Was There a Regional Center in Quechan Territory in the Eighteenth Century? An Analysis of Garcés’s *Diario de Exploraciones*

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Abstract

This article analyzes Garcés’s *Diario de Exploraciones* from the context of the regional conflict that it recorded. This approach attempts to determine the implications of conflicting interethnic dynamics from a sociohistorical perspective based on ethnohistory, political anthropology, and social archaeology. Garcés’s *Diario* belongs chronologically to the 1770s and geographically to the lower Colorado-Gila basin and circumscribing lands corresponding to the northern third of the Sonoran Desert. Ethnically, it is centered on the Yuman societies and their neighbors. Its relevance lies in the exceptional record of conflict interactions within an indigenous territory located beyond the frontier of New Spain, between New Mexico, Pimería Alta, and New California. The analysis of this information makes it possible to determine the existence of interethnic alliances and conflicts, geographical corridors, and probably one regional center.

Sociohistorical Problem

This article presents a sociohistorical analysis of the *Diario de Exploraciones* by the Franciscan Francisco Tomás Hermenegildo Garcés (1968) concerning interethnic conflict during the 1770s in the lower basin of the Colorado and Gila Rivers. This region was occupied by the Colorado delta’s Yuman-speaking sedentary and agricultural societies, as well as their neighbors of diverse linguistic affiliation, some of whom were hunter-gatherers and others, seasonal nomads. The investigation is focused on the Quechan, or Yuma, whose main settlement probably constituted a regional center, a matter that is not evident at first sight in the interpretations of the document. Such a regional center is significant, in terms of political anthropology. Given its importance, a future analysis will need to contrast this evidence with the record of the Jesuit Eusebio Francisco Kino (1989) and other sources contemporary to Garcés’s writing.

The standard perspective on the Colorado delta comes from the work of the ethnographers. By the time of their studies, the indigenous social structures had dissolved. The research problem is to analyze the situation in the eighteenth century, when it is assumed that social complexity was still articulated. This supports the relevance of studying Garcés’s (1968) viceregal document discussed here and those of Kino (1989). In the future, it will be necessary to study the documents of Eixarch (Montané 2000:360–432), Font (Montané 2000:41–360), and Anza (Montané 1989:51–121), contemporaries of Garcés, as well as the nineteenth-century writings generated as a result of the expansionism of the United States and the consolidation of the Mexican republican government.

In the eighteenth century, Kino and Garcés explored the lower Colorado delta, while Anza, Eixarch, and Font only knew its northern end in the vicinity of the current international border. Of these, only Garcés explored the route to the Mojave territory and from there to the Mission San Gabriel and to the Hopi...
region. In his successive travels to this area, Kino was accompanied by several missionaries, so documentary research may be needed to locate any documents they may have written. Kino traveled to the delta in 1699, 1700, 1701, and 1702 (Kino 1989:69, 104–107, 145–149, 151, 160–163), during which he observed five groups (Figure 1). García in 1775 (1968:25–34) recorded four groups: *yuma* (Quechan), *jalliquamay* or *quiríma* (Halliquamay, Halyikwamai, Maya), and *cucapá* (Cocopa).

The viceregal documents (García 1968:25–30; Kino 1989:146–148, 150, 152) give an account of extensive, very rich lands cultivated in the delta and a huge volume of agricultural production, processing, and storage, as well as fishing. Likewise, Kino witnessed an exchange event, in which *pimas* and *yumas* could not manage to load all the corn, beans, and squash that *quirímas* and *coanopas* (Kamia?) gave them in exchange. In both documents, the settlement pattern is defined as dispersed among crop fields, and...
significantly there was a “large ranchería,” San Dionisio, at the confluence of the Colorado and Gila Rivers (Kino 1989:106–107, 145, 160). Another relevant point is found in the account of García (1968:29), who noted that, as a result of conflict, both cajuenches and jalliquamais were in the process of concentration into villages. These facts indicate that the groups were both fully sedentary and agricultural, as well as being fishers, to which it was necessary to add that they were also potters. These documents also distinguish capitanes (captains), justicias (justices), and hechiceros (sorcerers), and allude to warriors. References to the long-distance exchange of prestige goods and the circulation of news are significant. These cultural elements show a much more complex social reality than might have been expected. But beyond these descriptions, the objective here is to arrive at a deeper understanding of the sociohistorical process. Therefore, the present problem is to analyze the historical-social circumstances of the viceroyalty’s expansion to Yuma territory. For this, the discussion here will concentrate on García’s *Diario de Exploraciones*. Accordingly, it is necessary to analyze the social interaction between the Quechan and their neighbors of the lower Colorado-Gila basin to infer the sociohistorical consequences (Ortega Esquinca 2018:2).

**García’s *Diary of Explorations***

García was commissioned by the viceroy of New Spain, and in his *Diary of Explorations* he assumed himself to be Spanish and in the service of the Spanish king. Commissioned as a missionary for San Xavier del Bac at the northern extreme of Pimería Alta, he led the advance in exploring the territory beyond the border with the intention of expanding the empire. In this political and ideological context, he carried out the order that Viceroy Antonio María Bucareli y Ursúa assigned to him:

I am commanded that, accompanied by another religious [Tomás Eixarch], I join Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista [de] Anza and Father Fray Pedro Font, destined for the port of San Francisco, and accompanying them to the Colorado River, I await their return there with my companion, and in the meantime examine the places, deal with the nearby nations, and explore their natives’ mood and disposition toward catechism and vassalage to our sovereign [García 1968:15].

But his orders contrast with the reality of what he reported in his *Diary of Explorations*. The “examination of places” and his “dealing with the nearby nations,” which the royal mandate required, led far beyond the area of the Colorado delta, where he was supposed to await Anza’s return (García 1968:15). In practice, he explored the area between New Mexico, Pimería Alta, and New California, a territory to be integrated into the Viceroyalty of New Spain. That integration could not be carried out because of the Quechan-Mojave uprising of 1781, although this was only a symptom of the empire’s collapse, which concluded with Mexico’s independence.

This document from the viceroyalty’s terminal stage has been the subject of studies with various purposes, such as that by Bardavío (2010), which focused on the Franciscan’s bearing and his contribution to the expansion of the church and overseas Spain, minimizing the manuscript’s substance, in addition to having a pro-Spanish bias and attempting to justify García as a martyr.

The intent here is not to offer an apology for García. García’s work was carried out beyond the frontier of Christianity, and he witnessed the contradictions of late Spanish expansionism, represented by the integrity of Anza and the mistakes of Moncada. He was the spearhead of that process and advanced the collapse of the Spanish Empire (Ortega Esquinca 2018:12).

The objective here is to deepen the analysis of García’s *Diario de Exploraciones*, which was not
written to enhance its author’s exploits, like Cabeza de Vaca’s Shipwrecks or Cortés’s Letter Reports. On the contrary, it is a treatise on the diversity and interaction of groups that in the 1770s inhabited the vast territory, unknown at that time, located beyond the farthest frontier of the Spanish Empire prior to its fall. In the viceregal geography, it was at the juncture of three fronts of expansion: New Mexico, Pimería Alta, and New California. In exploring this area, Garcés marched along Native trails. Three fundamental objectives, evident in his writing, were to find the best route between the advanced Spanish settlements, to determine the optimal places to establish missions that would link together the road network and seize Native territories, but above all, to dismantle interethnic conflicts in order to achieve safety for the transit of settlers, as he indicates:

[I was] persevering in the established peace. In this I worked so much, as the Diary attests, to prevent much death and destruction among these nations to whom I owe affection, so as to facilitate the foundation of the missions, and to render secure the intended transit to Monterrey and to New Mexico [Garcés 1968:80].

To understand the scope and limits of the information compiled by Garcés, it is first necessary to contextualize his work. A concern seeps through in the course of its drafting: to achieve the safe transit of caravans, for which he focused his action on dismantling conflict, pacifying the area, locating strategic sites to found missions, and establishing access routes between the Hispanic settlements. Except in occasional references, he did not describe the indigenous culture, so that in his writing, beyond ethnic names and general mentions of linguistic similarities and differences, it is impossible to distinguish, for example, a Quechan from a Cocopa, and these from a Pima, so his contribution to ethnography is marginal. A problem in which Garcés delved, given its relevance in the achievement of his objectives, is interethnic conflict, in order to differentiate allies from adversaries and to disrupt the belligerent dynamics. Another subject recorded in the course of his trip is the demarcation of the indigenous territories that were recognized by his Native guides, who refused to take another step when they were already within enemy territory and even guided him by alternative routes to avoid such areas. A third is in the references to an indigenous hierarchy constituted by capitanes, justicias, and hechiceros, in addition to indirect allusions to warriors and references to long-distance exchange, which presuppose the presence of some type of merchants. These three subjects make up Garcés’s great contribution for his own times and for posterity.

Garcés presented his Diary of Explorations in two sections. The first (Garcés 1968:13–87) (Table 1) is an exceptional travel log, in which he recorded his daily progress in terms of date, number of “jornadas” (days) and “leguas” (leagues) that he walked, and the direction with respect to magnetic north; eventually he also measured the latitude and made relevant ethnographic annotations. The record of interethnic conflict was made during his journey in relation to the groups he visited (Table 2).

The second part of his writings, which he entitled “Reflections on the Preceding Diary” (Garcés 1968:89–103), is a reasoned synopsis in which he summarized and synthesized those points that he considered relevant to solving regional problems, given the expansionist priorities of Spain. What resulted is the politically correct writing of a royal functionary. Two important limitations may be noted. First, he limited himself to describing who were “friends” and “enemies” of 11 groups to which he referred but for some reason did not write down; these are: cucapá (Cucapá), jalliquamay (Quiquima, Halikwamai, Maya), yuma (Quechan), jalchidún (Halchidoma), jamajab (Mojave, Mohave), pueblo de Oraibe (Hopi), yavipai del camino de Moqui (Havasupai), yavipai...
An Eighteenth-Century Quechan Regional Center?

This second problem of Garcés’s Diary of Explorations is the subject of this article. In the sociohistorical research issue, the challenge is “to make everything understood through the words of someone who understood nothing” (Eco 1991:32).

Garcés’s Route: The Geographical Ethnic Corridors

It is crucial to emphasize that Garcés used indigenous roads to “discover” a route that was regularly traveled by the Natives, along which prestige products from long-distance exchanges and news circulated, as noted in his travels in the Diary of Explorations. Two old indigenous paths were followed. One linked the pima gileño (Akimel Oódham), cocomaricopa (Maricopa), and yuma (Quechan) groups; from here it followed a branch to the north, to the jalchedum (Halchidoma) and jamajab (Mojave); later it followed another branch to the west, to the chemeguet (Chemehuevi), beñemé (Vanyume), and Gabrielino. It left the viceregal border settlement, Mission San Xavier del Bac, for the junction of the Colorado and Gila Rivers, where the crossing later called Los Algodones was located (Rojas and Courtade 2010); it then split into three branches. One branch headed north, to the territory of the Mojave, allies of the Quechan, and from there forked west and east. To the west, it led to Mission San Gabriel. This trail linked Pimería Alta (Sonora) with San Gabriel in New California. Garcés proposed the installation of missions in Quechan and Mojave territories.

The other path that he walked on his return from New California was the link between the Gabrielino,

Table 1. Subjects Contained in the Diario de Exploraciones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Pages in Garcés 1968</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interethnic conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliances</td>
<td>20, 26, 31, 36, 37, 39, 40–41, 42, 59, 60, 64–65, 66, 69, 70, 75, 76, 77, 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts</td>
<td>16, 17, 20, 26, 27–28, 29, 30, 37, 40–41, 42, 67, 69, 75, 76, 77, 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace treaties</td>
<td>21–24, 26, 31, 35–36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 63, 66, 68, 80, 81, 82, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violation of treaties</td>
<td>28, 30, 34, 63, 81, 82, 83, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonparticipant ethnic groups</td>
<td>36, 49, 60, 71–76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange networks</td>
<td>18, 19, 24, 43, 46, 48, 50, 59, 60, 62, 64–65, 68, 69, 70, 80, 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natives living with ethnic allies</td>
<td>26, 31, 39, 53, 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to ethnic allies</td>
<td>26, 33, 35, 36, 43, 46, 50, 51, 59, 60, 71–74, 79, 84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interacton between Spanish and natives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace with the Spanish</td>
<td>35–36, 41–42, 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic arbitrariness</td>
<td>36, 48–49, 50, 51, 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native rejection and/or rebellion</td>
<td>36, 37, 51, 60, 64, 65, 71–76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viceregal routes</td>
<td>16–25, 36, 43–47, 60–63, 64–71, 68, 76–84, 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garcés</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rejection of Garcés</td>
<td>28, 71–76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Hispanic conflict between Garcés and Rivera Moncada</td>
<td>48–49, 74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Table corrected and modified from Ortega Esquinca (2018:7), based on Garcés (1968:13–87).
Table 2. Alliances, Peace Treaties, and Conflicts: Data from the First Part of *Diario de Exploraciones*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Alliances</th>
<th>Peace treaties</th>
<th>Conflicts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cajuencche</td>
<td>jalliquamay</td>
<td>yuma</td>
<td>jalliquamay &gt; cajuencche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chemebet</td>
<td>yuta apache tejua jamabaj</td>
<td></td>
<td>comanches moquinos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cocomaricopa</td>
<td>pima gileño</td>
<td>yuma yavapai tejua</td>
<td>cocomaricopa &gt; yavapai tejua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cucapás</td>
<td>serranos</td>
<td></td>
<td>jalliquamais quemeyá cajuencches yumas serranos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>españoles (spanish)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>los del canal cuabajay quemeyá oraiibe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jagualapai</td>
<td>moquinos jalchedunes</td>
<td>jamajabs</td>
<td>yavapai tejua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jalchedunes</td>
<td>tecuiche jenequiche</td>
<td>yumas jamajab</td>
<td>yumas &gt; jalchedunes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jamajabs</td>
<td>yumas naciones del norte naciones del poniente [chemebet, behemé, and cuabajay]</td>
<td>yavapai tejua jagualapai jalchedún chemebet jalchedunes yavapais (Havasupai) yavapai Comanche</td>
<td>jamajabs &gt; jagualapai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moqui</td>
<td>los de Nuevo México zuhi guamua</td>
<td>españoles (Spanish)</td>
<td>yavapais tejua chemeguabas pimas, sobaipuris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pápago</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>apache</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pima gileño</td>
<td>cocomaricopa</td>
<td></td>
<td>apache apache del norte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quemeyá</td>
<td>yumas</td>
<td>españoles de yuma (Spanish from Quechan)</td>
<td>Spanish, San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yumas</td>
<td>quemeyá yavipais tejua o apache jamabaj</td>
<td>cocomaricopa jalchedunes jecuiche cajuencaches</td>
<td>yumas &gt; jalchedunes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yavipais del camino del Moqui (Havasupai)</td>
<td>moqui jagualapai yuta yavipai lipan yavipai nataje</td>
<td>españoles (Spanish) jamajabs</td>
<td>yavipais tejua o apaches; yavipais del sur guamua napac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yavipais tejua</td>
<td>yumas jamajabs yavipai del oriente chemeguabas</td>
<td>cocomaricopas</td>
<td>españoles (spanish) yavipais del norte moquinos gileños</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yuta</td>
<td>Pueblos del Moqui: Jano, Sesepaulaba, Masagnebé, and Galpa</td>
<td></td>
<td>Muqui Concabe Oraibe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Table corrected and modified from Ortega Esquinca (2018:8), based on Garcés (1968:16–87).
Table 3. Old Alliances and Conflicts: Data from “Reflections on the Preceding Diary, Second Point, Friends and Enemies.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>“Friends”</th>
<th>“Enemies”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cucapá</td>
<td>cuñain</td>
<td>pápagos, jallicuamais, cajuenches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jalliquamais</td>
<td>cajuenches, quemeyá, jalchédunes</td>
<td>yumas, pápagos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yumas</td>
<td>jamajabs, yavipais tejua, pápagos de Sonoitac</td>
<td>jalchédunes, cocomaricopas, pimas gileño del desemboque, jecuiches de la sierra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jallchédunes</td>
<td>cocomaricopas, pimas gileños, pápagos del norte, de yavapais a Oraíbe (except tejua), jecuiches, jenigueches from yumas down (cajuenche, jalliquamay, cucapá)</td>
<td>jamajabs, yavipais tejua, chemeguet, yumas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(jmb) jamajabs</td>
<td>(yum) yumas, yavipais tejua, che, chemeguet, Σ as far as San Gabriel and San Luis (chemeguet and beinemé)</td>
<td>yavipais, except tejua, jalchédunes, jenigueches, jecuiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pueblo de Oraíbe (hopi)</td>
<td>yavipais between Gila and Colorado, except tejua, yutas, pueblo del Moqui, Nuevo México missions, yajipais del sur</td>
<td>yavipais tejua, yutas del Colorado, chemeguavas, yumas, jamajabs, pimas gileños, cocomaricopas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yavipais del camino del Moqui</td>
<td>Oraíbe (hopi), jalchédunes, chemeguavas, cocomaricopas, pimas, yutas, haquiobas, yavipais lipanes, yavipais nataje</td>
<td>yavipais tejua, yumas, New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Havasupai)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yavipais tejua</td>
<td>yumas, jamajabs, chemeguavas, yavipais nabajai, yavipais gileños (tejua)</td>
<td>jalchédunes, pimas, gileños, cocomaricopas, yavipais del norte Oraíbe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chemeguavas</td>
<td>yutas, todos los yavipais, Σ del poniente (beinemé)</td>
<td>comanches, Moqui, jalchédunes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>los del Río Gila (cocomaricopa y pima gileño)</td>
<td>entre sí (between them), jalchédunes</td>
<td>tejua, apache</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: The Colorado delta groups are in bold font. The symbol Σ means “all the nations.” Table corrected and modified from Ortega Esquinca (2018:9), based on Garcés (1968:91–93).
beñemé (Vanyume), chemeguet (Chemehuevi), and jamajab (Mojave) groups, whom he met on his way, and from there to the upper Colorado River, on the south bank of the Canyon of the Colorado, among the cuercomanche (Yavapai), yavapai del camino de Moqui (Havasupai), and Moqui (Hopi) groups. He did not follow the stretch that led on to New Mexico. This trail linked New California with the Hopi area and New Mexico; its nerve center was Mojave territory, where Garcés proposed the installation of a mission.

On this path, the missionary traveled from San Gabriel to the Hopi area; for the section that went to New Mexico, he only compiled data from Native informants. In addition, he gave an account of a third path, located between the other two, which he did not travel, linking the societies of the pima gileño (Akimel Oódham), cocomaricopa (Maricopa), falchedum (Halchidoma), jecuiche (Cahuilla), jeneagueche (Serrano), and Luiseño in New California.

Garcés’s knowledge was limited to what he observed in the course of his journeys on Native paths, plus the information he gathered from the Indians with whom he talked, as well as what he deduced from both sources.

A Brief View of Social Complexity of the Colorado-Gila Basin

Kroeber (1928) claimed that there was a single culture in the U.S. Southwest and northern Mexico. Conversely, Kirchhoff (1954) observed that two indigenous cultures coexisted, based on the practice of two different ways of life: hunter-gatherers and farmers. On this material basis, he proposed the respective cultural areas of Arid America and Oasis America (Figure 2). The geographical setting where Quechan society interacted with the other ethnic groups was the lower Colorado-Gila basin. According to Kirchhoff (1954:550), two subareas of sedentary farmers were located in this territory: Pima-Opata and River Yumans. These groups were distributed along the rivers and in the Colorado delta, this last a very rich region, “de pingües tierras,” as Kino (1989:152) wrote.

In the Handbook of North American Indians, it is affirmed that “the cultures of the River and Delta Yumans were so similar to each other that they may be considered together. The River and Delta Yumans constituted a series of agricultural tribes along the lower Colorado and Gila Rivers” (Stewart 1983:1).

However, although Kirchhoff’s proposal is accepted, its application has remained limited. The problem is summarized in this way: Kroeber (1928) analyzed the area based on the concept of culture, with which he defined the existence of a uniform area, while Kirchhoff (1954), disagreeing, introduced the study of the way of life, which created the possibility of observing the coexistence of two cultures that were interacting intensely.

A greater social complexity in the organization of the lower Colorado-Gila basin’s indigenous groups is seen in the historical documents (Garcés 1968; Kino 1989). The possibility has been proposed that the groups that settled on the Colorado and Gila Rivers as well as in the Colorado delta were hierarchical tribal communities (Ortega Esquinca 2005). Although the analysis of the information of Kino and Garcés indicates the possibility that hierarchical societies were present, the essential data for confirmation were lacking. Subsequently, the fundamental reference was found (Ortega Esquinca 2014), as explained below.

Olleyquotequio, “Captain Salvador Palma,” received political power by inheritance from his father, and the latter from his grandfather (Sánchez Ramírez 1998:11, 14), which indicates the presence of a Quechan social elite. This information is fundamental, since it shows that these societies were not simple tribes. Therefore, at least this group, among the other River Yumans, may have been a hierarchical
Figure 2. Cultural areas of Arid America and Oasis America (Kirchhoff 1954:544).
tribal community (Ortega Esquinca 2005:153). To understand the role of these *capitanes*, the observation is significant that, when Garcés reached the *jamajab* (Mojave), “many people [went to see me] and among them, three captains, of whom [one] was the principal [el principal] of the nation, without whom nothing was determined” (Garcés 1968:42). The presence of this *capitán principal* allows us to assert that these groups were not simple tribes.

The ethnic scene of the lower Colorado-Gila basin in the eighteenth century shows a social complexity that Garcés, among the most perceptive of his contemporaries, did not perceive. But neither have those who have subsequently investigated this matter.

The study of the ethnic groups that inhabited the lower Colorado-Gila basin in the eighteenth century shows a social complexity in which hunter-gatherer and agricultural societies, seasonal nomads and sedentary groups coexisted with pre-tribal and tribal communities, including at least one hierarchical tribal community (Ortega Esquinca 2004:353–364). The problem is that this coexistence entailed conflict (Ortega Esquinca 2004:299–326). Consequently, the sociohistorical research problem consists in determining what the circumstances of the Yuman societies were from the perspectives of political anthropology and history.

**The Colorado Delta in the Eighteenth Century**

Kino’s travel record indicates that five indigenous societies were settled in the Colorado delta (Figure 1). It is relevant that the adjective used to describe this agricultural space, *tierras pingüíssimas* and *pingües tierras* (Kino 1989:148, 160) (“fat” or “rich” lands) testifies to the existence of an area of marked fertility and abundant agricultural production, as would be expected for a delta like that of the Colorado and Gila Rivers. Indeed, he continued to describe and praise the high production of corn, beans, and squash, in addition to fishing (Kino 1989:146–152). He also recorded the presence of “captains,” which indicates that they were societies with some differential social status. This needs to be analyzed because it means that they were no longer simple tribal societies, but may be characterized as hierarchical tribal communities (Ortega Esquinca 2000:120, Fig. 27; 2002:262; 2004:362; 2014:207).

Three-quarters of a century later, Garcés explored this deltaic oasis, following another Native path. He made two trips, the best known being that of 1775, when he toured four Native territories (Garcés 1968:25–35). He started from the recently founded mission of the Quechan, a *jacal* (Garcés 1968:24–25) built near the crossing later known as Los Algodones (Rojas and Courtade 2010). On this trip, he reached the Colorado estuary. He observed that the border between the *yuma* (Quechan) and *cajunche* territories was Laguna Santa Eulalia (Garcés 1968:26), which is relevant because this indicates that a part of the Quechan area was within the Colorado delta. To the east of the *cajunche* “nation” was *jalliquamay* territory (Garcés 1968:29), which means that it was south of the Quechan. At the southern end of the delta was settled “the Cucapá nation, which occupied a large area from Laguna de San Mateo to the sierra, the Colorado River, and its mouth” (Garcés 1968:27).

The languages spoken by these groups belong to the Yuman linguistic family, but that does not mean that they were automatically allies, nor does their being or not being farmers. On the contrary, even in the same delta where all were sedentary farmers and fishermen, the ethnic proximity of these Yuman speakers entailed tensions that led to battles, as witnessed by Garcés (1968:28–30). The Quechan, sedentary farmers and fishermen, had among their allies the *yapipai tejua-apaches* (Garcés 1968:36–37), hunter-gatherers and seasonal nomads belonging to the Athapascan language family. On the other hand, the *cocomaricopa* were allies of the *pima gileño* (Garcés 1968:20), the first of these being in the Yuman language family and

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the second in the Uto-Aztecan language family; both were sedentary farmers. The alliances and rivalries had other conditions that must be examined.

**Conflicting Interaction: The Quechan and Their Neighbors**

Kino’s (1989:149) document contains valuable information on interethnic conflict, as well as on his efforts to pacify the area located beyond the viceregal frontier. However, this conflict was adventitious for Kino, because his priority was to find the overland crossing to the supposed island of California, a passage he supposed must exist because of the “blue shells” of southern green abalone, *Haliotis fulgens*, that he had received as a gift. His efforts to achieve interethnic peace were made in order to ensure the transit from Pimería Alta to Lower California.

Three-quarters of a century later, when the Bourbons had already expelled the Jesuits from New Spain and before the incursions of Russian tsarist ships, securing this territory became of crucial importance for the empire. In this context of international conflict, Quechan territory became a geostrategic location for the Spanish Empire, since it contained the crossing that would allow communication by land between Pimería Alta and New California. In that context, Garcés’s work was essential. It was focused on founding the two missions among the *yuma*, the reconnaissance of Native communication routes, and the compilation of detailed information on interethnic alliances and hostilities.

Limiting this analysis to Garcés’s *Diario de Exploraciones*, it is observed that regional conflict showed characteristics related to interethnic confederations and interethnic conflict.

**Interethnic Confederations**

Garcés defined the groups that were at peace as “friends” and noted that they participated together in the campaigns against the “enemies,” in addition to having free passage through their territory and living among them (Garcés 1968:26, 33, 34). However, the noun “friend” does not allow us to distinguish between a simple friendship, an interethnic alliance, and a tribal confederation, which involve different degrees of interaction and interconnection. Observing in detail the oratory of the Quechan captain Palma before his *cocomaricopas* (Maricopa) and *jalchedunes* (Halchidoma) “enemies” (Garcés 1968:35–36), he emphasized that those who were his “friends” had established strong ties of interethnic collaboration, in addition to being supported by the Spanish. This placed Palma and the Quechan above any other lower Colorado-Gila group. Do these facts justify positing an emerging regional center? Since a simple friendship as described by Garcés does not settle the matter, it may be possible to do so from the context of alliances that led to the constitution of interethnic confederations (Ortega Esquinca 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2014, 2018). These were organized around four societies: the *yuma* (Quechan) and *jamajab* (Mojave, Mohave) on the one side, and on the other the *jalchedum* (Halchidoma) and Cocopa (Figure 3).

According to Garcés’s information, the *yuma* confederation was the one with greater consolidation and greater membership. The *yuma’s* old allies were the *jamajabs* (Mojave), *yavipais teju-apaches* (Apache), *pápagos de Sonoitac* (Tohono O’odham), and *quequemeyá* (Kumeyaay, Diegueño). With respect to the Kamia (Kumeyaay of Imperial Valley), whom he did not record, it is possible that he confused them with *quequemeyá* (Kumeyaay, Diegueño). Garcés promoted peace between the *yumas*, *cajuencches* (Cutyana), and *jalliquamais*, or *quiquímas* (Maya, Halliquamay, Halliykamai), who contrary to his mediating management reinforced a common front against the Cocopa. This confederation secured the route from east to west between Pimería Alta, the Colorado delta, and the missions of San Diego and El Descanso, but Garcés did not recognize this.
The *jamajab* (Mojave) confederation had as old allies the *chemebet* (Chemehuevi), *beñemé* (Vanyume), and *cuabajay* (Tatavian) groups. Garcés presents them as integrated in the *yuma* (Quechan) confederation. It secured the route to the west, from the Colorado River to the Pacific at Mission San Gabriel. Toward the east, the route was in a process of pacification, for which Garcés carried out mediation work with the *jagualapai* (Walapai), *yavapais del camino del Moqui* (Havasupai), and *cuercomanches* (Yavapai Cuercomanche) “nations.” If this route had been consolidated, it would have opened the way from New Mexico to New California. Garcés recognized this issue and put in his best effort as mediator to achieve peace between these groups.

In the *jalchedun* (Halchidoma) confederation, old allies were the *cocomaricopa* or *opa* (Maricopa), *pima gileño* (Akimel O’odham), *pápago del norte* (Tohono O’odham), *yavapais a Oraibe* (Havasupai), *jecuiches* (Cahuilla), and *jenegueches* (Serrano) groups. Their route, located between the previous ones, linked the *pima gileño*, *cocomaricopa*, *jalchedun*, *jecuiche*, *jenegueche*, and *Luiseño*; that is, from settled villages

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Figure 3. Interethnic confederations organized around four groups: the *yuma* (Quechan: *yu*) and the *jamajab* (Mojave: *mo*) as allies, and as enemies of the *jalchedum* (Halchidoma: *hal*) and the Cocopa (*cu*) (Ortega Esquinca 2004:324). Information synthesized based on the analysis of Garcés’s (1968) *Diario de Exploraciones*.
north of the mission of San Javier del Bac in what is now Arizona to the area of what would later be Mission San Luis Rey in New California. Although Garcés traveled along the cocomaricopa-pima gileño section, he crossed the jalchedun-jecuiche section, about which he reported; after his return from his travels, it was suggested to him that the short jalchedun-cocomaricopa path might be taken, but he was not aware of this route. However, some of the data are not clear. For instance, it was feasible that the cucapás (Cocopa) might have formed a confederation with cuñain and/or serranos, but the information does not allow us to determine whether these latter were two groups or one (Garcés 1968:33–34, 91); ruling out the enemy quemeyá (Kumeyaay), it is likely that the group mentioned was the Paipai, Kiliwa, and/or Juigrepa. Another problem is the claim that the jalchedunes (Halchidoma) were “friends” with all the groups “de los yuma para abajo” (“from the yuma down”) (Garcés 1968:92), that is, with the cajuñenes (Cutyanas); jalliquamais, or quiquimas (Halliquamay, Halyikwamai, Maya); and cucapás. This information seems contradictory because the first two societies as allies of the yumas participated together in a campaign against the cucapás (Cocopa) (Garcés 1968:30). It also seems contradictory that between these two “nations,” which were allies, a personal problem was resolved through hostilities (Garcés 1968:28).

**Interethnic Conflicts**

Garcés defined the groups that were in conflict as “enemies.” He observed that these did not enter their adversaries’ territories, so that his guides refused to step into the enemies’ geographical space (Garcés 1968:30). He did not speculate about the origin of this social situation, nor about its social implications in its historical moment. He limited himself to describing the problem he faced, which was pacifying the area in order to open free circulation to New California. Although providing invaluable information, it is insufficient for understanding the issue of interethnic conflict. Figure 4 shows the contenders’ conflict interactions in regional space.

In Garcés’s writings, there is a record of old and current conflicts. In the lower basin of the Colorado and Gila Rivers, there were five circles of conflict (Ortega Esquinca 2004:325) (Figure 4). These were centered on sedentary, agricultural societies settled on the banks of these rivers and in the Colorado delta, an area of Oasis America (Kirchhoff 1954:550). These societies were the cocomaricopas-pimas gileño (Maricopa-Akimel O’odham) allies on the Gila River, the jalchedunes (Halchidoma) and jamajabs (Mojave) on the Colorado River, the cucapás (Cocopa) in the extreme south of the Colorado delta, and the yuma (Quechan) at the junction of the Colorado and Gila Rivers and the delta. From this pattern of regional settlements, several social implications may be drawn:

- Garcés limited himself to defining who were “friends” and “enemies,” especially in the face of the problem of the Apaches, which he did not manage to solve. From the analysis of his *Diario de Exploraciones*, three confederations (Figure 3) and five interethnic centers of conflict (Figure 4) may be inferred.
- The allies of these groups came together in the territory of the group to exchange news and local products, as well as to establish agreements on actions to follow (Garcés 1968:22–24, 33, 35–36). The fact that some resided with their allies is relevant (Garcés 1968:26, 31).
- These groups were located at crossroads, which together constituted the network of indigenous communications of the lower Colorado-Gila basin. Both Kino and Garcés used this network to explore the area, and Anza used it to conduct his two expeditions to New California. Kino and Garcés glimpsed this situation, although they did not understand the regional integration of this autochthonous road network.
• The yuma (Quechan) were at the crossroads between the groups that constituted the three confederations and the five centers of conflict in the lower Colorado-Gila basin. This positioned them in a strategic setting to manage regional interaction (Ortega Esquinca 2018:10). They took advantage of this circumstance when establishing peace treaties with their enemies (Garcés 1968:22, 23, 24, 35–36), to receive news of the advance of the Spanish (Garcés 1968:24, 36), and to coordinate the actions of resistance (Garcés 1968:36). Incidentally, news brought by a quemeyá (Kumeyaay), which Garcés believed to be false, reported the rebellion at San Diego on November 4–5, 1776. Garcés did not report that the yuma went to the territory of their enemies to establish a peace treaty, but that they did travel to their friends’ territory.
• The yumas (Quechan) had an exceptional spot to cross the Colorado River with some security (Garcés 1968:24).
• Interethnic conflicts and alliances, among other issues, allowed for the control and exclusivity of the routes, and therefore for access to the

Figure 4. Circles of conflict, centered in six groups: yuma (Quechan: yu), halchedum (Halchidoma: hal), jamajab (Mohave, Mohave: mo), cucapá (Cocopa: cu), and cocomaricopa-pima gileño (Maricopa-Akimel O’odham: co and pi) (Ortega Esquinca 2004:324). Information synthesized based on the analysis of García’s (1968) Diario de Exploraciones.
prestige products of long-distance exchange, such as Hopi wool blankets, rabbit and otter hair blankets, Pacific shells, deer skins, and even Hispanic animals, tools, and clothing (Garcés 1968:19, 42–43, 46, 48, 50, 59–60, 64–65, 68).

A Quick Look at the Spanish

The Spanish and the people from New Spain were naïvely embedded in the interethnic conflicts, and their actions had repercussions on the regional patterns of interaction (Garcés 1968:35–36). Therefore, it is fundamental to ask about the historical situation of the Spanish Empire during the period under study.

A relevant perspective, which has not usually been included in studies of the journeys of Garcés and Anza, is the process of the Spanish Empire’s collapse between 1705 and 1821, derived from the enthronement of the Bourbons (Ortega Esquinca 2004:330, 343–346). It is clear that neither Garcés nor his contemporaries recognized it, because they acted as if the empire would continue unchanging in its expansion through North America from its center, New Spain. But history indicates that, for all of the resources, missionaries, soldiers, settlers, and efforts that the viceroyalty invested in it, this last expansion of the frontier, of which Garcés was the spearhead, would not materialize and was destined to fail.

In terms of the historical process, the stages of formation and apogee had ended. In the eighteenth century, the empire was falling. This fact is clearly seen in its inability to bring about the establishment of two viceregal settlements in the Colorado delta, with which it would ensure the occupation of the lower Colorado-Gila basin and the passage to New California. A simple Native uprising carried out by the Quechan-Mojave alliance in 1781, although similar to many others in the history of the viceroyalty during its expansion in Sonora, raised an insurmountable barrier.

The Quechan Regional Center

Garcés and Anza gave staffs of command to Native gobernadores (governors), alcaldes (mayors), and justicias (justices), a fundamental rite for these imperial functionaries because they thus instituted the ethnic authorities’ submission to the crown, in addition to ensuring the groups’ submission. But bestowing staffs was also crucial for the groups themselves, since the realist missionary and the soldier were naïvely contributing a significant impulse toward strengthening the existing confederations, which Garcés defined as “old friendships.” Through the institutionalization of ethnic hierarchies, they also contributed toward the culmination of the process of consolidating societies based on social inequality, in the model of hierarchical tribal communities (Bate 1998:88).

Two historical records concerning Captain Palma are indicative of the existing circumstances. The first was when he addressed a speech to his cocomaricopa (Maricopa) and jalchedunes (Halchidoma) enemies, who were visiting the yuma to confirm peace agreements promoted by Garcés:

We are now brothers who were once enemies. This good has been brought to us by the padres and Spanish, for whose respect I have thrown down my arms. Do not think that it was because of fear, because you already know that I have many people and that now the cajuenches, quemeyá, yavipais, and jamajab are my friends. You jalcheduns have told me that you are not firm in the peace that we have made; raise your arms if you want; I am enough with the Spanish to punish you. Say: who are we to oppose the soldiers? Those have already chosen their path, since you already know that there are Spanish on the seacoast and near the Moqui [Garcés 1968:35–36].
The second record was when he traveled to Mexico City to visit Viceroy Bucareli (who in the document is abbreviated as “Sor”) to request missionaries and to endorse the submission of the Quechan to the king:

My nation, Sor, is called Yuma and it is composed of several regular settlements, placed in the most advantageous situation at the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers. By this setting we enjoy abundant harvests, which put us in a state of not having to depend on foreign aid to subsist comfortably. I enjoy the supreme dominion in it, which by right of primogeniture I inherited from my parents, these from my grandparents, deriving to me successively from one to another from immemorial times. I entered into the command, at their death, with the general applause from my subjects [Sánchez Ramírez 1998:17].

This document confirms that the Quechan were a hierarchical tribal society based on social inequality, since the main political position was held exclusively by a family. Olleyquotequebo, Captain Salvador Palma, affirmed that such right, by primogeniture, was inherited by his father and had come to him from his grandfather. This indicates that the Native to whom Kino had given the staff of justice almost eight decades earlier was probably either Palma’s grandfather or his great-grandfather (Ortega Esquinca 2014:209).

Archaeological data are not available with which to analyze the past prior to the eighteenth century and to infer factually whether this process of social complexity and inequality had begun either before or in the context of the Spanish invasion. It may be hypothesized that probably the actions of the Jesuit Kino and Lieutenant Juan Mateo Manje at the end of the seventeenth century would have been the catalysts of a process in gestation, and 80 years later the actions of Garcés and Anza were its culmination. If so, in this area was present the regional origin of social inequality, a historical process that must have deep roots in the past and that was promoted in an innocent way by missionary and military realists.

Of all the groups settled on the lower course of the Gila and Colorado Rivers, located in the northern third of the Sonoran Desert, the yuma (Quechan) were situated at a crossroads and took advantage to position themselves as a dominant regional center in terms of geopolitics:

- They had in their territory and controlled the Colorado crossing, known as the Paso de los Algodones (Rojas and Courtade 2010), the only place within kilometers where it was possible to cross the Colorado River securely. Kino, as well as Garcés and Anza, crossed the river there. Based on Garcés’s information, it seems that this is the most relevant regional crossing, so its control was strategic for both the Quechan and the Spanish.
- Captain Palma indicated that the large volume of agricultural production gave the possibility of self-sufficiency. In his successive travels in the Sonoran Desert, Kino was impressed by this agricultural abundance.
- In the historical record cited above, there is evidence that Olleyquotequebo, as chief of the yuma, was fully aware of his hierarchical position with respect to the “friends” (allies) and “enemies” (in conflict).
- Peace was established, according to Garcés’s (1968:22–24, 35–36) information, in yuma territory, to which their enemies had to travel, and the simple fact of entering it put the enemies at a disadvantage.
- The yuma allies, the quemeeyá, yavapai tejua-apache, and probably their other allies, traveled constantly to inform the yuma of the progress of the Spanish and of the responses made (Garcés 1968:36, 37). This indicates a
territorial coordination exerted from the Quechan regional center.

The alliance of the Quechan and Mojave groups allowed them to control most of the lower Colorado-Gila basin. This control extended in two east-west strips. The yuma confederation stretched from Apache and Papago territories to Kumeyaay territory, that is, from the Gila River to the Pacific Ocean in the vicinity of Mission San Diego. The jamajabs confederation extended from their territory on the Colorado River to the Pacific Ocean in the vicinity of Mission San Gabriel, and with the peace treaties which the confederation was engaged in setting up, it had the possibility of controlling the road to the Hopi region on the upper Colorado River, which opened the path to New Mexico. These two confederations controlled the Colorado River crossings in geostrategic places, respectively the confluence of the Colorado and Gila Rivers and the Colorado delta, and the area where the Colorado River leaves the Grand Canyon.

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