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Mixco: Cochimí and Proto-Yuman: Lexical and Syntactic Evidence for a New Language Family in Lower California

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Cochimí and Proto-Yuman: Lexical and Syntactic Evidence for a New Language Family in Lower California. Mauricio J. Mixco. University of Utah *Anthropological Papers* No. 101, 1978, xiv + 125 pp., \$8.00 (paper).

Reviewed by JAMES M. CRAWFORD

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What little we know of the languages spoken by the Indians of Lower California comes almost entirely from the writings of the Jesuit priests who established missions throughout the peninsula, beginning in 1697 and ending in 1767. The Jesuits learned the native languages of the tribes surrounding the missions and translated sermons, prayers, and other religious material into the languages. Most of these materials have undoubtedly been irretrievably lost, although some may still be lying undiscovered in European or Mexican archives. The recent discovery in Rome of Miguel del Barco's manuscript, written in Italy after the expulsion and disbanding of the Jesuits, raises hopes that other manuscripts of this sort will also be found.

Several years ago Professor Mixco undertook the arduous task of analyzing the religious texts of del Barco's manuscript, written by him in the Cochimí language. There were several dialects of Cochimí, whose speakers dwelt within a 400-mile expanse of the central desert region of Lower California. Mixco has

examined and analyzed all extant material in the various dialects, which consists of material written by other priests and by travelers in the region. The results of his analysis are presented in this monograph.

The "regularization" of the Cochimí texts, as Mixco calls the process of discerning the phonetic values of the orthographic symbols used by the priests (p. 13), and the analysis of the texts into grammatical units form only one part of the monograph. Having identified the meaningful units in Cochimí, Mixco proceeds to compare some of them with over 140 Yuman forms in a comparative lexicon (pp. 69-101). The Cochimí forms are not compared with forms in the individual Yuman languages, but with hypothetical ones Mixco reconstructs for Proto-Yuman. Mixco thus demonstrates a close connection between Cochimí and the Yuman languages by means of a rather large number of regular and, for the most part, recurrent sound correspondences occurring in the cognate forms. He shows Cochimí to be, not a Yuman language, but one which during an earlier period of time split off from Proto-Yuman (Fig. 10, p. 77).

Most of the errors detected can be considered clerical and suggest a less than adequate proofing, e.g., omission of Miller (1967) from the bibliography (to which work reference is made on p. 71), James T. Crawford instead of James M. Crawford (p. 120), 1965 instead of 1957 as the date of publication of Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* (p. 120), Venegas 1944 instead of Venegas 1739*b* (p. 11), and omission of León-Portilla from the bibliography, although León-Portilla's edited works are given (p. 123) with many references to them throughout the monograph. Broadbent's 1957 article is incorrectly given as: "Reconstitution of Rumsen." The title of her article is "Rumsen I: Methods of Reconstitution."

Subheadings in the long chapter on Cochimí syntax would have been helpful in

locating the descriptions of Cochimí categories and functions. It would also be helpful to have given page numbers, along with authors and dates, more frequently for the specific citations and references. For example, giving the page number for the reference to Crawford (1976) (p. 33) might reveal the article's relevance to Mixco's comments on the Cochimí and Proto-Yuman numerals "two" and "three."

On the whole Mixco's prose is clear and concise. Only rarely is one startled by statements like, "Beyond this point [the northernmost limits of Cochimí], early Jesuit explorers . . . found speakers of an unrelated language family, the Yuman peoples mentioned earlier" (p. 4) or inclined to pause for reflection about assertions, like that of the great historical irony claimed to exist in the Jesuits' contacts with the Cochimí (p. 6).

The above-mentioned foibles are only minor ones in a generally well-written monograph. American Indian linguists, Yumanists, especially, will be grateful to Professor Mixco for his detailed analysis of Cochimí and his carefully defined views of the Cochimí-Yuman relationship.



The Natural History of Baja California.

Miguel del Barco S.J., translated by Froylan Tiscareño. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1980, 298 pp., illustrations, \$50.00 (hardbound).

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The editing, annotation, and publication in 1973 of the *Historia Natural y Crónica de la Antigua California* by Miguel del Barco S.J. was undertaken by the distinguished Mexican

historian Miguel León-Portilla. The manuscript was written in exile in Bologna in the 1770's, and it was held by the Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emmanuele II in Rome, quite inaccessible to most of those seriously interested in Baja California. Now that part of the work dealing with natural history has been accurately translated into English by Froylan Tiscareño. Similar treatment of the other two sections of the work is promised.

Del Barco served as a missionary in Baja California from 1738 until the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish Empire in 1768. His mission was San Javier near the southern limit of the Cochimí linguistic group, but he served as both visitor and rector for the mission province of California, visiting all the Jesuit missions, many of them several times. He thus differs from the two major Jesuit historians, Miguel Venegas and Francisco Clavigero, in having seen and lived in the peninsula and from his fellow exile and author Johan Jakob Baegert in having held administrative authority and travelled throughout the region. Baegert had first-hand knowledge only of his own mission, San Luis Gonzaga in the Guaicura-speaking area.

Venegas, working in Mexico from 1734 to 1739, had prepared an official history of the Jesuit mission to Baja California. He used letters and reports in the church archives and was able to send questionnaires to all surviving missionaries. His manuscript, *Empresas apostólicas de los padres misioneros de la Compañía de Jesus, de la Provincia de Nueva España, obradas en la conquista de Californias* . . . survives but it wasn't published. Del Barco, since he was effectively a prisoner during his brief stay in Spain after 1768, did not see the manuscript. He did know a derivative of it, published in 1757 under the title *La Noticia de la California*. Although Venegas' name remained on the title page this study had been heavily reworked by Andrés Marcos Burriel. Details were omitted, sections transposed, and