

EL SERMÓN NOVOHISPANO
COMO TEXTO DE CULTURA
OCHO ESTUDIOS

EDS.
BLANCA LÓPEZ DE MARISCAL
Y
NANCY JOE DYER



CON PRIVILEGIO . EN NEW YORK . IDEA . 2012

BLANCA LÓPEZ DE MARISCAL, NANCY JOE DYER (EDS.)

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OCHO ESTUDIOS

INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS AURISECULARES (IDEA)
COLECCIÓN «BATHIHOJA»

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Impresión: ONA. Industria gráfica S.A.
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ISBN: 978-1-938795-90-9
New York, IDEA/IGAS, 2012



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THE IMPOSED SILENCE OF IDEALIZED MEMORIES

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Among the sites incorporated into the American landscape are those that commemorate the colonizing efforts of missionaries and *conquistadores* during the Spanish-American period. Indeed, the most visible sites that memorialize this phase of America's history are those of former Spanish missions throughout the Southwest. With memorials like the statues of Franciscan missionary Francisco Tomás Hermenegildo Garcés in Bakersfield and Yuma Hill, California or the bronze plaque honoring Father Garcés and other victims of the Yuma Massacre of 1781 in the garden of San Gabriel Mission, visitors are expected to venerate the Spanish settlers who lost their lives at the hands of the Yuma Indians.

This memorialization process, however, operates within the framework of a negative dialectic, where ideological strategies override the harsh impact of the Spanish conquest on the Yumas' agrarian structure, household economy, kinship organization, and community life¹. Hence, the present but absent story is the damaging effects of colonization, which is masked and celebrated in the form of heroic veneration. In the words of David Lowenthal, «historical hindsight tidies chaos into order often into predestined sequence, as though things could not have happened other wise»².

These memorial sites not only reflect particular configurations of power, they are based on the appropriations of a colonial history infused with social and racial barriers. Moreover, controlling their public meaning are the legitimized commemorations in the colo-

¹ Burgess, 2001, p. 167.

² Lowenthal, 1996, p. 115.

nial Spanish archive. Ann Laura Stoler argues that, «colonial archives were both sites of the imaginary and institutions that fashioned histories as they concealed, revealed, and reproduced the power of the state»³. Arguably, the official commemoration of the colonial Spanish archive that these southern Californian monuments read back into is the 13th year anniversary ceremony of the Yuma Massacre at the missionary college of Santa Cruz of Querétaro on July 18 and 19, 1794.

In honor of the four Franciscan missionaries killed, Father Garcés, Father Juan Marcelo Díaz, Father José Matías Moreno, Father Juan Antonio Barreneche, the college superiors used this occasion to reinter their bones, thus, consecrating their public memory as martyrs⁴. On the afternoon of July 18th, Friar José María Carranza delivered the Latin eulogy, and on the following morning, Friar Diego Miguel Bringas de Manzaneda y Encinas preached a laudatory sermon in Spanish⁵. Ultimately, the later sermon by Father Bringas would leave a more indelible mark on the colonial archive with its complete publication first in 1812 in Mexico, and, then in 1819 and 1967 in Madrid, Spain⁶. Arguably, these multiple printings of Father Bringas' sermon in two separate centuries and two separate continents solidify it as an official interpretation of these missionaries' legacies. Although the place, time, and rituals of the commemorative event played an important role in consecrating their public memory, the Latin Bible emerges as the ultimate vehicle for successfully shaping grief and reverence into contours acceptable to the Spanish empire. In Bringas' sermon scripture is used to endow the honored missionaries with prestige while at the same time expunging the misdeeds of their colonizing enterprise.

As such, this essay examines how Father Bringas enlists a wide range of biblical passages to aggrandize the colonizing legacy of the four Yuma missionaries, while at the same time creating an image of the Yumas as depraved and barbaric. In this sense, Bringas' memo-

³ Stoler, p. 271.

⁴ Shackel (2001, p. 7) writes: «While collective memories can be challenged by subordinate groups, the ideas of the dominant group must be supported through ceremonies and commemorations if its ideas and histories are to last».

⁵ Santiago, 1998, p. 173.

⁶ The 1819 published version sermon is found in its entirety in Ernest J. Burrus, 1967, pp. 540-675.

rialization erects a racial barrier between the heroic missionaries and the «unhappy» Yuma Indians that endures to the present. The sermon on which I draw here is the original 1819 printed version at the press of Don Fermín Villalpando, in Madrid, Spain.

THE SERMON

Father Bringas was born in New Spain in 1762 of European parents. His birthplace was the Real de Minas of Alamos in the western foothills of the Sierra Madre Occidental in Sonora about 24 miles north of the present northern boundary of the Mexican state of Sinaloa⁷. The young Bringas became a student at the Royal College of San Francisco Xavier in the city of Querétaro, from which he passed to attend the Royal and Pontifical University of Mexico in Mexico City. Upon graduation, he returned to Queretaro, where he entered the Apostolic missionary college of Propaganda Fide of Santa Cruz de Querétaro and took the Franciscan habit⁸. By end of the 18th century, Bringas had become a regular preacher at this missionary college.

Among Bringas's more memorable sermons was the one he preached during the 13th anniversary ceremony of the Yuma Massacre, which he titled:

Sermón que en las solemnes honras celebradas en obsequio de los V.V. P.P. predicadores apostólicos Fr. Francisco Tomás Hermenegildo Garcés, Fr. Juan Marcelo Díaz, Fr. José Matías Díaz, Fr. Juan Antonio Barreneche, misioneros del colegio de Propaganda Fide de la Santa Cruz de Querétaro, Fundadores de las conversiones de la Purísima Concepción, y de S. Pedro y S. Pablo del Río Colorado entre los gentiles Yumas, y muertos en ellas gloriosamente a manos de los mismos bárbaros en los días 18 y 19 de Julio de 1781.

It is likely that Bringas' sermon manuscript circulated within the college library prior to its publication in 1812. In the 1819 printed edition, the publisher added Bringas' 1818 history of exemplary missionaries who served at the apostolic college of Propaganda Fide

⁷ Diego Miguel Bringas de Manzaneda y Encinas, *Friar Bringas Reports to the King: Methods of Indoctrination on the Frontier of New Spain 1796-97*, trans. and ed. Daniel S. Matson and Bernard L. Fontana, 1977, p. 2.

⁸ *Friar Bringas Reports*, p. 2.

of Santa Cruz de Querétaro since its founding in 1683⁹. Mandated by Pope Innocence XI in the 17th century, this college represented a new missionary initiative better known as *propaganda fide*. Its primary focus was the reform of Christian apostates and the conversion of indigenous peoples in the northern territories in New Spain.

The sermon opens with Bringas' central biblical text, Philippians chapter one verses 20 and 21, which describes Paul's desire to magnify Christ «...whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain» (NRSV)¹⁰. With these words, he constructs an extolling image of the four Yuma missionaries, who in Bringas words were «the heroes of the religion» (Burrus, pp. 613-614). For this purpose Bringas, the preacher, was chosen among many «to praise the virtues of our illustrious brothers, who passed from this life by way of the most glorious death» (Burrus, pp. 613-614).

Throughout the sermon, he employs words meaning 'virtue', 'illustrious' and 'hero'. In a rhetorical question, he asks «would I be comforted in presenting to you some heroes... am I capable to paint for you [an image] of some venerable priests, who were at a flowering age and enthused with divine zeal?» (Burrus, pp. 613-614). This heroic memory, however, stands in stark contrast to Bringas' negative portrayal of the Yuma Indians. He belabors the Yumas' culpability in the death of the four missionaries. He states that, «not even the precious moments of their sacrifice was a moving spectacle for the hearts of some murdering barbarians» (Burrus, pp. 613-614). For Bringas, the identity of the heroes and villains of the event are unquestionably clear. With the binary categories of hero/barbarian firmly established, he subtly provided the Church with a case for supplanting this barbaric decadence with Christian benevolence, and thus paving the way for continued colonization.

Following these opening statements, Bringas directs his audience's attention to the remains of the four missionaries, stating:

here lies the respectable ashes of Fray Juan Marcelo Díaz, a seasoned fruit from the Province of San Miguel en la Extremadura, and here lies the remains of the body of Fray Jose Matías Moreno, a heroic student

⁹ Burrus, 1967, pp. 541-542. Hereafter I will quote Burrus page in the text to abbreviate footnotes.

¹⁰ All biblical references cited in the text are of the New Revised Standard Version.

from the Province of Burgos, whose head is probably being conserved by the barbarians as a testimony of their ingratitude (Burrus, p. 616).

For Bringas, the Yumas were inherently violent, which in turn impeded their embrace of European progress. This progress was embodied in the lives of the four missionaries. Such as Fray Juan Antonio de Barreneche who in his words, was «a sweet fruit from the Province of Santa Elena of Florida» and «went to the sterile sands of the barbaric Yumas at the age of 31 years» (Burrus, p. 617), and Fray Francisco Garcés from the illustrious Province of Aragon, «whose glorious works amaze him to the point of silence» (Burrus, p. 617). Here the province prevails as the standard of land organization in the New World. In Bringas view, evangelism is defined in terms of provincialization, both for the Kingdom of God and the King of Spain.

Repeatedly, Father Garcés emerges as the primer hero in this evangelistic enterprise. Using 1 Corinthians 15:10, Bringas sanctifies Father Garcés legacy with apostolic status, stating as Paul did «I worked harder than anyone». Similar to Paul's sufferings, Father Garcés suffered «with countless floggings, and often near death» (2 Cor. 11, 23). Both Paul's fate and reality are repeated in Father Garcés's provincializing mission. During his harsh journey through the Internal provinces, he went «without food, cold and naked» (2 Cor. 11, 26-27). Here Bringas sees an easy identification with Paul who as an apostle experienced a similar state of anguish and distress. Based on Romans 15, 16, Father Garcés was also a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, of whom were the 25 Indian nations between the Colorado River and the west cost of *Nueva California*. In Bringas' mind, Father Garcés' missionary efforts fully embodied the apostolic mission of Paul «so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable» (Rom. 15, 16).

The fundamental rhetorical aim for Bringas is «to create a sweet and tender memory full of rejoicing and happiness». He feels it is his obligation to revive that «noble fire that inflamed the hearts of my four deceased brothers» (Burrus, p. 619). This obligation finds its justification in I Thessalonians 3, 3 «so that no one would be shaken by the persecutions. Indeed, you yourselves know that this is what we are destined for» (Burrus, p. 617). Here the Yumas emerge as the persecutors and the missionaries as the persecuted. Their mission is

infused with apostolic parallels, thus consecrating their victimization in perpetuity. Conversely, the harsh impact of Spanish colonization on Yuma community life remains silent.

Bringas' message is driven by an interpretation of the veneration of heroic death that is framed in the apostolic life of Paul. Such an interpretation, however, minimizes the Yumas' loss of established lands by the Spanish settlements¹¹. For Bringas, all that remains important is the tragic loss of the «four heroes...who lived exemplarily and died in the most glorious way» (Burrus, p. 619). Their deaths are likened to the deaths of the Israelite heroes in Hebrew 11, 37, «some died from stoning, others decapitated, some suffered strong tests of their virtue, not lacking those to be killed with spears» (Burrus, pp. 619-620). In Bringas' words they «lived a life truly evangelical and a death fundamentally precious» (Burrus, p. 620).

Adding to their legacy as heroes of the faith are their missionary journeys. Bringas claims that through their obedience in the Holy Spirit, they embarked on a prolonged and dangerous pilgrimage through the northern frontier. They walked «through mountains and high barren plain, through reefs and stormy seas, walking more than 600 leagues (900 miles) to arrive at their destination» (Burrus, p. 629). Their journeys brought them to a «land untilled and populated with Barbarians» (Burrus, p. 630). Bringas relies on this horticultural metaphor, evoking the re-creation of the spoiled land. With the arrival of the four missionaries, the land would be tilled anew, civilizing the heathen as they cultivated the soil. This task involved the missionaries «learning a barbaric language that was rough and irregular to pronounce» (Burrus, p. 630). These words disclose Bringas' prejudice view of the Yuma language, which like untilled land is in need of refinement.

Nevertheless, the merit of true martyrdom lies not with the missionaries' journey experiences but with their heroic virtues, which Bringas identifies as faith, obedience, and charity. These virtues were «the primary motive for their sacrifice, and in order to preserve them, they died gladly» (Burrus, p. 634). In their obedience to their superiors, the four missionaries «wandered the seas and forests to enlarge the catholic faith and save souls» (Burrus, p. 635). Bringas defines them not only as martyrs of the virtue of faith, but also of

¹¹ Santiago, 1998, p. 80.

the virtue of charity. In his words, «Because, if they should name Martyrs of the faith those who shed their blood, dying from the impulse of hate against this virtue, in the same way they should name Martyrs of charity those who die as victims of the love of God and neighbor» (Burrus, p. 636). As a result of their charity, these venerable men are able to proclaim the words of Saint John (1 John, 3, 10) that they are children of God because of their love for their brother. Moreover, their unwavering obedience to their order permits them to say with all truth the words in Psalm 17, 4: «by the word of your lips I have avoided the ways of the violent» (Burrus, p. 637). Ultimately, their heroic virtue resulted in the glorification of Jesus Christ, which, as Bringas states, is the essence of their doctrine: «Christ will be exalted now as always in my body...For to me, living is Christ (Philippians 1, 20)» (Burrus, p. 638).

Apart from heroic virtue, Bringas explains that these zealous Missionaries were of one spirit, each cooperating toward the same end. He compares their unanimity in purpose to the unity of the lion, ox, eagle, and human figure in Ezekiel's vision of the chariot. Like these four creatures, each missionary worked in unison in the name of the Lord, yet at the same time each maintained their own particular luster. This united four gives way to Bringas' other comparison with Nebuchadnezzar's identification of the four men in the fiery furnace in Dan 3, 25: «I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods». This text not only provides Bringas with a biblical basis for his missionary quartet, but also a correspondence to the theme of martyrdom.

Father Juan Díaz, an apostle, who set off on the propagation of the faith among the barbaric nations. A true pastor who sacrificed faithfully out of care for his flock, expired by the hands of «those same ungrateful sons to whom he visited four times» (Burrus, p. 640). Friar José Moreno was enriched with a great wealth of philosophical and theological knowledge, solid judgment, sophisticated wisdom, and heroic resolution. After nine months of toil among the barbarians, expired by their hands, head cut off, «without these unfaithful doing this type of sacrifice with another person of the many that they killed inhumanly» (Burrus, p. 641). In this way the anguishes of this illustrious Missionary satisfied the Lord at the flowering age of 37 (Burrus, p. 641).

The third missionary Juan Antonio de Barreneche had hope, charity, prudence, justice, and strength. He was constituted a hero for the defeats over himself (Burrus, p. 643). He was destined to accompany Father Francisco Garcés to be the Apostle of the Nations from the Colorado. In the end, Bringas explains the he is only able to provide an incomplete index of the exemplary life of this illustrious youth. He was a victim of charity in the early age of 31 years (Burrus, p. 645).

Bringas brings his audience to the fourth missionary, Father Francisco Garcés, who is the incomparable missionary. He asks the question «how can I paint for you the great soul of this Apostolic minister?». «How can I give you a perfect idea of the kind person of Friar Francisco Tomás Hermenegildo Garcés?» (Burrus, p. 645). The current circumstance compels one to form for his eulogy according to the prophetic expression of David: «Like your name (O, God) your praise reaches the ends of the earth» (Ps, 48, 11). Although the reference is to *elohim*, Bringas uses this verse to salute the name of Father Garcés (Burrus, p. 646).

While on the missionary field, his daily food was tasteless, like grasses, toasted corn, or reduced to powder and other dishes «similar to what the barbarians eat» (Burrus, p. 647). He gave freely to the Indians what was given to him for support; in turn they returned the benefits the hero bestowed on the Yumas. In speaking about his long pilgrimages, the vulgar and foul foods he had to eat, which came from a deep resource of virtue. These are the beautiful steps that led him «to evangelize the peace and communicate to the gentiles the true happiness» (Burrus, p. 647). The description underscores Bringas' attempt to make Garcés a hero while at the same time guarding the stereotypical image of the inferior Indian. Bringas states that in this description of Garcés, he is able to hear the prophetic voices of Isaiah, hence he quotes: «How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news who announces salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns"» (Isa 52, 7). For Bringas, Father Garcés embodies this passage, «how beautiful it appears to me the steps with which this apostolic man goes over mountains to announce and preach peace» (Burrus, p. 648). Bringas describes the various missionary journeys throughout the internal provinces of Father Garcés as difficult to follow. Their difficulty is compared to the way Salomon

describes the movement of the Sun in Ecclesiastes 1, 5: «The sun rises and the sun goes down, and hurries to the place where it rises». Explaining his six missionary journeys, Bringas describes his fifth, «he opened new way, received the hand idols of the barbarians and penetrated as far as *Nueva California*» (Burrus, p. 649). He allowed more than 25 Indian nations to hear the faith, which include «los Gileños, los Yumas, los Opas» (Burrus, p. 649). The benefits the hero bestowed on the Yumas. Bringas explains to his listeners that «this nomenclature of barbaric words that I started to pronounce, injures your ears and is it not enough to give you and idea of the bold zeal of this Apostolic man». Bringas states that who could have seen him conserving all serenity in the midst of repeated spears «in which at the sight of him, the barbarians bloody one against another suspended to his voice the torrent of their hatred, break their arrows, disarm their bows, and give each other open arms» (Burrus, p. 650). Bringas draws a striking contrast between the blood thirsty Yumas and the heroic efforts of Father Garcés. In his view they possessed a beastly nature. From his voice alone he brings order Bringas states who is able to make born the mode of humanity among these gentiles who «only conserve the appearance of rational» (Burrus, p. 650). They gain their moral superiority through creating monsters and beasts out of the native Yumas.

The journeys of Father Garcés were part of a legitimate mission. Bringas argues that his efforts are equated with the charge of Jesus to conquer the Universe through twelve men deprived of all human aid. Thus, he quotes «And he said to them: Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation» (Mark, 16, 15). Lay in replacing native economy and society with an imagined world of free, propertied, and prosperous peasant families. Like these apostles, they were sent out by two and two and then alone traveling many leagues. Bringas returns back to his basic achievements. The 25 Indians nations and 2000 leagues traversed was a legitimate mission was, which, in turn, made him die a violent death, Bringas refers to Father Garcés missionary experience as an enviable lot. Garcés died at «the strong and without compassion blows of some of the hands of the barbarians, at the vigorous age of 43 years, in the best constitution of his health, at the middle of his career» (Burrus, pp. 652-655). Bringas asks the question if this glorious death deserves the name of disgrace. Then he states how do we

call the death of the apostles? Did they die another way? This way of death is was designated by his legitimate mission» (Burrus, pp. 654–655).

Bringas indicates that Garcés emulated the Apostles. He says, he was a «glorious imitator of those heroes in whom Jesus deposited his spirit» (Burrus, p. 656). His journey is compared to the mission of the seventy, he was accompanied only by the gentiles. Similar to the seventy apostles, He was without bed, no bag, no provisions, no troops. In arriving Bringas describes the landscape as full of «skeletons and human skulls» which are «the vestiges and remains of reciprocated hostilities of those unhappy Nations» (Burrus, p. 658). The missionary sought to «cultivate» the hostile untilled lands of the indigenous-through the missionary project-to reduce the landscape from a chaotic mass of crude, dirty huts to an ordered town. The civilizing colonialism of the mission-sought to subordinate indigenous to the dominance of the Spanish order. Bringas boosts the heroic image of the missionaries and place them within the sacred history of the Apostles. This is the apostolic mission- The expansion of Christianity is promoted as a means of civilizing-making happy the barbarian.

Ultimately, the life of these four missionaries evokes an example for all priests. As Bringas explains, it should conform to the doctrine of Saint Paul, which is to form a life that is a spectacle pleasing to the angles. Yet he asks

How much more difficult is this spectacle among some barbarian community? What kind of abstinence is necessary to edify some men, who are accustomed to living with roots, grasses, and seeds of hay? What roughness would be sufficient to give example to Indians accustomed to resisting the cold with nakedness? (Burrus, p. 663).

Underneath this line of questioning, the missionaries gain their moral superiority by creating monsters and beasts out of the Yumas. This dichotomization becomes even more apparent in Bringas' memory of Father Garcés. He claims that «in his ears he had the patience to suffer and satisfy without change the constant questioning of the ignorant Indian communities» (Burrus, p. 663). In fact, the virtues that Father Garcés exemplified to the Yumas gave way to their admiration of him. In his words, «they demonstrated their veneration for

him with expressions alive with surprise» (Burrus, p. 663). This is not to mention the many other virtues shown in silence for which Bringas cites Sirach 43, 46: «Beyond these, many things lie hid: only a few of his works have we seen». This description underscores Bringas' attempt to make Father Garcés a hero while at the same time guarding the stereotypical image of the Yumas as inferior. Moreover, this idealized picture of Garcés and the other three missionaries overlooked the predatory nature of Spanish rule.

Bringas ends the sermon by recounting the final moments of their deaths. On the 17th of July 1781 «a plague came upon the multitude in the desert (Wisdom 18, 20)» (Burrus, p. 666). Here the biblical concept of plague defines the Yuma revolt, which in turn justifies their demonization. Bringas states that, «their formed a thick stormy cloud of barbarians with all the horrors of their ferociousness assaulted the mission of Garcés and Barreneche». These images define the abasement of the Yumas in behalf of the dominant ideology. He continues to explain that «after hearing the disharmonious yell of the barbarians and the people's voices who died» (Wisdom 18, 20), «the experience of death touched also the righteous» (Burrus, p. 667). Later a growing number came over to the other town «In one moment the rage of the barbarians, sacrificed the people of the town, burned the Church, and killed Father Díaz with fierce blows and satisfied the thirst of pouring the blood of Father Moreno, cruelly cutting the head with a hatchet, leaving the two cadavers on the ground» (Burrus, p. 667). These scenes of cruelty heighten the audiences' animosity toward the Yumas. Garcés and Barreneche resolved to escape the mission. On the 18th of July left directing the rest of their parishioners to take hide in the plain lands. Bringas states here «that it is here that you see clearly brightened the heroic charity of these venerable ministers» (Burrus, p. 668). The two ministers took refuge in the house of a gentile, where the next day, 19 of July, a mob of barbarians who were looking for them decided to kill them with inhuman blows (Burrus, p. 668). In the end, these four ministers died as victims of charity. These four illustrious, robust, sane, of a flowering age, ignited in a zeal of the souls, workers from a spirit the same as the Apostles (Burrus, p. 669). For Bringas, it was a seditious, insubordinate and barbarous act committed against a benevolent ruler.

Bringas sees his audience as Israel. He states, «it weighs heavy Israel the cruel sacrifice of those who died covered with injuries above the margins of the Colorado» (Burrus, p. 669). He states that the illustrious of Israel died, they were cut into pieces above the mountains. He cites 2 Samuel 1, 19, «Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places! How the mighty have fallen!» (NRSV). Bringas advocates the idea that the Spanish were the new Israel and the empire was given to teaching the catholic faith. Spain was fulfilling its mission as the new Israel by leading the unhappy Yumas. The death of Garcés and Barreneche was seen from the perspective of David's lament for Saul and Jonathan in 2 Samuel 1. Garcés and Barreneche are compared so that not even death was able to separate them and in their death they were not divided. He states: They were stronger than lions. They were swifter than eagles (2 Samuel 1, 23). How the mighty have perished in battle. I am distressed for you, my brother (2 Samuel 1, 26). Bringas ends with a call to his missionary brothers. He asks what happened to that noble burning of our charity (Burrus, p. 673). He charges the completion of their transmigration to the New World. The woeful voices of hundreds of thousands of souls, who have a right to our desires can you not hear with dry eyes the voices with which the protecting tutelary angles of those plains and those unhappy nations call us. In the silence of the night among the apparitions of the dream, there present to your eyes a barbarian, asking you with tears that you transmigrate to the Colorado and help him (Burrus, p. 673). Just as a Saint Paul was urged in the silence by a dream of the man from Macedonia. Flowering youth, whose spirit inflames the real charity, «to us the message of this salvation has been sent» (Acts, 13, 26).

CONCLUSION

The tradition of venerating heroes has a long history in Western societies and almost always results in their commemoration in landscape. Understanding the constructed nature of nationally significant sites on the American landscape is important for understanding how we remember our past. Legacy requires sporadic concealment-mandating many suppressions. Indeed, save for a, and a monument in San Bernardino County, commemorating the passage over the mountains of Father Garcés. The impressive statue of Padre Fran-

cisco Garcés stands at the intersection of Old Highway 99 and Chester Avenue in Bakersfield California. He acclaims a heritage as a universal requisite, yet disdain and derogate legacies that differ from or compete with our own. The voice of the Indian —only in the insurgence can we find their voices—the wall is the privileging the study of his own past to the neglect of the others. European invaders who swore by sedentary cultivation and private property long rejected such claims—in their view, lands held in common or by nomadic tribes were inappropriate, empty, terra nullius in legal terms Bringas willfully overlooks the fact, his sermon casts the Yumas in a negative light by its concentration on barbarians, blood shed. Undaunted by cultural, historical and political differences and distances, and they easily adapted themselves to the thought world of the Bible. In the words of Sugirtharajah, «the voice of God blended with the voice of the invader. The imposed silences—it is the contemporary visitor that brings meaning to the site, meaning created in a contemporary context and used to view the past. While collective memory can be about forgetting a past, it often comes at the expense of a subordinate group.

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C o l e c c i ó n B a t i h o j a



Este libro es el resultado de un proyecto de investigación apoyado con fondos de Texas A&M University (TAMU) en los Estados Unidos y el Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) de México. En él han participado dos equipos de investigadores, uno de TAMU dirigido por Nancy Joe Dyer y el otro por Blanca López de Mariscal del Tecnológico de Monterrey en México. Ambas instituciones cuentan con bibliotecas que albergan colecciones extraordinarias de libros antiguos y raros: la Biblioteca Cushing y la Biblioteca Cervantina. Las colecciones de sermones de estas universidades resultan de especial interés porque a través de ellas podemos destacar la importancia de estas piezas oratorias como 'texto de cultura', y analizar su contenido como documento histórico. En ellos descubrimos una parte de los valores religiosos, costumbres y prácticas de vida propias de los novohispanos.

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