

## The Political Dimension of Space-Time Categories in the Jesuit Missions of Paraguay (Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries)

*Guillermo Wilde*

From both a material and a symbolic point of view, space was a central dimension in the process of conversion of the indigenous peoples of the South American lowlands during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Spanish monarchy's policy of gathering natives into mission towns (*reducciones*) aimed to impose a new civil spatial order that would efficiently convey the very principles of Christianity. In this period the Jesuits built up more than fifty mission towns in the South American jungle, seeking to impose a new idea of society on the natives. The Jesuits started their program by relocating indigenous populations scattered throughout the rainforest in new villages, where they would be spatially segregated and 'protected' from the abuses of colonizers and enslavers. In order to make preaching more efficient, general indigenous languages (Guarani, Mojo, Chiquitano) were created and standardized through vocabularies, grammars, and catechisms. Believing that the Indians should have their own government and laws, the Jesuits facilitated the formation of an autonomous and centralized indigenous political organization. In the region of Paraguay, mission towns sheltered more than 140,000 Indians in the first half of the eighteenth century [Fig. 8.1].

Mission towns gathered indigenous populations from many different and diverse geographical, cultural and linguistic origins that had to adapt themselves to the same socio-political structure. Most inhabitants of the seventeenth-century Jesuit missions had been forced to move from their original regions to the new settlements, which entailed an accelerated process of demographic and territorial disintegration, as well as the reconfiguration of cultural, political and economic practices. The formation of new space and time categories and practices was an essential part of this process. These

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categories and practices played a fundamental role in configuring a 'mission culture' with two contradictory sides: one, associated with the imposition of a colonial regime based on the homogenization of daily practices (especially the rationalization of space and the regimentation of time); and another related to the different ways natives reacted toward such impositions (from rejection to appropriation). It is difficult to separate these two sides in terms of domination and resistance, since the process rather refers to the gradual and complex formation of a 'middle ground', in which new senses of belonging were created.<sup>1</sup>

Common sense has led many scholars to assume that missions were enclosed, homogenous, and ordered spaces from the physical point of view. Following that line of reasoning, the existing historical literature has paid special attention to the architecture and urban design of Jesuit mission towns, focusing on material and stylistic aspects and their evolution over time. By studying the surviving material structures, especially churches, scholars have identified styles and defined artistic periods. However, this historiography has neglected at least two important issues about mission space: first, the symbolic and political dimension of mission space construction, which implied internal complexities and differentiations; second, the significance of the periphery—that is, of the outskirts—in the configuration of the social life and urban structure of missions.

I define mission space as a symbolic and social process, involving several levels or scales of organization, representation, and performance. These levels or scales are connected in a network of links and activity-places, where particular agents operate.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, mission space cannot be reduced to the urban or architectural stylistic structure or even the physical territory of a mission town. It is rather the symbolic construction that organizes daily life and bodily practices.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, mission space defines what could be opera-

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1 White R., *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815* (Cambridge: 1991); Block D., *Mission Culture on the Upper Amazon: Native Tradition, Jesuit Enterprise, & Secular Policy in Moxos, 1660–1880* (Lincoln: 1994); Radding C., *Landscapes of Power and Identity: Comparative Histories in the Sonoran Desert and the Forests of Amazonia from Colony to Republic* (Durham, NC: 2005); Wilde G., *Religión y Poder en las Misiones de Guaraníes* (Buenos Aires: 2009).

2 Massey D.B., *For Space* (London – Thousand Oaks, CA: 2005).

3 For a theoretical perspective on the concepts of space, landscape and place it is worth considering the important production of British human geography over the last thirty years. See especially Cosgrove D.E., *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Madison: 1998); Harvey D., *Spaces of Hope* (Berkeley: 2000); Massey, *For Space*. For an anthropological perspective see Hirsch E. – O'Hanlon M. (eds.), *The Anthropology of Landscape: Perspectives on Place and Space* (Oxford – New York: 1995).

tionally described as a 'visual regime' (or a 'regime of perception') in which both Jesuit priests and indigenous actors actively participated. I argue that this specific regime is intrinsically linked to the symbolic process of spatial formation as a socio-cultural and historical process.<sup>4</sup> It is worthwhile to analyse the complex and contradictory mechanisms involved in the differentiation, hierarchization, and connection of activity-places, paying attention to the role social actors played in their construction and representation. Such analysis requires considering how power influences spatial (and visual) ordering. I also argue that the dimension of space overlaps with the dimension of time; if we seek an understanding of a long-term cultural (or trans-cultural) process of identity formation, the two dimensions cannot be completely separated.

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first describes space-time ordering in daily mission life according to Jesuit descriptions, focusing on how the urban organization of mission towns was efficiently oriented for discipline and social control. The second part analyses evidence about indigenous reactions to Jesuit impositions, emphasizing the way natives appropriated some impositions and contributed to the formation of mission space patterns. In its third section, the chapter explores visual-spatial developments that resulted from negotiations and adaptations between Jesuits and indigenous actors.

### Space, Civil Order, and Discipline

According to most Jesuit official records of the eighteenth century, the world was organized in terms of dichotomies that radically opposed 'Christian civility' to 'gentile chaos'. The importance of space and time categories is evident in the construction of these dichotomies:

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4 I take the definition of 'visual regime' from Meneses U. Toledo Bezerra de, "Fontes visuais, cultura visual, história visual: Balanço provisório, propostas cautelares", *Revista Brasileira de História* 23 (2003) 11–36. See also Marquese R., "O Vale do Paraíba cafeeiro e o regime visual da segunda escravidão: O caso da fazenda Resgate", *Anais do Museu Paulista* 18 (2010) 83–128, at 86. The recommendation of understanding space 'in more than simply visual or physical dimensions' provides some elements for the reconstruction of a mission soundscape. We can even go further considering 'the other senses, including the smells and tangibility or intangibility of holy places, which must have had a profound impact on the emotional reception of religion', Coster W. – Spicer A., "Introduction: The Dimensions of Sacred Space in Reformation Europe", in Coster W. – Spicer A. (eds.), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 2005) 1–16, at 14.

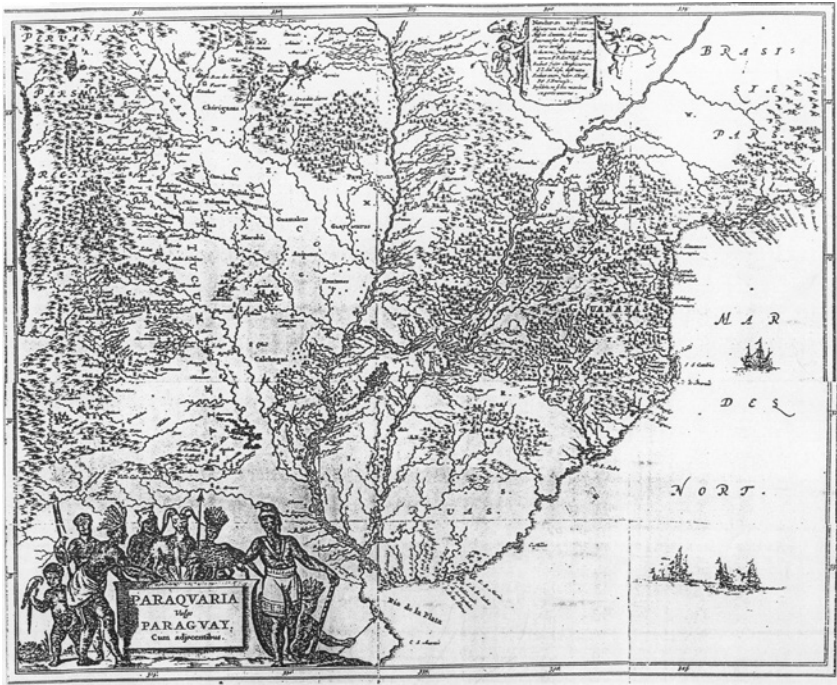


FIGURE 8.1 Johannes Blaeuw, Paraquaria Vulgo Paraguay cum adjacentibus (1667).  
Source: Furlong G., *Cartografia jesuitica del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: 1936),  
as reproduced in Barcelos A., *O Mergulho no Seculum: Exploração, conquista e  
organização espacial jesuítica na América espanhola colonial*, Ph.D. dissertation  
(Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul: 2006).

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Mission town	Rainforest
Inner space	Outer Space
New time of Christianity	Ancient time of pagan ancestors
Eternal/Spiritual	Temporal
Heaven	Hell
Solemn	Profane
Rational natural order	Chaos
Kingdom of God	Realm of demons and the devil
Proper civil life	Savage/Barbarian/Pagan life
Lambs	Lions, tigers, serpents
Saints, virtuous congregants	Sorcerers, old evil women
Christian liturgy	Dancing and drinking festivals
Peace	War and cannibalism
Self	Other

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As the table above summarizes, Jesuits constructed a radical opposition between the inner and the outer space of the mission town from both a material and a symbolic point of view. Jesuits regarded this series of overlapping dichotomies as an expression of the rational and natural ordering of the world. The rainforest, in the official discourse, was related not only to the infidels dwelling in it but also to the indigenous ancestors and memories that could always threaten the mission's stability.<sup>5</sup> Mission history, as recounted by important seventeenth-century Jesuit chroniclers, was the story of an irreversible transformation in space-time categories. It was conceived as the gradual inscription of the marks of Christianity on 'infidel' soil, the 'domestication' of the 'savage' mind, and the transformation of 'lions' into 'lambs'.<sup>6</sup> Jesuits conceived of themselves as the vehicles of this radical transformation and they frequently portrayed themselves as apostles continuing the pilgrimage that St. Thomas had begun on South American soil. The legend of St. Thomas's pilgrimage in the Americas before the Jesuits' arrival was widely disseminated among the first Jesuits that came to Brazil and Paraguay. According to Manuel da Nobrega's and José Anchieta's letters and Antonio Ruiz de Montoya's *Spiritual Conquest*, the apostle Thomas was supposed to have left his footprints in the jungle, along with a prophetic message to the Indians announcing that his brothers (the Jesuits) would come in a near future.<sup>7</sup> This set of narratives and gestures about Christianity would qualify as a 'naming that marks a beginning in time and an origin in space'.<sup>8</sup>

At the end of the seventeenth century, the Jesuit Anton Sepp presented a detailed description of the construction of a mission town. He paid special

5 Wilde G., "Prestigio indígena y nobleza peninsular: La invención de linajes guaraníes en las Misiones del Paraguay", *Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas* 43 (2006) 119–145.

6 In many pages of his account, Ruiz de Montoya Antonio, *La Conquista espiritual del Paraguay* [1640] (Rosario: 1989) related the way Indians continued with their traditional funerary practices in the rainforest even after having accepted Christian life. It was difficult for him to understand why the Indians maintained that duplicity. On the idea of 'natives' openness to the other during the first phases of evangelization, see Viveiros de Castro E., *A inconstância da alma selvagem* (São Paulo: 2002), and Fausto C., "Se Deus fosse jaguar: Canibalismo e cristianismo entre os guarani (séculos XVI–XX)", *Mana: Estudos de Antropologia Social* 11 (2005) 385–418.

7 Gandia E. de, *Historia crítica de los mitos de la Conquista americana* (Buenos Aires: 1929). On the diffusion of the legend of St. Thomas's pilgrimage in the Andean region see Bouysse-Cassagne T., "De Empédocles a Tunupa: Evangelización, hagiografía y mitos", in Bouysse-Cassagne T. (ed.), *Saberes y memorias en los Andes: In memoriam Thierry Saignes* (Paris – Lima: 1997) 157–212.

8 Short J.R., *Cartographic Encounters: Indigenous Peoples and the Exploration of the New World* (London: 2009) 12.

attention to the way Jesuits negotiated with indigenous leaders (known as *caciques*) in order to convince them to move their families into new settlements. He did not hesitate to compare those Indians with the Jewish tribes of Israel in their pilgrimage to new lands. In Sepp's opinion the creation of a mission entailed seizing control over the chaos of the rainforest. In 1701 he stated: 'So many thousands of years after its creation, this semi-deserted jungle, inhabited only by pagan barbarians, was destined to become a village of Catholic Paracuarians'.<sup>9</sup> As in many other regions of the early modern world, to impose the new religion was to print its marks over the previous beliefs. And this began with the simple act of naming and 'taking possession' of territory.<sup>10</sup>

'We erected', Sepp wrote, 'the glorious banner and trophy of the Holy Cross as a sign and proof of our taking possession of this region with all its forests, rivers, and fields'. This act was the cornerstone of the future mission town, but more importantly, the 'symbol of Christianity's victory and of the expulsion of hellish demons from the vast countryside and shadowy jungles, which they had owned for so many thousands of years, adored as idols by the infidels Paracuarians'. That day, fields and forests would be consecrated 'with the sign of the Holy Cross as the ground for the construction of Christian houses'.<sup>11</sup> Sepp pointed out that once the infidel Indians got to know the Christian festivals, they noticed their beauty and concluded that they were much more wonderful than their ancient costumes and feasts. Therefore, the Indians rapidly abandoned their shadowy forests and caves since it was clear for them that the place for their new life was the Christian village.<sup>12</sup>

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9 Sepp Anton, *Continuación de las labores apostólicas. Edición crítica de las obras*, ed. W. Hoffmann (Buenos Aires: 1971) 194 ('Cuando los dos Padres y yo vimos tantos dones de la generosa naturaleza acumulados en un lugar, consultamos con los caciques y llegamos a la conclusión de que Dios nos había predestinado desde la eternidad, para que lo ocupáramos y habitáramos. Tantos miles de años después de su creación, debía convertirse de una jungla semidesierta, poblada sólo de bárbaros paganos, en una aldea o reducción de paracuarios católicos. Y en este mismo día empezaría a cumplirse su voluntad').

10 Seed P., *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World, 1492-1640* (Cambridge: 1995). On the ritualization of space see the classic works by Gennep A. van, *The Rites of Passage*, trans. M.B. Vizedom and G.L. Caffee, introd. S.T. Kimball (Chicago: 1960), and Turner V., *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (New York: 1995).

11 Sepp, *Continuación de las labores*, 195 ('[...] erigimos el glorioso estandarte y trofeo de la Santa Cruz como signo y comprobación de nuestra toma de posesión de esta comarca con todos sus bosques, ríos y campos. Y esto sucedió en el mismo día en el cual la Iglesia Católica celebra gloriosamente la Exaltación de la cruz').

12 *Ibidem*, 263.



In late Jesuit writings the idea of Christian life as a life in the polis (whether the city, the village, or the mission town) is even clearer.<sup>13</sup> As the Jesuit José Manuel Peramás would point out in a remarkable work meaningfully entitled *The Guarani and Plato's Republic*, conversion of the indigenous populations began when they were convinced to leave their isolated huts. By order of their chiefs, they grouped themselves in common settlements, thus founding 'cit[ies]' in which they could help each other, 'consolidating their ideas and efforts'. Urban organization, with its regular and harmonious distribution of streets and buildings, was the physical manifestation of a utopia, a 'happy Christian [community]'.<sup>14</sup> Peramás mentioned 'moderation' and 'prudence' as being among the principal qualities of civility. Following Plato, he highlighted the importance of the 'moderate man' who controls his appetites for fear of the law and guided by his reason. As a result, Peramás commended the values of frugality and sobriety manifest in the public meals the Guarani held to mark certain solemn occasions: 'All was done there with moderation'.<sup>15</sup> Like Plato, Peramás also underscored the importance of music, dance, and the arts for reinforcing civic virtues and contributing to the education and control of a citizenry's body and soul—or, to put it another way, for controlling the passions.

13 The terms *reducción*, *misión* and *doctrina* were considered synonyms in common usage, although in the strict sense *reducción* or *misión* alluded to villages formed with an indigenous population in the process of conversion to Christianity. Once they had reached stability these became *doctrinas* or *parroquias de indios*. On the difference see Möerner M., *La corona española y los foráneos en los pueblos de indios de América* (Madrid: 1999). In the discussion of previous urban models in the formation of the missions the case of the Jesuit missions of Juli has played an important role: Gutiérrez R., *Evolución urbanística y arquitectónica del Paraguay, 1537–1911* (Resistencia: 1978). Much has been written on the links between classical utopias: Alvarez Kern A., *Missoes, una utopía política* (Porto Alegre: 1982); Cro S. "Empirical and Practical Utopia in Paraguay", *Dieciocho* 15 (1992) 171–184.

14 Peramás José Manuel, *La república de Platón y los guaraníes* [1793] (Buenos Aires: 1946) 121 ('Cuando pareció llegado el tiempo oportuno, se hizo recaer la conversación sobre las grandes comodidades que obtendrían si, en vez de habitar en chozas aisladas, se agrupasen los diversos caciques y emigrasen con sus gentes a un común asiento, fundasen una ciudad y se ayudasen mutuamente, mancomunando sus ideas y esfuerzos').

15 Ibidem, 100 ('Las comidas públicas no se celebraban sino en ciertas ocasiones más solemnes del año. Entonces se colocaban mesas en la plaza, sobre las cuales se disponía todo aquello que los jefes de familia aportaban de sus casas. Y para que la comida fuese más espléndida se distribuían entre las diversas tribus algunos víveres procedentes del fondo común. Dispuestos ya ordenadamente los distintos manjares, se pedía la venia al Párroco, el cual pronunciaba la Bendición, que era contestada por un coro de músicos. Estos proseguían luego, durante la comida, ejecutando aires festivos con sus instrumentos [...]. Todo se hacía allí con moderación').

From Plato, Peramás took the idea that music was a '[...] natural instinct that has universal characteristics; there is no nation, however barbarous and lacking in culture, that in weddings, banquets and public games does not make use of music'.<sup>16</sup> In relation to the Guarani he wrote: '[...] they sang daily during the Mass, accompanied by the organ and the other instruments. In the afternoon, after the rosary, they intoned a brief motet in honour of the Holy Sacrament and of Mary, Mother of God, to which the whole village responded. Finally the Act of Contrition was prayed'.<sup>17</sup>

It was important for Jesuit writers to establish a strong contrast between Christian life and what they considered to be the pre-Hispanic indigenous way of life. The latter was characterized by excesses, sexual promiscuity, war, cannibalism, and drinking festivals. Sometimes Jesuits would emphasize the fact that those Indians did not even have 'idols' or a proper religion, but only superstitions and sorcerers who pushed them to drink and dance. They were societies with 'no king, no faith, and no law', and their life, in contrast to the Christian life, epitomized the misuse of space and time. Jesuit depictions of the indigenous economy clearly illustrate this aspect. Chroniclers such as José Guevara and José Cardiel emphasized that Indians were inconstant and unordered by nature, did not have a permanent address or possessions, and constantly migrated from one place to another. That was why they were not used to regular work in their fields and displayed little providence. On the contrary, they were permanently wasting their time and food in festivals and dances during which they got drunk [Fig. 8.2].<sup>18</sup> These descriptions became a common

16 Ibidem, 79 ('Hay en ello cierto instinto natural que revista caracteres de universalidad: pues no hay nación, por bárbara e inculta que sea, que en las bodas, en los banquetes y en los juegos públicos no haga uso de la Música').

17 Ibidem, 82 ('Los guaraníes cantaban diariamente durante la Misa, acompañados del órgano y de los demás instrumentos. Por la tarde, después del Rosario, se entonaba un breve motete en honor del Santísimo Sacramento y de María, la Madre de Dios, al cual respondía todo el pueblo. Al final se rezaba el Acto de contrición').

18 The Jesuit Guevara writes: 'La segunda casta o generación era de gentes vagamundas, que se mantenían de la pesca y caza, mudando habitación cuando lo uno y lo otro escaseaba, por haberlo consumido. Éstos propiamente carecían en este mundo de domicilio permanente, porque el que tenían era portátil, y mudable a diligencias y esfuerzos de las mujeres, que son las transportadoras de las casas, y del ajuar doméstico de ollas, menaje de cocina, estacas y esteras de la casa. Como estas pobres tienen la incumbencia de conducir el equipaje doméstico, gozan en las transmigraciones el privilegio de arreglar las marchas, y medir las jornadas', Guevara José, "Historia del Paraguay, Río de la Plata y Tucumán (1764)", in De Angelis P., *Colección de obras y documentos relativos a la historia antigua y moderna de las Provincias del Río de la Plata*, 4 vols. (Buenos Aires: 1836–1837, repr. 1969–1972), vol. I, 539. The Jesuit Cardiel describes the Indians' laziness as follows: 'Ni basta el hacerle coger toda su cosecha. Lo más que cogerá un indio ordinario es tres ó cuatro faenas de maíz.



way of representing indigenous populations on the fringes of Ibero-American empires, as described in early writings and images of the conquest.<sup>19</sup>

In spite of their stereotyped descriptions, Jesuit documents also intended accurately to inform readers about the way Indians used to live before the Jesuits' arrival. A seventeenth-century document containing declarations of missionaries who had contacted indigenous groups in the jungle provides details about indigenous spatial organization. Most of the testimonies stress the importance of the 'big house', which they sometimes identify with 'little villages' due to the large number of people they were able to shelter. One account states that the natives lived in big houses recognizing the authority of their 'caciques, whom they called *Abarubicha*'.<sup>20</sup> The Jesuit Juan de Salas reported that some leaders had such an extensive house that they would call it 'village'.<sup>21</sup>

Jesuits also emphasized the problem of household dispersion and instability, which made the task of evangelization more difficult. One source explains:

I have reached them and I have seen them with my own eyes. I have registered more than four hundred families of infidels, and all of them I found in little settlements (*aldeitas*) of three or four houses together, with others a league away and others further away, and I observed that in each little town (*poblado*) like this they respected their *cacique*, who was the lord of all the Indians. And I saw in all these little towns that they had

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Bien pudiera coger veinte, si quisiera. Si esto lo tiene en su casa, desperdicia mucho, y lo gasta luego, ya comiendo sin regla, ya dándolo de valde, ya vendiéndolo por una bagatela, lo que vale diez por lo que vale uno. Por esto se le obliga á traerlo á los graneros comunes, cada saco con su nombre: y se le deja uno solo en su casa, y se le va dando conforme se le va acabando. Toda esta diligencia es necesaria para su desidia', Cardiel José, "Breve Relación de las Misiones del Paraguay" [1771], in Hernández P., *Organización social de las doctrinas guaraníes de la Compañía de Jesús* (Barcelona: 1913) 542.

19 We find one of the first systematic classifications of the native peoples of the Americas in the important work of the Jesuit José de Acosta. In 1590 Acosta proposed a classification of three types of societies: empires such as those of the Incas and the Aztecs; *behetrias*, or middle-range groups with certain kinds of political leadership; barbarians, living with no rule at the confines of the world. Although he was inspired by previous ideas and classifications such as those of Bartolomé de las Casas, Acosta was one of the first authors to translate descriptions into practical methods of missionizing, which were applied in several regions of the Americas during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. See Acosta José de, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (México: 1979). See also Pagden A., *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: 1982).

20 Díaz Taño Francisco, "Informaciones a favor de los caciques de la nación Guaraní en que se prueba haber habido siempre caciques", 28 March 1678, in Archivo General de la Nación [henceforth AGN], Buenos Aires, IX.6.9.3, fol. 612r.

21 Ibidem, fol. 624r.



FIGURE 8.2 *Tupinamba Indians of the Brazilian Coast.*  
 Source: Staden Hans, *Warhaftige Historia und beschreibung eyner Landtschafft der Wilden Nacketen, Grimmigen Menschfresser-Leuthen in der Newenwelt America gelegen* (1557).

sown corn, sweet potato, cassava, and other root crops, and in some I found that they had run out, and in this way, this nation was different from many others that exist in these regions.<sup>22</sup>

Several decades earlier, a Jesuit account describes the characteristics of traditional indigenous houses:

They live in solid houses made of wooden posts with thatch on top. Some have eight or ten wooden posts and others more or less according to the number of vassals the cacique has, because they live all together in the same house. There is no division in the house, and everything can be seen from the beginning to the end. Between two wooden posts live two families sharing one stove in the middle. During the night they sleep in nets that the Spanish call hammocks, which they tie to sticks specially made for that purpose. They are so close to one another that they seem to be woven together and it is impossible to walk through the house.<sup>23</sup>

The mission towns kept this structure in the first phases of evangelization, as can be inferred from the annual letter of 1626–1627. The letter tells that in the mission town of Nuestra Señora de Concepción, the house where the cacique lived with his entire group of vassals or *mboyas*, was comprised of 20, 30, 40 or even more families according to his prestige. The house did not have any

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22 Ibidem, fol. 618v ('Y yo los vi con mis propios ojos por haber llegado a ellos y haber matriculado mas de cuatrocientas familias de infieles, y todas ellas las halle en sus aldeitas de tres o cuatro casas juntas y otras apartadas una legua y otras a mas distancia, y adverti que en cada poblado de estos respetaban a su cacique, que era el señor de todos los demas indios, y en todos estos poblado vi que tenían sementeras de maiz, batata, mandioca, y otras raices comestibles, y en algunos hallé que tenían agotado, y en esto se diferenciaba esta nación de otras muchas que hay por estas Provincias').

23 *Manuscritos de la Coleção De Angelis*, ed. J. Cortesão – H. Vianna, 7 vols. (Rio de Janeiro: 1951–1970), vol. 1, 166–167 ('Habitan en casas bien hechas armadas en cima de buenos horcones cubiertas de paja, algunas tienen ocho y diez horcones y otras mas o menos conforme el cazique tiene los basallos porque todos suelen vivir en una casa. no tiene division alguna toda la casa, esta esenta [*sic*] de manera que desde el principio se vee el fin: de horcon a horcon es un rancho y en casa uno habitan dos familias una a una banda y otra a otra y el fuego de estambos [*sic*] esta en medio: duermen en unas redes que los españoles llaman hamacas las quales atan en unos palos que quando hacen las casas dejan a proposito y estan tan juntas y entre tejidas las hamacas de noche que en ninguna manera se puede andar por la casa').

division or separation, save for some pillars located along the building that supported the roof. The term 'house' referred to the 'space between pillars'.<sup>24</sup>

It is clear that the natives' previous way of life and spatial ordering prevented the effective development of missionary activities. Before the Jesuits' arrival the population of each big house under the rule of one or a few caciques could range from 150 to 300 people. Households used to be separated from one another by many kilometres, thus ensuring the political, social, and economic autonomy of each *cacique* and his close relatives. In a provocative essay Pierre Clastres has defined these caciques as 'leaders without power', since they were subjected in one way or another to the will of the group; they served an 'egalitarian' society 'against the state'.<sup>25</sup> The Jesuits would radically transform this traditional way of life by fragmenting the family groups in pieces, which the Jesuits called *cacicazgos* or *parcialidades*. These groups were all gathered together in single mission towns where they shared common places. Traditional indigenous authorities quickly lost their autonomy and, although they preserved some prestige, caciques became part of a centralized political organization controlled by the Jesuits. The homogenization pursued by Jesuit mission policy was frequently limited by the fact that some indigenous groups rejected such forms of mixture and the consequent loss of autonomy. Some evidence indicates that indigenous populations coming from different regions were kept separated in different neighbourhoods (*barrios*) within the same mission town to prevent any kind of mixture or conflict.<sup>26</sup>

24 *Cartas Anuas de la Provincia del Paraguay, Chile y Tucumán, de la Compañía de Jesús* (1615–1637), ed. C. Leonhardt (Buenos Aires: 1929) 362–363.

25 Clastres P., *La société contre l'État* (Paris: 1974).

26 The characteristics of missions' urban organization are not well known until the eighteenth century. A document from 1657 reports on the distribution of *cacicazgos* in *barrios* (neighbourhoods), suggesting that this trait was introduced early on in the missions' urban organization. The document is a certification of the Jesuit Pedro Comental to the *Oidor* Juan Antonio Blázquez de Valverde that lists the names of various caciques of the mission town of Loreto, indicating their distribution according to 'barrios'. Thus, see for instance, Archivo General de la Nación (Buenos Aires, Argentina), Legajo 1X.6.9.3, Comental Pedro, "Certificación firmada por la que hace manifestación al Gobernador del Paraguay Don Juan Blazquez de Valverde, de todos los Indios del Pueblo de su cargo, que son verdaderos caciques, y descendientes de tales", Pueblo de la Encarnación de Itapúa, 3 September 1657: 'Del barrio de los del Pirapó parte principal del pueblo de Loreto'; 'Del Barrio de los pueblos de los Angeles provincia del Tayaoba y [...]'; 'Del Barrio de los del Pueblo de la Encarnacion del Nuatynguy'; 'Del Barrio de los del pueblo de San Xavier del ñupabay, y del ñbÿzy [...]'. It seems that the caciques of each *barrio* along with their population come from the regions specified. I would like to thank Kazuhiza Takeda for referring me to this document.

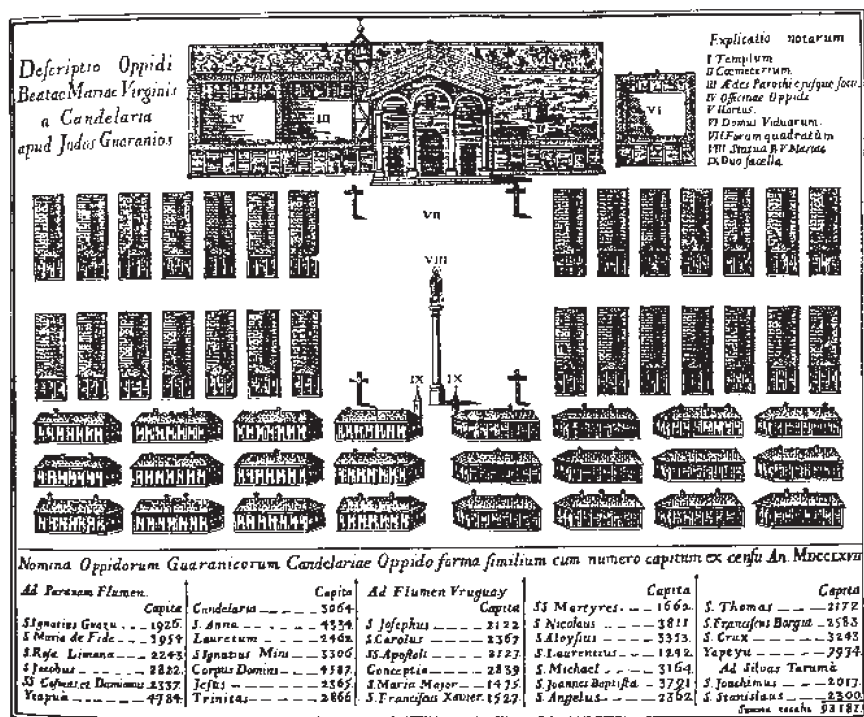


FIGURE 8.3 Plan of mission town of Candelaria.

Source: Peramás José Manuel, *La república de Platón y los guaraníes* [1793] (Buenos Aires: 1946).

The characteristics of missions' urban organization during the seventeenth century are almost unknown. In any case, their aim was gradually to impose a new conception of society, based on the principles of rationality and hierarchy. Based on later visual sources the public centre of the mission has usually been described as a theatre stage. The church, the cemetery, the school, and the workshops of the Indian craftsmen, were located on the main side of the huge plaza, together constituting the dominant axis of ritual life. This axis was associated with the authority of the Jesuits and the indigenous leaders. The Indians' houses surrounded the plaza, forming rows of equal proportions [Fig. 8.3].<sup>27</sup>

This regular urban design was gradually introduced as a control device to organize indigenous populations and impose social discipline. Close to the church, there were two jails, one for men located in the corner of the plaza, and

27 Gutiérrez, *Evolución urbanística*, and Gutiérrez R. – Maeder E.J.A., *Atlas Histórico del Nordeste Argentino* (Resistencia: 1995).



one for women, a separated house called '*cotiguazù*'. Around 1770 the Jesuit Cardiel explained that women living in the *cotiguazu* were not strictly imprisoned but as free as the so-called 'beatas'. This curious comparison suggests that Cardiel attributed to the Indians living in the *cotiguazu* a similar liminal status as laywomen not completely subjected to the family, mainly widows, orphans or singles. In the following paragraph Cardiel referred to the way physical punishment was imposed on those who had committed crimes. He emphasized the place of public humiliation:

They never leave except all together as a group accompanied by their guardian. Also [at the *cotiguazú*] delinquents are kept locked up or free. [...] in such a growing crowd sins are not lacking. Those like crimes of children, are punished with lashings, jail, and the stocks. But when they are serious, [time in] jail and the stocks is prolonged, and they are whipped many times, leaving some days in between. Males are whipped on their buttocks, in the middle of the plaza, when it is convenient as a lesson; women on their backs, in secret inside the prison, by the female guardian or another woman.<sup>28</sup>

Space in its different levels of organization, distribution, and hierarchization produced devices of social control and, in some cases, ways of punishment. The urban design and the bodily practices can be seen as two levels of the same process of space construction: the mission town, with its roads and buildings, reproduced at the macro level what the body represented at the micro level. As Michel Foucault pointed out, both levels refer to the government of the population and the state. Self-government and the government of the family, goods, property and, finally, the state, are elements of a chain in the evolution of social control and disciplinary devices that culminates in the society of the *Ancien Régime*. This also has consequences for the organization of gender relations.<sup>29</sup>

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28 Cardiel, "Breve relación" 543 ('Nunca salen sino en comunidad y con su Directora. Allí se ponen también las delinquentes en prisión o libres. [...] en tan crecida muchedumbre no faltan pecados, los cuales como delitos de niños, se castigan con azotes, cárcel y cepo. Mas cuando son graves, la cárcel y el cepo se alargan, y se les dan azotes varias veces, dejando pasar un intermedio de algunos días. Los varones son azotados en las nalgas, y en medio de la plaza cuando conviene para escarmientos; las mujeres en las espaldas, y en secreto dentro de la cárcel, por mano de la directora o de alguna otra mujer').

29 Foucault M., *Société, territoire, population: Cours au Collège de France, 1977–1978* (Paris: 2004) 97.



Cardiel exhaustively describes how Jesuits used to strictly separate men and women both in public and private places. On Sundays the population gathered in the *plaza* and after the church was opened, men and women entered through separate doors. Once inside, the males and females remained separated during the service, and were strictly controlled by their respective guardians. In his description of the Easter celebration, Cardiel noted:

Once the priest had finished incensing the statues, the congregants joined in a procession around the plaza; on one side, the men and the missionary, carrying the Resurrected, and, on the other side, the women, carrying the Holy Mother [...] all the while the bugles and the shawms were played with such skill it was as though they were being made to speak.<sup>30</sup>

It is reasonable to think that the final shape of missions' urban organization is related to the progressive consolidation of political, social, and demographic stability. As explained by a Spanish official who visited the missions shortly after the Jesuits expulsion, urban organization served to politically hierarchize the indigenous population. According to Francisco Bruno de Zavala, the Indians were distributed in houses on the basis of their belonging to *cacicazgos*, which constituted the group of relatives of the *cacique* or indigenous leader. The people of each *cacicazgo* lived in houses or rows of houses of the same size and proportions. One or more houses were given to each *cacicazgo* depending on the number of its members. Zavala stated:

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30 Cardiel, as cited by Nawrot P. (ed.), *Indigenas y cultura musical de las reducciones jesuíticas* (Cochabamba: 2000) 25. According to some accounts, sexual relations were monitored and, eventually, overseen by the priests, with the aim of maintaining monogamous marriages, demographic growth, and proper sexual customs. An interesting excerpt, written by a Spanish official some years after the expulsion of the Jesuits, illustrates the extent to which Indians' sexual life was controlled. See Doblas Gonzalo de, *Memoria histórica, geográfica, política y económica sobre la Provincia de Misiones de indios guaraníes* [1785] (Buenos Aires: 1836) 50: 'Having noticed that the drums were played at various points during the night, and particularly at dawn, curiosity moved me to inquire as to what purpose the drumbeat served. [The Indians] told me that the Jesuits, familiar with the lazy temperament of the Indians who, exhausted after working all day [...], arrive home, eat dinner, and then sleep until morning, made them arise at dawn to go to church, and from there, go on to work. Because of this, the husbands were not spending much time with their wives, and the population was diminishing. And so, they decided that, at certain hours of the night, they would remind them, so that they would fulfill their obligations as married people'.

The method of government and police of the Guarani, and of the Tape Indians inhabiting those villages, consists in recognizing their caciques; each Cacicazgo lives in those towns in houses (*galpones*) or rows of houses of the same size and proportions, covered by tiles, with corridors in the sides for transit. Separated by equal distances, these *galpones* compose the streets and form the Plaza; each *galpon* is divided into various small sleeping-rooms, each of which is occupied by one family belonging to the *cacicazgo*: according to its number of people, it has more, or fewer *galpones*. When the cacique is asked how many *mboyas* [vassals] he has, he answers: 'I have X number of houses, or *galpones*', so that one can have an idea of the number [...].<sup>31</sup>

As mentioned, Jesuits rigidly controlled the form and proportions each building should have, and the activities that could take place inside. It is worth considering an internal source from the Society of Jesus to understand how far the order could reach in its efforts to supervise daily mission life. Books of precepts were documents containing a list of orders from the superior priests to missionaries: they regulated every activity. One of those books, found at the National Archive in Buenos Aires, specifically indicates how to construct and use certain buildings. The book provides specific measures for both Jesuits' and Indians' houses.<sup>32</sup> Priests were not allowed to have boys sleeping in their house

31 Zavala Francisco Bruno de, "Oficio a Don Francisco de Paula Sanz" [1784], in Gonzalez J.C., "Un Informe del gobernador de Misiones, don Francisco Bruno de Zavala, sobre el estado de los treinta pueblos", *Boletín del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas* 25 (1941) 159–187, at 162 ('El método de Gobierno, y policia, que tienen entre si los Indios Guaranis, y Tapes havitadores de aquellos Pueblos consiste en Reconocer a sus caziques; cada Cazicasgo havita en los pueblos en unos Galpones o filas de casas de igual medida y proporcion, cubiertos de texa, con corredores por todos costados que sirven de transito: Estos galpones separados con igual distancia componen las calles, y forman la Plaza; cada Galpon se divide en varios pequeños aposentos, cada uno de los cuales ocupa una familia de las pertenecientes a aquel Cazicasgo, y segun lo numeroso de el, asi tiene mas, o menos Galpones, el Cazique cuando se le pregunta, que Mboyas tiene, Responde tengo tantas filas de casas, o Galones para que se conceptue su numero').

32 AGN, Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Leg. 140, "Libro de preceptos. Gobierno de los jesuitas en los pueblos de misiones. Preceptos de nuestros Padres Generales y Provinciales que tocan inmediatamente a los PP que viven en las Doctrinas en varias materias con sus declaraciones": '2º Que en nuestras casas que de nuevo se hubiesen de edificar, se siga la planta, que dejó en mi segunda visita de 22 de enero de 1713. En lo substancial de sus medidas, de suerte, que no pase el primer patio de nuestra vivienda de 180 pies geométricos, contando de pared a pared y no pase de largo el segundo grado: 240, pies geométricos, y de ancho 150 pies de pared a pared y nuestros aposentos de 22 pies de largo, 21 de ancho:

and all the young men serving them should be married.<sup>33</sup> Priests should keep their distance from women, avoiding any direct contact with them. Jesuits were not even allowed to speak or see them without the presence of another priest or two reliable Indians.<sup>34</sup>

A series of precepts regulated the use of doors and locks, especially those of the church and the missionaries' houses. The book of precepts reads: 'Do not open the door of the church until daylight comes, and persons can be recognized'. During praying hours only certain persons, such as the cook, sextons, and healers, were authorized to enter. Any view of the Jesuits' dormitories, whether from the church or the street, should be strictly blocked. Another order forbids speaking at the common dining room (*refectorio*) except on certain specific days such as the feast of St. Ignatius, the Jesuits' patron saint. On those days only the reading of saints' lives was allowed during dinner, and in general silence should be kept. Some orders in the book forbid the display of paintings on the walls of dormitories, dining rooms, or corridors, with the exception of paintings of saints that might inspire devotion, and modest maps or stamps.

There is no question that ritual life was concentrated in the church and the plaza. These were places associated, respectively, with the main solemn

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el refectorio 31 pies de largo, 21 de ancho: las huertas de largo deben tener lo que hay desde la esquina del segundo patio hasta el estero de la iglesia y de ancho 200 pies geométricos. 16 de marzo de 1713' (my italics).

33 AGN, Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Leg. 140: '[...] que ningún muchacho duerma en nuestra casa y que los que cuidan, y sirven a los padres han de ser casados. / En el refectorio los que sirven han de ser casados y no muchachos: a las oraciones se han de enviar a los muchachos a sus casas, fuera del lector de la mesa [...] No duerman grandes con chicos ni estén despacio en nuestros aposentos./11 ni en ocasión de fiestas, ni en otras de entre año, duerman los indios grandes con los chicos ni estén despacio en nuestros aposentos, con que se excusarán hurtillos. Nuestra Orden'.

34 AGN, Colección Biblioteca Nacional, Leg. 140: '6º Clausura./Cuídese mucho de la clausura de nuestras casas de suerte que se eche de ver, que son de la Compañía, y no entre mujer ninguna de la puerta adentro, ni se les de a besar la mano, ni nadie castigue por su propia mano, ni asista ocularmente a castigo de mujer, ni en lugar a donde se hace el castigo por la indecencia, dándose a venerar, y respetar, como dice su regla: *omnice gravitatis et modisti exemplum preveant*. Ord. Com 37. [7º Hablar a mujeres] Nunca se hable a mujer ninguna sin que esté delante uno de los nuestros, o dos indios de toda confianza. Ord. Com 3º. / 8º Salir a enfermos de día y noche *como percató con el otro sexo*. / Ninguno saldrá de noche sin linterna encendida, y acompañado de algún enfermero, y otros dos indios de satisfacción: y de día llevará el mismo acompañamiento y a los indios industrieseles, que siempre estén a la vista del padre. [fj. 9] y si el rancho estuviere oscuro, se encenderá la candela, que para esto se lleva, siempre prevenida. Ord. Com. 3º' (my italics).

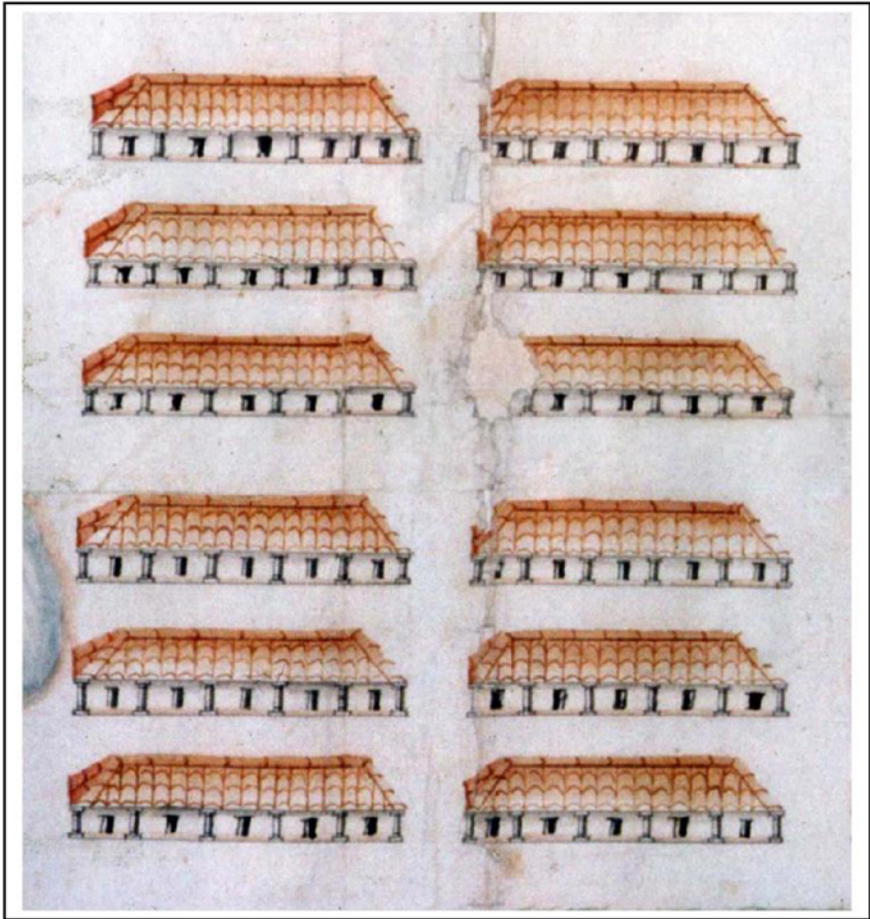


FIGURE 8.4 *Plan of the mission town of San Juan Bautista (1750s): detail of Indian houses.*  
 Source: Archivo General de Simancas, Valladolid, as reproduced in Barcelos A.,  
*O Mergulho no Seculum: Exploração, conquista e organização espacial jesuítica na*  
*América espanhola colonial*, Ph.D. dissertation (Pontifícia Universidade Católica  
 do Rio Grande do Sul: 2006).

and festive, or profane, activities.<sup>35</sup> In the church interior the most important visual representations of Christianity were concentrated, some of them

35 From an empirical point of view, the distinction 'solemn-profane' is more operative for my analysis than that of 'sacred-profane'. In fact, that is the distinction that generally appears in Jesuit discourse, along with that between temporal and eternal. From a theoretical point of view, other overlapping distinctions, like urban-rural and public-private, also remain to be studied to fully understand the 'topography of holiness'. See Coster – Spicer, "Introduction".

particularly meaningful for each mission town. Most paintings could only be exhibited there. The Jesuit Sepp describes the inside of the mission town of San Juan Bautista [Fig. 8.4] as follows:

They painted the altarpieces; the one at the main altar represents the patron of the town, St. John the Baptist, at the instant he baptizes Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Jordan. Above is visible the Saintly prince of heaven, Archangel Michael, patron of the old village, as he expels Lucifer from heaven; to the side, the saint apostles Peter and Paul; below, St. Ignatius and St. Francis Xavier, together with the patron. One of the lateral altars is dedicated to the three holy persons, Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the other to my saint, the miraculous St. Anthony of Padua [...].<sup>36</sup>

This quotation not only presents a visual depiction of Christian cosmology and its hierarchy of heroes but it also recounts the history of the mission town where the images were shown. In fact, the village of San Juan Bautista was a new colony created with the population coming from another village, San Miguel ('the old village'), with which San Juan Bautista would sustain long-term relationships. The populations of both mission towns would maintain kinship ties and political and economic exchanges, even decades after the Jesuits' expulsion at the end of the eighteenth century. In this sense, the interior of San Juan Bautista's church produces a visual discourse in which Christian mythology overlaps with the mission town's history.

Spatial ordering overlapped time ordering in the regimentation of daily economic and religious practices.<sup>37</sup> Daily and weekly celebrations were a

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36 Sepp, *Continuación de las labores* 257 ('[...] ya se pintaron los retablos; el del altar mayor representa al patrono del pueblo, San Juan Bautista, en momentos que bautiza a Nuestro Señor Jesucristo en el Jordán. Algo arriba se ve el santo príncipe del cielo, arcángel Miguel, patrono del viejo pueblo, cuando arroja al orgulloso Lucifer hacia el abismo del cielo; al costado a los santos apóstoles Pedro y Pablo; abajo, junto al patrono, a San Ignacio y Francisco Javier. Uno de los altares laterales está dedicado a las tres santísimas personas, Jesús, María y José, el otro a mi santo, al milagroso San Antonio de Padua, que no se pintó con colores sin vida sino que se talló y será dorado más tarde').

37 Genealogies were another form of production of time and social memory in the missions that also reveals a strong link with missions' political organization. I already mentioned how the *cacicazgo* used to have an inscription in space. The authorities of every village were supposed to conduct a periodic census of their inhabitants. Some of these censuses or *padrones* were organized by *cacicazgos*. The *padrones* mentioned the names of each cacique, after which all family members and close relatives were included. It is possible to verify the persistence of caciques' names over a period of two hundred years. These *cacicazgos* were usually related to the particular history of conversion or the creation of a

fundamental organizing factor of social life. They marked the rhythm of routines dividing every day into economic and religious activities, work and leisure time. Each was performed in a specific place. A description by Cardiel makes clear how the ritual was organized according to the alternation of work activities and the celebration of daily mass. He stated that the Guaraní called the days of the week 'working days'; for instance, Monday was called *mbae apoipi*, 'first work'; Tuesday, *mbae apomocoi*, 'second work'; Thursday *trique*, 'entrance'—the latter because in the beginning they not only entered the church for Catechism on Sunday, but also on Thursday. And Saturday was known as the 'vespers of Feast'.<sup>38</sup> In the same paragraph, Cardiel said that the elders prayed in the temple, while the children, both boys and girls, prayed on the patio and at the cemetery. In these descriptions we can see an interesting overlapping of space and time categories in the missions' daily life.<sup>39</sup>

The alternation of daily masses and labour was designed to eliminate the irregular handling of productive activities characteristic of the previous 'pagan' life. Moreover, the rational use of space corresponded to the rational use of time. Early accounts, such as the 1637–1639 annual reports, noted that the Indians attended mass every morning, and afterwards they devoted themselves to agriculture. Once the mass had ended, some of them confessed. Catechism was explained on feast days and on Thursdays before lunch as well. Toward sunset the Indians prayed the rosary in the church when they had returned from their work assignments.<sup>40</sup> Many years after the expulsion of the Jesuits, we find a very similar description, written by Zavala. He explained that

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specific village. The Jesuits were particularly interested in maintaining the continuity of *cacicazgos* after many generations. To that end, they not only kept the *padrones* but they also wrote genealogies to fix the descent of the *cacique* from one generation to another through the father's line. See Wilde, "Prestigio indígena".

38 Cardiel José, "Costumbres de los Guaraníes" [1747], in Muriel D., *Historia del Paraguay desde 1747 a 1767*, trans. P. Hernández (Madrid: 1918) 531.

39 We have some other curious examples, such as *Ara Poru aguyey haba*... or *El buen uso del tiempo* ('The Good Use of Time'), a book of Christian devotion by the Paraguayan Jesuit José Insaurrealde, printed in Madrid in 1759 and 1760. See Meliá B., *La lengua guaraní en el Paraguay colonial: La creación de un lenguaje cristiano en las reducciones de los guaraníes en el Paraguay* (Asunción: 2003). Insaurrealde's book proposed to organize the mission's daily routine according to the regular alternation between collective work and liturgical activities.

40 *Cartas Anuas de la provincia del Paraguay 1637–1639*, ed. E. Maeder (Buenos Aires: 1984) 84: 'Asisten los indios todas las mañanas a la santa misa, y después de ella se dedican a sus faenas agrícolas. Después de la misa siempre hay algunos que se quieren confesar [...] el catecismo se explica no sólo los días festivos, sino los jueves de cada semana antes del almuerzo. Al anochecer se reza el Santo Rosario en la iglesia, a la cual acuden los indios al volver de sus trabajos campestres'.



the Priests and Partners (*compañeros*) celebrated Mass on working days at dawn so that the Indians could attend and then go to work. After the mass they used to go to the patio, receive their assignments from the priest, and their portion of *yerba mate* [Paraguayan tea]. Afterwards they would go to work, and when finished they would attend to the rosary, and return to the patio. The foremen (*mayordomos*) used to make a report to the priest on how much canvas each *maestro* had woven, and what had been made in the workshops (*talleres*). They were reprimanded or corrected, [and] they took another portion of *yerba*, or if it was during the day they took a portion of meat.<sup>41</sup>

The sound of bells and drums were often used to guide the movements of the indigenous populations through the various daily activities and rituals. The Jesuit Cardiel notes in his *Declaración de la verdad* ('Declaration of Truth') that all villages possessed a sundial and that a bell was rung to mark parts of the hour. After meals, there was conversation around the table until the bell was sounded again, signalling that it was time to gather at the church for the Holy Sacrament. In the afternoon 'Vespers and Compline are rung, and at their times Matins and Lauds, and we go to confession'. At four, a large bell in the mission tower was rung, calling the priests and people to gather together for catechism and subsequently the rosary. The Jesuit adds that in each tower there were between six and eight large and small bells.<sup>42</sup> Mission villages also made use of the sound of drums to call the boys and girls under the age of seventeen to catechism.<sup>43</sup>

The previous descriptions show that the new political and economic organization had required the introduction of new notions of space and time. In other words, space-time categories and practices were central dimensions in the production of power relations. They established what could be defined as 'protocols' for visual and sonic perception: they produced schemes and rules for the circulation of people inside the mission town, and they coordinated the

41 Zavala, "Oficio" 174 ('Los Curas y Compañeros decían misa, los días de trabajo al romper del día, para que los Indios asistiesen a ella, y pudiesen ir temprano a los trabajos; despues de la misa salian al Patio, tomaban las ordenes del Cura, se les daba su racion de Yerba y salian para ir a los trabajos y demas faenas, asistian al Rosario, y despues de el volvían al Patio, los Mayordomos daban Cuenta al Cura de las varas de Lienzo que cada Maestro habia tejido, y lo que se habia obrado en las demas Oficinas de adentro de la Casa pral, se reprendia o corregia, lo que avisaban defectuosos, tomaban otra racion de yerba, y si era día de Carne iban a tomar su racion').

42 Cardiel José, *Misiones del Paraguay: Declaración de la verdad* (Buenos Aires: 1900) 247–252.

43 Furlong G., *Juan Escandón y su carta a Burriel* (1760) (Buenos Aires: 1965) 88.

uses of the landscape and the processes of work and liturgical activities.<sup>44</sup> The homogenous labour defining the new economy was translated into a homogenous time that could be controlled, measured, and regularized. This rational and continuous temporality tended to undermine the traditional ways of life based on discontinuity and the uneven use of time. The schedule regimented every aspect of social life, not only labour but also the distribution of food, sexual relations, language, punishment, occupation, age and gender. But it was not all about social control. Indigenous actors participated in the formation of mission space in different ways. This is the topic of the second part of this chapter.

### Indigenous Appropriations

In 1736, the Jesuit Bernardo Nusdorffer wrote about the foundation of a village of fugitive Indians from the missions in the region of Iberá. He noted:

2º This population has twenty-three rows of houses. San Carlos, one row. San José, one. Apóstoles, two. Candelaria, one. San Cosme, one. Santa Ana, one. Loreto, two. San Ignacio-miní, one. Corpus, one. Santo Martires, one. Concepción, one. Santo Tomé, three. Santa María, two. Cruz, four. Trinidad, one.

3º They have their *cabildo* in good order, the captain of everyone is an Indian from La Cruz named Diego Chaupai, who dresses in the Spanish way with a hat and stockings, but without shoes.

4º In the morning, instead of mass, they pray the litanies of Our Lady: the *Preste* is an Indian from the village of Apóstoles named Miguel, who was procurer in his town.

5º In the afternoon women and rabble (*chusma*) meet for the rosary.<sup>45</sup>

44 Marquese, "O Vale do Paraíba".

45 Biblioteca Nacional de Rio de Janeiro, Colección De Angelis, 1-29-4-59: Nusdorffer Bernardo, "Noticias que se confirman de todas partes, y de averiguaciones hechas de varios Indios de varios pueblos del Pueblo nuevo de los Indios fugitivos de las doctrinas entre el Ibera, Miriñay y Rio Corrientes" [1736] ('2º Tiene la población veinte y tres hileras de casas. San Carlos, una hilera. San José, una. Apóstoles, dos. Candelaria, una. San Cosme, una. Santa Ana, una. Loreto, dos. San Ignacio-miní, una. Corpus, una. Santo Martires, una. Concepción, una. Santo Tomé, tres. Santa María, dos. Cruz, cuatro. Trinidad, una./ 3º Tienen su cabildo en forma, el capitan de todos es un Indio de la Cruz llamado Diego Chaupai, que se viste a modo de Español, con sombrero y medias, pero sin Zapatos. // 4º Por la mañana, en lugar de misa, se reza la Letania de Nuestra Señora: el Preste es un Indio

Although they came from many different missions, the fugitive Indians of this village rigorously preserved the urban organization of their mission towns in rows of houses, in this case distributing them according to the different origins of its members. They had a *cabildo* (local council) for government and they celebrated daily mass.

But there are two striking details in the description of this village. One is that evidently it had no priests. It was the leader Diego Chaupai who celebrated the daily litanies and gave blessings to the population, dressed in Spanish clothes, with a hat and socks, 'but without shoes'. The other detail is that the Indians of this village were polygamous. In spite of being married, each man could have many women because the female population was more numerous than the male. And if they wanted more women than were available, the men would go to the trails outside the village and kidnap wanderers' wives. Nusdorffer was not a direct witness of the formation of this village but received the news from unknown informants, and the Jesuits did not take any action against the village.

This extraordinary case clearly shows how Indians could paradoxically adopt hegemonic spatial and temporal practices to fight against the Jesuits. They did not simply accept the impositions, but they implemented them in their favour. They also took autonomous decisions regarding the spatial and political organization of their villages, contributing to the construction of hybrid or, so to speak, 'heterodox' spaces. As I will try to show, the confrontation between Jesuits and Indians was not all about domination or resistance in the formation of mission space. A mission town was neither a Foucauldian Panopticon nor a free 'land without evil', but rather the result of a tense process in which both Jesuits and Indians, as non-homogeneous actors, took part. It is important to remember that the Indians also participated in the construction of mission power. In this sense, they had personal ambitions and actually had conflicts among themselves. Mission space had its internal differentiations, which allowed the Indians, at certain moments, a certain degree of autonomy.

Mainstream mission historiography and architectural studies have not sufficiently considered the fact that mission space used to extend beyond the urban area, to the so-called 'periphery', nor the fact that that space had internal differentiations and complexities. Inside the mission there were less-controlled places, where the Indians had a relative degree of autonomy and freedom. Among these places were houses, orchards, and ranches, where the Indians spent a significant part of their daily routine. Generally, economic activities

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Apostólico llamado Miguel, que fue Procurador en su pueblo. / 5° A la tarde se juntan las mujeres y chusma al Rosario').

were organized in two alternating phases corresponding to the use of two different places-spaces. The first, called *tupambaé* or 'land of God', involved the community's productive, commercially oriented activities in the collective lands of the mission town. The second, *abambaé* or 'land of men', was reserved for the subsistence of the cacique, his family, or the members of his *cacicazgo*. Surrounding the mission town were huge expanses of land for cultivation and livestock, the *chacras* and *estancias* (ranches), and also unexplored areas of rainforest where the Indians used to collect foodstuffs and other natural products. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Jesuit Juan Escandón writes that each cacique and his followers had lands distributed around the village according to the size of his group, where they could plant corn, sweet potatoes, cassava, legumes, and other products for subsistence. These labour lands belonged to the commons of each mission town, and no individual could own them.<sup>46</sup>

This distinction in productive spaces may also point to the boundaries between artistic experiences related to religious worship and the profane expressions of daily life. In fact, there was in mission towns a clear split between canonical forms of the 'official Baroque', the aesthetic program of the Church, and a set of 'marginal' cultural manifestations that expressed a certain degree of freedom among the Indians. In his descriptions, the Jesuit Peramás gives an idea of how different musical performances were associated with certain places:

In general one can say about the music of the Guarani that in the temple it was devout and solemn, and disdained profane theatrical cadences or melodies (which many profane and incapable musicians have tried to introduce—shamefully—into the holy precinct); and in homes and in the country it was decent and dignified, without allowing anything that could corrupt manners.<sup>47</sup>

46 Furlong, *Juan Escandón* 108.

47 Peramás, *La república de Platón* 82 ('En general, de la música de los guaraníes puede decirse que en el templo era devota y solemne, distando mucho de profanarlo con cadencias o melodías teatrales (que muchos músicos profanos e incapaces han intentado introducir, ¡oh vergüenza!, en el recinto sagrado); y en los hogares y en el campo era honesta y digna, sin admitir nada que pudiese corromper las costumbres'). This could also be associated with what Coster and Spicer call 'gradations of holiness within sacred sites', referring to internal differentiations or hierarchies in physical space that are associated with the use of certain objects, places or buildings. See Coster – Spicer, "Introduction" 9: '[...] the church within the churchyard, the chapel within the church, the altar within the chapel'.

The mission town's surroundings were less controlled than the central zones of activity and therefore they allowed a relatively free circulation of people and information. How Indians used these 'peripheral' or 'displaced' places and how they represented them remains a research topic to be addressed.

Cartography provides us with some evidence for a first analysis of indigenous understanding of mission space. Indians were able to produce maps in which they visually represented the way they used missions' surroundings, associating places and paths with specific activities. One remarkable example is a map from 1784, fifteen years after the Jesuits' expulsion, produced as evidence in a legal dispute in which indigenous officials (*cabildantes*) of the mission town of Santo Tomé denounced colonizers' abuses of their lands [Fig. 8.5]. By contrast with other examples of the same time, this map cannot be easily recognized as a realistic visual representation of the land: it draws attention to a distorted representation of hydrography and a general horizontal orientation that locates the Paraná River below and the Uruguay River with several streams in the centre, without indicating latitude or longitude. Rivers and streams are clearly marked in the map as veins traversing the land. We know that the Indians resorted to river navigation in their long distance trips to cities or other mission towns. A series of dotted lines on the map signal trails or pathways, and little houses with crosses on one of their sides seem to indicate chapels and posts of ranches (San Marcos, San Gabriel, San Antonio, San Pedro, etc.). The mission towns are represented by icons of churches, which are specific to each mission (Santo Tomé, San Francisco de Borja, La Cruz). The cloud-shaped icons positioned at the end of the largest streams probably pointed to water sources. Names of places are in the Guaraní language. One of the signatories is apparently the Spanish administrator of the town, which would indicate that he also intervened in the making of the map.<sup>48</sup>

The map gives us clues about the ways mission inhabitants conceived of the outskirts of their mission towns. They represent these areas as a network of lines, connecting points of circulation and activity. This representation suggests that the outer space was a horizon of knowledge, a set of fluid

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48 Below the map we read: 'Plano o Mapa del Pueblo de la Real Corona, Nombrado Santo Thomé, Nos el Correxidor Cavildo, y Administrador remitimos el Plano de las Tierras que contiene nuestra Jurisdicción según y conforme manifiesta el original que para en nuestra Casa de Cabildo. Toco con sus nombres, y distancias de leguas según señala dichas copias sin haber mas papeles ni documentos que los que remitimos, y para que conste su verdad lo firmamos en nueve de Septiembre de mil setecientos ochenta y cuatro, Francisco [Varui], Apolonio [Aguiy], Guillermo Pobal, Por mi y por los demás capitanes Yo Joseph Saaviliano [...]', Furlong G., *Cartografía jesuitica del Río de la Plata* (Buenos Aires: 1936) 122.





constitutes an important area for research. According to the Jesuit Peramás, the absence of geographic references used to be very common in the indigenous representations of space. In one of his works, Peramás refers to an Indian called Melchor, author of a history of the mission town of Corpus Christi, who 'had enriched his work with a map made by himself, on which he did not write down the degrees of longitude and latitude, because he was unaware of them. But he did very clearly and correctly record the mountains, streams, and rivers contained within the limits of the town'.<sup>50</sup>

We find another interesting example of map-making in 1773, when central authorities filed a lawsuit against a private rancher who was profiting from *yerba mate* lands of the mission town of Loreto. Attached to this document [Fig. 8.6], whose author is not specified, is a beautiful map in colour, which records the ancient use the Indians made of those lands. In one of the corners of the map we can read a caption mentioning the names of thirteen *caciques* who used to live in those lands, clearly pointing to the places where they extracted *yerba mate*. The text adds a curious clarification: 'It should be known that these *caciques* were not from Loreto but from Corpus, and they come from the village of Acaray that was founded at the same time as Corpus, and these missions together with Itapúa'.<sup>51</sup>

This phrase is a bit confusing, but in a few words it basically sums up the history of migrations made by indigenous populations since the first half of the seventeenth century. As noted earlier, most of the mission towns in that region had been formed by populations coming from other regions in the seventeenth century. The mission town of Loreto, in the region of the Parana River, had been founded in 1632 by a population that migrated from the Guayra region, and relocated again in 1647–1649 and 1686. According to the litigation, the mentioned *caciques* were not native to Loreto but from Corpus, a neighbouring mission town, which was in turn the result of the migration of peoples from another village, Nuestra Señora de la Natividad del Acaray, destroyed and abandoned in 1633. The population of Acaray had been redistributed in Corpus and Itapúa, in the Parana region.

What is important about this case is that, in spite of the demographic and territorial decomposition the mission towns suffered over more than a century, they preserved a record, or rather 'a memory', of their geographical origins and

50 Quoted in Barcelos A., *O Mergulho no Seculum: Exploração, conquista e organização espacial jesuítica na América espanhola colonial*, Ph.D. dissertation (Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul: 2006) 369.

51 AGN IX.40.2.5, Tribunales, leg. 12, exp. 33: "El Administrador General de los Pueblos de Misiones Don Juan Angel Lazcano contra Don Josef de Velasco por haber beneficiado porción de hierba en los hierbales del pueblo de Loreto" [1773].



FIGURE 8.6 Map produced in connection with the litigation of 1773. Image © National Archive, Buenos Aires, AGN IX.40.2.5.

the use they made of their lands over the long term. It is reasonable to think that in spite of the Jesuits' effort to make a clear distinction between the inside and the outside of a mission town, Indians understood the frontier between the two spaces as a permeable line. In certain cases, they could even maintain different kinds of interactions with their 'infidel' neighbours involving a varied repertoire of strategies, from the exchange of goods to the creation of kinship relations.<sup>52</sup> We can conclude that Indians did not ignore Jesuits' radical

52 A sensitive article on indigenous cartography in North America identifies a series of traits that can easily be compared to Guaraní cartographic representations: 1) irregular linear features; 2) networks; 3) discrete enclosed spaces; 4) caricaturisation and exaggeration; 5) discontinuities of style. See Lewis G.M., "Indicators of Unacknowledged Assimilations from Amerindian Maps on Euro-American Maps of North America: Some General Principles Arising from the Study of La Verendrye's Composite Map 1728–29", *Imago Mundi* 38 (1986) 9–34. On indigenous cartography see also Short, *Cartographic Encounters*; Montes de Oca Vega M. – Salvador Reyes Equiguas D.R. – Sellen A., *Cartografía de tradición hispanoindígena: Mapas de mercedes de tierra, siglos XVI y XVII*, 2 vols. (México: 2003); Russo A., *El realismo circular: Tierras, espacios y paisajes de la cartografía indígena novohispana siglos XVI y XVII* (México, DF: 2005); Barcelos A., "El saber cartográfico

dichotomies; nevertheless they interpreted them differently, clearly not as opposite poles. Evidence indicates that the Indians conceived of their mission towns as integrated in the immediately surrounding region; for them the interior and exterior of their mission towns were not mutually exclusive spatial dimensions but complementary ones. Moreover, they could alternate different types of belongings and even use different cultural codes in order to exchange information and supplies with other indigenous and non-indigenous actors living outside of the missions. For the Indians, the outskirts were a horizon of knowledge of fluid connections with their mission towns, whose elements were incorporated, when possible, through personal interactions. Being 'out of town' or 'fleeing to the jungle' may have implied for the Indians restoring or actualizing a relationship with the old ways of being, or maintaining an advantageous duplicity that allowed them to access new knowledge and information, which could even increase their prestige.<sup>53</sup>

### Spatial and Visual Developments

As previously noted, existing typologies of mission art and architecture emphasizes an aesthetic perspective based on the evolution of styles in which the definition of a 'mission Baroque' style is at stake. In general this literature also highlights the hegemonic visual discourse brought by European priests in successive periods. More recent approaches have emphasized the *sui generis* character of mission art, which tended to adapt to local instances of interaction.

It is likely that the Jesuits realized the importance of interactions and thus made an effort to codify a visual and plastic discourse that could express the permeability and interconnectedness of mission space. The most common procedure deployed was to incorporate local motives into the hegemonic representations of Christianity, conveying a certain idea of continuity (and harmony) between nature and civility, between rainforest and mission town, and between Christian and pagan worlds. In most representations, the outer space (and the ancient time) was depicted as having been absorbed and domesticated by a mission style or a Christian mind.

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indígena entre los guaraníes de las misiones jesuíticas", in Wilde (ed.), *Saberes de la conversión* 191–204.

53 Idem, "Orden y ambigüedad en la formación territorial del Río de la Plata a fines del siglo XVIII", *Horizontes Antropológicos* 19 (2003) 105–135.

An example of this is the decoration of temples characterized by abundant native zoological and botanic motifs along with walls and columns. Even though the function of these motifs has been traditionally reduced to a merely ornamental one, they may have been designed deliberately to present temples, inner spaces *par excellence*, in spatial continuity with the surrounding rainforest, inhabited by untamed beasts and ruthless barbarians. Local elements can also be found both in important ceremonies of the liturgical calendar and in books for preaching. During the celebration of Corpus Christi, flowers, tree branches, birds of all colours tied by the feet, tigers on chains, and fish in vessels of water were exhibited to the public. The sounds and colours of these animals and plants were mixed up in the ceremony with those of Indian garments, orchestras, and singers.<sup>54</sup>

Juan Eusebio Nieremberg y Otín's book *De la Diferencia entre lo Temporal y lo Eterno*, printed in Guarani on the mission's printing press in 1705, featured a series of engravings made by Indians [Figs. 8.7 and 8.8]. Some of the pictures incorporate local elements combined with visual metaphors and complex allegories. Recent study has demonstrated that the images in the Guarani version of the book were far from being a mere reproduction of the original European engravings by Gaspar Bouttats. In fact, the Guarani imprint adds many new pictures to the original. Some animals and plants that appear in the original were replaced by others common to the region, such as the jaguar and the serpent. To visually illustrate passages of the text, the author (or the authors) specially designed new images that would have local value, guided by a plastic rather than an allegorical or narrative criterion.<sup>55</sup> This aspect raises the question of whether the text was used not only by priests but also by Indians to preach in the missions.

The Guarani re-elaboration adopts diverse adaptive procedures in its way of organizing scenes, which seem to correspond to an indigenous way of seeing. In some cases the Guarani version reproduces the original composition. In others it inverts the copy, or it modifies it partially, broadens it, or adds new autonomous frames to it. It also applies modifications from the visual point of view. Significantly, perspective is modified to favour a more planimetric and symmetric conception. Some elements lose scale in relation to the total space and others are simplified, emphasizing frontality.<sup>56</sup> Did Jesuits, in promoting

54 Charlevoix Pierre-François-Xavier, *Historia del Paraguay* [1757], 6 vols. (Madrid: 1915), vol. II, 88.

55 González R., "Textos e imágenes para la salvación: La edición misionera de la diferencia entre lo temporal y eterno", *ArtCultura, Uberlândia* 11, 18 (2009) 137–158.

56 Ibidem. On the appropriation and transformations of the 'mission baroque' see Pla J., *Las imágenes peregrinas (Las migajas de una herencia): Barroco en el Paraguay* (Asunción:





FIGURES 8.7–8.8 *Images from the Guarani imprint of Juan Eusebio Nieremberg y Otín's De la Diferencia entre lo Temporal y lo Eterno (1705).*

these modifications, intend to translate Christian sacrality into native ways of understanding space, real or virtual? How did indigenous populations participate in the definition of this message and how did they read and interpret its meaning? Were local motifs intended to transmit the idea of continuity that Christian images were unable to transmit?

In some cases, visual figurations expressed the clear intent of Jesuit priests to make the biblical message understandable and appealing to the Indians. In other cases, they codified in a more subtle way indigenous representations of space and contact. There remain some examples of mission visual representation that have not been studied in depth to date. I will mention two remarkable ones. The first is a series of graffiti engraved on the floor and walls of a church in the mission town of Santísima Trinidad [Figs. 8.9, 8.10 and 8.11]. The series presents zoomorphic, anthropomorphic, phytomorphic, geometric, and

1975); Escobar T., "El Barroco misionero: Lo propio y lo ajeno", in *El Barroco en el mundo guaraní: Colección Latourrette Bo* (Asunción: 2004).

architectonic designs, among others. Feet, hands, and objects like crosses and medals can be identified, as well as footprints of various species of animals. The graffiti also include signatures, letters, numbers and phrases, which not only reveal an intention of representation but a certain degree of schooling on the part of the native authors. These designs seem to have been made spontaneously, as a form of play, and probably during pauses in daily activities.<sup>57</sup>

The second example also comes from Trinidad [Fig. 8.12]. The interior of the town's enormous church has a frieze that shows a series of angels playing musical instruments. Four of them hold curious spherical instruments that look like indigenous maracas. Their body language and the pleats in their clothing suggest the movements of a dance. These figures, carved a few years before the expulsion of the Jesuits, point to priests' efforts to incorporate meaningful elements of traditional Guaraní religion into a style and a space dominated by Christian symbols. The Jesuits' motives for this appear reasonable. They made it possible for indigenous religious values to be co-opted and reassigned with Christian meanings. In any case a certain degree of ambiguity will remain associated with these figures.<sup>58</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

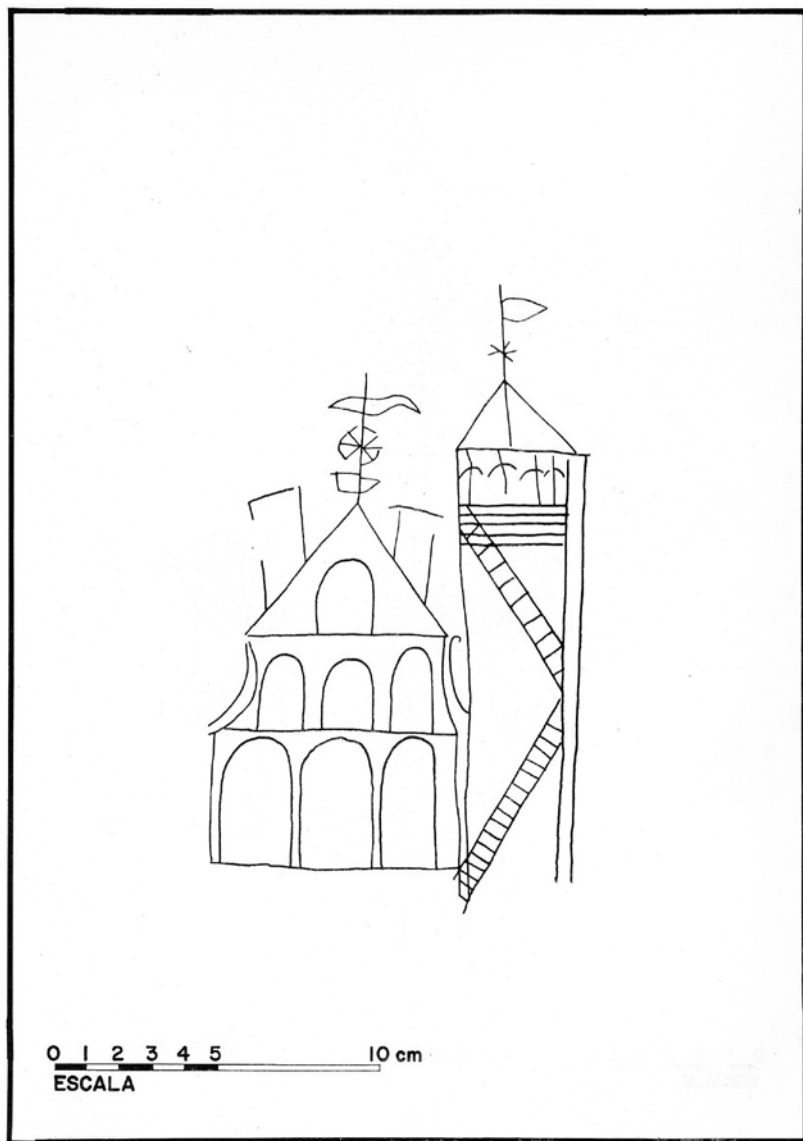
Mission space was far from being closed and homogenous, as it has usually been described. Several overlapping levels of meaning can be associated with it. I have focused on the meaning constructed in practice both by Jesuits and Indians. While Jesuits tended to produce a radical separation between inner and outer space, at least in their official records and iconographies, Indians experienced space as a permeable reality in which the inside and the outside were connected; Indians represented the mission town as a place belonging to a network of places.

I suggest that the indigenous role in the production of a spatial structure can be explored at least in three senses: first, the study of the use and representation of the periphery and its relation with the inner mission space; second, the

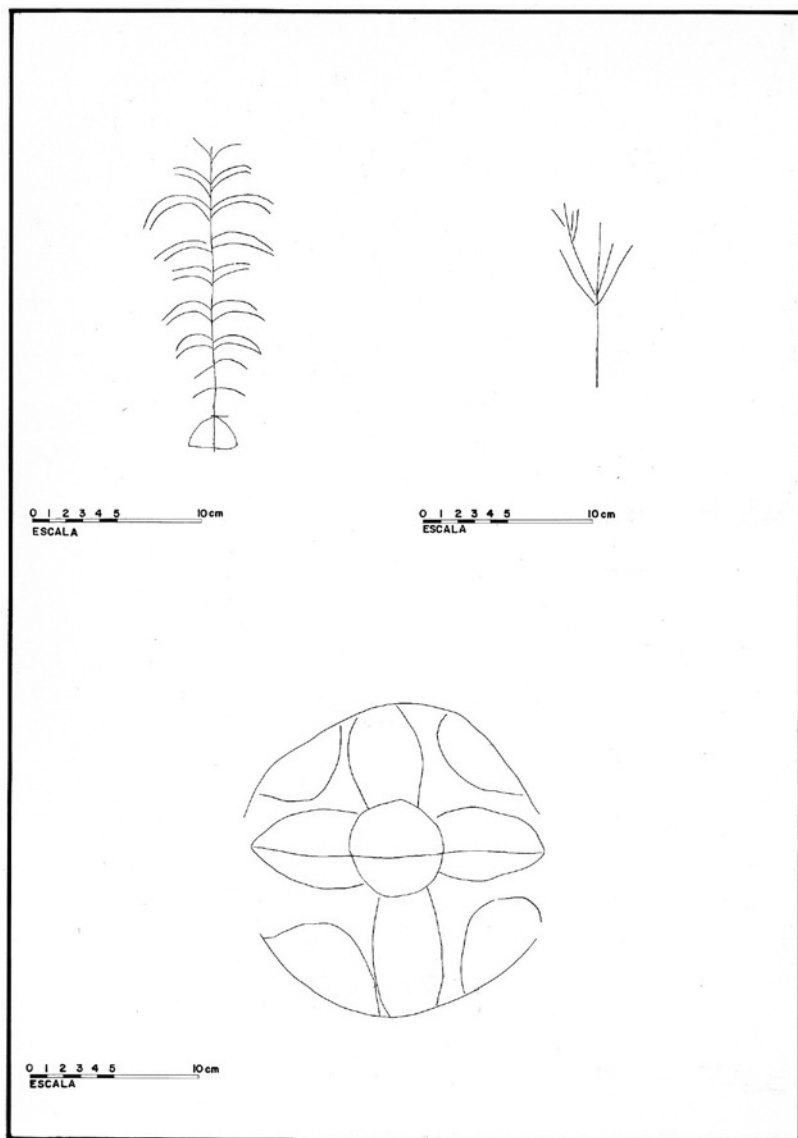
57 Perasso J.A., *El Paraguay del siglo XVIII en tres memorias* (Asunción: 1986) 59.

58 On the use of maraca in ancient Guaraní musical traditions, and its association with resistance, see Wilde G., "El enigma sonoro de Trinidad: Ensayo de etnomusicología histórica", *Revista Resonancias* 23 (2008) 41–66; on the contrast between traditional sounds and new sounds in the process of conversion, see idem, "The Sounds of Indigenous Ancestors: Music, Corporality and Memory in the Jesuit Missions of Colonial South America", in Hall P. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Music Censorship* (New York: in press).





FIGURES 8.9–8.11 *Engravings of the mission town of Santísima Trinidad.*  
Source: Perasso J.A., *El Paraguay del siglo XVIII en tres memorias*  
(Asunción: 1986).



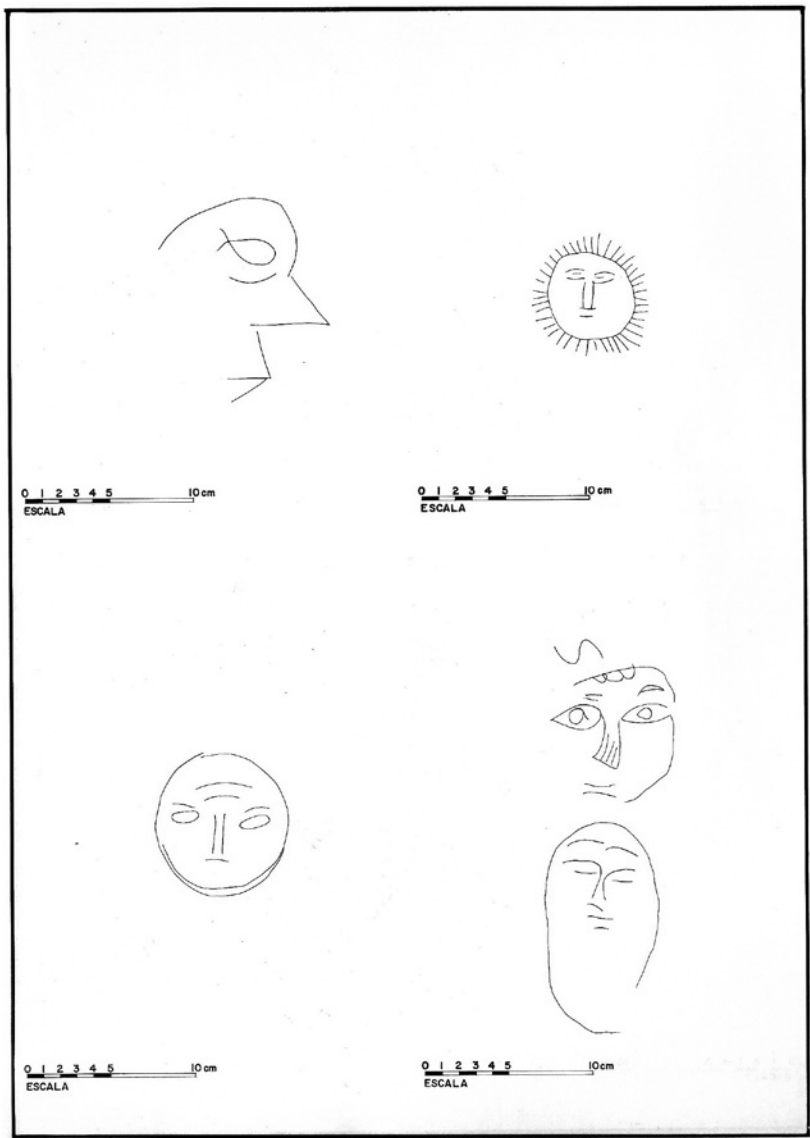




FIGURE 8.12 *Angel musician holding maraca in the mission town of Santísima Trinidad.*  
Photo © Bozidar Darko Sustersic.

production of internal differentiations and the preservation of an autonomous political space inside the missions; third, the elaboration of hybrid spaces as a result of indigenous appropriations and missionaries adaptations. Moreover, as I have attempted to demonstrate, the production of mission space was associated with particular ways of seeing and perceiving.

In closing, indigenous conceptions of mission space should not be understood as a symbol of 'ethnic purity', for they only make sense in the context of the mission formation process. It was in this context that Indians learned and developed technologies of representation. What may be recognized as 'indigenous creativity' is not an isolated given to be evaluated exclusively from an aesthetic point of view, but an element belonging to a specific network of social and political relations. It was in the mission as a socio-historical formation that the instrumental or aesthetic need for spatial representation was born.

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