

Shadow authors: The texts of the earliest indigenous Florida writers

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1 Introduction

Timucua is an extinct language of northern Florida. Its relationship with other languages is unclear. Two Franciscan priests, Francisco Pareja and Gregorio de Movilla produced an arte, four catechisms, confessional, doctrina (other materials, including perhaps a dictionary has been lost). Their dates of production were approximately 1603-1627.

There are also two letters written in the language, probably by native speakers. In total there are about 2000 pages of bilingual Timucua-Spanish text.

2 Methods for studying the Timucua Language

Our knowledge of Timucua comes almost entirely from 17th century Spanish colonial documents. The most important of these fall into two categories: a.) a Latinate grammar Pareja (1614) (hereafter the Arte), giving a treatment of some aspects of Timucua grammar and b.) several long volumes of parallel Spanish-Timucua religious materials, including a confessional, three catechisms, and a doctrina (explication of Christian doctrine). There are explorations of a few areas of Timucua grammar in Gatschet (1877)Gatschet (1878), Gatschet (1880) and in Adams and Vinson (1886). The only modern account of Timucua grammar is Granberry (1993), but there are large gaps in his account of the language.

In order to get a better understanding of Timucua grammar, I have developed a corpus of the extant Timucua texts, along with their parallel Spanish translations. The corpus is still in development, and new material is being added, with an eventual aim of including all Timucua text. The current corpus is about 41,000 orthographic words of Timucua, and was designed to include range of styles and authors. It is composed of the following material:

Approximately

- 4/5 of the 1613 Confessionario Pareja (1613)
- 2/3 of the large 1612 CatechismoPareja (1612a)

- 1/4 of the small 1612 Catecismo Pareja (1612b)
- 1/8 of the large 1627 Catecismo Pareja (1627)
- 1/3 of the Movilla Doctrina Movilla (1635)
- 2/3 of the 1614 Arte Pareja (1614)

The corpus has been analyzed with Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEX), a tool designed by SIL. Because Timucua is an extinct language, with no dictionary, the meanings of most words and morphemes in the texts have to be deduced by examining multiple contexts of use. The powerful concordance functions of FLEX and its abilities to ensure consistency in interlinear glossing were extremely helpful in deciding on likely glosses for the material.

Through this corpus-based approach to the Timucua language, it is now possible to read many Timucua texts for the first time and to compare them to the Spanish texts with which they stand in parallel. As might be expected, there are often discrepancies between the two. I will argue below that some discrepancies are particularly revealing.

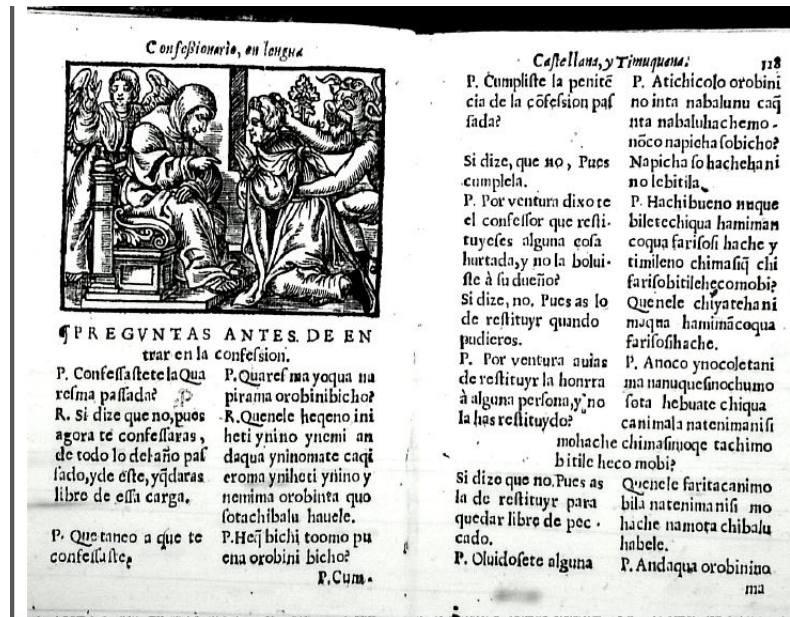
3 Authorship in the Timucua materials

3.1 Named Spanish authors and unnamed indigenous co-authors

If we ask the question "Who are the authors of these Timucua books?" at first, the answer may seem obvious. The authors were Francisco Pareja and Gregorio de Movilla. But I would like to ask that we think more carefully about how the books were written and the role that Timucua speakers played in writing these books. I'll argue that there is good evidence to believe that one or more unnamed Timucua people are the unnamed co-authors of these texts. And thus some Timucua people used their literacy in the early 17th century to express their own perspectives as they worked alongside the Catholic priests in the task of translating doctrinal material

3.2 Why Pareja was not the 'author' of Pareja (1612a, 1612b, 1613)

If we look at the list of parallel Timucua-Spanish documents, among the most significant are two catechisms Pareja (1612b) and Pareja (1612a) and a confessional Pareja (1613). I'd like to make the claim that Francisco Pareja was not the author of any of these works in the way we usually understand authorship today. Let us look at a sample page of the Confessional to better understand this claim.



The text is in two columns, with the Spanish on the left and the Timucua on the right. Pareja edited the Spanish, choosing and sometimes modifying standard questions in any Spanish language confessional.

But what about the Timucua language version? Did Pareja speak and write Timucua well enough to compose this version himself? Did Pareja explain the meaning to a bilingual Timucua, who translated the sentence verbally, after which Pareja wrote the Timucua? Or did the Timucua speaker write the Timucua unassisted by Pareja? Was Pareja present at the time of the composition of the Timucua version, or did he give a Spanish confessional to a trusted Timucua convert and ask him or her to produce a translation?

I'd like to try to dismiss the first possibility -- that Pareja himself wrote the Timucua versions of Pareja (1612b), Pareja (1612b), and Pareja (1613) -- by looking at one text that Pareja probably did write, Pareja (1614).

3.3 Pareja's Arte

Pareja (1614) is a Latinate grammar of Timucua by Pareja which is confusing in the extreme. My assessment of this grammar is that it shows a poor understanding of the grammar of the language on the part of the author. Let us take the following example as fairly typical of a passage:

For the genitive, which in the Latin language is given the noun of possession, whose or of whom the thing is, these particles are used: na, la, tiacu, pan ta, no, ha, all of which are postposed. For Na: my father, honihe itina; my house or it is my house pahana l. pahani panta; this is mine, honihehamila l. honihe, isota tiacu l. isotanano, l. honihe, haminano, l. honihe, hamila-ha, l. hamila l. hamimitiacu, l. honihe haminaqua; in the interior, they use these 3. particles, it is mine haminiyacu and hamintibama and haminlechu; Pl. it is ours heca hamimilela, l. hamimilele, l. nihamimilebatiacu l. hamimileno, l. heca hamimilelemaqua, l. isotanicano, l. isotanicala.” Pareja (1614:20), Martin and Reed (in preparation)

Pareja seems to be expressing the view that possession is indicated by six different suffixes or particles:

- -na
- -la
- -tiacu
- -panta
- -no
- -ha

What is very frustrating about Pareja's examples, however, is that some of them seem to have two of these suffixes (e.g. hamila-ha), and most of them have other morphology which is not explained. The various forms are all given as alternatives to each other as if they were synonymous, but it seems likely that they must differ in meaning in some way not explained.¹

My own analysis of the text corpus has resulted in the following analysis of these six morphemes (or morpheme sequences):

- -na '1st singular possessive'
- -la 'sentence final affirmative'
- -tiacu 'copula'
- -pan 'auxiliary' (+ -ta 'present tense')
- -no 'sentence final affirmative'
- -ha 'future'

My current analysis of the forms listed in Pareja's discussion of the genitive is as follows. For each example, I list the Timucua, a translation of Pareja's Spanish gloss, and my understanding of what the Timucua literally says.

- (1) honihe itina .
 honihe iti -na
 honihe iti -na
 I father 1sgPoss

My father

¹Alternatives in the text are separated by *l*, the Latin abbreviation for vel 'or'.

(lit. my father)

- (2) pahana .
 paha -na
 paha -na
 house 1sgPoss

My house²

(lit. my house)

- (3) pahani panta .
 paha ni- pan -ta
 paha ni-1 pan -ta
 house 1st person aux pres

my house

(lit. I have a house)

- (4) honihehamila .
 honihe hami -la
 honihe hami -la
 I owner affirm

It is mine.

(lit. I am the owner)

- (5) honihe isota tiacu .
 honihe iso -ta -tiacu
 honihe iso -ta copula
 I have part

It is mine.

(lit. I have it)

- (6) isotanano .
 iso -ta -nano
 iso -ta -nano
 have, hold part vsuff

It is mine.

(lit. I have it)

- (7) honihe hamila-ha .
 honihe hami -la -ha
 honihe hami -la -haue
 I owner affirm irr

It is mine.

²The Spanish gloss is uncertain and depends on the scope of the 'or' in the translation. Possibly this should be *pahana panta* 'I have a house'

(lit. I will be the owner)

- (8) hamila .
 hami -la
 hami -la
 owner affirm

It is mine.

(I am the owner.)

- (9) hamimitiacu .
 hami -mi tiacu
 hami -mi1 copula?
 possessed thing 3poss

It is mine.

('it is his thing')

If the analysis I have given is largely correct, then Pareja's forms are a mixture of sentences and noun phrases, and they roughly correspond to everything that Pareja might have heard as a Timucua translation of a Spanish phrase like 'este es mío'. They are listed without any explanation of the differences between them. For one form among them (hamimitiacu), my analysis suggests that the correct translation involves a third person possessor 'it is his thing' rather than Pareja's translation 'It is mine.'

Pareja's list of genitive markers in Timucua seems almost randomly selected from his examples. He mentions the 1st singular possessive marker -na, but excludes the 1st plural -mile. At the same time he includes in his list of genitives such elements as auxiliaries, copulas, tense markers, and affirmative particles.

Francisco Pareja undoubtedly possessed many virtues of energy and organization, but the bumbling nature of his attempts to explain something as relatively simple as possessive marking in Timucua cast doubt on the idea that he had sufficient the grammatical competence in Timucua to compose the Timucua translations of catechisms, confessionals and other doctrinal materials.

Further complications about Pareja's role in the authorship of the texts comes from the disparate linguistic nature of the Timucua materials themselves.

3.4 Linguistic and orthographic diversity in the Confessionario vs the Short Catechism

Some of the texts seem to have had multiple Timucua coauthors. This is clearest in the Pareja (1612b), (the Short Catechism) which I will compare with Pareja (1613) (the Confessionario), a text which appears to have a single Timucua coauthor.

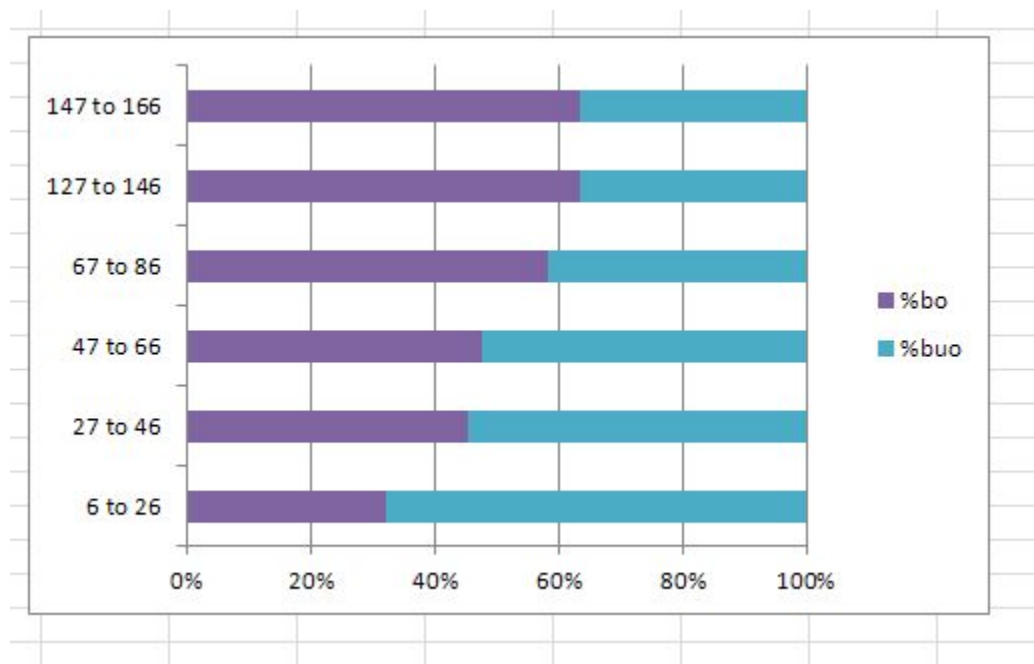
Evidence for multiple coauthors comes from some slight dialect diversity among Timucua speakers. The linguistic evidence seems to show that speakers differed in the pronunciation of the plural argument suffix /-bo/. For one group of Timucuas

(BO dialect), the pronunciation was consistently [bo], while for another group of Timucuas (BUO dialect), the pronunciation varied between [bo] and [b^wo].

Because the writing of Timucua in the early texts was not standardized, the spelling of this suffix can offer a clue as to the dialect of the writer. Texts that consistently spell the plural argument suffix <bo> are likely to be from a speaker of the BO dialect, while texts that alternate between the <bo> and <buo> spellings are likely to be from the BUO dialect.

The Short Catechism appears to come from a speaker of the BUO dialect, with a fairly smooth distribution of that averages about 48% <bo> to 52% <buo> throughout the text. Consider the following figure and graph:³

Source	Folio	bo	buo	total	%bo	%buo
Short Catechism	6 to 26	10	21	31	32%	68%
Short Catechism	27 to 46	10	12	22	45%	55%
Short Catechism	47 to 66	10	11	21	48%	52%
Short Catechism	67 to 86	7	5	12	58%	42%
Short Catechism	127 to 146	7	4	11	64%	36%
Short Catechism	147 to 166	7	4	11	64%	36%
Mean		8.5	9.5	18		

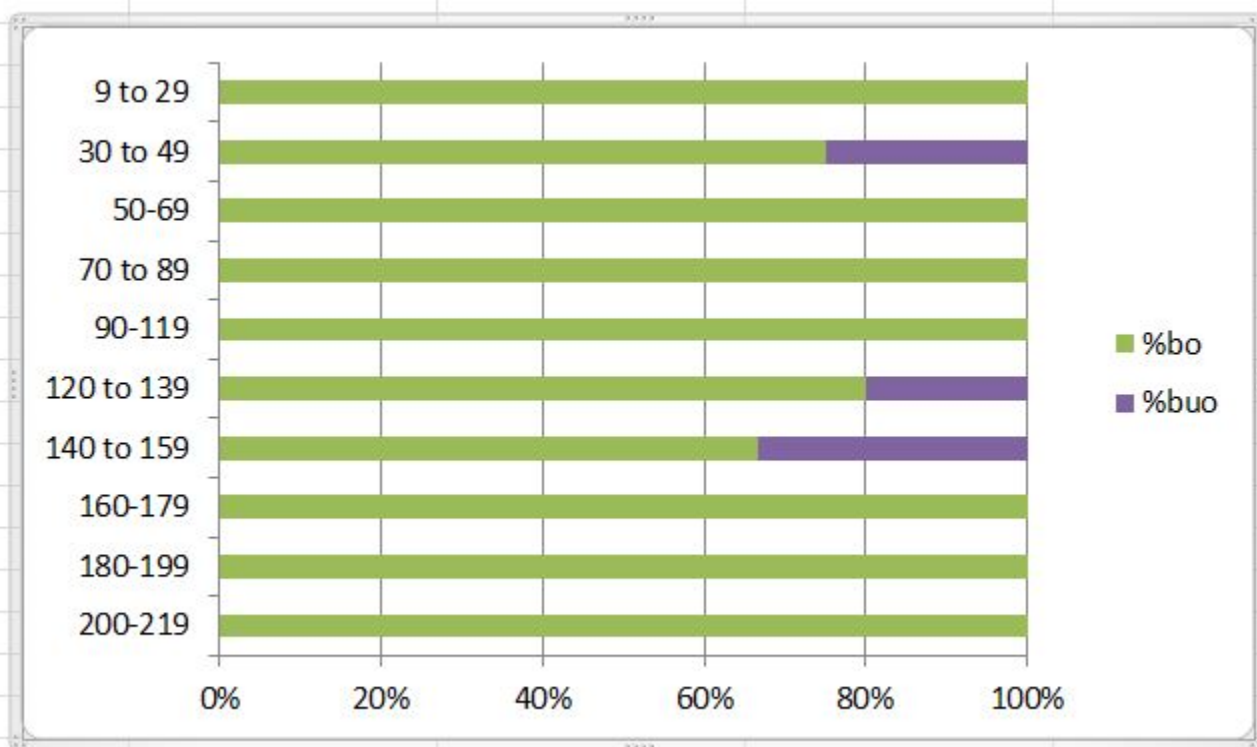


In contrast, the distribution in the Confessionario is very different. The beginning of the text is almost entirely in the BO dialect -- the first 119 folia have one instance of <buo>. But something very unusual happens at folio 120 -- the pattern begins

³The count begins with page 6 because that is where the Timucua text begins, the previous pages being Spanish introductions. Folia are grouped into bins of 9-10 pages for the purpose of this count. The number of instances of /bo/ between bins ranged from a high of 24 to a low of 2, with a mean of 4.75 instances.

to change, and now <bo> and <buo> begin to alternate in the pattern that is characteristic of the BUO dialect of Timucua. This pattern continues until roughly folio 159, when the text reverts to the uniform BO dialect, which it continues to the end of the text.⁴ The following chart and graph show the pattern in more detail:

Source	Folio range	bo	buo	total	%bo	%buo
Confessionario	9 to 29	15	0	15	100%	0%
Confessionario	30 to 49	3	1	4	75%	25%
Confessionario	50-69	4	0	4	100%	0%
Confessionario	70 to 89	2	0	2	100%	0%
Confessionario	90-119	7	0	7	100%	0%
Confessionario	120 to 139	12	3	15	80%	20%
Confessionario	140 to 159	8	4	12	67%	33%
Confessionario	160-179	6	0	6	100%	0%
Confessionario	180-199	2	0	2	100%	0%
Confessionario	200-219	4	0	4	100%	0%
Totals		63	8	71		
Mean		6.3	0.8	7.1		



I believe the easiest way to explain this strange distribution of the spellings in the document is posit at least two Timucua coauthors in the Confessionario. The first coauthor spoke the BO dialect of Timucua and wrote the first 119 folia of

⁴It is hard to be sure where the end of the BUO coauthor's portion is. There are no instances of <buo> after f159, but a speaker of the BUO dialect might very well write several pages with only <bo>. So perhaps some pages in the f160s also belong to this section.

the document. The first coauthor also probably wrote the last forty or fifty folia (roughly f160-f219 or f170-f219) of the Confessionario.

⁵

The second coauthor spoke a BUO dialect of Timucua and wrote the middle section of the Confessionario, folia 120-159. This coauthor is probably not the same Timucua person who authored the Short Catechism, because <bo> and <buo> spellings appear in approximately equal frequency in the Short Catechism. The coauthor of the middle section of the Confessionario, in contrast, spoke a BUO dialect, but spelled <buo> at a much lower rate. As the chart shows, there are 27 instances of the /bo/ morpheme in folia 120-159 of the Confessionario, and the author spells it as <bo> 20 times, and as <buo> 7 times. That is a roughly 3/4 to 1/4 ratio.

The folia 120-159 section also coincides with a significant thematic boundary in the text, what is sometimes called the 'Superstitions' section of the text. The preceding folia (f117v-119v) are the questions prior to confession, and the introduction and explanation of the first commandment begins on f119v and continues to f121, followed by questions on the first commandment. These end, and then on f123, we come to a section labelled

Ceremonias, agueros y supersticiones que aun usan algunos ('Ceremonies, auguries, and superstitions that some still follow.')

This section is made up of a set of questions about traditional Timucua beliefs that are fascinating for their ethnographic content, as discussed in Milanich and Sturtevant (1972). Confessants were asked questions such as 'Are you a healer?' 'Have you placed a new candle or fire to cure someone?' 'Have you cured someone by called the Devil?' 'When it thundered, did you whistle to the sky to have clouds or rain by your evil prayers?' 'Have you taken the skin of the poisonous snake or of the black snake and with black guano and other herbs have you tried to bewitch someone or have you bewitched them or wished to do so?' and 'In order to begin to take food out of the storehouse, have you prayed?'

The questions fit awkwardly within the context of confessional questions about the ten commandments, which resume at f133 with the second commandment. The third, fourth, and fifth commandments follow in a fairly conventional way. But after the fifth commandment, there is another ethnographically specific set of questions about curing, pregnancy, abortion, traditional curers, the use of herbs, and witches. Like the previous set, it refers to traditional Timucua practices and asks the confessants whether they persist in non-Christian practices.

Thus this middle section is not only different linguistically from the rest of the text, it has different content as well.

Clearly the evidence of linguistic diversity within the Timucua text seems fatal for the hypothesis that Pareja learned Timucua well enough to write these texts himself. If he had done so, he surely would not have switched dialects halfway

⁵I will not attach too much significance to the single instance of a <buo> spelling in this passage.

through the book. But the orthographic diversity also seems very problematic for the idea that Timucua assistants translated the Spanish verbally and Pareja wrote down their translations. For if Pareja were writing down the Timucua himself, wouldn't he come to some standard way of writing the verbal suffixes after scores of pages of texts?

Instead, I think the orthographic diversity shows that Timucuas themselves were writing their language in the early 17th century. The unnamed Timucua coauthors here tried to write texts that matched their own pronunciations of the language, and thus when they differed in dialect, their texts show those differences. The orthographic differences in the *Confessionario* also suggest that for a large text, various sections might be assigned to different native coauthors who would work to produce Timucua versions. Pareja's role, I suggest, might be more like that of an editor, taking existing Spanish language devotional material, assigning various sections of it to trusted Timucua converts for translation, then assembling, copying and preparing the finished products for printing.

Of course, one of the clear dangers of such an enterprise is that the priest running the operation does not truly understand all the subtleties of the language under translation. That introduces the possibility of texts that begin to diverge from their sources; a possibility which I discuss in more detail in the next section.

3.5 The coauthor has gotten out of control: Textual divergence in the Timucua translation

The Timucua coauthor of the middle section seems to have been assigned the task of producing the questions about native practices and superstitions. But it is in close reading of the 'Superstitions' portion of the *Confessionario* that one begins to notice suspicious divergences between the Timucua text and the Spanish text. Consider the following passage:

(10) Nia chipacanoleta etamina hinayelaha
 nia chi -pacano-le-ta eta-mi nahi-naye-la-ha
 woman 2-single-cop-part pregnant-3poss exist/have-when-cop-irrealis

iniheti inino acoma chinecoco lahacu yunchi
 iniheti-ini-no acoma chi -neco-co -la-hacu yunchi
 sin-commit-ger great 2-result-indef vsuff-comparative shame

nomabetaleqe aruquima iqueninaye qere nabueta
 -no-ma beta-leqe aruqui-ma iqueni-naye -qere na-bueta
 nmzr-art for-focus baby-art kill-when comp instrumental-from

nebeleca acola inecalua iquoma nantela niapacanoleta
 nebeleca acola inecalua iquoba-ma nante-la nia-pacano-leta
 much very grave sin large-art called-affirm woman-single-if

ciyuchita hanimate iquenetiqua nihache.
 ci-yuchi-ta -hanima-te iquene-tiqua -ni = hache
 2nd person-shame-part although-aug kill-must not must not = imper

If she were single and it is known that she is pregnant, it is to be said to her that she is not to abort or choke the unborn child as they are accustomed to do. My daughter, although you have fallen into mortal sin, beware that you will fall into an even more serious one if you have brought about a miscarriage. don't commit such a grave sin even if it means shame, bear the sin in God's name.

Si fuere soltera y se sabe que esta preñada, por que no aborte o achocandolo como suelen se le dira. Hija aunque yncurriste en peccado mortal, mira que caeras en otro mas grave si mal pares no hagas tan grave peccado aunque passes verguença llevala a Dios.

(Lit. If you are a single woman and are pregnant you have committed a great sin, but it is more shame when you kill the child. This is the greater sin, called mortal sin. If you are a single woman and are ashamed, you must not kill.) [Conf f147]

There are other passages as well that seem to show different Timucua and Spanish attitudes towards sex and shame. The following two passages come from the Confessionario f164 (and are thus possibly by the BUO coauthor)

- (11) Inihiminco anoeyo napatabo hero
 inihi-mi-ncō ano-eyo na-patabo -he-ro
 spouse-3POSS-INDEF person-other INSTRUMENTAL-have sex FUTURE-DESIR

maninoma nate quenta haue manibicho?
 mani-no-ma nate quen-ta -haue mani-bi-ch-o
 want-NMZR-ART pardon be (emphatic)-PART IRREALIS pardon-PAST-2-Q
 Have you consented that someone walk with your spouse?

Haz consentido que alguno ande con tu consorte?
 (Lit. Have you pardoned your wife when she wanted to have sex with another person?) [Conf f164]

- (12) Anopira comeleta niamate nata hibuasi mota
 anopira comele-ta nia-mate nata hibua-si mo-ta
 ceremony act voluntarily-PART woman-AND consent say-BENEF say-PART

viroma nacunata hibuasomata mosobi cho?
 viro-ma nacu nata hibua-so-mo-ta moso-bi chi-o
 male-ART and then, thus consent say-CAUS-say-PART advise/say-PAST 2-Q

'Have you arranged that someone be married according to the Indian way without first giving notice to the parish priest?
 As concertado que algunos se casan a uso de indios sin dar parte al para-cho?
 (Lit. Did you advise that ceremonies should be secret and that the woman should speak (her consent) and then that the man should speak (his consent)?) [Confessionario f184]

Here the emphasis of the Spanish text is that permission of the priest is required before two people can marry. Surely there is nothing amiss in arranging weddings where both parties consent; it is just that such consent is not sufficient for a marriage unless a priest also gives permission.

Our Timucua coauthor chooses to translate the passage in a way that just focuses on the couple and edits the priest out of the question altogether. It is hard to imagine that a priest translating the passage would make the same choice!

The Timucua is also sometimes more direct in its language about sexuality, while the Spanish uses euphemisms and circumlocutions. Consider the following two examples:

- (13) Inihimincó patabosintanaqeno ysono lebitima
 inihi-mi-ncó patabo-sin-ta naqeno yso-no -lebi-ti-ma
 spouse-3POSS-INDEF have sex-RECIP-PART way? use-NMZR MUST-NEG-ART

ysobicho yanacu quososi-ro
 yso-bi-ch-o yanacu quoso-si-ro
 use-PAST-2ND PERSON-Q and then make-DESIRED COMPLEMENT

manibicho?
 mani-bi-ch-o
 desire, want-PAST-2ND PERSON-Q

Spanish: Making use of marriage, has it been in the ordinary way or have you desired that it be in a different way?

Usando del matrimonio a sido por la via ordinaria o has desseado que sea de otro modo?

(Lit. When having sex with your wife, did you use that which must not be used and did you intend to do it?) (Conf f164)

- (14) Aanoco nahebuastechiqua huema
 ano-co na-hebua-s-te-chi-qua hue-ma
 person-INDEF INSTRUMENTAL-speak-BENEF-PART-2ND PERSON-IF hand-ART

hibita cumechipaliqe vna oquoye
 hibi-ta cume chi-pali-qe vna oquo-ye
 take the hand-PART heart 2ND PERSON-excite-AND THEN body penis-2SGPOSS

biturumota yribobi?
 bituru-mo-ta yribo-bi
 be hard-cause-PART stand-PAST

Speaking with some person or taking your hand, did some change in the flesh come to you?

Hablando con alguna persona o tomandote la mano vinote alguna alteración de la carne?

(Lit. When you spoke to a person and took the hand, did you get excited and did your penis get hard and stand?) (Conf 158)

Some Timucua customs are ascribed to the devil in the Spanish version, but not in the Timucua version. In the following passage, the Timucua version only mentions ituhu 'to pray', but the Spanish refers to la ceremonia de el Demonio 'the devil's ceremony.'

- (15) Nimota uquata ituhuta honosoma enesota onaquosta,
 nimota uqua-ta ituhu-ta honoso-ma ene-so-ta ona-quos-ta
 horn? take-PART pray-PART deer-ART see-CAUS-PART affirm-make-PART

ituhuta iquenhale manda bohobi cho?
 ituhu-ta iqueni-ha-le man-da boho-bi chi -o
 pray-PART kill-IRREALIS-AFFIRM:1SG want-PART believe-PAST 2-Q
 In order to hunt some deer did you take the antlers of another deer and
 pray over them the Demon's ceremony?
 Para cazar algun venado as tomado las hastas de otro venado, as le rezado
 la ceremonia de el Demonio.
 (Lit. Did you believe "Taking horns and praying, I will see the deer and by
 doing this, I will pray and kill it"?) [Conf, f130]

Similarly, in the following example, the Spanish describes the practice of blowing
 at the wind as *tus malos rezos* 'your evil prayers', but the Timucua contains no
 corresponding evaluation.

- (16) Numa hebuama bimetaqe ituhuta iposibicho?
 numa-hebua bime-ta-qe ituhu-ta ipo-si-bi-chi-o
 sky/heaven-speak blow?-PART-IF pray-PART extinguish-BENEF-PAST-2-Q
 Thundering, have you blown toward the heavens in order to stop the clouds
 or water with your evil prayers?
 Tronando, as soplado asta el Cielo para detener el nublado o agua con tus
 rezos malos?
 (Lit. When the heavens spoke, did you blow and pray to extinguish it?)
 [Conf f150]

In other cases, the Timucua text adds or omits cultural details not found in the
 Spanish translation. Consider the following examples:

- (17) Hachipile uquestanaye yabima ichuquinetiqua nimaca,
 hachipile uques-ta-naye yabi-ma ichuquine-tiqua -ni-maca
 animal kill-PART-WHEN bone-ART throw:down-MUST NOT MUST NOT-prohibit

uquesinoma ubua-hauetila mota bohota mobi cho?
 uquesi-no-ma ubua-haue-ti-la mo-ta boho-ta mo-bi chi-o
 kill-NMZR-ART enter-IRREALIS-NEG-AFFIRM say-PART believe-PART say-PAST 2-Q
 Did you order that the bones of the game must not be thrown away, unless
 the game would no longer enter into the snare or trap, but that they
 must be hung up or placed on the roof of the house?

As dicho los guesos de lo caçado no los arroyes, que no entrara mas en el
 laço y parãça, sino colgados o poneldos en las palmas de la casa?

(Lit. Did you say and believe that when animals are killed, the bones must
 not be thrown away or they would not enter the place of killing?) [Conf
 f130]

- (18) Abo pahama honote coso habeleta ituhubicho?
 abo paha-ma hono-te coso -habe-leta ituhu-bi-chi-o
 high location house-ART food-AUG do IRREALIS-PURPOSE pray-PAST-2-Q
 In order to begin to take food out of the storehouse, have you prayed?
 Para comenzar a sacar la comida de la garrita, has rezado?
 (Lit. Did you pray in order to do the food in the high house?) [Conf f150]

The cumulative effect of all these discrepancies is to make it very unlikely that
 the same person wrote both the Spanish and the Timucua. If Pareja is the author
 of the Spanish text, other unnamed native writers composed the Timucua.

4 Literacy, letters, and the Timucua

4.1 Christian Education and Timucua Literacy

The Spanish intention in translating these documents in Timucua was to have
 native people read them in their own language. Thus Spanish mission education
 included training Timucuas to read and write. We do not know how extensive
 Timucua literacy was, but Native people wrote letters to each other and to Span-
 ish authorities (two have survived). Many other Timucua literacy materials existed
 (e.g. spellers, reading books) but have been lost. (Their existence is mentioned in
 a 1630 letter by Fr. Alonso de Jesus.) Timucua converts learned to recite catechis-
 mal responses, prayers, the Credo, etc in Timucua.

4.2 Literacy, Protest, and Rebellion

Worth (1992:467-469) cites the 1660 testimony of Clemente Bernal, that the interception of a Spanish letter was one of the sparks for the Timucua Rebellion.

... the cacique of San Martín, named Lúcas Menéndez, had made a meeting of caciques in the said village of San Pedro de Potoxiriba, the cause which moved him, according to what he said, was a letter that he said he had intercepted from the said Governor/ [---] he said he wrote it, and that in it, the sending to call upon the principals and the rest of the people of the said provinces of Apalachee and Timucua for the aid of this city was in order to make them slaves, and not because there was news of enemies, and that an Indian who knew Spanish had read the said letter.

The cacique Lúcas Menéndez mentioned in this testimony subsequently sent a letter in Timucua to the Spanish authorities in St Augustine, warning them not to come to his hacienda Worth (1992:228) (This letter has not survived.) Native letters thus seem to have been the one of the means by which a rebellion against the Spanish was planned.

In his 1660 testimony after the Timucua Rebellion, the adjutant Pedro de la Puerta said that

Governor Don Diego de Rebolledo asked him what motive had the said Indians for this, and the said Don Juan responded that before, the said cacique of San Martín had written him a letter, being on horseback from this city in order to go to his said hacienda, though [the letter] being in the language of Indians which he did not understand, he had not opened it. He had proceeded with his journey, and having arrived at the said hacienda of La Chua, he gave the letter to an Indian who he had in his service who spoke Spanish...Worth (1992:372)

A lesson from this testimony is that literacy is a powerful tool. Once native people become literate, they can use their literacy as a means to promote Christianity or to promote rebellion.

The 17th century Timucua authors discussed here were part of a larger literate population of Timucua people. We do not know how widely dispersed Timucua literacy was, but the existence of monolingual books in Timucua Movilla (1635) and Timucua letters show that there were certainly many people who could read and write their language.

4.3 Conclusions: Agency, Authorship, and History

The linguistic evidence shows us that there are at least two Timucua coauthors in the Confessionario, as shown by their different dialects of Timucua. The primary Timucua coauthor of the 1612 Catechism is different than the primary coauthor of the Confessionario. Though Pareja is listed as ‘author’ of both, the different language and different content in the two raises a number of issues which make it very unlikely that he wrote the Timucua portions. Thus these texts are the work

of unnamed Timucua coauthors, whose work was made possibly by the flowering of literacy among Timucua Christian converts in the 17th century.

Though the Timucua are a vanished people, we can gain insight into their perspectives from Timucua authors four hundred years ago. These texts Pareja (1612b), Pareja (1612a), and Pareja (1613) are the oldest writings in a North American indigenous language outside Mexico. The unnamed authors of these texts are thus the earliest Native writers in this country. Thus the Franciscans of Florida created not only converts, but co-authors among the Timucua.

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