

# Hearing a Faint Voice: Timucua Words in a Catholic Miracle Story

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The 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* is a long, dry, repetitive, Spanish book translated into a Native language for the purpose of helping Franciscans in La Florida communicate key Catholic rites and teachings to a Timucua audience. But the book seems different when we read the Timucua version and not simply the Spanish.<sup>1</sup>

Timucua is a Native language once spoken in what is now Florida and Georgia. It is a linguistic isolate, meaning that its connections to other languages and language families remain unclear.<sup>2</sup> There were well over one hundred thousand speakers of Timucua before the Spanish encroachment in the area in the early sixteenth century. But violence, unrelenting waves of disease, and outmigration

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<sup>1</sup> Francisco Pareja, *Cathecismo, y examen para los que comulgan. En lengua castellana y Timuquana* (Mexico: Imprenta de Iuan Ruyz, 1627). There are two surviving copies of this work. One is held by the British Library, where it is cataloged in the General Reference Collection, shelfmark 3505.df.30. A second exemplar is held by All Souls College (Codrington) Library, Oxford, cataloged in the Great Lib. Gallery, shelfmark r.9.22(1). A digital facsimile of this copy is freely available via the *Early Printed Books* database of All Souls College (<https://library.asc.ox.ac.uk/epbs>). Further bibliographic details for this work can be found in the *Universal Short Title Catalogue* (<https://ustc.ac.uk>) and the *Iberian Books* (<https://iberian.ucd.ie>) catalog, where it is known as USTC 5028645 and IB no. 51904, respectively.

<sup>2</sup> Albert S. Gatschet, "The Timucua Language," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 16, no. 99 (1877): 626-42; sequential lectures published in *Ibid.*, vol. 17, no. 101, pp. 490-504, and vol. 18, no. 105, pp. 465-502; James M. Crawford, "Timucua and Yuchi: Two Language Isolates of the Southeast," in *The Languages of Native America: Historical and Comparative Assessment*, eds. Lyle Campbell and Marianne Mithun (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 327-354; Ives Goddard, "The Description of the Native Languages of North America before Boas," in *The Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 17, *Languages*, ed. Ives Goddard (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1996), 17-42; George Aaron Broadwell, "Timucua -ta: Muskogean parallels," in *New Perspectives on Language Variety in the South: Historical and Contemporary Approaches*, eds. Michael D. Picone and Catherine Evans Davies (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015): 72-81; *Ibid.*, "Honorific usage in Timucua exempla," in *Preaching and New Worlds: Sermons as Mirrors of Realms Near and Far*, eds. Timothy Johnson, Katherine Wisbey Shelby, and John D. Young (New York: Routledge, 2019): 280-294.

had significantly reduced the numbers of Timucua speakers by the time the manuscript pages of the *Cathecismo y Examen* traveled to Mexico for publication.<sup>3</sup> The 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* tells none of this story. It has nothing to say about why or how Spanish settlers took hold in Florida; it is not concerned with the outbreaks of disease that decimated Native town after Native town; it is not even preoccupied by the rapidly expanding mission enterprise in La Florida or the tensions that accompanied missionization. In this sense, the 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* is like most of the catechetical literature of the time, for it seems almost detached from the social, cultural, political, and even historical reality of La Florida. Following a standard catechetical genre configuration, the 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* focuses on European examples to explain Catholic doctrine, in both the Spanish and Timucua versions of the text.

The 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* was also much like the other half-dozen religious texts produced in La Florida. In terms of content, it contained lengthy discussions on the importance of communion and confession; it included careful guides on how to pray and revere God. At the end of the book, in a section called *Algunos Milagros del SS Sacramento sacados de aprobados autoridades*, there are about thirty brief stories, *ejemplos* or exemplars, that relate miracles associated with the Eucharist. In terms of structure, the book is a bilingual text, containing alternating sections in Spanish and Timucua, with the Timucua writings supposedly serving as direct translations of the Spanish text that precede it. In terms of authorship, Fray Francisco Pareja appears on the cover page as the sole author of this book.<sup>4</sup> However, extensive work on the Timucua translations has shown that Native authors played critical roles in the translation, interpretation, writing, and rewriting of the Spanish materials. Unnamed and erased by Pareja, Timucua

<sup>3</sup> For overviews see: John H. Hann, *A History of the Timucua Indians and Mission* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996); John E. Worth, *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida*, vol. 1, *Assimilation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998): 57–68; Jerald T. Milanich, *Laboring in the Fields of the Lord: Spanish Missions and Southeastern Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 82–104; Paul Kelton, *Epidemics and Enslavement: Biological Catastrophe in the Native Southeast, 1492–1715* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 82–83.

<sup>4</sup> For more on Franciscans and Francisco Pareja's efforts, see Michael Gannon, *The Cross in the Sand: The Early Catholic Church in Florida, 1513–1870* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1965); Albert William Vogt III, "'Trust Yourself to God': Friar Francisco Pareja and the Franciscans in Florida, 1595–1702," Master's Thesis (University of South Florida, 2006). For Pareja's earlier involvements in Florida missions, see "Fray Francisco de Pareja's Statement," in *Murder and Martyrdom in Spanish Florida: Don Juan and the Gule Uprising of 1597*, eds. J. Michael Francis and Kathleen M. Kole (New York: Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, 2011), 79–80.

authors unequivocally wrote parts of the 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen*. They are present in every page, in every Timucua word.<sup>5</sup>

Timucua authors left hundreds of pages of text, but their words are mostly read in translation. For almost four hundred years, it is the Spanish doctrinal materials and Catholic questions that have been cited and used, rather than the Timucua writings. Historians often bemoan the lack of sources written by Native people, but Timucua materials *were* written by Timucua people. To center Native writers, actors, and voices we must work with Native language materials.<sup>6</sup> There is nothing simple or obvious about this statement, though perhaps there should be. It can be a slow and frustrating endeavor to work with the Timucua language documents, whose compilers and archivists were more concerned with changing Native beliefs and practices than with properly recording the language.<sup>7</sup> Such scholarship requires deep interdisciplinary collaboration across the fields of linguistics, history, and anthropology, and ongoing involvement with language work across Indian Country today. The point, however, is not that engaging with Native language materials is difficult, but that it can be and should be done.

The 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* is an unusual point of entry into Timucua writings. After all, it is a colonial and Catholic text—a very colonial and Catholic text. But it contains several brief *ejemplos* that break up the religious discourse with interesting, albeit heavy-handed, didactical stories, including one discussed in this article. The *ejemplo* analyzed here tells the tale of a young Jewish boy in Constantinople who eats pieces of the Holy Eucharist and then is miraculously

<sup>5</sup> Alejandra Dubcovsky and George Aaron Broadwell, "Writing Timucua: Recovering and Interrogating Indigenous Authorship," *Early American Studies* 15, no. 3 (2017): 409-41. For Native authors in other places of Early America, see Drew Lopenzina, *Red Ink: Native Americans Picking Up the Pen in the Colonial Period* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012), 87-136; Hilary E. Wyss, *English Letters and Indian Literacies: Reading, Writing, and New England Missionary Schools, 1750-1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 2012), 35-45; David A. Chang, *The World and All the Things Upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), x-xi.

<sup>7</sup> For the classic work on analyzing Native voices in missionary texts, see Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989). For more recent examples, see Gregory Haimovich, "Precontact Indigenous Concepts in Christian Translations: The Terminology of Sin and Confession in Early Colonial Quechua Texts," in *Words and Worlds Turned Around: Indigenous Christianities in Colonial Latin America*, ed. David Tavárez (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2017): 82-101; Mark Z. Christensen, *Translated Christianities: Nahuatl and Maya Religious Texts* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014); Otto Zwartjes, "The missionaries' contribution to translation studies in the Spanish colonial period: The *mise en page* of translated texts and its functions in foreign language teaching," in *Missionary Linguistics V: Translation Theories and Practices*, eds. Otto Zwartjes, Klaus Zimmermann and Martina Schrader-Kniffki (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2014), 1-50.

unharméd when his father locks him in a burning furnace for three days. It is a peculiar story set in a place far from Timucua homelands, but no more strange than other *ejemplos* in the 1627 *Catecismo y Examen*, which include accounts about a woman captured by pirates; a giant spider that ate a sinner who would not confess; and a hunter visited by the spirit of his condemned friend.<sup>8</sup> Though we know little about how these religious books were used in Florida, it is clear that Franciscans relied on these stories to communicate Catholic doctrine. But what were they communicating? What do the Timucua translations of these religious stories actually say?

This article works through the Timucua version of an *ejemplo*. It first grounds the *Catecismo y Examen* in 1620s Timucua; since almost nothing is known about where or how these religious materials were written, this context becomes even more important to understand the particularities of the Timucua translation. Then we provide a new and more literal translation of the Timucua text, offering both the original Spanish and Timucua versions. Though the Spanish and Timucua stories cover similar ground, there are noticeable differences between the Timucua and Spanish texts. These moments of divergence are worth exploring, for they provide insight into how Timucua writers approached colonial texts and translation projects. Though a full explanation of Timucua grammar and syntax is beyond the scope of this piece, the *ejemplo* allows us to examine the sophistication, subtly, and power of the Timucua language, and argue once again for the importance of working with and through Native languages. “Language was always the companion of empire,” or so argued Antonio de Nebrija in his 1492 *Gramática Castellana*, but in these Timucua-Spanish texts, the Timucua subtly fights back. Right next to a Spanish text that sought to convert, suppress, and oppress, the Timucua language remains. It does not accompany empire; it disrupts it one syllable at a time.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Francisco Pareja, *III. parte del catecismo, en lengua Timuquana, y castellano. En que se trata el modo de oyr Missa, y sus ceremonias* (Mexico: Imprenta de Iuan Ruyz, 1628). Only surviving copy held by All Souls College Library, cataloged as Great Lib. Gallery, shelfmark r.9.22(2), see IB no. 51905. This work is bound with the All Souls College Library copy of *Catecismo y Examen* cited in n.1. Gregorio de Movilla, *Explicacion de la doctrina que compuso el cardenal Belarmino, por mandado del señor papa Clemente 8. Traducida en Lengua Floridana: por el Padre Fr. Gregorio de Movilla...* (Mexico: Imprenta de Iuan Ruyz, 1635). Only surviving copy held by The New-York Historical Society, cataloged as Y1635.Bell Expl, within the Buckingham Smith papers, see IB no. 49841.

<sup>9</sup> Antonio de Nebrija, *Gramática castellana...*, eds. Pascual Galindo Romeo and Luis Ortiz Muñoz, 2 vols. (Madrid, 1946 [og. pub. 1492]). For further discussion on Nebrija’s grammar, see Hans-Josef Niederehe, “Los ejemplos de la ‘Gramática de la Lengua Castellana’ de Elio Antonio de Nebrija,” in *Actas del Congreso Internacional de Historiografía Lingüística: Nebrija V centenario, 1492-1992*, eds. Ricardo Escavy Zamora, José Miguel Hernández Terrés, and

*Timucua, 1620s*

There is more known about the beginning of Spanish intrusions into Timucua territory than about colonialization and missionization efforts there in the three decades that followed. The Spanish had established a permanent colony in St. Augustine, Florida in 1565. The outpost remained small and troubled by a lack of personnel, food, and supplies. Spanish officials knew they had to form partnerships with the local populations if they wanted the colony to survive—there had been many previous, failed Spanish efforts in the region since the 1510s.<sup>10</sup> Timucas, especially those who lived along the coast, had tenuous relations with the new arrivals; they had dealt with the French previously and knew well the internal havoc these external powers could cause. Spanish efforts to missionize the area therefore turned north, to Guale. It took close to four decades, an organized Guale attack against Franciscans, rising pressure, and many gifts for Timucua leaders to finally allow Franciscans into their towns.<sup>11</sup>

As the seventeenth century dawned, Timucua chiefs sought a closer connection to St. Augustine, with all the practical as well as spiritual goods that came with it. The Spanish archive narrates a story of Timucua missionization as one of unparalleled growth. Franciscans established mission after mission, and in a matter of decades all Timucua towns had welcomed friars. The often-cited 1630 Memorial of Fray Francisco Alonso de Jesus describes 60 churches in 200 places and claims: “there are more than 20 thousand souls baptized and more than 50,000 catechized.” The 1630 Memorial even noted the importance of preaching and teaching in the Native language. Jesus explains how the friars have “written children’s primers, catechisms, vocabularies, and other booklets of devotion in them because of the great deal we have learned in them... this method [learning a Native language] being the most efficacious one for the conversion and

Antonio Roldán Pérez (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, Secretariado de Publicaciones e Intercambio Científico, 1994) 1: 413-424, and Walter D. Mignolo, “Nebrija in the New World: The Question of the Letter, the Colonization of Amerindian Languages, and the Discontinuity of the Classical Tradition,” *L’Homme* 32, no. 122/124 (1992): 185-207.

<sup>10</sup> For an overview of St. Augustine, see Kathleen A. Deagan, *America’s Ancient City: Spanish St. Augustine, 1565-1763* (New York: Garland, 1991); Paul E. Hoffman, *Florida’s Frontiers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 47-147.

<sup>11</sup> John E. Worth, *The Struggle for the Georgia Coast: An 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Spanish Retrospective on Guale and Mocama* (New York: Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, 1995); Francis and Kole, eds., *Murder and Martyrdom in Spanish Florida*; Rochelle A. Marinnan and Tanya M. Peres, “Introduction,” in *Unearthing the Missions of Spanish Florida*, eds. Tanya M. Peres and Rochelle A. Marinnan (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2021), 1-34.

devotion of the natives.”<sup>12</sup> In short, the 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* was commissioned in a moment of massive expansion, conversion, and change.

But was it? These stories of seamless evangelization come from the people doing the converting, not from the Native populations. Timucua sources tell, if not a different, then a more contingent narrative. Timucuas remained a sizeable majority in Florida, and they lived in towns that, at most, had two or three people of European descent in them. The location and size of most Timucua *hica* (towns) remained in place, about 100 to 200 people continued to live together and build their houses in a circular fashion. In the 1620s, Timucuas fished, hunted, and farmed as they had before Spanish arrival, though now they were responsible for feeding Spanish bellies and building Spanish defenses as well. Timucuas kept their traditions, such as dances and first-fruits ceremonies.<sup>13</sup> They spoke and wrote in their own language. Matrilineal clans continued to provide structure for sociocultural as well as political power. There might have been friars in every town, but in the 1620s Timucua was still clearly and firmly a Native world.

And this world was formidable. The descriptions of Timucuas fishing, dancing, and speaking and learning to write in their language should not be seen as passive acts, as Timucuas merely existing. Because in the wake of colonial expansion, there was nothing merely passive about existence. The continuation of Native practices shows an active struggle in Timucua. In 1656, a coordinated attack utterly destabilized a region the Spanish were certain they controlled. There were also other, earlier, and less well-known moments of unrest in Timucua in the 1610s and 1620s. Though Timucua resistance prior to 1656 appears mostly in fragments in the Spanish archive, it is evident that this early mission period was far from the idyllic “Golden Age” so touted by Franciscan friars.<sup>14</sup>

The 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* was thus written in a moment of both growth and struggle. The Timucua authors who helped translate the story of the Jewish

<sup>12</sup> John H. Hann, “1630 Memorial of Fray Francisco Alonso de Jesus on Spanish Florida's Missions and Natives,” *The Americas* 50, no. 1 (1993): 85-105, quotes from 100, 95.

<sup>13</sup> Hann, *A History of the Timucua Indians and Mission*, 87-93, 115-121.

<sup>14</sup> For the so-called Timucua rebellion, see John E. Worth, *The Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida*, vol. 2, *Resistance and Destruction* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998): 38-65. For the ongoing violence of missionization, see Charles R. Cobb, “Indigenous Negotiations of Missionization and Religious Conversion,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the Archaeology of Indigenous-Colonial Interaction in the Americas*, eds. Lee M. Panich and Sara L. Gonzalez. (New York: Routledge, 2021), 163-79. For smaller acts of resistance before 1656, see “Petition from Juan and Agustín, Timucua Indians,” July 6, 1636, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Santo Domingo 27B, accessed via microfilm facsimile: Jeannette Thurber Connor Collection, Reel 2, P.K. Yonge Library, University of Florida, Gainesville. For “golden age,” see Charles W. Spellman, “The ‘Golden Age’ of the Florida Missions, 1632-1674,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 51, no. 3 (1965): 354-72.

boy saved by eating the eucharist had likely lived their whole lives in a “mission town,” or rather in a Timucua town that had a small church, shaped like all other Timucua structures but with a palmetto cross outside it. They had surely heard Franciscans give mass every week and knew a great deal about Catholicism and the stories Franciscans liked to tell. But they also understood perfectly well the limits of Spanish colonial authority. They had seen Spanish officials scramble to retain their balance and more than once lose control all together; they knew how precarious the situation remained in St. Augustine. The Timucua parts of the 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* reveal glimpses of this contested context.

*Cathecismo y Examen*, 1627, folios 287v-288r

Reversing the order of the *Cathecismo y Examen*, we begin with the Timucua text, followed by a new English translation. We then include the original Spanish text, accompanied by its own literal translation. These passages will make it possible for readers of English to compare the Timucua and Spanish texts.

Constantinopla isotabinincono, Hostia consagrado[n]co,  
napiranincono, aruquiqichi, hebuanquano paha eate[n]co belebota  
ohobobiletequa, pequata yaha mosicono judioqiemiletequa,  
anoqiemamano Sacrame[n]toma abosoqe nahiabota horno alano nijo  
nijo cocoma, habita echesoqe, ano vlemamano, nuta [u]bueta  
naqetahicapacama naqeta, halifotequa, anecota, ela nahapumima,  
hachibono, nayalenopahama, vcuchuama hibuata, vbueniqe chaquita  
cha! vlechumota, vlemimichu, narecabiletequa, hornomano habitaleqe  
hibuata, nanemibeletequa, pequatamichu, mine isomi cunama,  
nahiabota, horno oyoqua hebuapuntaqe, anulemama ocototaqere,  
naquana horno mabeta niocotequa, minoqe baluta yateqe, iquòtima,  
ininimano mahanatoyati, hachaqueneti, quenequa maha balu balumota  
hibuaqe, tayateta, nia michunu, tachristianoleqe anoqiemamano, qiemima  
iquènisiro maninomabeta, Emperador Iustiniano calubosomaca  
motechunu.

It used to be the practice in Constantinople that when any of the sacred Host was left over, they called small children who were at the school-house and gave it to them. A certain one of those children was the son of a Jew, and his father learned that he [the son] had received the Sacrament, he [the father] made a fire, which was burning hot, and caused him [the son] to go inside. The mother didn't know [what happened], and cried, and looked for him, and continued to look for him in the street, but was unable [to find him]. On the third day, he [the son] was

alive [behind] the door of the storehouse and he cried and she [the mother] moaned and she said “Oh, my poor child!” Her son recognized her from it [her voice], and from the interior of the oven, kept crying out. His mother knew the voice (words coming from the oven) and when the mother heard her son, immediately she ran to the oven and got there. He was alive and she found him and miraculously he had suffered but he was not burned in it, nothing happened [to him], but he was healthy and living [when] she found [him] in there. The aforementioned woman became Christian. As for the father who wanted to kill his son, the Emperor Justinian said, “[You all] must punish him!”

Usavase en Constantinopla, que quando sobran algunas particulas de la sagrada Eucharistia llamava[n] de las escuelas à los niños inocentes y puros, paraque las consumiesen. Aconteció q[ue] entre estos muchachos se mezclò un hijo de un judio inimicissimo de los Christianos, el qual, como supo que su hijo avia recibido este Sacrame[n]to encendio en furor le echò en un ardiente horno de vidrio, la madre lo buscò tres dias llorando y al cabo dellos estandole llorando el hijo la respondió del horno, corrió la madre al horno, y hallò à su hijo milagrosamente sano enmedio de las llamas. Movida deste milagro, y conocida la causa luego se hizo Christiana. Y el Emperador Iustiniano mandò castigar al padre judio, como homicida de su propio hijo.

It used to be the practice in Constantinople that when they dropped some crumbs of the sacred Eucharist, they would call the innocent and pure children from the school to eat it. It is told that among these children, there was mixed with them the son of a Jew who was a great enemy of the Christians, and when he found out that his son had received this Sacrament, burning with furor, he threw him into a burning glass furnace. His mother searched for him for three days, crying, and after crying all those days, the son responded from the oven, and the mother ran to the oven, and found her son miraculously safe in the middle of the flames. Moved by this miracle and later learning how it came to pass, she became Christian. Emperor Justinian ordered the Jewish father to be punished as the murderer of his own son.



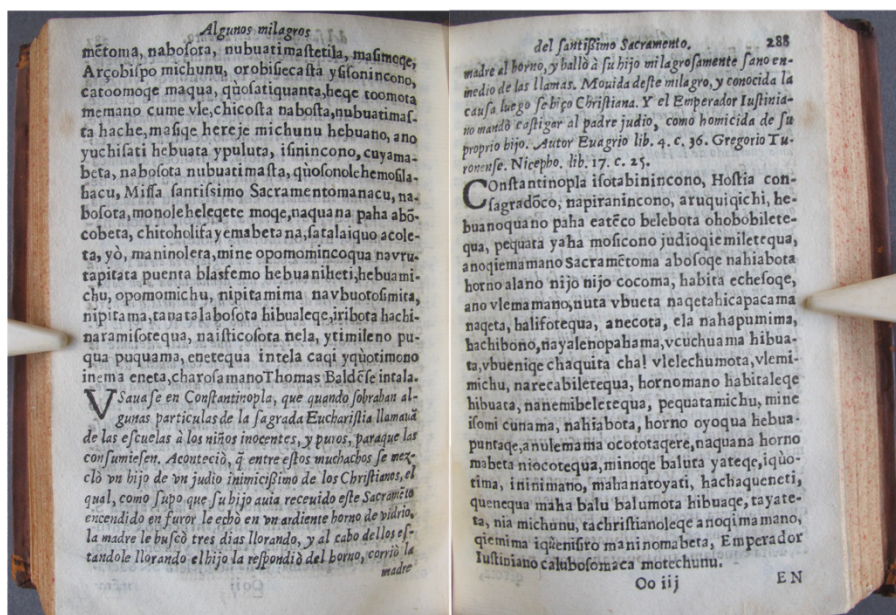


Figure I. The *ejemplo* in *Cathecismo y Examen*. Permission given by The Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford (Shelfmark r.9.22(1)).

### Interlinear Gloss

To read the *ejemplo*, we relied on interlinear analysis. Interlinear analysis is a common linguistic analytical approach that deconstructs a sentence or phrase on multiple levels. Mainly, it breaks up each word into morphemes, or the smallest units of meaning, and then offers a direct translation and identifies the linguistic category of each morpheme. This type of analysis allows for the Timucua language to be read and analyzed anew.

Included here is a full interlinear gloss of the *ejemplo*. The first line includes the original text; the second line breaks down the Timucua into morphemes; the third line provides a translation of the word or linguistic category. This interlinear gloss provides further analysis on the syntax and grammar of the Timucua language, but it also, and perhaps more importantly, shows how we arrived at our translation, interpretation, and arguments. The original text has no line breaks, so we have inserted them.

1.1 Constantinopla isotabinincono,  
 constantinopla iso -ta -bi -nincono  
 Constantinople do part pst if

Hostia consagrado[n]co,  
 Hostia consagrado -nco  
 communion:host consecrated indef

napiranincono, aruquiqichi,  
 na- pira -ni -nco -no aruqui qichi  
 ins be:left:over pass indef nmlz child little

hebuanouquano paha eate[n]co  
 hebuanouqua -no paha ea -te -nco  
 teach nmlz house live:pl part indef

belebota ohobobiletequa,  
 bele -bo -ta oho -bo -bile -tequa §  
 call pl:abs part give pl:abs past:2:(remote) and:so

It used to be the practice in Constantinople that when any of the sacred Host was left over, they called small children who were in the schoolhouse and gave it to them.

1.2 pequata yaha mosicono  
 pequata yaha mosi -co -no  
 child one after:a:numeral alter top

judioqiemiletequa, anoqiemamano  
 judio qie -mi le -tequa anoqiemama -mano  
 \*Jew son:(of:a:man) 3poss cop and:so father top

Sacrame[n]toma abosoqe nahiabota horno  
 sacramento -ma aboso -qe nahiabo -ta horno  
 \*sacrament def receive comp:ds know part \*oven

alano nijo nijo cocoma, habita echesoqe, §  
 ala -no nijo nijo -coco -ma habita eche -so -qe  
 make:fire nmlz burning refl def interior be:inside caus if

A certain one of those children was the son of a Jew, and his father learned that he [the son] had received the Sacrament, and he [the father] made a fire, which was burning hot, and caused him [the son] to go inside.

1.3	ano	vlemamano,	nuta		vbueta	
	ano	vlema	-mano	nu	-ta	vbue
		mother	top	be:ignorant	part	be:in:pain
						part

naqetahicapacama		naqeta,
naqe	-ta	hicapaca
look:for	part	street
		-ma
		def
		naqe
		-ta,
		look:for
		part

halifotequa,		anecota,	
halifo		-tequa	aneco
do:habitually		and:so	-ta
		prevent	part

§

The mother didn't know [what happened], and cried, and looked for him, and continued to look for him in the street, but was unable [to find him].

1.4	ela	nahapumima,			hachibono,
	ela	na-	hapu	-mi	-ma
	day	ins	three	ordinal	def
					thing

nayalenopahama,
na-
yale
-no
paha
-ma
ins
keep
nmlz
house
def

vcuchuama		hibuata,
vcuchua	-ma	hibua
door	def	-ta
		live
		part

vbue	niqe		chaquita	cha!
vbue	-ni	-qe	chaqui	-ta
cry	pass	and:ds	moan	part
				Oh!

vlelechumota,		
vle		-lechu
child:(said:by:female)		mo
		-ta
		say
		part

§

On the third day, he [the son] was alive [behind] the door of the storehouse and he cried and she [the mother] moaned and she said “Oh, my poor child!”

1.5 vlemimichu,

vle	-mi	-michu
child:(said:by:female)	3poss	prev:mention

narecabiletequa,

na	areca	-bile	-tequa	hornomano
ins	recognize	past:2:(remote)	and:so	horno -mano
				*oven top

habitaleqe

hibuata,	nanemibeletequa,	§
habita -leqe	hibua -ta	nanemi bele -tequa
interior foc	live part	always cry:out? and:so

Her son recognized her from it [her voice], and from the interior of the oven, he kept crying out.

1.6 pequatamichu,

mine isomi	cunama,
pequata -michu	mine iso -mi cuna -ma
child prev:mention	resp mother 3poss voice def

nahiabota,

horno	oyoqua	hebuapuntaqe
nahiabo -ta	horno oyo -qua	hebua puen -ta -qe
know part	*oven in loc	word? come part if

anulemama

ocototaqere,
anulema -ma
mother def
octo -ta -qere
hear part when

naquana

horno	mabeta
naquana	horno ma -beta
without:delay	*oven def obl

niocotequa,

minoqe	§
nico	-tequa mino -qe
run:(with:determination)	and:so arrive and:ds

His mother knew the voice (words coming from the oven) and when the mother heard her son, immediately she ran over to the oven and got there.

1.7 baluta yateqe, iquòtima, ininimano mahanatoyati,  
 balu -ta yate -qe iquòtima ini -nima -no maha na- toya -ti  
 live part find if marvel be when top but ins be:burned neg

hachaqueneti, quenequa maha balu balumota  
 hachaquene -ti quene -qua maha balu balu mo -ta  
 do:something(?) neg and with but healthy say:redup part

hibuaqe, tayateta, §  
 hibua -qe ta= yate -ta  
 live if away find part

He was alive and she found him and miraculously he had suffered but he was not burned in it, and nothing had happened [to him], but he was healthy and living [when] she found [him] in there.

1.8 nia michunu, tachristianoleqe §  
 nia -michunu ta= christiano le -qe  
 woman RelCl away Christian cop if

The aforementioned woman became Christian.

1.9 anoqimamano, qiemima  
 anoqima -mano qie -mi -ma  
 father top son:(of:a:man) 3poss def

iquènisiro maninomabeta, Emperador  
 iquèni -siro mani -no -ma beta emperador  
 kill desid:SS want nmlz def to \*emperor

Iustiniano calubosomaca motechunu. §  
 \* calubo -so =maca mote -chunu  
 \* be:punished caus imper:pl say past:perfect?:

As for the father who wanted to kill his son, the Emperor Justinian said, “[You all] must punish him!”

### *Language*

How is it possible to read the Timucua language? There is no colonial dictionary of Timucua, and the only grammatical treatment comes from a rather messy and incomplete Latinate sketch.<sup>15</sup> In order to get a better understanding of the Timucua grammar, George Aaron Broadwell, one of the authors of this paper, has developed a corpus of the extant Timucua texts, along with their parallel Spanish translations. The corpus now includes all the known Timucua textual material. The current corpus is about 148,000 orthographic words of Timucua and was designed to include a wide range of styles and authors.

The corpus has been analyzed with Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEx). Because Timucua is a language that is currently no longer spoken, 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 were essential tools in working out the grammar and lexicon of the language. Based on this corpus, Broadwell has created an online dictionary of approximately 3,800 lexical items in Timucua, along with examples, confidence rankings, and textual citations. The combination of a better dictionary and a better understanding of the grammar has dramatically improved our ability to translate Timucua materials and to offer literal translations.<sup>16</sup>

This corpus-based approach to the Timucua language makes it possible to read many Timucua texts for the first time and to compare them to the Spanish texts with which they stand in parallel. Previous work on the language has identified two styles in Timucua narrative: reverent talk and plain talk. The text considered here is written in “plain talk,” since it discusses the Jewish boy, his mother, his father, and the emperor Justinian with more simple language and without overt honorifics.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Francisco Pareja, *Arte y pronunciacion en Lengua Timuquana, y Castellana...* (Mexico: Empronta de Ioan Ruyz, 1614). Only surviving copy held by the New York Public Library, Rare Book Room, cataloged as \*KE 1614, see IB no. 51899; Gatschet, “The Timucua Language”; Lucien Adam and Julien Vinson, *Arte de la lengua Timuquana...Publicado conforme al ejemplar original único* (Paris: Maisonneuve frères et CH. Leclerc, 1886); Julian Granberry, *A Grammar and Dictionary of the Timucua Language*, 3rd ed. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993).

<sup>16</sup> For the Timucua dictionary, see: <https://webonary.org/timucua>.

<sup>17</sup> Broadwell, “Honorific Usage in Timucua exempla,” 280-294.

“Reverent talk” constitutes a significant subset of the Timucua corpus. It is used in religious texts that contain targets of deference, such as God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, saints, bishops, and angels. Reverent talk is also evident in secular documents. In the 1651 “Jesus Maria Letter,” the oldest epistle written by a Native person in what is now the United States, the Timucua writer repeatedly uses honorific markings, such as including the word *ano* or *mine* before the names of Spanish officials—in English we would use the word Lord, Mr., or Sir in much the same way.<sup>18</sup> In reverent talk, the social hierarchy is linguistically indexed through the use of special verbal and nominal morphology, a pronoun of respect, and a preverbal particle of respect. In short, the Timucua language has many and different ways to let the reader know that the subject discussed is important or valued.

The *ejemplos* in the 1627 *Cathecismo y Examen* tend to be in “plain talk.” Plain talk is used for simple narrative description, and uses little honorific language, even when potential targets of deference are present in a text. This lack of special verbal and nominal morphology is not intended to show disrespect to any of the people mentioned, but instead shows that the writers of these brief exempla wished to present the stories simply and with little linguistic elaboration. It also shows that Timucua writers made a choice about how they communicated information, alternating styles even within the same text. This stylistic writing choice and strategy is only evident by reading the Timucua version.

Moreover, the *ejemplo* offers a glimpse of the Timucua language in action. There are three main actors in this text: the boy, his mother, and his father, but it is the verbs that do most of the heavy lifting in the story. In Timucua, verbs not only contain a great deal of information about the what, when, where, and how of the action performed, but they also explain who did the action. Note a sequence attributed to the mother:

*ano vlemamano, nuta vbucta naqeta hicapacama naqeta, halifotequa, anecota*

The mother didn’t know [what happened], and cried, and looked for him, and continued to look for him in the street, but was unable [to find him].

Here a sequence of verbs is connected by the participial suffix *-ta*, which links actions performed by the same subject. In this case, that person is the mother: she does not know, cries, searches, searches again, and is unable to find her child.

<sup>18</sup> George Aaron Broadwell and Alejandra Dubcovsky, “Chief Manuel’s 1651 Timucua letter: The oldest letter in a Native language of the United States,” *Transactions of the American Philological Society* (Forthcoming).

In contrast, *-qe* joins clauses where there is a change of subject. Consider line 1.2, where the father learns that the son has received the Sacrament. Here the subject of *aboso* “receive” is the boy, which is different than the subject of *nabiabo* “to know,” and the change is shown by the *-qe* suffix.

*pequata yaba mosicono judioqiemiletequa, anoqiemamano Sacrame[n]toma abosoqe  
nabiabota horno alano nijo nijo cocoma, habita echesoqe*

A certain one of those children was the son of a Jew, and his father learned that he [the son] had received the Sacrament, and he [the father] made a fire, which was burning hot, and caused him [the son] to go inside...

These grammatical details matter. They show how Timucuas connected and separated ideas, introduced different characters and their actions, and structured narratives.

#### *Differences of Omission*

Now let's turn to the translations. There is much to say about the similarities and differences between the Timucua and Spanish versions of the *ejemplo*, but a good place to start is with what is not there. There are details in the Spanish story that are simply not included in the Timucua version. Though these omissions are small, they are interesting. The first concerns the moral character of the children who are fed the remaining pieces of the Eucharist. While the Spanish text describes them as “innocent and pure,” the Timucua text provides no such description. This might have been a simple omission, but the Timucua text does carefully explain that the children were small (*aruqui qichi*) and at a schoolhouse (*bebuanoguano paba*). The only children attending school in Timucuas towns were those being catechized; the failure of the Timucua version to describe them as “pure and innocent” could be read as a subtle critique of Spanish practices. Such differences in wording could also reflect a divergence in focus: the Timucua text cares much more about children and their actions than it does about their moral purity.

Morality is at the core of the Spanish text. After it introduces the Jewish father, the Spanish version briefly notes that Jews are “inimicísimo de los Christianos”: enemies of the Christians. This line is missing completely from the Timucua text, as is the focus on the father. The Spanish text centers on the Jewish father and his anger. It is the father's rage that grows out of control and harms the child. The fire of the furnace and the anger of the father rise in parallel: “encendio en furor le echò en un ardiente horno de vidrio.”



The Timucua text has no interest in tying the father's violent behavior to the fact that he was an "enemy of Christianity." While the Spanish text drew a direct link between the father's murderous deed and him not being a Christian, the Timucua text did not. In the 1620s, many Timucuas remained *Christianoleti*, not Christian. And rather than describe the father by what he was not, the Timucua details what he was. Once again, the Timucua focuses on actions. It is what the father does against his own child, rather than his lack of Christianity that reveals his cruelty.

The Timucua text then shifts the attention to the fire. It contains a dramatic rendition of the fire and its intensity: *borno alano nijo nijo cocoma*, a furnace greatly blazing. Note the repetition of the word *nijo* as well as the use of the emphasizer *coco*, to place particular attention on the fire, its heat, and its destructive potential. The Spanish text explores what the father was feeling, the Timucua version emphasizes what he did. Finally, missing from the Timucua text also is a small detail regarding the type of furnace employed—one used to make glass.

### *Differences of Addition*

The Timucua text is not lacking in details; it contains information not present in the Spanish version. The crying and suffering mother is the clearest example. The mother plays a role in the Spanish version, but she is a more fully formed character in the Timucua story. We learn in both stories that she searched for her son on the street, but only in the Timucua do we have indication that she would never abandon this search. *Nanemi* means "always," implying that the mother was not going to give up. After three days without any sign from her child, she breaks down and cries: "Oh, my poor child!" (*chaquita*, "*cha! Ulelechu*," *mota*). She fears something terrible has happened. The Timucua points to the anguish of the mother by adding the suffix *-lechu* to *ule*, the word for child. This suffix is used to indicate woe. The mother is not simply crying for her child; she is doing so with anguish.

In the Spanish story, the boy hears the mother, calls to her, and she saves him. In the Timucua version, there is a bit more back and forth. The child first has to understand his mother before he replies. The mother also goes through her own process, having to make sense of both the voice she faintly hears and discern its provenance. These sentences build tension. Unlike the Spanish text, the Timucua account has an interesting narrative pause, making the reader or listener imagine themselves in the storehouse with the mother when suddenly a sound interrupts her crying. What was that noise? Could it be her son? Is she simply imagining the voice of her missing child?

When she realizes that the voice is coming from inside the oven, she acts without delay. In the Spanish version, the mother appears in little more than a

sentence. In the Timucua story, she takes up more narrative space. She cries, runs, searches, and acts without hesitation. She also feels. In the Spanish text, the father can be seen getting angry at his son; in the Timucua text, the mother is the one who is allowed to let emotions guide her response. She is worried and despairs for her missing child. Timucua society was matrilineal, and mothers (and women more generally) were seen as the primary caretakers of the young (*pequata*). The mother is thus doing what Timucuas expected mothers to do: focus on the well-being of their children. And while matrilineality in no way justifies the behavior of the father, it does help explain the focus of the Timucua text. Rather than emphasize the evil actions of the father, the Timucua text centers on the active and caring mother, the one who tried to solve the problems, not cause them.

The son is *natoyati*, *bachaqueneti*, unburned and unscathed. More than that, he was *balu balu*, healthy. Here, like earlier in the text, the Timucua version repeats a word to add emphasis. Remarking both upon her surprise and the miracle of her son's survival, the mother adds: *balu balu* to the word *hibua*, another term meaning life.

And at that moment, after affirming her son's health, she becomes a woman. Up until this point, the Timucua text has referred to the mother as *ano ulema*, literally meaning: person (with) her child. *Ano ulema* is not the most common way to say mother in Timucua—*iso* is the most used term. Interestingly, the father is identified in a similar way: *ano qiema*, literally meaning person (with) his child.<sup>19</sup> Again, this term is not the most prevalent outside this text; *iti* is more generally used for father. In the Timucua story both the mother and the father seemed to be identified only by their relation to the son. In short, they are understood as parents. The father being a parent who wishes to kill his son; the mother being a parent who rescues him. But the moment the mother turns to Christianity, the text no longer identifies her as *ano ulema* and instead calls her *nia*, woman.

This is a subtle word switch present only in the Timucua. The Spanish version always refers to her as “madre.” She becomes *nia*, but the father who sought to punish his son's Christian deed remains *ano qiema*. What caused a change in the way the mother was identified? Did Christianity supplant her previous identity as a mother? Was it her defiance against the boy's father that made her into something different? The Timucua text represents the father's act as cruel and reprehensible, a transgression of all parental and kinship expectations; but the mother behaved like a *nia* (woman) should.

The Timucua states: *nia... tachristianolege*, the woman became Christian. The clitic *ta=* in front of the word Christian is used to show movement and

<sup>19</sup> In Timucua, a female called her children *ule*, while a man called his children *qie*. Thus, Timucua encodes the different parent roles (and their associated social roles) linguistically.

directionality. It usually means “away.” Was she moving away from her Timucua life to become a Christian? Was she moving away from her husband? Perhaps the *ta=* speaks of the woman’s time before conversion, becoming Christian only after taking her son out of the oven against the father’s will, and witnessing her son’s miraculous survival. The transition from *ano ulema* (mother) to *nia* (woman) is evident in the clitic *ta=*. In the Timucua language lies a back-and-forth surrounding conversion that is not evident in the Spanish text.

### *Borrowing and Adaptation*

How did Timucua people choose to translate the foreign concepts contained in this story? In some instances, the concepts seem to be far from the world of Native people in Florida, and thus the text simply uses a borrowed Spanish word. This is the case for several imported Catholic words, such as *Hostia* for eucharist, *Sacramento* for sacrament, and *consegurado* for consecrated. *Judio* (Jew), *Emperador* (emperor), and *horno* (furnace or oven) are also borrowed, strongly suggesting that none of these terms were familiar to the Timucua people of the time. Yet other parts of European culture were expressible through Timucua phrases. Schools, called *bebuanoqua paba*, and storehouses, called *bachibono nayaleno paba*, also appear in this brief *ejemplo*. A school is referred to as “a house of words” and a storehouse as “a house where one keeps things.” Both terms were clearly familiar to Timucuas of the time, and thus they adapted their own words to describe these prevalent Spanish practices and spaces into their language.

Both the borrowing of Spanish terms and the adaptation of existing Timucua words shows the dynamism of the Timucua language. Scattered in the *ejemplo*, these words show a vibrant language in real time; Timucua speakers and writers were using these strategies to document and make sense of a new colonial reality.

### *Conclusion*

At first glance this brief *ejemplo* from the 1627 *Catecismo y Examen* might seem like a quirky, albeit violent story about Catholic teachings, but read and analyzed in Timucua, this text becomes so much more. By no means a comprehensive or exhaustive analysis, this article has sought to show the potential and possibility of these Timucua texts, and more importantly to emphasize the need to work on Native language materials. Catechisms and other such texts are deeply colonial documents, intended to convert Native practices, beliefs, and customs; but Timucua voices can still be found within them, alive and healthy: *balu balu bibuata*.