

# Writing Timucua

Recovering and Interrogating Indigenous Authorship

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**ABSTRACT** This paper offers a reexamination of the Timucua-Spanish relations in colonial Florida, culminating in the Timucua uprising of 1656. Combining our two specialties, linguistic anthropology and history, this paper explores the few Timucua religious materials available, which are the oldest extant Native American texts north of Mexico. Examining the content of these texts (the subject matter, the language, and its arguments) as well as the context in which they were produced, this essay considers the Timucua texts as early expressions of Timucua literacy and authorship. The Timucua texts hint at the complex effects of linguistic collision and exchange. As Timucua authors collaborated and, at times, appropriated these Spanish religious texts, their voices hint at the power of language as a marker of identity and resistance.

Lucas Menéndez, one of the most powerful Timucua chiefs, spoke with clarity and force.<sup>1</sup> This was his chance. He had one opportunity to convince

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1. For mentions of this meeting see “Testimony of Don Joseph de Prado, Royal Treasurer,” “Testimony of Adjutant Pedro de la Puerta,” “Testimony of Captain Augustín Pérez de Villa Real,” April 1660, in *Caja de St. Augustine de Florida, Residencia a Diego Rebolledo*, Archivo General de Indias (hereafter cited as AGI),

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Timucua leadership as well as delegates representing the interests of the Timucuas' more populous western neighbors, the Apalachee, to rebel against the Spanish. In the spring of 1656 Lucas left his mission town of San Martín and convened a council in San Pedro, a town farther west and closer to the border between Timucua and Apalachee. At the council meeting, Lucas lambasted the policies of Diego de Rebolledo, governor of Florida. On top of the onerous *repartimiento* (labor draft), Governor Rebolledo, fearing an English invasion, had called for an additional five hundred Timucua and Apalachee soldiers to march to St. Augustine, the main Spanish garrison in Florida. Lucas complained that while the Spanish were asking for more labor and food than the Timucuas could provide, St. Augustine's commitment to the region seemed fading and Spanish goods were rarely sent to Timucua. Lucas was furious, a sentiment echoed by the caciques of San Francisco de Chuaquín, Santa Fé de Toloco, Santa Cruz de Tarihica, San Francisco de Potano, San Pedro de Potohiriba, and Santa Helena de Machava.<sup>2</sup> To convince the remaining Timucuas and Apalachees at the San Pedro council to join him in rebellion, Lucas flaunted a letter he had intercepted.

The Indians gathered at San Pedro had been waiting for a letter. A couple of weeks earlier Lucas and Diego, the cacique of San Pedro, had written to Rebolledo describing the impoverished conditions of Timucua and requesting that the governor ease his stringent demands for Native labor. Juan Alejo, an Acuera Timucua from Santa Lucía, and Alonso, the son of the cacique Lázaro from San Indelfonso de Chamile, had carried Diego and Lucas's letter to Rebolledo. The governor promptly read the chiefs' message and gave Juan Alejo and Alonso two letters to carry back to Timucua. The first letter was a response to the Indian leaders gathered in San Pedro; it assured them that the Spanish took their request very seriously and would consider reducing the number of Native men needed in St. Augustine. But the second said the opposite. Rebolledo ordered Captain Agustín Pérez de Villa Real to disregard all Timucua complaints and to continue sending Timucua and Apalachee men to work in St. Augustine. Captain Pérez never received

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Contaduría 963. Martín Alcayde de Cordoba, "Summary of Service Record," March 9, 1649, cited in John E. Worth, *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida*, vol. 2, *Resistance and Destruction* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 42.

2. For the meeting see "Carta de los religiosos de la Florida," June 16, 1664, AGI, SD 233, in the John Tate Lanning Papers, Thomas Jefferson Library, University of Missouri, St. Louis, no. 701. For Lucas and Diego communicating via letters, see "Testimony of Juan Alejo," May 17, 1660, in Caja de St. Augustine de Florida, Residencia a Diego Rebolledo," AGI, contaduría 963.

Rebolledo's instruction because Juan Alejo and Alonso delivered both letters to Lucas. Lucas angrily waved the letter intended for Captain Pérez during the San Pedro council. While providing evidence of Spanish duplicity and self-interest, this latter missive also offers proof of the Timucuas' ability to both use and undermine the Spanish communication systems.<sup>3</sup>

That Lucas was literate in Timucua, Spanish, and possibly Apalachee seems clear enough, but that he tried to forge an inter-Indian alliance by wielding a piece of paper written in Spanish significantly broadens the implications of this incident. To explain why Lucas used the governor's letter as a rallying cry requires exploring the richer and far deeper relation Timucuas had to writing and the production of texts. The historical trajectory that connects Lucas's political pursuits in 1656 with Timucua literacy and authorship is neither direct nor simple. But only by understanding the Timucuas' active and sustained engagement with the written word can the intertwined colonial and indigenous forces informing Lucas's strategy be fully understood. Timucua writings show that the Spanish colonial project in Florida was not only messy and contingent, but also dependent on people who spoke, wrote, and thought in indigenous languages.

Timucua was not the lone, or even the most important, linguistic companion of the Spanish empire.<sup>4</sup> Mesoamerican Indian languages, in particular Nahuatl, underwent far more robust projects of colonization. Groundbreaking works by James Lockhart, Robert Haskett, and Caterina Pizzigoni have investigated the wide range of Nahuatl records from colonial Mexico. Other scholars, most notably Louise M. Burkhart and Mark Z. Christensen, have further shown the importance of Nahuatl language texts in ecclesiastical settings.<sup>5</sup> These studies detail first and foremost the richness

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3. Alejandra Dubcovsky, *Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016), 68–96.

4. For Spanish efforts in Timucua territory see Jerald T. Milanich, *The Timucua* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996). For missions in Guale, see John E. Worth, *The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An 18th-century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocama* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1995). For the missionization of Calusa, see John Hann, ed. and trans., *Missions to the Calusa* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991).

5. James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Robert Haskett, *Indigenous Rulers: An Ethnohistory of Town Government in Colonial Cuernavaca* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991); Caterina Pizzigoni, *Testaments of Toluca* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Louise M. Burkhart, *Holy Wednesday: A Nahuatl Drama from Early Colonial Mexico* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996); Louise

and pervasiveness of Native language texts in the Spanish colonial world. They also show how Spanish imperial language projects were built on top of existing traditions of Native literacy. As Kathryn E. Sampeck argues in the introduction to a recent *Ethnohistory* forum on colonial Mesoamerican literacy: “Because writing, reading, and having texts was so thoroughly a part of the pre-Columbian Mesoamerican world, Mesoamericans encountered European alphabetic writing as a useful tool more than as a fundamentally new activity.”<sup>6</sup> And finally, these studies reveal how Indian authors and readers worked through and sometimes against a Spanish colonial system that employed their Native literary traditions to compose maps, record histories and laws, and produce religious texts.

In this growing scholarship about the possibilities afforded by Native literacy, Timucua rarely makes an appearance. Florida and the Franciscan missionary project that was instrumental in documenting this Native language fare no better. Geography, demography, and scale help explain some of the marginality. Florida was at the periphery of the Spanish Empire, and St. Augustine was a small military presidio that at times housed no more than two hundred Spanish soldiers. Lacking in mineral wealth and in sizable Native empires, Florida received little attention and far fewer resources from the Spanish Crown. Ignored by people at the time, Florida also falls beyond the mainline narratives of the Spanish Empire, colonial North America, and borderlands scholarship.<sup>7</sup>

Some of the best-studied features of this neglected colony are its Franciscan missions, and for obvious reasons: these missions were the largest Spanish colonial endeavor in Florida, boasting over seventy communities and close to 30,000 neophytes by the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>8</sup> Examined from

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M. Burkhart, Barry D. Sell, and Stafford Poole, *Aztecs on Stage: Religious Theater in Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011); and Mark Z. Christensen, *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms: Texts and Religion in Colonial Central Mexico and Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013).

6. An excellent special issue titled “A Language of Empire, a Quotidian Tongue: The Uses of Nahuatl in New Spain,” *Ethnohistory* 59, no. 4 (2012), features articles by Yanna Yannakakis, John F. Schwaller, Mark Z. Christensen, Robert C. Schwaller, Laura E. Matthew and Sergio F. Romero, Martin Nesvig, and Caterina Pizzigoni.

7. “Florida at the Margins,” forum at the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture Conference, Chicago, June 2015; Thomas Hallock, “Florida at the Margins,” <http://blog.oieahc.wm.edu/florida-at-the-margins/>.

8. Bonnie G. McEwan, ed., *The Spanish Missions of La Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), xv; Michael V. Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513–1870* (Gainesville: University of Florida

both historical and anthropological perspectives, Spanish missions in Florida have been described as sites of exploitation, contestation, negotiation, and cultural production. Language, however, has been conspicuously missing from the scholarship on Florida missions. On the one hand, this omission is surprising. Not only are there a sizable number of Native-language texts produced by and in Florida missions, but studies of the Jesuits in New France and in the *pays d'en haut*, of Puritan praying towns, and even of Franciscan missions in other parts of the Americas have also revealed the complex insights gained by engaging with Native language-based texts.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, the lack of focus on Timucua is readily explicable. Timucua, a language spoken by a limited number of people and recorded by an even smaller cohort, was neither the sole nor even the most important Native language spoken in the American Southeast. Furthermore, and perhaps even more important, Timucua is a dead language. Telling the story of Timucua and the people who spoke and wrote it cannot end with twenty-first-century Timucua speakers or communities endeavoring to revitalize the language.<sup>10</sup> Historians, who are often quicker to commend than to actually employ Native-language sources, have a unique opportunity with Timucua.<sup>11</sup> Through a dynamic engagement with the language, which involves an ongoing and evolving effort to reconstruct Timucua vocabulary and grammar, a dialogue with people who have been silent and silenced for centuries can begin again. In their writings and in their language, Timucuas emerge as more than mere echoes of Spanish translations. They enter into

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Press, 1965); John Hann, *Summary Guide to Spanish Florida Missions and Visitas: With Churches in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1990).

9. Tracy Neal Leavelle, *The Catholic Calumet: Colonial Conversions in French and Indian North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 1–19; Sarah Rivett, “The Algonquian Word and the Spirit of Divine Truth: John Eliot’s Indian Library and the Atlantic Quest for a Universal Language,” in Matt Cohen and Jeffrey Glover, eds., *Colonial Mediascapes: Sensory Worlds of the Early Americas* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 376–408; Sean P. Harvey, *Native Tongues: Colonialism and Race from Encounter to the Reservation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015), 19–48; David J. Silverman “The Curse of God: An Idea and Its Origins among the Indians of New York’s Revolutionary Frontier,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2009): 495–534.

10. Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Encounters at the Heart of the World: A History of the Mandan People* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2014), 227–336.

11. For careful studies using Native language see Brett Rushforth, *Bonds of Alliance: Indigenous and Atlantic Slaveries in New France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

colonial conversations and canonical texts as authors and producers of indigenous knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

Hidden in plain sight, these invisible Timucua authors wrote some of the earliest published texts in an American indigenous language north of Mexico. This claim is not simply about declaring, “See, Native people also wrote things down”—although they certainly did and in a variety of interesting and nuanced ways. The point is to take Native authorship seriously and to read these Native authors in their own language. Native authorship, however, is far easier to assume than to prove. That is, though many or even most bilingual or exclusively Native language texts written in a colonial context were collaborations between Europeans and indigenous peoples, it takes careful textual analysis to identify moments of Native contribution as well as points of divergence between European and Native authors.<sup>13</sup> To demonstrate that Timucua Indians and Franciscan friars coauthored Timucua religious materials and to argue that these texts offered opportunities for Native self-expression require finding clear moments of Native literary expression.

This careful work hinges on a truly interdisciplinary approach that relies on both linguistic anthropology and history. We use linguistic anthropology to read, translate, and analyze documents in a Native language inaccessible to most historians. And we use history to situate these texts within the colonial context in which they were produced. When we combine the questions and methodologies of these two disciplines, Timucua writings become

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12. For exploring the role of Native voices in missionary texts, see Even Hovdhaugen, . . . *And the Word Was God: Missionary Linguistics and Missionary Grammar* (Münster: Nodus, 1996); Edward G. Gray and Norman Fiering, eds., *The Language Encounter in the Americas, 1492–1800: A Collection of Essays* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000); John Steckley, “The Warrior and the Lineage: Jesuit Use of Iroquoian Images to Communicate Christianity,” *Ethnohistory* 39, no. 4 (1992): 478–509; David J. Silverman, “Indians, Missionaries, and Religious Translation: Creating Wampanoag Christianity in Seventeenth-century Martha’s Vineyard,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (2005): 141–74; Robert Michael Morrissey, “‘I Speak It Well’: Language, Cultural Understanding, and the End of a Missionary Middle Ground in Illinois Country, 1673–1712,” *Early American Studies* 9, no. 3 (2011): 617–48.

13. Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 1–10; Gray and Fiering, *The Language Encounter in the Americas*, esp. 5; Yanna Yannakakis, “Indigenous People and Legal Culture in Spanish America,” *History Compass* 11, no. 11 (2013): 931–47; Drew Lopenzina, *Red Ink: Native Americans Picking Up the Pen in the Colonial Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 87–136.

an exciting new lens through which to examine the transformative power of missionary and conversion projects in Florida and the negotiated and contested nature of those projects. Through a close look at language we can begin to examine what the Native presence in these religious texts did and meant, who those Timucua writers were, and how the multivalent power of literacy helped create cultural identity and political power in the colonial world. Reading Timucua, then, requires and demands hearing Timucuas.



Timucua is not merely the name of a place. Timucua is more than just the name of a people. It is also the name of a language that was spoken in what is now northern Florida and southern Georgia.<sup>14</sup> Timucua was spoken in around thirty-five separate chiefdoms. Although many of these chiefdoms had common social, cultural, and even political practices, they never grouped together into one cohesive unit. Archaeological evidence concludes that as many as 200,000 Timucuas could have lived in the region before the advent of Spanish colonization, but by the late sixteenth century the population of Timucuas appears to have been closer to 27,000, a number that reflects a rapid and drastic decline in population.<sup>15</sup> More is known about the general patterns of growth and decline than about the people who lived, worked, and struggled in the area the Spanish called Timucua. Here is what we do know about Timucuas before 1565. They were farmers and grew a variety of crops, but the majority of their diet came from fishing, hunting, and foraging for palm berries, nuts, and acorns. Their societies, like those of most southeastern Indians, were matrilineal. They played a game the Spanish unimaginatively dubbed *el juego de la pelota* (the ball game). They drank a black drink before going into warfare. And it is clear from Theodor de Bry's engravings that, like their European counterparts, Timucuas expressed much about their rank and standing in the ways they dressed and adorned their bodies. But we know much more about the Timucuas after the 1560s.

14. James M. Crawford, "Timucua and Yuchi: Two Language Isolates of the Southeast," in Lyle Campbell and Marianne Mithun, eds., *The Languages of Native America: Historical and Comparative Assessment* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979); Ives Goddard, "The Description of the Native Languages of North America before Boas," in *The Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 17 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1996), 17–42.

15. Worth, *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida*, 2:2, 9–10; John H. Hann, "1630 Memorial of Fray Francisco Alonso de Jesus on Spanish Florida's Missions and Natives," *Americas* 50, no. 1 (1993): 85–105.

Though the Spanish had intermittent contact with Timucuas after the 1520s—Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón (1525–26), Pánfilo Narváez (1528), and Hernando de Soto (1539–40) had all traveled through different Timucua chiefdoms—it was the establishment of the short-lived French Huguenot colonies of Charlesfort and Fort Caroline (in 1562 and 1564, respectively) that prompted more-sustained European interaction with this group of Indians. René de Goulaine de Laudonnière and Jean Ribault, the two main leaders of the French colonial ventures in Florida, understood the value of establishing and maintaining good relations with the Timucuas. But a French-Timucua alliance proved hard to establish and even harder to control. Through goods and promises of military support, Laudonnière and Ribault first secured the friendship of Saturiwa, who was a chief in eastern Timucua. This alliance, however, proved brief because the French also courted the favor of Outina, the powerful rival chief of Saturiwa. Unable to play these intra-Timucua factions against each other, the French quickly became tangled in an intricate, Native-controlled network of alliances.<sup>16</sup>

In 1565 Pedro Menéndez de Avilés led a Spanish military expedition against Fort Caroline and forcibly removed all French holdings from Florida. Menéndez received some initial support from eastern Timucua Indians, especially from those under Saturiwa, who felt no sympathy for the double-dealing French officials who had betrayed Saturiwa and supplied Outina.<sup>17</sup> That same year Menéndez established the town of St. Augustine, which would remain in Spanish hands for over two centuries. But even after the founding of their first permanent colony in Florida, Spanish relations with the Timucuas remained tenuous and sporadic. It took another thirty years for the Spanish to establish more regular and sustained contact with Timucuas. In the 1590s Friar Baltasar López and Friar Martín Prieto helped establish in Timucua the first *doctrina* (a Native town that had a friar in residence) and subsequent *visitas* (subsidiary sites that the Franciscan friars visited for Mass and during special feast days).

The Timucua chiefs who had invited the Franciscans into their towns had both practical and political motivations. They wanted the goods and

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16. René Goulaine de Laudonnière, *Three Voyages*, ed. and trans. Charles E. Bennett (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1975), 125; Jonathan DeCoster, “Entangled Borderlands: Europeans and Timucuan in Sixteenth-century Florida,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* 91, no. 3 (2013): 375–400.

17. Gonzalo Solís de Merás, *Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, Adelantado, Governor and Captain-General of Florida: Memorial*, trans. Jeannette M. Thurber Connor (Deland: Florida State Historical Society, 1923), 80–106.



military alliance that accompanied Spanish missions, but they also wanted to retain their positions of power. Timucua elites saw the world around them changing and, to secure their status as both political and religious figures, they welcomed Spanish support. From goods that Timucua chiefs could distribute as they saw fit to Franciscan friars who would be hosted only in specific towns and at the goodwill of the caciques, the first Spanish interventions in Timucua did much to emphasize the power of select chiefs. As the Spanish gained Native converts, the Timucua elites retained a power structure that favored them.<sup>18</sup> The Franciscans knew that if they intended to gain converts, establish missions in Native lands, and, more important, live long enough to achieve any of their goals, they needed to work within existing Native structures. Timucua chiefs determined where Franciscans could establish the *doctrinas*, how the *gasto de Indios* (“Indian expenses” and gifts) were allocated, and who would be required to journey to St. Augustine to comply with the Spanish *repartimiento*.<sup>19</sup> As the anthropologist John Worth has argued, the social and political structure within Timucua towns reinforced the continued importance and “persistence of chiefly power” during the growth of Spanish missions.<sup>20</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century nearly all the different Timucua chiefdoms had received Franciscan friars, erected missions, and welcomed (to varying degrees) a Spanish presence in their everyday lives. The success of the missions hinged on the *reducción* (colonization) of Timucua. The Franciscans could not merely introduce Catholic rituals, such as baptism and confession; they had to dismantle Timucua traditions, such as healing ceremonies, dances, ball games, and naming practices.<sup>21</sup> Franciscans also sought to reorganize Timucua labor, requiring Indians to work both for the

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18. Dubcovsky, *Informed Power*, 68–72.

19. Amy Bushnell, “Republic of Spaniards, Republic of Indians,” in Michael Gannon, ed., *The New History of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 62–77.

20. John Worth, “Spanish Missions and the Persistence of Chiefly Power,” in Robbie Ethridge and Charles Hudson, eds., *The Transformation of the Southeastern Indians, 1540–1760* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002). For *gasto de Indios* see Amy Turner Bushnell, *Situado and Sabana: Spain’s Support System for the Presidio and Mission Provinces of Florida* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 1994), 46.

21. “Juego de la Pelota,” November 29, 1677, Escribanía de Cámara, legajo 156, ff. 519–615, vol. 2035-a, reel 14, Stetson Collection, P. K. Yonge Library (hereafter cited as PKY), University of Florida. See also Amy Bushnell, “‘That Demonic Game’: The Campaign to Stop Indian *Pelota* Playing in Spanish Florida, 1675–1684,” *Americas* 35, no. 1 (1978): 1–19.

mission and for the main St. Augustine presidio. In the seventeenth century Timucuas harvested corn in larger amounts than ever before. They were also required to serve as *cargadores*, transporting food and supplies on their backs from their towns and missions all the way to St. Augustine.<sup>22</sup>

Spanish pathogens also destabilized Timucua.<sup>23</sup> The destructive effects and demographic loss caused by epidemic disease cannot be overstated, but specific references to outbreaks in Timucua are hard to find. A vague report made by a Franciscan council in 1617 alluded to a great *peste* (unspecified illness) that had hit the newly converted Indian populations. From the timing of the report, the sites it refers to, and the high mortality rates in certain Timucua missions at this moment, it seems reasonable to conclude that this *peste* struck Potano and Timucua. The next epidemic to devastate Timucua was smallpox. “There are very few Indians,” explained Governor Rebolledo of the demographic decline of Timucua in 1656, “because they have been wiped out with the sickness of the plague and smallpox which have overtaken them in the past years.”<sup>24</sup>

By the mid-seventeenth century probably around 2,000 to 2,500 Timucuas remained. Resilience and flexibility proved enduring traits for the Timucuas, who were continually forced to reassess their position and find new ways to survive socially, culturally, and physically. After launching an unsuccessful rebellion against the Spanish in 1656, Timucuas had to completely reorganize their leadership structure and relocate their towns closer to El Camino Real, the main Spanish road. Though these geographical and political changes were intended to compromise Timucua autonomy, the Timucuas managed to rebuild their relations with the Spanish without completely losing their sovereignty or sense of identity.<sup>25</sup> The Timucuas

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22. “Visitation of Timucua,” February 13, 1657, in Testimonio de Visita of Governor Diego Rebolledo (hereafter cited as *Visita*), Escribanía de Cámara, legajo 15, no. 188, vol. 1467, reel 12, Stetson Collection, PKY.

23. Paul Kelton, *Epidemics and Enslavement: Biological Catastrophe in the Native Southeast, 1492–1715* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 82–87.

24. “Governor Rebolledo’s reply to the Franciscans,” August 5, 1657, in *Visita*, Escribanía de Cámara, legajo 15, no. 188, vol. 1467, reel 12, Stetson Collection, PKY. See also John H. Hann, “Translation of Governor Rebolledo’s 1657 Visitation of Three Florida Provinces and Related Documents,” *Florida Archaeology* 2 (1986): 111.

25. Jerald T. Milanich, *Laboring in the Fields of the Lord: Spanish Missions and Southeastern Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 161–64.

even weathered the violent English slaving raids that ravaged Florida missions from 1704 to 1706. But by 1717 only about 200 Timucuas remained.<sup>26</sup>

Told in this manner, the story of Timucua Indians resembles one we have heard many times before. The Timucuas were a people grouped together by language, not politics; they knew how to work the wet, hot lands of Florida, and they left behind glimpses of their thoughtful and nuanced practices. Spanish colonization and missionizing deeply affected the Timucua peoples, not only altering their cultural mores and their labor practices, but also exposing them to ravaging diseases. As a sovereign people, the Timucuas gradually but surely perished. The Timucua language texts challenge neither the arc nor the parameters of this standard narrative, but they do center the Timucuas' role in its creation. Timucuas emerge not as projections of Spanish desire or fear, but as complex actors who took control of their own histories, texts, and languages.



Timucua is an extinct language of northern Florida whose relationship with other Indian languages is unclear. Our knowledge of the Timucua language derives almost entirely from seventeenth-century Spanish colonial documents. Two Franciscan friars, Francisco Pareja and Gregorio de Movilla, collected the bulk of these materials between approximately 1612 and 1635.<sup>27</sup> There are also two letters written in the language by Timucua chiefs from the Potano region. Manuel, chief of Yustaga and of the mission town of San Miguel de Asile, penned one of these missives: the Jesus María Letter, named for those words scribbled at the top of the page. Friar Alonso de Escudero, who had ties to the nearby mission of Santa Cruz de Tarihica, translated a copy of this letter into Spanish, but Escudero's influence, if any, over Manuel's words remains unclear.

26. For a survey and population census of these towns, see efforts by Joseph Primo de Rivera, April 18, 1717, reel 36, Stetson Collection, PKY; and John H. Hann, "St. Augustine's Fallout from the Yamasee War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (1989): 180–200.

27. Maynard J. Geiger, *Biographical Dictionary of the Franciscans in Spanish Florida and Cuba (1528–1841)* (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1940), 85; Milanich, *The Timucua*, 35; Ives Goddard, "The Description of the Native Languages of North America before Boas," 18; Jerald T. Milanich and William C. Sturtevant, *Francisco Pareja's 1613 Confessionario: A Documentary Source for Timucuan Ethnography* (Tallahassee: Florida Division of Archives, History, and Records Management, 1972), 1–21; Milanich, *The Timucua*, 172–73.

The Jesus María Letter was written in 1651 as a call for help. Chief Manuel implored the St. Augustine government for more support for the Timucua missions, complaining that as Spanish authorities took an interest in the western, grain-producing province of Apalachee, Timucua was left to suffer. Beyond the clear and practical rhetorical strategies Manuel employed to present his arguments, the Jesus María Letter underscores how well this Timucua headman understood the form and content of Spanish modes of communication and, more important, how readily he employed epistolary writing for his own purposes.<sup>28</sup>

In total there are about two thousand pages of bilingual Timucua-Spanish writings—a very large and rich corpus of indigenous language texts. Very few other indigenous languages north of Mexico have any textual documentation from such an early date. For the seventeenth century, the Timucua corpus is second only to the Massachusetts corpus and precedes it by a half century.<sup>29</sup> The existence of Timucua language texts is all the more remarkable since they were created in small communities new to European literary traditions. In this respect, Timucua differs from large Mesoamerican languages (such as Nahuatl, Maya, and Zapotec), wherein colonial literary practices represent a more direct continuation of earlier forms of literacy.<sup>30</sup> The Timucua language corpus was part of Pareja's effort to create a single written form of the language that would connect the dialects of the rival Timucua chiefdoms in a shared Christian literacy.

The most important Timucua writings can be divided into two categories: grammatical and spiritual. The first category consists solely of a 1614 Latinized grammar credited to Pareja, which examines some aspects of Timucua grammar (hereafter referred to as *Arte*). The second category includes several long volumes of parallel Spanish-Timucua religious materials, including a confessional, three catechisms, and a *doctrina* (explication of

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28. Cacique Manuel, Jesus María Letter, December 9, 1651, trans. (into Spanish) Fray Alonso Cuaderas, Ms. 2446-f, reel 6, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Museum Support Center, Suitland, Md.

29. See Ives Goddard and Kathleen J. Bragdon, *Native Writings in Massachusetts*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), and John Eliot, *The Indian Grammar Begun* (Cambridge, Mass.: Marmaduke Johnson, 1666), for representative portions of the corpus.

30. On precolonial literacy in Nahuatl, see Frances Karttunen, "Nahuatl Literacy," in George A. Collier, Renato I. Rosaldo, and John D. Wirth, eds., *The Inca and Aztec States, 1400–1800: Anthropology and History* (New York: Academic Press, 1982), 395–417.

Christian doctrine.<sup>31</sup> Though a detailed analysis of all the editions and reprints of these books falls beyond the scope of this essay, Pareja's writings had longevity.<sup>32</sup> A 1616 report of Franciscan activity in Florida conducted by Friar Luís Gerónimo de Oré praised Pareja's efforts to learn and catechize in Timucua: "Fray Francisco Pareja . . . is a man of great sanctity and of incredible zeal for the salvation of souls, as his works and writings which he has composed and has had printed in the language of the Indians, gives testimony. In this he surpassed the rest. . . . By these deeds and through the power of example, which he always gave, he overcame the harshness and cruelty of the Indians, changing them from wolves to sheep."<sup>33</sup> Oré credited Pareja's work "in the language of the Indians" with transforming the "harsh and cruel" Timucuas into loyal Catholic subjects. Pareja left behind few other pieces of writing, most notably a handful of letters criticizing Governor Pedro de Ibarra for interfering with religious matters and mistreating Timucua Indians. Pareja wrote first as a priest, then as a *custodio* (leader of a minor religious unit), and finally as senior *definitor* (head of a main religious province), and his dislike of St. Augustine officials remained as constant as his commitment to proselytizing Florida Indians.<sup>34</sup>

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31. For a nuanced discussion about texts, "books, technology, and American Indians," see Cohen and Glover, *Colonial Mediascapes*, xi, 1–34. See also Matt Cohen, *The Networked Wilderness: Communicating in Early New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 1–27; Birgit Brander Rasmussen, *Queequeg's Coffin: Indigenous Literacies & Early American Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 17–48; Kathleen J. Bragdon, "The Pragmatics of Language Learning: Graphic Pluralism on Martha's Vineyard, 1660–1720," *Ethnohistory* 57, no. 1 (2010): 35–50.

32. Georges Baudot, "Fray Andrés de Olmos y su tratado de los pecados morales en lengua náhuatl," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 12 (1976): 33–59; Charles Dibble, "The Nahuatlization of Christianity," in Munro S. Edmonson, ed., *Sixteenth-century Mexico: The Work of Sahagún* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 225–33; Bartolomé de Alva, *A Guide to Confession Large and Small in the Mexican Language, 1634*, ed. Barry D. Sell and John Frederick Schwaller, with Lu Ann Homza (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

33. Luís Gerónimo de Oré, "The Martyrs of Florida (1513–1616)," *Franciscan Studies*, no. 18 (1936): 107.

34. Albert William Vogt, "Trust yourself to God: Friar Francisco Pareja and the Franciscans in Florida, 1595–1702" (master's thesis, University of South Florida, 2006), 24–65. For Pareja's earlier involvements in Florida missions, see "Fray Francisco de Pareja's Statement," in J. Michael Francis, Kathleen M. Kole, and David Hurst Thomas, *Murder and Martyrdom in Spanish Florida: Don Juan and the Guale Uprising of 1597* (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 2011),

Pareja was one of the earliest nonindigenous students of the Timucua language—but fortunately not the sole scholar to take up this important work. There are explorations of a few areas of Timucua grammar in Albert Gatschet’s *The Timucua Language* (1877), as well as subsequent publications in 1878 and 1880, and Gatschet’s contemporaries Lucien Adam and Julien Vinson republished some of Pareja’s texts in 1886. The only modern, though rather incomplete, account of Timucua grammar comes from Julian Granberry’s *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Timucua Language*, published in 1993.<sup>35</sup> To understand Timucua grammar better, George Aaron Broadwell has collected a corpus of the extant Timucua texts, along with their parallel Spanish translations. Still in development, with new material added regularly, Broadwell’s corpus aims to assemble all Timucua texts. The current corpus comprises about 63,000 orthographic words of Timucua and incorporates a range of styles and authors. It includes the following material, all fractions being approximate:

- 4/5 of the 1613 *Confessionario* Pareja (1613)
- 2/3 of the large 1612 *Catecismo* Pareja (1612a)
- 1/4 of the small 1612 *Catecismo* Pareja (1612b)
- 2/3 of the *Doctrina* Movilla (1635)
- 2/3 of the 1614 *Arte* Pareja (1614)
- 2/3 of the 1627 *Catecismo* Pareja (1627)

This corpus has been analyzed with Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEX), a tool designed by SIL International.<sup>36</sup>

Because Timucua is an extinct language, with no reliable dictionary, the meanings of most words and morphemes in the texts have to be deduced by examining multiple contexts. FLEX allows users to find all instances of a single Timucua morpheme (i.e., root, prefix, or suffix) in the corpus and

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79–80, <http://digitallibrary.amnh.org/bitstream/handle/2246/6123/AP95.pdf?sequence=1-accessdate=21>. John E. Worth, *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida*, vol. 1, *Assimilation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998), 35–54.

35. Albert S. Gatschet, *The Timucua Language* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1877–80); Francisco Pareja, *Arte de la lengua Timuquana . . . Publicado conforme al ejemplar original u'nico* (1614), ed. L. Adam and J. Vinson (Paris: Maisonneuve Frères, 1886); Julian Granberry, *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Timucua Language*, 3rd ed. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993).

36. SIL is the organization that makes the software; see [www.sil.org/about](http://www.sil.org/about). The initials SIL alone are used today—at one point they stood for Summer Institute of Linguistics.

look at each corresponding Spanish passage to draw conclusions about the meaning of the morpheme. The more frequent the morpheme, the greater can be the certainty about its meaning. Currently there are approximately 2,300 morphemes that can be translated with some degree of confidence. This lexicon permits reexamination of Timucua texts using the standard linguistic method of interlinear glossing, which breaks each word in a sentence into its constituent morphemes, lists the meaning of each morpheme, and demonstrates how the meaning of the entire sentence is related to the meaning of its parts. Careful application of this method enables reconstruction of the probable meaning of the Timucua sentences. This corpus-based approach to the language makes it possible to read many Timucua texts for the first time, as well as compare them to the existing Spanish translations. The powerful concordance functions of FLE<sub>x</sub> and its abilities to ensure consistency in interlinear glossing provide essential tools for working out the grammar and lexicon of the language.

This methodology allows reexamination of the most important Spanish-Timucua text, the *Confessionario*. Written in both Spanish and Timucua, this work has been cited to showcase examples of Timucua life and culture, to discuss the general religious practices of Indian people in Florida, and to detail the experiences of early Indian-European encounters. But without a working knowledge of the Timucua language, other explorations of this text have focused exclusively on the Spanish translations. Reading and analyzing the Timucua section of the text reveals a different story of the missionary effort in Florida that parallels, but is distinct from, the one Pareja crafted.

Pareja devoted a great deal of time and effort to learning Timucua, and his contemporaries as well as later generations of friars praised and remembered his efforts.<sup>37</sup> Preaching in the native tongue, Pareja insisted, was the only way Franciscans could truly convert and missionize Indian peoples. In the opening sentence of the *Arte de la lengua Timuquana*, he argues that clear command of Timucua was imperative. “Everyone knows of the great damage and inconvenience (both in the temporal as well as the spiritual) that comes from a lack of understanding of the Indian languages . . . it is not enough to merely understand their tongue, they [Franciscans] must study it with much care, learning well the words and manners of speech that they [Indians] have; because, without this knowledge, instead of speakers of the truth, they [the Franciscans] will be bearers of mistakes and falsities.”<sup>38</sup> To catechize and convert Indians, it was “not enough to merely understand”

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37. Granberry, *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Timucua Language*, xvi.

38. Pareja, *Arte de la lengua Timuquana*, 1.

Timucua. Pareja insisted that the Franciscans needed to know the “words and manners” of the language to preach without errors and to prevent their sermons from leading to “great danger . . . both in the temporal as well as the spiritual.” The friar believed that to preach “the truth,” the Franciscans needed full knowledge of the Timucua language. But this task proved easier to champion than to accomplish.

A careful assessment of the *Arte* reveals that Pareja himself had a rather poor understanding of Timucua grammar, and, despite his warnings, he produced doctrinal texts marred by many “mistakes and falsities.”<sup>39</sup> In his 1877 study of the catechisms and *Confessionario*, Gatschet harshly criticized Pareja’s knowledge of Timucua. “So careless and unreliable is the orthography of these texts,” argued Gatschet, “that doubts arise whether Pareja himself . . . corrected and revised the proof sheets. The Spanish version is neither verbal nor faithful, often half, often twice as long as the Timucua text, and very frequently misleads the studious reader.”<sup>40</sup> Gatschet critiqued Pareja’s editing and translation skills, but the discrepancies between the Timucua and Spanish versions of the *Arte* and *Confessionario* raise the more problematic question of how well Pareja actually knew Timucua.

Pareja’s own words provide the best evidence of the friar’s limited grasp of Timucua grammar. He misidentified key structures of the language and made rudimentary errors. In describing the genitive, for example, Pareja wrote, “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.” He then clarifies:<sup>41</sup>

For *Na*:

My father: *honibe itina*;

My house or it is my house: *pabana* l. *pabani panta*;

This is mine, *honibehamila* l. *honibe, isota tiacu* l. *isotanano*, l. *honibe, haminano*, l. *honibe, hamila-ba*, l. *hamila* l. *hamimitiacu*, l. *honibe haminaqua*;

In the interior, they use these three particles: it is mine, *haminiyacu* and *haminti-bama* and *haminlechu*; plural: it is ours, *heca hamimilela*, l. *hamimilele*, l. *nibamimileb-atiacu* l. *hamimileno*, l. *heca hamimilelemaqua*, l. *isotanicano*, l. *isotanicala*.

39. Ibid. For similar examples in a different context, see Steckley, “The Warrior and the Lineage.”

40. Gatschet, *The Timucua Language*. At the time of Gatschet’s work, the *Arte de la lengua Timuquana* had not yet been discovered, so his comments were confined to the materials then extant.

41. l. is a Latin abbreviation for the word *vel*, meaning *or*.



Pareja argued that possession is indicated by six different suffixes or particles: *-na*, *-la*, *-tiacu*, *-panta*, *-no*, and *-ha*, but the examples he provides are frustrating at best. Some words seem to have two of these suffixes, while most of them have other parts that are not explained. The various forms are all given as alternatives to each other, as if they were synonymous, but they actually differed significantly in meaning.<sup>42</sup> Analysis of the text corpus reveals that the six morphemes (or morpheme sequences) that Pareja presented as equivalent to the Latin genitive perform extremely distinctive functions in Timucua:

- na*: first singular possessive
- la*: sentence final affirmative
- tiacu*: copula
- pan*: auxiliary (+ *-ta* present tense)
- no*: sentence final affirmative
- ha*: future

This description of the Timucua genitive, which is characteristic of much of the *Arte*, reveals Pareja's tendency to misunderstand basic Timucua grammar.

The friar's translation of the simple Spanish phrase "este es mío" serves as a telling example. A more detailed grammatical analysis of several of these sentences, where the Timucua sentences are divided into their constituent morphemes and the most likely meanings are assigned to each morpheme, showcases Pareja's inadequate control of the language.

(1) *bonibehamila*.

<i>bonibe</i>	<i>hami</i>	<i>-la</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>owner</i>	<i>affirm</i>

Pareja's translation: This is mine.

Literal translation: I am the owner.

(2) *bonibe isota tiacu*.

<i>bonibe</i>	<i>iso</i>	<i>-ta</i>	<i>tiacu</i>
<i>I</i>	<i>have, hold</i>	<i>part</i>	<i>cop</i>

Pareja's translation: This is mine.

Literal translation: I have it.

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42. Some examples also contain the *-nano* ("sentence final affirmative") particle.

- (3) hamimitiacu.  
       hami    -mi    -tiacu  
       owner 3poss cop

Pareja's translation: This is mine.

Literal translation: He is the owner.

Pareja's examples seem like a rough listing of different Timucua translations of the Spanish phrase "este es mío." Some of the responses are paraphrases, and some reflect probable misunderstandings, on the part of either the friar or the Timucuas. Pareja offers no explanation for the differences among these examples. Sentence (2) is more of a paraphrase than an accurate translation. Sentence (3) seems to be translated incorrectly, meaning "he is the owner," rather than "this is mine." The examples of genitive markers in Timucua form no grammatically coherent group. Pareja simply lists elements found at the end of the responses, which suggests that he could not reliably distinguish Timucua sentences with different but related meanings. Nor could he tell when Timucua people gave him inaccurate responses to his requests for translation. His less than complete understanding of the Timucua language shows that, contrary to the promises made in the introduction of the *Arte*, Pareja did not fully grasp "the manners" of this Native language. But more important, these errors show that he did not know enough Timucua to produce these texts on his own.

Timucua Indians played an important role in writing these doctrinal materials. The text of the *Confessionario* is in two columns, the Spanish on the left and the Timucua on the right. Pareja did not write the Spanish, which was drawn from a standard set of questions found in many Spanish-language confessional materials. The Timucua portions are attributed to Pareja, but if the friar's linguistic shortcomings were not enough to complicate this assertion, the text itself offers good evidence that at least two, and perhaps even more, uncredited Timucuas coauthored the Timucua sections. Probably unbeknownst to Pareja, the *Confessionario* includes different and sometimes mixed dialects of Timucua. Such inconsistencies suggest that no single author, either Spanish or Indian, could have written the whole document.<sup>43</sup>

The dialect diversity in the Timucua language sections helps disentangle

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43. For other moments of Timucua involvement in Spanish religious activities, see Bushnell, *Situado and Sabana*, 90–112.



Figure 1. “Preguntas antes de entrar en la Confesión” (Questions for before Entering Confession) from *Confessionario*, f. 117v. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Native authorship from the proselytizing and colonial projects of the *Confessionario*. Linguistic evidence suggests that speakers differed in the pronunciation of the plural argument suffix *-bo*.<sup>44</sup> This suffix appears on the verb when either the subject or object is plural, such as in the following example:

- (4) heca      nisibotela
- heca    n-    isi    -bo    -te    -la
- we    1st   say   pl    present   affirm
- We say. (Nosotros dezimos)

Here the combination of *ni-* (first person) and *-bo* (plural argument) indicates that the verb is inflected for a first-person plural subject.

The *-bo* suffix appears frequently in the texts, but with variant spellings.

44. [bo] and [b<sup>w</sup>o] alternate in many contexts; we have chosen to focus on alternations in the spelling of the *-bo* (plural) morpheme because it is extremely frequent and thus a very good diagnostic of this dialect alternation.

**Table 1**  
**Distribution of *-bo* and *-buo* Dialect in the Small Catechism**

Folia	<i>-bo</i>	<i>-buo</i>	Total	% <i>-bo</i>	% <i>-buo</i>
6–26	10	21	31	32%	68%
27–46	10	12	22	45%	55%
47–66	10	11	21	48%	52%
67–86	7	5	12	58%	42%
127–46	7	4	11	64%	36%
147–66	7	4	11	64%	36%
Mean	8.5	9.5	18		

For one group of Timucuas (BO dialect), the pronunciation was consistently [bo] whereas for another group of Timucuas (BUO dialect), the pronunciation alternated between [bo] and [b<sup>w</sup>o].<sup>45</sup> Because the writing of Timucua in the early texts was not standardized, the spelling of this suffix offers a clue to the dialect of the writer. Texts that consistently spell the plural argument suffix *-bo* are more likely to be from a BO dialect speaker, while texts that alternate between the *-bo* and *-buo* spellings were probably written by someone who spoke the BUO dialect.

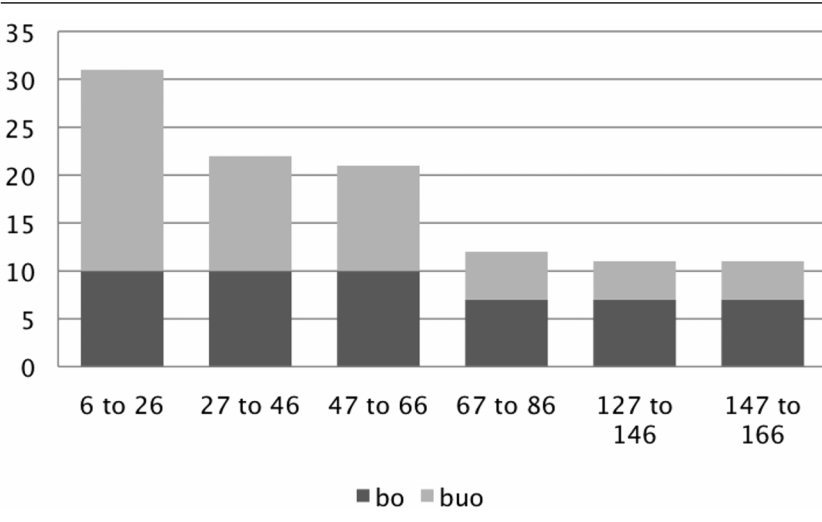
The small catechism (Pareja 1612b) appears to be the work of a BUO-dialect speaker, as there is a fairly smooth distribution of averages (about 48 percent *-bo* and 52 percent *-buo*) throughout the text. Consider tables 1 and 2.<sup>46</sup>

The *Confessionario* contains a very different distribution. The text commences almost entirely in the BO dialect—the first 119 folia have only one instance of *-buo*. But something very unusual happens at folio 120, when the pattern changes, and *-bo* and *-buo* begin to alternate in a way that is characteristic of the BUO dialect of Timucua. This pattern continues until

45. Pareja himself notes dialect variation of this kind in the *Arte de la lengua Timuquana*, f. 4v. We think it is significant, however, that after his initial discussion of dialect difference he never spells the plural *-bo* as *-buo* in the *Arte*. Thus the *Arte*, the document that is most clearly written by Pareja, does not show the orthographic variation for the plural found in the *Catecismo* and the *Confessionario*.

46. The count begins with f. 6 because that is where the Timucua text begins, the previous pages being Spanish introductions. Folia are grouped in bins of twenty folia for the purpose of this count. The number of instances of *-buo* within bins ranged from a high of 21 to a low of 4, with a mean of 9.5 instances. The transcription and analysis of ff. 87–126 are not yet completed.

**Table 2**  
**Distribution of *-bo* and *-buo* Dialect in the Small Catechism**



roughly folio 159, when the text reverts to the uniform BO dialect and remains that way until the end of the text.<sup>47</sup> Tables 3 and 4 show the pattern in more detail.

The best explanation for this strange spelling distribution in the text is that at least two Timucua coauthors helped write the *Confessionario*. The first spoke the BO dialect and wrote the first 119 folia of the document, and probably the last forty or fifty (roughly ff. 160–219 or ff. 170–219).<sup>48</sup> Meanwhile, a second Timucua coauthor, this time a BUO-dialect speaker, wrote the middle section of the *Confessionario*, folia 120–59. While the linguistic diversity of the text challenges Pareja’s claims of sole authorship, the orthographic diversity helps bring the otherwise invisible Timucua authors out of the shadows. Only careful textual analysis in the Native language, rather than in the Spanish translation, shows how more than one

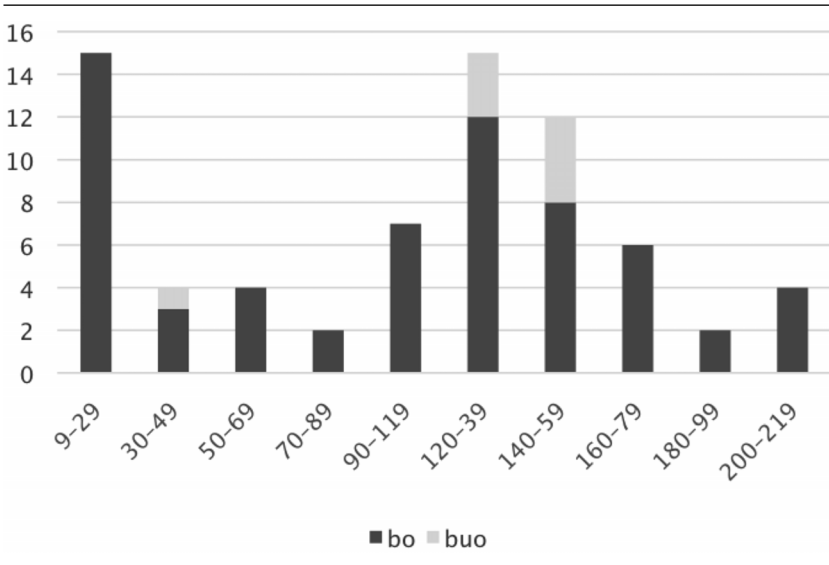
47. It is hard to be sure where the end of the BUO coauthor’s portion is. There are no instances of *-buo* after f. 159, but a speaker of the BUO dialect might very well have written several pages with only *-bo*. Perhaps some folia in the 160s also belong to this section.

48. There is only one instance of *-buo* in ff. 9–119, and there are thirty-one instances of *-bo*. Thus, this section shows a 96.8 percent preference for *-bo*.

**Table 3**  
**Distribution of *-bo* and *-buo* Dialect in *The Confessionario***

Folios	<i>-bo</i>	<i>-buo</i>	total	% <i>-bo</i>	% <i>-buo</i>
9-29	15	0	15	100%	0%
30-49	3	1	4	75%	25%
50-69	4	0	4	100%	0%
70-89	2	0	2	100%	0%
90-119	7	0	7	100%	0%
120-39	12	3	15	80%	20%
140-159	8	4	12	67%	33%
160-79	6	0	6	100%	0%
180-99	2	0	2	100%	0%
200-219	4	0	4	100%	0%
Totals	63	8	71		
Mean	6.3	0.8	7.1		

**Table 4**  
**Distribution of *-bo* and *-buo* Dialect by Folios in *The Confessionario***



Timucua author meticulously translated, copied, and even wrote doctrinal material without the friar's direct assistance.

Orthographically distinct, the ff. 120–59 section also presents a significant thematic boundary in the text, sometimes referred to as the text's "Superstitions" section. The preceding folia (ff. 117v–119v) record the questions before confession. But on f. 119v, the introduction and explanation of the First Commandment begins and continues to f. 121, followed by questions about the First Commandment. On f. 123, a new section begins, labeled "*Ceremonias, agueros y supersticiones que aun usan algunos*" (Ceremonies, auguries, and superstitions that some still follow), which lists a set of questions about Timucua beliefs that offer fascinating ethnographic insights.<sup>49</sup> Confessants were asked a series of questions, such as, for example:

Are you a healer?

Have you placed a new candle or fire to cure someone?

Have you cured someone by calling the devil?

When it thundered, did you blow 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?

In order to take food out of the storehouse, have you prayed?

Such questions fit awkwardly within the context of the confessional questions about the Ten Commandments that resume at f. 133 with the Second Commandment. The Third, Fourth, and Fifth Commandments follow in a fairly conventional way. But after the Fifth Commandment, another ethnographically specific set of questions appear; these deal with pregnancy, abortion, traditional curers, the use of herbs, and witches. Like the previous set, these questions are inquiries into Timucua customs and require the confessants to acknowledge whether they are continuing to practice non-Christian rituals.

The dialect employed as well as the content discussed in this middle section of the *Confessionario* differs from those in the rest of the text. One would expect that if Pareja was writing down the Timucua himself, his

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49. As does Mauricio Damian Rivero in "The Words of God: Religious Texts and the Counter-Reformation in the Spanish World" (Ph.D. diss., Florida International University, 2000), 203–33.

spelling would be consistent, and he would be unlikely to change his spelling of the plural suffix halfway through the *Confessionario*, only to switch back to the original spelling in the final third. Linguists, however, like to play devil's advocate and think of other potential explanations. What if Timucua coauthors did not write the texts according to their own pronunciations of the language, but Pareja merely and faithfully recorded the different dialects of his Native assistants, thus yielding the pattern with the BO and BUO alternation? Though this scenario cannot be completely dismissed, it seems highly unlikely. Pareja was generally careless about spelling in both Spanish and Timucua; thus, it would be surprising if he was suddenly accurate in transcribing dialect differences. Crediting Pareja with sole authorship would imply that on the one hand the friar was a very accurate phonetician, while on the other hand he was incapable of knowing when the Timucua text said something different from the Spanish.

The linguistic and orthographic differences in the *Confessionario* recast the entire enterprise in a new light. To produce these texts, Pareja did not work alone, diligently translating from Spanish to Timucua, as earlier scholars have assumed.<sup>50</sup> The Franciscan acted more like an editor, taking extant Spanish language devotional material, dividing it into sections, and assigning them to Timucua converts. It was the converts, therefore, who translated and wrote down the Timucua. Pareja then assembled the pieces, copied them, and prepared the document for printing. The friar might have run the operation, but he did not control its every aspect.<sup>51</sup> And failing to note the subtleties of the language under translation, Pareja compiled texts that contained significantly different Timucua and Spanish versions.

For the Timucuas helping Pareja, Spanish might have been a second, third, or possibly even a fourth language, so discrepancies between the Timucua and the Spanish versions of the *Confessionario* could have derived, in part, from the Timucuas' failure to understand fully either the Spanish language or the key religious concepts under consideration. But this scenario seems improbable. Evidence of language in colonial contexts reveals that the duty of bilingualism was not equally shared between the colonizers and the colonized. Many Timucua subjects were fluent speakers of Spanish, although we do not know whether any Spaniards were fluent in Timucua. Furthermore, the frequency with which the Spanish and Timucua texts

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50. Goddard, "The Description of the Native Languages of North America before Boas," 18; James M. Crawford, "Timucua and Yuchi: Two Language Isolates of the Southeast," in Campbell and Mithun, *The Languages of Native America*, 327.

51. Worth, *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida*, 1:57–68.



reflect each other perfectly suggests that the Timucua authors understood Spanish with a great degree of sophistication and made careful choices about when and how to vary their translations.

A close reading of the “Superstitions” portion of the *Confessionario* reveals many instances of the Timucua text diverging substantially as well as purposefully from the Spanish. The following passages explore different Spanish and Timucua translations on sensitive topics, such as abortion and infanticide.

(5) *Nia chipacanoleta etamina binayelaha*  
 nia chi - pacano -leta eta -mi nahi -naye la -ha  
 woman 2 single if pregnancy 3poss exist when cop irrealis  
*inbeti inino acoma chinecoco labauc yuchi*  
 iniheti ini -no acoma chi - neco -co -la -hacu yuchi  
 sin commit ger great 2 effect indef vsuff comparative shame  
*nomabetaleqe aruquima iqueninaye qere nabueta nebeleca*  
 -no -ma beta -leqe arugui -ma iqueni -naye -qere na- bueta nebeleca  
 nmzr art to, for focus baby art kill when comp instr from much  
*acola inecalua iquoma nantela niapacanoleta chiyuchita*  
 acola inecalua iquoba -ma nante -la nia pacano -leta chi- yuchi -ta  
 very grave sin large art called affirm woman single if 2 shame part  
*hanimate iquenetiqua nibache.*  
 -hanima -te iquene -tiqua -ni = hache  
 although aug kill must not must not = imper

Pareja’s translation reads:

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

A more literal rendering of the Timucua shows significant differences:

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. (*Confessionario*, f. 147)

The Timucua version focuses on the act of “kill[ing] the child,” but it omits the specific details found in the Spanish text, such as “chok[ing] the unborn

child” and “hav[ing] brought about a miscarriage.” It also makes no reference to the idea of bearing the sin in God’s name.<sup>52</sup> Though the text was intended to facilitate conversion and communicate doctrine, Timucua authors had managed to reinterpret Catholic notions of sin.<sup>53</sup> A testament to Native agency and literary skill, these carefully crafted passages show the subtle ways in which Timucuas adopted and adapted the religion of their colonizers.

Native authors made repeated value judgments about their own beliefs. Spanish sections of the text tend to describe Timucua practices as evil or as the work of the devil, whereas the parallel Timucua versions omit such loaded assessments. The Timucua sections of the *Confessionario*, therefore, explain Christian doctrine in ways that are less antagonistic to Timucua religious practices. In the following passage, the Timucua version mentions *ituhu*, meaning “to pray,” whereas the Spanish refers to it as *la ceremonia de el Demonio* (“the devil’s ceremony”).

(6) *Nimota uquata itubuta honosoma enesota onaquosta*  
 nimota uqua -ta ituhu -ta honoso -ma ene -so -ta ona quos -ta  
 antlers? take part pray part deer art see caus part affirm make part  
 , *itubuta iquenihale manda bobobi cho?*  
 ituhu -ta iqueni -ha -le man -da boho -bi -ch -o  
 pray part kill irrealis affirm:1sg want part believe past 2 q

The literal translation of the Timucua reads, “Did you believe ‘Taking horns and praying, it will cause [me to] see the deer and by doing this, I will pray and kill it?’” (*Confessionario*, f. 170).<sup>54</sup> The strikingly different Spanish text asks, “In order to hunt some deer did you take the antlers of another deer

52. For more on Timucua beliefs see Hann, “1630 Memorial of Fray Francisco Alonso de Jesus”; Milanich, *The Timucua*, 171–95.

53. Tamara Spike, “To Make Graver This Sin: Conceptions of Purity and Pollution among the Timucua of Spanish Florida” (master’s thesis, University of South Florida, 2006); Leavelle, *The Catholic Calumet*, 1–19, esp. 15.

54. The Timucua word *nimota* is difficult since it appears only once in the corpus, yet its position in the sentence argues for “antlers” as the most likely translation. A reviewer has suggested that *nimota* may mean “I say” (where *ni-* is the prefix and *mota* is the root “say”). But we do not think this is likely because of the initial position of the word in the sentence. We have many other examples of “say” verbs in our corpus, but they are normally clause-final, and we have no examples in such an environment. It is also possible that *eneso*, translated here as “cause to see,” is an idiom meaning “find,” as suggested to us by a reviewer.

and pray over them [in] the devil's ceremony?" Pareja's question implies that the prayers conducted before the hunt were part of "the devil's ceremony," whereas the Timucua version omits such condemnation and refrains from framing the practice of "taking horns and praying" as something aberrant or demonic.<sup>55</sup>

The Spanish description of the Timucua practice of blowing at the wind to cause or prevent rainfall provides a similar example. The Spanish text labels Timucua efforts to influence or change the weather as "*tus malos rezos*" ("your evil prayers"), while the Timucua version of the same question contains no such evaluation.

(7) *Numa hebuama bimetaqe ituhuta*  
 numa hebua-ma bime -ta -qe ituhu -ta  
 sky/heaven speak -art blow? part if pray part

*iposibicho?*

ipo -si -bi -ch -o  
 extinguish benef past 2 q

The Spanish translation reads, "When it was thundering, have you blown toward the heavens in order to stop the clouds or water with your evil prayers?" But there was no mention of evil in the Timucua text, which instead asks, "When the heavens spoke, did you blow and pray to extinguish it? (*Confessionario*, f. 150).

Timucua and Spanish authors also clashed when it came to evaluating appropriate sexual behavior. Their differences are apparent in the following two passages from the *Confessionario*, f. 164 (and thus possibly by the BUO coauthor).<sup>56</sup> The Timucua explains:

(8) *Inibimingo anoeyo napatabo hero*  
 inihi -mi -nco ano eyo na- patabo -he -ro  
 spouse 3poss indef person other instr have sex future desir  
*manimona 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

Pareja's translation asks, "Have you consented that some man walk with your spouse?" But the question posed in Timucua was closer to "Have you

55. Milanich, *The Timucua*, 175–77.

56. Hann, "1630 Memorial of Fray Francisco Alonso de Jesus," 97.

pardoned your spouse when he or she wanted to have sex with another person?” Both versions inquire after the proper level of contact between a married person and a person outside the marriage, but while Pareja assumes that the Timucua husband controls his wife’s sexuality and gives her permission, the Timucua version asks only whether one spouse forgives the other for his or her desires and the actions presumed to follow from them. Native notions of sex and marriage, formed within a matrilineal society, showed how women’s choices and power (at least in the realm of marriage and family) were far more open.<sup>57</sup>

This example also uncovers an interesting grammatical difference between the languages. The Spanish reads, “*As consentido que alguno ande con tu consorte*,” where the gender of *alguno* seems to indicate that the extra-marital party is male and the married person is female. No such gender inflection is present in the Timucua, where *inibi* means “spouse” and *ano eyo* is “another person,” and thus the Timucua question specifies neither the gender of the spouse who “walks with another” nor the gender of the person with whom the spouse is walking. For the Spanish, as the anthropologist Barbara Voss has argued, “the public and institutional exercise of sexual control was central to the imperial project.” For the Timucuas, the ability to regulate sexual practices was central to maintaining as well as expressing constituent elements of their cultural identity.<sup>58</sup>

Timucua and Spanish authors wrote differently about sex. The Timucua sections are often more direct in their language about sexual practices, while the Spanish tend to use euphemisms and circumlocutions. Consider the following example:

(9) <i>Niaco</i>										<i>nahebuasisintechiqua</i>								<i>yanacu</i>
<i>nia</i>	<i>-co</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>- hebua</i>	<i>-si</i>	<i>-sin</i>	<i>-te</i>	<i>chi</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-qua</i>	<i>yanacu</i>								
woman	indef	instr	speak	benef	recip	part	2A	if	and then									

57. Ruth Troccoli, “Elite Status and Gender: Women Leaders in Chiefdom Societies of the Southeastern United States” (Ph.D. diss., University of Florida, 2006), 83–117; Spike, “To Make Graver This Sin,” 94–115; Sabine Land, *Men as Women, Women as Men: Changing Gender in Native American Cultures*, trans. John L. Vantine (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 107–8, 171–77.

58. Barbara L. Voss, “Domesticating Imperialism: Sexual Politics and the Archaeology of Empire,” *American Anthropologist* 110, no. 2 (2008): 191–203, quote on 191; Spike, “To Make Graver This Sin,” 94–115; Ruth Troccoli, “Colonization and Women’s Production: The Timucua of Florida,” in Cheryl Claassen, ed., *Exploring Gender through Archaeology* (Madison, Wisc.: Prehistory Press, 1992), 95–101.

<i>tipasinta</i>		<i>yanacu</i>	<i>hùema</i>	<i>nabibita</i>					
<i>tipa</i>	<i>-sin</i>	<i>-ta</i>	<i>yanacu</i>	<i>hùe</i>	<i>-ma</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>- hibi</i>		<i>-ta</i>
embrace	recip	part	and then	hand	art	instr	take the hand		part
<i>cumechipaliqe</i>						<i>vnaoquoye</i>		<i>ribobi</i>	
<i>cume</i>		<i>chi</i>	<i>- pali</i>	<i>-qe</i>	<i>vna</i>	<i>oquo</i>	<i>-ye</i>	<i>ribo</i>	<i>-bi</i>
heart, chest, soul		2B	excite	and then	flesh	body	2sgPoss	stand	past

The Spanish asks, “Speaking with some woman or embracing her or taking her hand, did some alteration come to you?” The Timucua version more directly questions, “If you were talking together with a woman and you embraced each other and you took her hand, did you get excited and did your penis [literally, the flesh of your body] stand?” (*Confessionario*, f. 164). The discrepancy between “did some alteration come to you?” and “did you get excited and did your flesh stand?” is not just a matter of mistranslation. Instead, the different ways in which the Spanish author and the Timucua authors approached this topic underscore the dissimilar and at times conflicting understandings, projects, and even writing styles that uneasily cohabit the same text.

The Native authors of the *Confessionario* exerted some control over the arguments in their translations of the Spanish text. In discussing what constituted a marriage, the Timucua begins:

(10) <i>Anopira comeleta</i>		<i>niamate</i>	<i>nata</i>	<i>hibuasi</i>	<i>mota</i>				
<i>anopira comele</i>		<i>-ta</i>	<i>nia</i>	<i>-mate</i>	<i>nata</i>	<i>hibua</i>	<i>-si</i>	<i>mo</i>	<i>-ta</i>
Indian	act	voluntarily	part	woman	and	consent	say	benef	say
<i>viroma</i>	<i>nacunata</i>		<i>hibuasomata</i>	<i>mosobi</i>	<i>cho</i>				
<i>viro</i>	<i>-ma</i>	<i>nacu</i>	<i>nata</i>	<i>hibua</i>	<i>-so</i>	<i>mo</i>	<i>-ta</i>	<i>moso</i>	<i>-bi</i>
male	art	and then, thus	consent	say	caus	say	part	advise/say	past 2
									q

The Spanish translation asks: “Have you arranged that someone be married according to the Indian way without giving notice to the parish priest?” The Spanish text, as is to be expected, emphasizes the role of the priest, acknowledging that there was nothing amiss in arranging weddings where both parties consented, but their consent alone was not sufficient for the marriage to be approved and consecrated by the Church. A priest needed to grant permission.

The Timucua version differs significantly, asking only, “Did you advise that the Indians should act voluntary and that the woman should speak [her consent] and then that the man should speak [his consent]?” (*Confessionario*,

f. 184). The Timucua authors' focus is solely on the couple and their desires. The priest does not even make an appearance. It is hard to imagine that a priest translating the passage would have made the same editorial choice. As in the previous examples about regulating the sexual behavior of married women or "evil doing," the Timucua authors deemphasize or, in this instance, completely remove the Franciscans' ability to shape Native actions, decisions, and practices. The experiences and expectations of these so-called Spanish mission Indians, as the Timucua versions of the *Confessionario* reveal, were extraordinarily complex. Even within the expanding power of missionary projects in Timucua, Native peoples found significant room to maneuver and mediate central aspects of their lives. After all, Timucua writers of a Spanish religious text averred that marriage required consent, but not necessarily a priest.

Timucua authors also exercised control over the text's meaning by adding or omitting cultural details from the Spanish versions. Listing first the Timucua text, then the translation as it appears in the *Confessionario*, and finally a closer translation of the Timucua text, the following examples show where and how the Timucua and Spanish text diverged.

- (11) *Hachipile uquestanaye yabima ichuquinetiqua*  
 hachipile uques -ta -naye yabi -ma ichuquine -tiqua  
 animal hunt part when bone art throw:down must not
- nimaca* , *uquesinoma ubua-hauetila mota*  
 -ni maca uquesi -no -ma ubua -haue -ti -la mo -ta  
 Must not prohibit hunt nmzr art enter irrealis neg affirm say part
- bobota mobi cho ?*  
 boho -ta mo -bi -ch -o  
 believe part say past 2 q

Pareja: Did you order that the bones of game must not be thrown away, lest 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?

Literal: Did you say and believe that when animals are hunted, the bones must not be thrown away or they would not enter the place of hunting? (*Confessionario*, f. 130).

- (12) *Abopahama honote coso habeleta*  
 abo paha -ma hono -te coso -habe -leta  
 high location house art food aug do irrealis purpose

<i>ituhubicho</i>				?
ituhu	-bi	-ch	-o	
pray	past	2	q	

Pareja: In order to begin to take food out of the storehouse, have you prayed?

Literal: Did you pray in order to do the food in the high house? (*Confessionario*, f. 150).

In the first example the Spanish text included a detail about throwing the bones on the roof that is missing from the Timucua; in the second, the Timucua uses the vague verb *coso* (“do”) to describe the relationship between the agent, the food, and the storehouse, while the Spanish makes explicit that the prayers were said when taking food out. These last two examples raise the possibility that the original text for some sections of the *Confessionario* was actually the Timucua, and that the author of the Spanish portion incorporated additional information into his translation. The Timucua author might well have thought it was obvious which activities in the storehouse required prayer and what people had to do with the bones of game, whereas the Spanish author felt it necessary to provide more context so that other priests reading the *Confessionario* could better understand the practices described. These seemingly minor details suggest that the Timucua authors were not simply mistranslating or reinterpreting Spanish words; they were in control of key aspects of the text.

Timucua-Spanish textual incongruences point to the ingenuity and drive of the Native authors while also acknowledging the influence of Spanish missions, infrastructure, and power on Timucua life. Pareja knew a great deal about Timucuas, and he exercised an even greater amount of control over the daily life of many mission Indians. The additions, selective emphases, and mistranslations authored by Timucuas do not negate Spanish authority, but they do complicate the colonial project envisioned by the *Confessionario*. Viewing these texts as a Timucua-Spanish collaboration, which was at times willing, often conniving, and always asymmetrical, helps emphasize the contingent power at the core of Indian-European relations, even literary ones.

Pareja never acknowledged his Timucua coauthors. He did, however, recognize the quick spread of literacy among the Timucuas. The friar reported that “many Indian men and women have learned to read in less than six months, and they write letters to one another in their own language.”<sup>59</sup>

59. Francisco de Pareja to the king, March 8, 1599, reel 7, Stetson Collection, PKY, as quoted in Daniel Stowell, *Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve: His-*

Gregorio de Movilla's decision to publish a two-hundred-page monolingual *Doctrina* in Timucua in 1635 would be inexplicable without a literate community of people who could read the language. Timucuas were fast learners and eager to communicate with one another in "their own language." Though Pareja praised Timucua literacy and epistolary practices, Indian letter writing slowly spun out of Spanish control. By early 1656 the children of the men and women Pareja had taught to read and write were sending letters across Timucua and Apalachee to organize a rebellion against the Spanish.<sup>60</sup> These Native authors had moved well beyond inserting their voices and ideas into Spanish texts and were now writing their own.

Lucas, the Timucua cacique of San Martín, was one such author. He was not only literate, but also prolific, and he wrote many letters in the days leading up to the Timucua rebellion. He corresponded regularly with both Governor Rebolledo and Don Juan Menéndez Márquez, owner of La Chua hacienda, while also writing missives to his fellow Native leaders.<sup>61</sup> In organizing an inter-Indian council in San Pedro in the spring of 1656, Lucas sent letters and couriers throughout Timucua and Apalachee territory.<sup>62</sup> Though his literacy might surprise us, what shocked the Spaniards was how he used it. Other Indians in Florida, even other Timucuas, had used the pen to protest Spanish authority.<sup>63</sup> Lucas's challenge seemed far more extreme because he employed his ability to read and write to bring together Timucuas and Apalachees and transform their frustration into action.

Lucas was in good company. By the mid-seventeenth century Timucua

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*toric Resource Study* (Atlanta: National Park Service, 1996); Milanich, *The Timucua*, 109–10.

60. For Native adoption of European writing practices, see Lisa Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space in the Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 12.

61. "Testimony of Don Joseph de Prado, Royal Treasurer," "Testimony of Adjutant Pedro de la Puerta," "Testimony of Captain Agustín Pérez de Villa Real," April 1660, in Caja de St. Augustine de Florida, Residencia a Diego Rebolledo, AGI, contaduría 963.

62. "Carta de los religiosos de la Florida," June 16, 1664, AGI, SD 233, John Tate Lanning Papers, no. 701; "Testimony of Juan Alejo," May 17, 1660, in Caja de St. Augustine de Florida, Residencia a Diego Rebolledo, AGI, contaduría 963.

63. Cacique Manuel, Jesus María Letter, December 9, 1651; Don Patricio Indian to Captain Don Juan de Ayala Escobar, February 28, 1701, SD 840, in Jeanette Thurber Connor Papers, PKY; Amy Bushnell, "Patricio de Hinachuba: Defender of the Word of God, the Crown of the King, and the Little Children of Ivitachuco," *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 3, no. 3 (1979): 1–21.



authors had been writing for over half a century. Their insertions, deletions, and mistranslations provide insight into some of the intellectual projects of an Indian community where literacy was far more widespread than has previously been acknowledged. Reading and writing were not only common and commonly recognized practices, they also were skills that the Timucuas themselves valued and appropriated. Lucas used these skills to coordinate a political and military uprising, whereas the writers of the *Confessionario* used their literacy to defend Timucua beliefs and challenge Franciscan authority. Timucua texts contain the voices of unnamed Timucua authors, and only by working with and through their Native languages can we hear their stories.

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