroying the temples and all evidence of visible pagan worship as they found it. The political and financial power of the Indian chiefs and nobles who supported the all-male priesthoods was eroding. With these rapid and wrenching changes to the superstructure of Aztec society, the whole discipline of the high priesthoods crumbled. Small local cults and individual priests survived, and there was evidence that they continued to ply their trade on an individual basis. With political defeat, the cult of the war gods was set aside, and paganism returned to older, more agriculturally based religious observances, predicated on the monthly and seasonal festivals, which the individual priests could regulate. But, in the proselytizing campaigns of the early 1530s, the bishop and the friars made an all-out assault on these smaller enclaves and truly drove paganism underground.

For their local worship, colonial indigenous people had to depend more on a loose network of rather mobile shamans who had operated in the past and probably continued into the present. But how did a shaman get himself established? There is considerable evidence in the trial transcript of how Ocelotl was doing this. He very likely created his own past of magical and shamanistic powers in a community where he was unknown. More importantly, however, he was trying to build his reputation for prophecy among the indigenous nobility. With some nobles it seemed to work. Don Juan of Acatepeque exclaimed to Pedro de Meneses, an *encomendero*, "You don't know him? He is a man who has lived a long time and knows a great number of the lords of Mexico and in all the land they obey him and give him what he asks for and he in turn gives to other people. . . . He has spoken of things not

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 12:3.

seen or heard. All the land holds him in esteem and there isn't much that we say that he does not know."⁴⁵ The notion that all the land held Ocelotl in esteem, however, was not exactly the case in 1536 when he was arrested, though Ocelotl was clearly trying to earn this exalted reputation.

Indeed, his reception in the indigenous community was still highly ambiguous. He consistently pressed indigenous leaders and their servants to accept his predictions, in effect marketing his powers to the community. For example, he asked one indigenous leader, Don Juan of Tecamachalco, to send to him one hundred packages of natural color powders, a very expensive product in the colonial period. When Don Juan's servant, Miquan, arrived with the goods, Ocelotl told Miquan, "Go to Don Juan and tell him that I keep these colors that he has sent me as a gift and tell him that he can plant a lot of corn and put in a lot of magueys, because hunger will begin soon and he must do it."⁴⁶ The odd thing about this transaction was that, in effect, Ocelotl was dictating the terms of exchange in such a way that the leader was indebted to him. With Don Gonzalo of Cachula, Ocelotl had arranged an exchange of a cedar log for deer skins. When the servants arrived with the log, however, he kept them at his home for three days, feeding and entertaining them. Then he sent them on their journey back, saying "Tell your Señor Gonzalo that he is to plant much corn and magueys because for the next four years there will be a lot of hunger."⁴⁷ Same prediction, but in this case, it seemed that Ocelotl was trying to ingratiate himself with Don Gonzalo but could not go as far as dictating the relationship.

Apparently, there were other lords in the community who were less inclined to accept Ocelotl as a priest or shaman. On one occasion, he detained a servant of an indigenous noble, Don Luis of Tepeaca, who had refused an invitation that Ocelotl had extended to him. Five months later, Ocelotl cornered two of Don Luis's servants and took them to the basement of a home he had between Coatepeque and Istapalucan, towns south of Texcoco. He told the two very nervous fellows, "I have sent to all the *caciques* and all the lords of this region that they should plant many fruit trees and magueys and tunales and cereals and other fruits in their lands because there is going to be no rain and there will be much hunger and with these things they can maintain themselves, because the corn will not grow." He gave them sev-

⁴⁵ "Procesos," pp. 30–31.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

eral gifts that they were to take to Don Luis, which he said came from “our lord Camasteclé.”⁴⁸ Camasteclé was the pre-Hispanic god of rain in the Puebla region of Mexico and generally accepted among the indigenous people as the same entity as the rain god of the Mexico Valley, who was called Mixcoatl. Again, working through the servants, he was trying to oblige the nobles to him with his predictions and his gifts. To servants of another lord of the village of Tecalco who was also keeping his distance from Ocelotl, Ocelotl complained about the reluctance of the lord. “Ask your lord why he has gotten on badly with me that he does not want to obey me nor do one thing that I sent for him to do.”⁴⁹ In the course of the trial, it was revealed by two separate sources that Ocelotl had had problems with some of the Christianized indigenous nobility in Texcoco and that at some point he left Texcoco, “very angry at them,” and changed his residence to Guaxtepec, a short distance away.⁵⁰ The Texcocans claimed to the bishop that they drove him out of Texcoco.⁵¹ Clearly, Ocelotl was still trying to build a reputation in the valley and was perhaps working out a rhetorical strategy to try to appeal to these powerful nobles.

THE PAGAN ALTERNATIVE

Inventing a past and ingratiating himself with the indigenous nobles to win them over, however, were not the only elements of the Ocelotl strategy. He also began to present himself as the mystical pagan alternative to the friars. He ascribed godlike powers to himself, he made predictions that elided Christianity and paganism, and he directly presented himself as a center of alternative thinking to Catholicism. Witness after witness testified that he encouraged them to come seek him out: “When those of the village want something, they should come to his house because many of that region had left there satisfied and everything that they want to know and everything that they are to do will be explained to them.”⁵²

Ocelotl tried to enhance his predictions by spreading the illusion that he was associated with the gods of water. His claim to be Camas-

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19; Camasteclé was a local patron god of the Puebla and Tlaxcala region and his equivalent in the Mexica pantheon was Mixcoatl.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

tecle's messenger was one example. Also, his name, jaguar, appealed to some of the deepest sensibilities of the Mesoamericans in the pantheon of water fertility. The jaguar shared with the snake the most powerful connotations of supernatural power over water. Jaguars lived in lairs in caves in the mountains from which the water came, while snakes lived in the ground from where the natural springs arose. Therefore, they were both central to the connection between survival and the supernatural. Sculptural representations and early paintings of Aztec gods often contained the snake eyes and jaguar claws that connoted the power of these animal symbols. Tlaloc, the rain god and one of the oldest gods of the pantheon, as well as the most central god to the Texcocan urban pantheon, embodied both jaguar and snake features in most early descriptions.⁵³

Ocelotl the jaguar played with the idea of himself as a personification of supernatural powers. On one occasion, he told visitors to his home that they should go home soon because "my sisters are coming," by which he meant the clouds that would bring the rain.⁵⁴ A number of witnesses claimed that he had told them that he was one hundred years old but made himself look young and that he could turn himself into a lion, a tiger, or a dog at will.⁵⁵ He told people outside Texcoco that when the village tried to attack him, he turned himself into little pieces and then reappeared in the whole on the side, laughing at them.⁵⁶ On another occasion, he claimed that in the incident where Moctezuma had imprisoned him that he, Ocelotl, had challenged the great leader and told Moctezuma that "he did not fear him nor would he give anything to him, because, though he would kill [Ocelotl] and tear him into pieces, he would not die nor could he die." Moctezuma then ordered him killed, according to Ocelotl, and his bones ground up, but Ocelotl "rose up as before, healthy and well before the said Moctezuma."⁵⁷

As Jacques Lafaye argued in *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe*, one can hardly help noting the Christian and millenarian trope of resurrection and eternal life in Ocelotl's stories.⁵⁸ And, indeed, Ocelotl had plenty

⁵³ Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, "The Templo Mayor of Tenochtitlán: History and Interpretation," in *The Great Temple of Tenochtitlán*, trans. John Copeland, ed. Johanna Broda, David Carrasco, and Eduardo Matos Moctezuma (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 15–60.

⁵⁴ "Procesos," p. 21.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵⁸ Lafaye, *Quetzalcoatl and Guadalupe*, p. 21.

of access to the Christian teaching from which he seemed to be liberally borrowing. He was not a person marginal to Christian or Hispanic culture. By his own account, Ocelotl had been baptized around the year 1525. The Franciscans had compelled him to marry one of his several wives in 1533. He was “*tan ladino*,” according to one witness, meaning he spoke Spanish very well. Other witnesses claimed that he got along well with the Spanish. Ocelotl showed no fear in meeting prominent Spaniards and was quite hospitable and friendly, offering to do business with them.⁵⁹ In fact, he had all the certitude of a man who believed his knowledge of both worlds would allow him to manipulate the inhabitants of each. He used his knowledge of Christianity to undermine the Franciscans, and his confidence overflowed. Witnesses said that when the Franciscans would enter a village to proselytize, Ocelotl would wave the Indians in the village on, saying, “Go, go, I will come later,” meaning he could undo at his will any proselytizing the Franciscans had done.⁶⁰

At one meeting, he told servants of a local lord to tell him that “recently two apostles, sent by God, had arrived, with great fangs and other frightful things, and [they said that] the missionaries would become *chichimicli*,” which was translated in the transcript as “a very ugly demon.”⁶¹ Actually, the trial scribe incorrectly wrote the name for *tzitzimime*, which the *Florentine Codex* translates as “demons of darkness [who] will come down; they will eat men.”⁶² Thus, Ocelotl was attempting to spread a kind of terror among the commoners toward the friars. On the other hand, he was a kind of opposing force of succor and support for the indigenous people. The apostles, who came to warn of the hidden evil in the friars, possessed fangs, personifying them as allies with the jaguar and, therefore, allies with Ocelotl. In effect, Ocelotl put God and the apostles on his side and against the Franciscans. An even more subversive set of ideas that Ocelotl preached was his philosophy of living. In a fiesta he held in a subterranean room of his home in Guaxtepec, he invited a number of servants of a prominent noble-

⁵⁹ “Procesos,” pp. 21, 25, 31.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁶² Sahagún, *General History*, 8:2; Gruzinski, “Mixcoatl,” pp. 41–42, correctly speculated that the *tzitzimime* were associated with dreaded goddess figures in pre-Columbian ideology and even “latent fear of the mother”; see also Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 45, for a similar interpretation. For a more detailed analysis of the feminine characteristics of the *tzitzimime*, as well as a clear connection to the god Mixcoatl in Tlaxcala and Puebla, see Cecelia F. Klein, “The Devil and the Skirt: An Iconographic Inquiry into the Prehispanic Nature of the *Tzitzimime*,” *Ancient Mesoamerica* 11 (2000): 1–26.

man. He told the servants to go back to their lord and tell him, "Do you think that you will always be in this law of the Christians? Don't you know that we are born to die and that after we die, we will not have pleasure or rejoicing? Well, why not enjoy ourselves while we live and take pleasure in eating and drinking and enjoying ourselves and sleeping with the wives of our neighbors and take their goods and what they have and give ourselves a good life? We really do not live for anything else."⁶³

This bit of Epicurean advice has been the subject of a minor debate among historians. Serge Gruzinski maintains that the philosophical underpinnings of this statement are in pre-Hispanic elite morality. He claims that we have a "prudish" and false picture of pre-Hispanic religion and moral philosophy because it is wholly based on accounts that Sahagún collected in the *Florentine Codex*. Looking back, nostalgically, the elders who provided Sahagún with his information wove an overly rigorous and aesthetic vision of elite conduct and practice.⁶⁴ Louise M. Burkhart, however, argues that what Ocelotl was advocating was inconsistent with native ideology, as we know from many sources, and that he was actually making an "argument against Christianity, not simply an assertion of Nahua ideology."⁶⁵ Apostles from God predicting a dismal fate for missionaries and Epicurean philosophies did not have a foundation in indigenous moral principles. As Burkhart explains, laying with your neighbors' wives was entirely contradictory of Texcocan law and most Mesoamerican codes, which would have punished adultery with death for both man and woman. The unorthodox philosophy, however, had a rebellious appeal that many nobles were ready to hear after years of Franciscan interference into their daily lives in the 1530s moral campaigns. It was a masculine assertion of their prerogatives and values, particularly on the issue of polygamy, and in opposition to the austere moral restrictions of the Franciscans.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid., p. 21.

⁶⁴ Gruzinski, "Mixcoatl," p. 42.

⁶⁵ Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahua-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989), p. 140.

⁶⁶ The pattern of anti-Franciscan and anti-monogamy attitudes occurs over and over in the early colonial period. In the Mixton War of 1541–1543 in the western state of Jalisco, pagan priests told Indians that those who fought the Spanish "will become young again and have several wives, not merely one, as the monks order. . . . Whoever takes only one wife will be killed," see Ricard, *Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, p. 265 for the reference. In New Mexico, according to Ramon Gutiérrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500–1800* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 76–77, "the friars control of marriage and their imposition of

On the whole we must conclude that Ocelotl was styling himself as a political prophet with ideas that had resonance in the discontented indigenous noble community. The friars probably did not understand the full implications of what was said and revealed at the trial as a potentially dangerous pagan alternative. However, it is likely that they suspected something was amiss when, in the aftermath of the trial, they unraveled Ocelotl's network of contacts and wealth. Suspicions were very likely reinforced when two subsequent trials made the millennial potential of his case more clear. The following year, another self-made prophet named Andrés Mixcoatl (note his open adoption of the rain god persona that Ocelotl had used) came forward and identified himself as the brother of Ocelotl, suggesting that Ocelotl did not die and would return.⁶⁷ He made quite an impression in the sierras above Texcoco before the Franciscans brought him to the Inquisition in 1538. In 1539, the famed Texcocan chief Don Carlos was charged with idolatry and burned at the stake. In his trial it was revealed that he began to turn away from the Franciscans and Christianity right after Ocelotl's trial, and he repeated many of the ideas of Ocelotl, as he encouraged his fellow nobles in the spring of 1539 to ignore the Franciscans and their religious rules.⁶⁸

EPILOGUE

In her book *Ambivalent Conquests*, Inge Clendinnen interpreted a later, more notorious inquisition of native leaders led by the Franciscan and bishop of Yucatan, Fray Diego de Landa, in the 1560s. In a brief, intense, and particularly violent inquisition, Landa and his Franciscans persecuted and executed scores of Indians and flogged and severely punished dozens more in an escalating holocaust of the Christianized Mayan villages of the Yucatan. She suggests that the violence of the friars was closely related to the fact that the idolatry they discovered was precisely in the villages that were the centers of their previous proselytizing successes. Moreover, "in the very violence of the

monogamy were the tyrannies that most angered Pueblo men and became the most pervasive reasons for revolt."

⁶⁷ "Procesos," pp. 53–78; see also Gruzinski, "Mixcoatl."

⁶⁸ See Gruzinski, "Mixcoatl;" also see Patricia Lopes Don, "Death of an Aztec: The Inquisition of the Native Leader Don Carlos of Texcoco in Early Mexico, 1539," unpublished paper presented to the International Seminar on the History of the Atlantic World, 1500–1800, August 2004, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

response of the Yucatan friars to the first discovery of the ‘treachery’ of their Indians, we can see something of the emotion-charged punitive rage of the betrayed parent.”⁶⁹ Zumárraga’s inquisition had less of the emotion-charged atmosphere of the later holocaust, and Zumárraga and Ciudad Rodrigo, even in their pursuit of idolatry, showed much more restraint than Landa.

Nevertheless, there were clear signs of a building anger among the Franciscans, and even rage, in the course of Zumárraga’s Indian Inquisition, especially toward the indigenous leaders. One can hear the tone of “parental” frustration and “betrayal” in the letter of another prominent friar, Fray Andrés de Olmos, to Zumárraga in January 1540. The much beloved Fray Andrés was in the midst of trying the chief of Matatlan for idolatry and bigamy when he learned about the burning of Don Carlos of Texcoco a month earlier and sent his good friend Zumárraga words of encouragement.

I would hope that they [the Indians] are Christians, but the way it is right now, baptism is at risk. It isn’t surprising, because over there [in the Mexico Valley] where the preaching has been abundant for so many years, you find, well, what you find [referring to the numerous cases of recidivism]. It is not merciful to ignore the public wrongs that they do, because they are devaluing the teaching and the baptism that they have received, which pains me to the soul. It seems to me that they shower us with compliments and yet I have not known three nobles who have voluntarily come to the religion and remained faithful to it. [By accepting baptism but not remaining faithful] it is always May for them and there is no winter. The trees, however, will not turn by themselves and if they do not experience the seasons [meaning winter] no fruit will be born. It is always May, yet there has to be a winter and punishments for the things they have committed against their baptisms, even if they have to be put into the fire, as your Excellency is beginning to do.⁷⁰

The last phrase is highly significant because it suggests that an opinion was forming in the circle of friars around the bishop that more indigenous leaders would have to follow Don Carlos onto the pyre in order for the Franciscans to turn the tide against paganism. Surely, this was why Don Carlos, whose crimes were really less than those of Ocelotl and Mixcoatl, was burned at the stake instead of banished or impris-

⁶⁹ Inge Clendinnen, *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517–1570* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 113.

⁷⁰ “Procesos,” p. 207.

oned. A holocaust was most probably at hand in the spring of 1540. However, when the Council of the Indies in Spain learned of Don Carlos's execution, they reprimanded Zumárraga, sent a *visitador*, an inspector-auditor, to New Spain to take away the bishop's inquisitorial powers, and left him in a state of some humiliation until his death in 1548. All indications were that they feared further such executions would lead to widespread indigenous rebellion in New Spain. As was the case with the Muslims in the Old World, although orthodox Christianity was central to the concept of Spain and the monarchy, when the imperial Spanish needed to choose between religious orthodoxy and the security of the state, they could learn very quickly to be flexible and *politique*, yet express their concerns in judicious language. In a letter of 22 November 1540, Francisco de Nava, bishop of Seville, explained to Zumárraga that while he understood that he had executed Don Carlos "in the belief that burning would put fear into others and make an example of him," the Indians, he suggested, "might be more persuaded with love than with rigor."⁷¹

⁷¹ Fray Juan de Zumárraga, *Nuevos documentos inéditos de d. fr. Juan de Zumárraga y cédulas y cartas reales en relación con su gobierno*, ed. Alberto María Carreño (Mexico: Ediciones Victoria, 1942), p. 81.

Hans Staden's Captive Soul: Identity, Imperialism, and Rumors of Cannibalism in Sixteenth-Century Brazil

H. E. MARTEL
Northern Arizona University

As early modern empires competed for economic, spiritual, and imperial control of the Atlantic world, Europeans brought violence upon the natives and feared retaliation for their trespasses. Of the violence they imagined facing, cannibals embodied the ritualized vengeance and physical incorporation that threatened and beckoned them far away from home when they sometimes found themselves dependent, rather than conquering, guests of Native Americans. As a result, the reality or rumor of cultural cannibalism enlivened the travel narratives of sixteenth-century explorers such as Hans Staden, who was stranded in Brazil for over ten months. Real or not, the cannibal took a charismatic and leading role in the theater of imperial violence and was used by all sides in the conflict. In addition to representing the politics of early modern imperialism, the coercion to which cannibals subjected their victims as they violently and forcefully condemned them to incorporation into a new culture and body politic was a powerful metaphor for the extreme lack of free will in the experience of identity and cultural affinity for sixteenth-century Christians torn apart by Reformation controversies. As the vessel of the soul, each individual body became a center on which to lay siege, in cannibal feast or Christian battle.

Controversy over the historical practice of cannibalism by Native Americans has occasionally flared up in academia since William Arens's 1979 *Man-Eating Myth* questioned the evidence on cultural anthropophagy and turned the ethnographic gaze upon the Western

obsession with cannibals. Among the questionable evidence, Arens challenged the veracity of Hans Staden's 1557 narrative of captivity with the cannibalistic Tupinamba of Brazil. Pointing to linguistic barriers and a notable lapse in time between Staden's adventures and the recording of his tale, Arens argued that this account offers historians access to the West, rather than to the Tupinamba.¹ Other scholars, frustrated in their desire to recover lost cultures in these European texts—among them real cannibals—have been zealous in defending the cannibal against this “crazed revisionism.” In his 1997 *Cannibals*, Frank Lestringant called Arens a “sensation-hungry journalist” and indicted such scholarship for its “misrepresentations of the Other.”² The most commonly cited repudiation of Arens's argument, Donald W. Forsyth's 1985 “Three Cheers for Hans Staden: The Case for Brazilian Cannibalism” used Staden's narrative to respond point by point to Arens's sometimes sloppy critique.³ However, other than these European travel narratives, which are fraught with imperial motivations and the undeniable Western obsession with cannibals, no evidence hard enough to convince either side of this debate is likely to appear. The reality of the practice of cannibalism on the part of the Tupinamba remains open.

Scholars have been able to provide useful and convincing analyses of the myth of cannibalism and its uses for early modern imperialism. In fact, Lestringant's *Cannibals* was more successful in reflecting upon the history of the cannibal in French culture than he was at enacting a “retrieval” of real cannibals.⁴ As Lestringant argues, cannibalism usually “represents something other than itself,” as in Michel de Montaigne's 1580 essay “On Cannibals,” in which he compared cultural cannibalism to the treatment of French subjects in the current regime and found cannibalism preferable.⁵ While he does not address Hans Staden's narrative, Lestringant does analyze descriptions of Tupinamba cannibalism by its two other main authors—Catholic André Thevet and Calvinist Jean de Léry. In these chapters, Lestringant draws con-

¹ William Arens, *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

² Frank Lestringant, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*, trans. Rosemary Morris (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), pp. 6–7.

³ Donald W. Forsyth, “Three Cheers for Hans Staden: The Case for Brazilian Cannibalism,” *Ethnohistory* 32, no. 1 (1985): 17–36; other repudiations have been equally vitriolic. Forsyth, “The Beginnings of Brazilian Anthropology: Jesuits and Tupinamba Cannibalism,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 39, no. 2 (1983): 147–178; Thomas S. Abler, “Iroquois Cannibalism: Fact or Fiction,” *Ethnohistory* 27, no. 4 (1980): 309–316.

⁴ Lestringant, *Cannibals*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 100.

nections between the authors' interest in Tupinamba cannibalism and the ideological animosity over religious identity and Christian values that characterized the worst conflicts of the Reformation.

Patricia Seed agrees with Lestringant's portrayal of French attitudes when she compares European ideas of "Cannibals: Iberia's Partial Truth" in her 2001 *American Pentimento*. As Seed adds, true or not, condemnations of American cannibals "were colonial accusations" that served to support the practices of imperialism.⁶ Seed touches on Spanish and Portuguese justifications for enslaving native peoples in petitions that "yoked together two entirely separate reasons for enslavement: cannibalism and military resistance to Iberian domination."⁷ Threatening and anti-Christian in their rumored practice, natives branded as cannibals were subject to the violence and fervor of religious conversion, enslavement, and death—through disease or through colonial violence.

In fact the association between cannibalism, warfare, and anticolonial resistance was intrinsic to the European interpretation that Tupinamba cannibalism was an act of vengeance upon captured members of enemy tribes. European observers admired the fierce pageantry of the ritual in which the Tupinamba bludgeoned and butchered the captive only after he or she had made a speech promising retribution. This documented display of cannibal audacity has made its mark on scholarship attempting to capture the motivations behind these rumored acts of Tupinamba cannibalism. Although his focus became the French, Lestringant's interesting goal was to recover the cannibals' "loquacity—or rather their proud and cruel eloquence."⁸ The victim's formalized speech of vengeance speaks to Westerners regretful of conquest.

Postcolonial criticism has resoundingly objected to the Western practice of giving voice to the "Other."⁹ However, interpretations like that of Lestringant do lend an appeal to the cannibals by portraying them as insurgents insisting on cultural autonomy who asserted resis-

⁶ Patricia Seed, *American Pentimento: The Invention of Indians and the Pursuit of Riches* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 112.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁸ Lestringant, *Cannibals*, p. 7.

⁹ His problematic claim to give "voice" to the cannibals answers in the affirmative Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's questioning of that practice in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp. 271–313. For another interesting critique, see Donna Haraway, "Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics for Inappropriate/d Others" in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 295–337.

tance to European imperialism by killing and eating those who would enslave them and destroy their culture. Anthropologist Neil Whitehead believes that such recent scholarship “recovers the cannibal as an anticolonialist sign, much in the manner of the Brazilian *antropofagia* movement, as a mark of liberty in the face of colonial oppression.”¹⁰ Whitehead argues that Hans Staden’s account “reveals the political and social calculation surrounding the ritual performance” of cannibalism by the Tupinamba at what may have been “a particularly intense and desperate moment” as community leaders saw their culture “disintegrating under external colonialism and epidemic disease.”¹¹ To leave aside Western prejudices about anthropophagy and uncover Brazilian resistance to imperialism is admirable. However, cultural relativists such as Lestringant, Whitehead, and other scholars who have professed a belief that the Tupinamba were “real” cannibals overlook the possibility that the brilliance of Tupinamba resistance may not have been in eating the enemy. Rather, it was their use of rumors that fed the European obsession with dreaded cannibals that earned them respect in the colonial contest.¹² The fear of cannibals and the practice of anthropophagy went to the heart of Christian identity in a time of religious turmoil taking place in Europe, which at times was played out on the Brazilian coast among the Tupinamba.

The strategic deployment of the rumor of Tupinamba cannibalism, whether grounded in truth or not, lends important insight into the cultural politics of European–Native American contact. If it is not possible to prove or disprove the existence of cannibals, the use of the rumors that they did exist, by Europeans and Tupinambas alike, reveal strategies for survival in a violent and transformative period of world history. To understand the use of these rumors, it is necessary to uncover the authors of Brazilian cannibalism and their motives. Historians know of the Tupinamba through the travel narratives of three main authors: from France, André Thevet and Jean de Léry; and from

¹⁰ Neil L. Whitehead, “Hans Staden and the Cultural Politics of Cannibalism,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 80, no. 4 (2000): 733. Whitehead is also critical of Lestringant’s characterization of Arens.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 750.

¹² Rolena Adorno, “The Negotiation of Fear in Cabeza de Vaca’s *Naufragios*,” *Representations* 33 (1991): 163, noted that “fear of the other was a weapon employed by both sides, the native American and the European. Both groups created, managed, and manipulated it, depending on who had the upper hand.” The Western obsession with flesh-eating “Others” dates back to Herodotus in the fifth century B.C.E., see Colin Ramsey, “Cannibalism and Infant Killing: A System of ‘Demonizing’ Motifs in Indian Captivity Narratives,” *CLIO* 24, no. 1 (1994): 55–68.

the German province of Hesse, Hans Staden. While Staden's account appears to be that of a simple soldier stranded in Brazil, the narratives of Thevet and Léry are charged with controversies over transubstantiation and the Eucharist, a mutinous conspiracy theory and accusations of cannibalism in a badly run colonial effort. For all three authors, Tupinamba cannibals provided a useful Other against which to define their own values and imperial alliances.

It was against the backdrop of competing empires and Christianities that Staden, Thevet, and Léry encountered the Tupinamba. Although Brazil was claimed by Portugal in 1500, the French had continued to develop trade relations with natives on the east coast, such as the Tupinamba. As a result, alliances with rival native groups were fostered by the Portuguese and French as they competed for trade in brazilwood, which produced a desirable red dye, along with other resources, including slaves. The contest of empires and Christianities played out in the accounts of all three experts on the Tupinamba. Hans Staden appears to have acted as a free agent on both sides of these conflicts. He traveled to Brazil in 1547 on a Portuguese ship ordered to "seize as prizes any French ships which he might find in Brazil trading with the savages."¹³ His second voyage in 1549 with the Spanish was shipwrecked near a Portuguese colony while en route to Rio de La Plata in present-day Uruguay. After living among the Tupinamba, allies of France, Staden then returned home in 1555 on a French ship.

That same year, Frenchman Nicholas Durand de Villegagnon founded the Fort Coligny colony on the east coast of Brazil. Driven by a combination of paranoia and miscommunication, Villegagnon soon embroiled the colony in the violence of religious turmoil taking place in Europe when he began murdering Protestants who later claimed to have come at the request of Villegagnon himself. Within five years, the Fort Coligny colony folded under the pressure of Portuguese military attacks. However, Franciscan friar André Thevet blamed the Calvinists for its failure in his 1575 *Cosmographie Universelle*. Thevet had come to the colony with Villegagnon early on in the role of chaplain. Though he spent only ten weeks in Brazil, he published two accounts describing Tupinamba culture. Thevet was not an eyewitness to the culture he described; scholars believe he consolidated the reports of Frenchmen who lived among the Tupinamba. While he was an entertaining and imaginative storyteller, he was also known to be "careless

¹³ Hans Staden, *The True History of his Captivity, 1557*, trans. and ed. Malcolm Letts (New York: Robert M. McBride & Company, 1929), p. 34.

and credulous” as an ethnographer. His most valuable contribution to the history of the Tupinamba was probably to inspire Calvinist Jean de Léry to publish a response to his accusation that Léry and the other Calvinists were plotting with cannibalistic Tupinamba and French-born Brazilians to overthrow the colony.¹⁴

Calvinist Jean de Léry had arrived at Fort Coligny in 1557. After eight months, several of his fellow Protestant missionaries were murdered by Villegagnon. The remainder were violently exiled from the island colony and forced to live on the mainland, where they depended on the natives for survival for the two months until a ship came that would return them to France. During this brief period, Léry was able to observe many aspects of everyday life among the Tupinamba. However, like Thevet, Léry relied on Frenchmen who lived with the Tupinamba in order to comprehend their language and the more complex and sacred aspects of their culture. Though motivated by a desire to contradict Thevet, Léry reiterated much of Thevet’s description of Brazilian practices. According to Janet Whatley, “in the reportage of the two men there is more overlap than Léry would like to admit, even in anecdote and wording.”¹⁵ This agreement suggests the possibility that neither Léry nor Thevet’s knowledge of Tupinamba cannibalism was based on eyewitness experience.

When he returned to France, Léry became a Calvinist minister as well as a witch-hunter in the violent Wars of Religion that swept through his homeland. Among those who suffered under his examinations, a family he claimed resorted to eating their dead baby during the siege of Sancerre was put to the torch at his orders.¹⁶ Léry did not publish an account of his time in Brazil until he became enraged by Thevet’s accusations. In response, his 1578 *Histoire d’un Voyage* accused Villegagnon of cannibalism in a classic Protestant argument against transubstantiation in the Catholic Eucharist, claiming “they wanted not only to eat the flesh of Jesus Christ grossly rather than spiritually, but what was worse, like the savages named *Ouetaca*, of whom I have

¹⁴ Janet Whatley, “Introduction,” in *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America: Containing the Navigation and the Remarkable Things Seen on the Sea by the Author; the Behavior of Villegagnon in That Country; the Customs and Strange Ways of Life of the American Savages; Together with the Description of Various Animals, Trees, Plants, and Other Singular Things Completely Unknown over Here*, by Jean de Léry, trans. Janet Whatley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. xix, xxi.

¹⁵ Regarding Léry’s witch hunting, see Lestringant, *Cannibals*, p. 70; on his use of interpreters, see Whatley, “Introduction,” p. xxi; Léry, *History of a Voyage*, pp. 29, 140, 161–164, 170.

¹⁶ Léry, *History of a Voyage*, p. 41; Lestringant, *Cannibals*, pp. 71–72, goes into depth about the connections between the Eucharist and cannibalism.

already spoken, they wanted to chew it and swallow it raw." Just as Thevet had accused the Calvinists of collaborating with cannibals to raid and rob the French colony, Léry identified the French Catholic opposition with the most degrading form of anthropophagy in the consumption of the raw flesh of their saviour. The slanderous accusations between Léry, Thevet, and Villegagnon reflect European religious controversies and warn of the possibility of death as a consequence for the wrong cultural and religious affinity.

This leaves Hans Staden, who wrote his *Veritable Historie and Description of a Country Belonging to the Wild, Naked, Savage, Man-Eating People, Situated in the New World America* with the authority of an eyewitness held captive among the Tupinamba. Trained as a gunner, Staden left his native Hesse in 1547, during the years when Landgrave Philip of Hesse, Staden's prince and the leader of the military arm of the Lutheran movement in Germany, was defeated and imprisoned by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. Though nothing is known about Staden's military career, he may have been a gunner in Philip's Lutheran army. It is also possible that he was part of Charles V's reorganization of that army when it was defeated in 1547. Staden traveled by way of Charles V's homeland, Holland, to Portugal and then to Brazil with a Portuguese ship carrying convicts to labor in the colony. When his second voyage with the Spanish ended in shipwreck, he was rescued by the Portuguese and put to use defending their colony as a gunner. From there he was taken in by the Tupinamba where he stayed for ten months until they allowed him to leave with the French.

Upon his return home to Hesse in 1555, Staden was questioned by agents of the recently liberated Landgrave Philip, who was again involved in the Protestant contest for control of France and Germany. Writing to Landgrave Philip in the original introduction for Staden's text, Dr. Johann Dryander attested to this careful interview, reporting that Staden "has long before been by His Highness our gracious Lord, and in my presence and in that of many others, examined and thoroughly questioned upon all points of the shipwreck and imprisonment . . . of which I have often spoken and narrated to Your Highness and to other Lords."¹⁷ Staden's narrative was the product of that interrogation. Given this close examination, Staden's account must be read as

¹⁷ Hans Staden, "Veritable Historie and Description of a Country Belonging to the Wild, Naked, Savage, Man-Eating People, Situated in the New World, America," in *The Captivity of Hans Stade of Hesse, in A.D. 1547-1555, Among the Wild Tribes of Eastern Brazil*, trans. Albert Tootal and annotated by Richard Burton (New York: Burt Franklin, 1874), p. 13.

a strategic offering to an interested and politically powerful audience. As a simple soldier, Staden did not stray from his narrative to take sides in the ideological battles of the Reformation. However, during his travels, Staden had survived by acting as an agent employed to the uses of his master of the moment. As a result, his seemingly simple text is intricate—concealing and disavowing allegiances with both Catholics and Brazilians for the benefit of his Protestant audience.

By his own admission, Hans Staden was a practiced chameleon; his narrative moves through scene after scene in which he demonstrated his willingness to lie and perform an identity not his own. As Malcolm Letts notes, “he obviously expected to be classed among the lying travelers” for he insisted repeatedly that his account was true.¹⁸ Believers in Tupinamba cannibalism have defended the truth of his account, citing his careful attention to each encounter he had with a European who, as Dryander wrote, might “return home, and if Hans Staden’s story be false or lying . . . put him to shame and denounce him a worthless man.”¹⁹ In fact, Staden was careful to detail each European encounter, not only to support his claims, but to explain away evidence that he had set aside his Christian roots and been assimilated by the Tupinamba. Just as the religious wars divided the French colony in Brazil and devolved into the murder of Calvinists by Catholics, Staden’s experience in Brazil had not liberated him from the Christian contest for souls. Hans Staden’s soul was captive to the violence of culture wars and cannibals not in Brazil, but at home in Europe.

While he seems to have willingly shifted affinities and played with cultural identity in order to survive, Staden never exhibited a sense of agency. Instead, he was “tied,” “captive,” “obliged,” or a “slave” to a new “master.” Staden’s sense of captivity and obligation rather than free will is evidenced in the early parts of his account by his identification with slaves under Portuguese control. For his Lutheran audience, Staden was openly critical of the Portuguese use of slaves. He described natives who had “become rebellious against the Portuguese,” explaining, “they had not been so before, but they now became so on account of the Portuguese having enslaved them.” Staden identified with these people, observing that they simply “desired peace.”²⁰ After he returned to Portugal, Staden signed on for a second trip to South America, this

¹⁸ Malcolm Letts, introduction to Staden, *True History*, p. 12.

¹⁹ Most defenders cite the scholarship of Donald Forsyth. Dr. Dryander is quoted in Staden, *Captivity of Hans Stade*, p. 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

time with a Spanish fleet. In this part of his narrative, he again commented on Portuguese slavery at the island of Sainte Thome. Stating that "it is an island rich in sugar, but unhealthy," Staden elaborated, saying, "in it live Portuguese with many black Moors, who are their slaves." These observations suggest that Staden was especially sensitive to the Portuguese use of slave labor, possibly because he could identify with those coerced into serving them.

Staden's criticism of Portuguese slavery makes more sense when juxtaposed with his own service for the Portuguese after he was shipwrecked and stranded in Brazil at their colony of Brikioka. Upon learning he was trained as a gunner, the Portuguese assigned him to stay there for four months to defend a fort on a nearby island where "no Portuguese gunner would stay," until ships arrived with reinforcements. The duty he described was miserable and dangerous; he remembered that "during most of the time, I was in the blockhouse with three others and some guns, but we were in great danger from the savages, for the fort was not strong, and we had to keep perpetual watch lest the savages should slip past in the darkness." When the ships from Portugal arrived, Staden recalled simply, "I desired my release." However, the Portuguese pressured him to stay on until Staden yielded, as he recalled, "on the condition that when this time was at an end they would then without hindrance set me on the first ship for Portugal." Whether he emphasized this obligation for the benefit of his Protestant audience or he truly found himself bonded to the Portuguese against his will is concealed within the convolutions of Staden's narrative. Paired with his emphasis on Portuguese slavery, the "hindrance" Staden referred to suggests that he may have been kept against his will, for he had expressed a strong desire for his "release."²¹ If Staden was forcefully held by the Portuguese, the scene of his capture, while foolishly hunting alone in the woods, is better interpreted as an escape to the Tupinamba. This also explains why each of the five times the Portuguese and their Tupi-ikin allies come looking for him, Staden found an excuse to either hide, decline rescue, or shoot back.

Often seen resisting rescue, even shooting at the Portuguese, Staden had to have a story to explain this resistance and deny physical evidence that suggested his soul was willingly captive to the Tupinamba.²² Much of Staden's narrative of captivity among cannibals was structured around explaining his apparent preference for the Tupinamba over the

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55, 75, 77, 89–90, 113.

Portuguese. Despite appearances, he professed loyalty to the Portuguese and denied having gone Tupinamba; he portrayed his actions as a mere performance of identity in order to survive. In one such scene, Staden told of an attack on the Tupinamba by Portuguese allies. Here he claimed to have pretended to sympathize with his captors in order to get them to relax their guard: "Then I said to them, 'You take me for a Portuguese, your enemy, now give me a bow and arrows and let me go loose, and I will help you to defend the huts.' They handed me a bow and arrows; I shouted and shot and acted as like them as I possibly could, and encouraged them to be of good heart and valorous, and that no harm would come to them. And my intention was to push through the stockade which surrounds the huts, and to run towards the others, for they knew me well, and also were aware that I was in the village."²³ From the viewpoint of the Portuguese, when Staden took up arms and joined the Tupinamba in battle, he performed as a member of the Tupinamba. He knew they would have witnessed him in his Brazilian alliance and feared they would report that he had dangerously denied Christian aid. In anticipation of such reports, Staden's narrative may have been an elaborate revision of actual events that concealed his assimilation into that Tupinamba community.

According to Staden, this performance of identity was necessary because Staden's association with the Portuguese made him the mortal enemy of the Tupinamba. They told him that the Portuguese had tricked a number of them onto their ship and "then attacked them and bound them." Though those captured were probably enslaved, the Tupinamba were convinced that the Portuguese had then "delivered them up to their enemies who had killed and eaten them."²⁴ Anthropophagy became a metaphor for Portuguese slavery. Believing he was Portuguese, the Tupinamba also asked Staden to explain his time spent as a gunner for the Portuguese, in which he had been called upon to shoot at them. Staden's strategy was to deny his alliance with the Portuguese, recalling that he "said that the Portuguese had stationed me there and that I was obliged to do so."²⁵ Staden was most frank about his strategy of shifting national and religious identity in order to survive when he recalled attempting to convince the Tupinamba that he was with the French rather than the Portuguese. To explain his ignorance of French, Staden told the Tupinamba, "Yes it is true, I have been so long out of my country that I have forgotten my

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

language.”²⁶ However, the Tupinamba were wise to this strategy and spoke of other enemies who had posed as French in order to survive. In fact, the evidence suggests that Staden was telling the truth not to his Protestant audience in Germany, but to the Tupinamba with whom he stood and fought, shouting, encouraging, and acting “as like them” as he could. Staden had escaped captivity among the Portuguese and was relying on Tupinamba animosity toward them to defend him from reassignment to a dangerous indentured service defending their fort.

There is good evidence that Staden was initiated or at least living freely among the Tupinamba. As Malcolm Letts explained in the introduction to the 1929 translation of Staden's narrative, “Staden was to some extent now an honoured guest among the Tupinamba.”²⁷ There came a time when he “went about unfettered.”²⁸ He secured gifts for the community from a Portuguese rescue attempt (again refused), and the Tupinamba decided to “henceforward treat him better.” Though he cast his time among the Tupinamba in the same terms he had used to explain his service for the Portuguese, Staden found a useful role when, as he wrote, “they led me now and again into the forest, and when they had work to do, I was *obliged* to help them.”²⁹ Later, the Tupinamba strategically took him on a reconnaissance mission to Brikioka, the colony where he had served the Portuguese as a gunner.³⁰ Toward the end of his ten-month stay, Staden was given to a new master, a king who Staden claimed even “called me (his) son.”³¹

Staden's strategy of making himself useful to the Tupinamba in order to escape the Portuguese and survive being stranded in Brazil may seem unproblematic. However, as Ramie Targoff has argued, his Protestant contemporaries held “a profound conviction in the transformative power of public performance.” According to Targoff's research, early modern critics of the theatre were concerned that even a “purely hypocritical performance” would be “unwittingly internalized” and evolve into a sincere expression of cultural affinity that mirrored the Protestant expression of faith.³² In other words, Staden's Protestant audience might believe that his performance for the Tupinamba could have truly transformed him into an anti-Christian cannibal.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Staden, *True History*, p. 8.

²⁸ Staden, *Captivity of Hans Stade*, p. 81.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 91.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 96–100.

³¹ Ibid., p. 108.

³² Ramie Targoff, “The Performance of Prayer: Sincerity and Theatricality in Early Modern England,” *Representations* 60 (Fall 1997): 50, 52–53.

Against this suspicion, Staden demonstrated his further willingness to be flexible with his religious and cultural identity. The part played by Staden for his examiners in Germany was that of the persecuted Calvinist surviving torment in the wilderness among cannibals.³³ Though he was freed and working in the community, Staden denied the hospitality of the Tupinamba and dramatized his mistreatment in their hands. He described a frightening capture, torture, and interrogation at the hands of the Tupinamba in an initial period that he associated with the preparation of captives for the cannibal feast: "When they first bring their enemies home, the women and children beat them. Thereupon, they paint the captive with grey feathers, shaving his eyebrows from above his eyes; they dance with him, tie him securely that he may not escape them, and give him a woman, who takes care of him, and who also has intercourse with him."³⁴ Whether his experience broke from the agreed upon description of Tupinamba cannibal rites or Staden also had the opportunity to cohabit with a Tupinamba woman remains unclear. His experience seems comparable to those described by white captives in North America who were initially beaten, then treated with such "tenderness" that many refused to receive rescue.³⁵ According to Richard Slotkin's analysis of North American captivity narratives, "in the Indian's devilish clutches, the captive had to meet and reject the temptation of Indian marriage and/or the Indian's 'cannibal' Eucharist."³⁶ While Staden did fixate on the important ceremonial role played by women in rites he believed were cannibalistic, if he did take a wife, he denied facing that temptation before his Protestant audience.

Instead, Staden made sure that his audience knew he had refused to eat the food offered to him by the cannibals, claiming that "one of my teeth began to ache so violently that because of the pain I could

³³ There are mentions of praying with the Spanish in Staden, *Captivity of Hans Stade*, pp. 29, 31.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³⁵ James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

³⁶ Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1500–1860* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). As the literary analysis of North American captivity narratives has shown, captivity among "savages" was a formula used for reifying Christian affinity, a test passed in a tempting wilderness; see Annette Kolodny, *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of American Frontiers, 1630–1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); also, June Namais, *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); and Richard Van der Beets, *Held Captive by Indians: Selected Narratives, 1642–1836* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973).

not eat and I began to lose flesh." When his "master" tried to pull the tooth out "by force," Staden "resisted so vigorously that he desisted." In doing so, he took the position of martyr, suffering physical pain willingly in order to diminish his flesh and prevent incorporation. When he remembered that scene, Staden recalled fantasizing that the infected tooth might kill him, thinking, "God knows how much I wanted to die in peace if it was His will, before the savages could have their way with me."³⁷ His refusal of food signalled the purity of his Christian affinity. This was not an uncommon strategy used by European visitors who faced starvation for fear of physical transformation into savagery by the food and climate of the Americas.³⁸ By starving himself, Staden also assured his audience that he had not eaten human flesh and referenced the religious controversy over the Eucharist and its association with cannibalism.

Like his show of resistance to Tupinamba food and hospitality, Staden's refusal to participate in cultural ceremonies demonstrated his resistance to incorporation by the Tupinamba. Claiming he was "obliged" to dance "in harmony" at a ceremony celebrating his arrival, Staden refused to fall in step with the Tupinamba. Here again he called upon the suffering of his body, complaining that "the leg in which I was wounded pained me so badly that I could hardly stand." Rather than abandoning his cultural ties, Staden used his suffering body to speak of his Christian resistance. In his performance as Christian captive, Staden assured his readers that pain enabled him to remain true to Christian values. He described his ten-month stay as a witness to one anthropophagic feast after another, against which he entreated the Tupinamba to stop and prayed to a god who brought storms and sickness upon the cannibals. Thus Staden kept knowledge of his cultural betrayal from his examiners and critics in Germany.

Staden's performance of Christianity among cannibals convinced his interviewer, Dr. Dryander, of the purity of his motives and resistance to Americanization. To those who might have believed that Staden "wished hereby to gain glory and to make a transient name," Dryander argued that Staden was motivated by a desire to "praise and

³⁷ Staden, *Captivity of Hans Staden*, pp. 69–70.

³⁸ Martha L. Finch, "'Civilized' Bodies and the 'Savage' Environment of Early New Plymouth," in *A Centre of Wonders: the Body in Early America*, ed. Janet Moore Lindman and Michele Lise Tarter (London: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 43–60; and Jorge Canizares Esguerra, "New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America," *American Historical Review* 104 (February 1999): 1–39.

to glorify God.”³⁹ Staden had shown himself subject to God’s “will” and passed a test of faith by rejecting the hospitality of the Tupinamba and refusing to participate in their culture. Indeed, Staden’s account of Calvinist martyrdom was so compelling that when his narrative was rereleased in 1593 by the Protestant Theodor de Bry, the new engravings illustrating the account served to strengthen Staden’s claim of Christian virtue in a hellish wilderness.⁴⁰

Staden was not the only character to use rumors of Tupinamba cannibalism to serve his own ends. Just as Staden used the myth of the cannibal to play Christian captive, the Tupinamba played cannibal to further their own ends. The Tupinamba met Staden’s performance of Christianity with humor and further encouraged his fear of being eaten. When he would fall into prayer or break into a desperate hymn, they were amused and laughed at him, saying “how he howls, he dreads death.” There is evidence that the Tupinamba threatened death and cannibalism as part of the ceremonial language of initiation and for a good joke on the frightened Europeans. With Staden, the Tupinamba “played cannibal” and “pretended to bite at their arms.”⁴¹ They circled around him and laid claim to his body parts and “called mockingly after me that they would not fail to appear at my master’s hut, to drink over me and to eat me.”⁴² Staden was not alone in being the butt of Tupinamba cannibal humor. In one terrified moment, Jean de Léry recalled, “my one consolation was the great hoot of laughter they sent up—for they are great jokers.”⁴³ “Great jokers” that they were, the Tupinamba kept European visitors at a disadvantage through their own anxiety about being eaten.

This Brazilian sense of humor intoxicated even those whom the Europeans believed would be killed and eaten. In one encounter with a man, “on the eve of the day when they intended drinking to his death,” Staden “said to him, ‘Everything is prepared for thy death.’” In response to Staden’s dramatic reference to death, the victim “laughed and said, ‘Yes.’” Staden was confused because the “victim” seemed more concerned with the details of his upcoming ceremony and complained that the people of this village had bound him with a cord “not quite long enough.” As Staden recalled, “he spoke in such a manner

³⁹ Staden, *Captivity of Hans Stade*, pp. 11–12.

⁴⁰ I have written about these images in my dissertation; see Heather Elaine Martel, “Contact: Christianizing the Soul, Disembodying Science, Americanizing the Flesh, 1498–1627” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 2001), pp. 204–71.

⁴¹ Staden, *Captivity of Hans Stade*, p. 52

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 75

⁴³ Léry, *History of a Voyage*, p. 164.

as if he were going to a festival.” According to Léry, “prisoners consider themselves fortunate to die thus publicly, in the midst of their enemies, and are utterly untroubled.”⁴⁴ In his account of a very similar encounter, a female prisoner also mocked and laughed at Léry’s Christian concern: “There was a woman prisoner all ready to be slain. I approached her, and trying to adapt my speech to hers, told her to entrust herself to the care of [God]. . . . Her only response was to shake her head, and say to me in mockery, ‘What will you give me if I do as you say?’ I answered, ‘Poor wretch, soon you will need nothing more in this world, and therefore, since you believe the soul to be immortal . . . think what will become of it after your death.’ But she merely laughed again and was felled with a blow and so died.”⁴⁵ The humor of the Tupinamba and their “victims” in the moments before the ceremony was confusing for both Léry and Staden who were obsessed with cannibals and dreaded being eaten.

In this almost formulaic encounter, both Léry and Staden revealed deep-seated and complex cultural misunderstandings that the Tupinamba seemed to find amusing. Whether these misunderstandings included the real practice of cannibalism by the Tupinamba remains unknown. They did seem to enjoy exploiting the European fear for their own amusement and had disease not weakened them, the dread of cannibals might have kept the empires at bay for longer. It is worth noting that—though he was threatened—Staden was not murdered and eaten by the Tupinamba. Instead, he was brought into the community.

In addition to those Tupinamba comedians nibbling on their arms while they entertained themselves with European hysteria, the true authors of Brazilian cannibalism were Frenchmen who had been assimilated by the Tupinamba. In the first European encounters with the Americas, contact and colonization was intense with the risk that Christians would let go that identity and “go native.” Unlike Staden, many did. In sixteenth-century Brazil, relations between the French and Tupinamba were facilitated by “‘*truchements de Normandie*’ or Norman interpreters” (as Jean de Léry called them), Frenchmen who lived among the Tupinamba, intermarried with them, raised children by them, learned their language, and adopted their practices.⁴⁶ Jean de Léry described them as “certain Normans, having escaped from a shipwreck, [who] had remained among the savages, where, having no fear

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 125.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Letts in Staden, *True History*, p. xix.

of God, they lived in wantonness with the women.”⁴⁷ Through captivity, necessity, or choice, these men and women became loyal to the native communities and families that provided them with new homes and status. Though ostracized by colonial authorities, Indianized Europeans maintained trade relations with other Europeans and offered valuable services as mediators and translators. It is difficult to capture the experiences and motivations of these men, for they are usually mentioned in the historical record only as interpreters for travelers, such as Jean de Léry, who claimed firsthand knowledge of native cultures.

Though valuable to the French colonization effort led by Villegagnon at Fort Coligny on the coast of Brazil, 1555–1564, the French authorities were highly critical and mistrustful of the Norman interpreters because of their ability and willingness to adapt to Brazilian culture. It was these nativized Frenchmen who were singled out by André Thevet in his 1575 *Cosmographie Universalle* when he mentioned “certain conspiracies against our company by Norman Frenchmen, who, because they understood the language of this savage and barbarous people (who are so brutish as to possess almost no reason), were plotting with two petty kings of the country, to whom they had promised the few goods that we possessed, to kill us all.” Léry, who had relied so heavily on these interpreters for mediation and cross-cultural diplomacy with the Tupinamba, turned against them in his narrative, calling it “praiseworthy” that “Villegagnon, by advice of the council, forbade on pain of death that any man bearing the name of Christian live with the savages’ women.” Léry recalled a Norman interpreter “convicted of fornication with a woman.” If a friend had not softened Villegagnon toward the interpreter, “instead of having him punished merely by being chained by the foot and among slaves, Villegagnon would have had him hanged.”⁴⁸ Though Villegagnon had betrayed Léry and killed some of his fellow Calvinists, Léry admired such brutality against those Frenchmen who had gone Tupinamba.

Motivated by the same religious coercion that shaped Staden’s use of those rumors, the Norman interpreters might have been inclined to tell tales of Brazilian cannibals to Léry, Thevet, and the French colonial authorities and thus solidify their privileged access to those trade alliances. It was these cultural intermediaries who delivered the rumors of cannibalism to early European ethnographers. They used the Chris-

⁴⁷ Staden, *Captivity of Hans Stade*, p. 144.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

tian fear of cannibals against them and nurtured their dread through rumors and misinformation about the Tupinamba. Allied with the Tupinamba in giving this impression, the Norman interpreters solidified the European myth of the Brazilian cannibal, pretending to participate themselves. Léry claimed that, "surpassing the savages in inhumanity," some of the French-born Brazilians had "even boasted in my hearing of having killed and eaten prisoners."⁴⁹ When Staden had struggled to assure the Tupinamba that he was a friend, not one of the Portuguese who had tricked them with trade, kidnapped their members, and used them for slavery, he counted on religious affinity from a Frenchman, thinking, "in all events he is a Christian, and he will say everything for the best." However, the Frenchman who arrived to verify his identity had new loyalties. He lived among the Tupinamba not four miles away, spoke fluent Tupi, was called in their language Karwattu Ware, and refused to be complicit in Staden's story. Showing solidarity with his Tupinamba allies instead, Karwattu Ware "said to the savages in their language, 'Kill him and eat him, the villain, he is a true Portuguese, my enemy and yours,'" thus condemning Staden to death and worse, consumption by cannibals.⁵⁰

Later Karwattu Ware again confirmed Staden's fear that he would be eaten. When Staden begged him to "tell them not to eat me," Karwattu Ware replied, "they want to eat you," sending Staden into a dramatic fit of despair in which he ripped off his clothes and exposed himself to the scorching sun, saying "If I am to die, why should I preserve my flesh for another?"⁵¹ Léry also admitted that he "did not understand their language perfectly at that time." He recalled a song wherein "they had said several things that I had not been able to comprehend, and I asked the interpreter to explain them to me." In response, the interpreter told him that the singers "pronounced violent threats against the Ouetaca . . . , to capture and eat them."⁵² Just as the Tupinamba had used Staden's fear of cannibalism as entertainment or possibly to break down his Christian affinity and turn him toward a new Tupinamba master, the Norman interpreters proliferated rumors of the Tupinamba cannibal for European visitors.

Anthropologists and historians have argued that agreement between Thevet, Léry, and Staden proves the veracity of their accounts and the existence of cannibals in sixteenth-century Brazil. However,

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 126.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 67–68

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 68.

⁵² Léry, *History of a Voyage*, p. 144.

information given to all three of them by French-born members of Brazilian communities during a brief sixteen-year period from Staden's first encounter in 1548 to Thevet's departure in 1564 may have come from the same unreliable source. In fact, the three major chroniclers of sixteenth-century Brazilian culture—Hans Staden, Jean de Léry, and André Thevet—studied the Tupinamba and their supposed practice of cannibalism with the aid of French interpreters such as Karwattu Ware. Léry and Thevet's dependence on these Norman interpreters is well documented. Staden also had contact with French-born Brazilians in his interactions with the Frenchman Karwattu Ware and through his escape on a French ship. Even though Staden demonstrated a good command of the Tupinamba language, he often misunderstood the more subtle meanings of their words, actions, and symbolism.⁵³ While many have found Staden's Christian narrative of captivity among cannibals believable, it is possible that either he or his sources intentionally misrepresented the Tupinamba.⁵⁴ The Frenchmen who aided Staden may well have provided him with the same details on Tupinamba cannibalism that were given to Léry and Thevet. In need of a good story for his return to German Hesse, Staden would have been a captive audience.

Perhaps after a time among them, Staden had been remade by the Tupinamba. He had felt the fluidity of his identity and his ability to adapt himself. He had pretended to be a healer, to interpret the heavens, and to speak for God in order to stay alive, and was labeled a "bad wizard" by the Tupinamba.⁵⁵ Just as the Spanish explorer Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca had endured for years in the arid lands of eastern Texas and northern Mexico by offering his services to the natives as slave, trader, and healer, Hans Staden had played soldier for both the Portuguese and Spanish conquest; performed as a soldier, trader, sorcerer, and scout for the Tupinamba; and returned home to Germany where he presented a tale of Protestant devotion among bloodthirsty cannibals. But Staden's willingness to play with his cultural identity also reflected a sense of necessity born of surviving conflict at home through his native alliances.

Unlike Cabeza de Vaca, Staden did not speak up for the natives

⁵³ Forsyth ably defends Staden's ability to speak Tupi against Arens's claim that Staden could not have had a good enough command of the language to understand their descriptions of cannibalism. Forsyth, "Three Cheers for Hans Staden," p. 18.

⁵⁴ Whitehead, "Hans Staden"; Forsyth, "Three Cheers for Hans Staden", Lestringant, *Cannibals*.

⁵⁵ Stripped of the cannibal myth, Staden's experience of being stranded in the Americas and dependent on native hospitality was much like that of Cabeza de Vaca.

who had taken him in and as a result he would also not return home in chains and be suspected of treason.⁵⁶ Hans Staden's motivations were not questioned by his fellow Christians, for far from defending the natives or telling a tale of bravery and personal "glory," he exhibited no free will. Though his body was captive to various masters, his soul was ultimately obliged to a Christian God. Unlike the Norman interpreters who, "having no fear of God," moved freely between cultures, Staden was forced to choose a Calvinist identity. To protect himself from corporal punishment and assure the vigilant enforcers of religious affinity, he condemned the Tupinamba to a history as cannibals.

In the end, Staden's account met no critics because the Tupinamba and their French-born members kept their story straight; they fed the misrepresentation of themselves as eaters of human flesh. As Neil Whitehead has observed, "in other contexts, the cannibal sign was quite overtly manipulated by indigenous populations, in the face of colonial obsessions."⁵⁷ The Tupinamba and some of their French allies used the Western fascination with cannibals. They took advantage of Reformation controversies surrounding the Eucharist that facilitated the spread of rumors about Brazilian cannibalism among their Portuguese competitors and the Catholic and Calvinist missionaries who came to colonize their homeland.⁵⁸ If so, the real story is about the subversive power of rumors in resisting imperialism. Just as Staden played with identity to preserve himself, the Tupinamba and the nativized Norman interpreters "played cannibal" to European expectations. Though they were overcome by disease in the end, the myth of the cannibal earned the Tupinamba notoriety that lasts to this day and may have been effective in frightening and sometimes even freeing Europeans from their imperial purpose.

⁵⁶ Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Adventures in the Unknown Interior of America*, trans. and ed. Cyclone Covey (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1961). Cabeza de Vaca's travels (1527–1537) led him to advocate for native Americans subject to the Spanish conquest and, when he was appointed governor of Rio de la Plata in 1540, he "systematically prohibited enslaving, raping, and looting of the Indians;" as a result, he was deposed, returned to Spain in chains in 1543 and then exiled to Africa from 1551 to 1556; see pp. 14–16.

⁵⁷ Whitehead, "Hans Staden," p. 750.

⁵⁸ As historian Gregory Evans Dowd has shown in *War under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations & the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 168–173, "rumors and misinformation" were a subversive strategy used by those facing colonial subjugation.

