



Father Montoya and the spiritual conquest strategies in Guairá Missions¹

Padre Montoya e as estratégias de conquista espiritual nas missões do Guairá

El Padre Montoya y las estrategias de conquista espiritual en las misiones de Guairá

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss Father Montoya's strategies in the spiritual conquest process among the heathens in Guairá missions, in the context of the 17th century. Based on the opus named *Conquista Espiritual feita pelos religiosos da Companhia de Jesus nas Províncias do Paraguai, Paraná, Uruguai e Tape – Reduções Guaraníticas*, written by this Jesuit Father, also on Pierre Bourdieu's strategy and *habitus* concepts, this article also attempts to make explicit that the Jesuits' presence was marked out not only by denouncements of abuse committed by the Spanish settlers and the trailblazers from São Paulo against the heathens, but also by the converted heathens' flattering description and by the struggle against the non-converted ones, in particular against chieftains and shamans who were represented as the Devil's incarnation in the American lands.

Keywords: Society of Jesus. Guairá Missions. Antonio Ruiz de Montoya. Spiritual conquest.

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Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo discutir as estratégias de Padre Montoya no processo de conquista espiritual entre os gentios das missões do Guairá, no contexto do século XVII. Apoiase na obra intitulada *Conquista Espiritual feita pelos religiosos da Companhia de Jesus nas Províncias do Paraguai, Paraná, Uruguai e Tape – Reduções Guaraníticas*, escrita por esse padre jesuíta e nos conceitos de estratégia e *habitus* de Pierre Bourdieu, na tentativa de explicitar que a presença dos jesuítas foi demarcada pela denúncia de abusos contra os gentios praticados pelos colonos espanhóis e bandeirantes paulistas, pela descrição elogiosa dos gentios convertidos e pelo combate contra gentios não convertidos, em especial contra caciques e pajés que eram representados como a encarnação do demônio nas terras das Américas.

Palavras-chave: Companhia de Jesus. Missões do Guairá. Antonio Ruiz de Montoya. Conquista espiritual.

Resumen

Este artículo pretende discutir las estrategias del Padre Montoya en el proceso de conquista espiritual entre los gentiles de las misiones de Guairá en el contexto del siglo XVII. Se basa en el trabajo titulado *Conquista espiritual*, escrito por el sacerdote jesuita y en los conceptos de estrategia y hábito de Pierre Bourdieu, por los religiosos de la Compañía de Jesús en las provincias de Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay y Tape - Reduções Guaraníticas, en un intento de hacer explícito que la presencia de los jesuitas fue demarcada por la denuncia de abusos contra los gentiles practicados por los colonos españoles y los bandeirantes paulistas, por la digna descripción de los gentiles conversos y por el combate contra los gentiles no convertidos, especialmente contra los caciques y pajés que fueron representados como la encarnación del diablo en la tierras de las Américas.

Palabras clave: Compañía de Jesús. Las Misiones de la Guía. Antonio Ruiz de Montoya. Conquista espiritual.

Introduction

This article aims to discuss the strategies of Padre Montoya (1582-1652) for the realization of the spiritual conquest among the Gentiles of the Guairá missions, in the context of the 17th century. Our source is the work entitled *Spiritual Conquest* made by the religious of the Society of Jesus in the Provinces of Paraguay, Paraná, Uruguay and Tape - Guaranitic Reductions, written by this Jesuit priest, published in 1639, in Madrid. The Portuguese version we use comes from the 1892 edition, which, in turn, was reissued in 1992. This writing went through a re-elaboration to be published, as it was used as a document in the lawsuit filed against the pioneers in the Spanish Court. Due to the minutiae of its description, this source is considered, in the context of history and historiography, as one of the most complete and complex regarding the Jesuit missions (PARELLADA, 2013; REBES, 2001).

It is possible to observe the particularities of the work of the Society of Jesus, in particular, the way Montoya built the representation of the life of the indigenous people and the role of the priests in undertaking the missions. It is worth mentioning that - through readings - a disparity can be found between the dates fixed in the reorganization of the writings, carried out by the Jesuits themselves, for publication. This question can be understood due to the spatial distance, between the writers and the recipients of the letters, sent to their superiors (REBES, 2001). Furthermore, it is important to say that the Society of Jesus invests carefully in “[...] written monuments from its missionary and institutional past. The institution's document production is monumental, both in terms of the colossal issue of written papers and in the intentionality of what was produced” (OLIVEIRA, 2015, p. 79)².

As Paulo Rogério Melo de Oliveira (2015) rightly identifies, since the creation of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, there was interest in writing the history of the missions. In this sense, the letters and records of the priests who were on a mission constituted the materials that document the performance of the Society of Jesus. Montoya's descriptions are among the documents used by historians of the Order, corroborating the construction of a past “[...] great and glorious, and the edifying deeds of great men assume epic proportions. In this monumental vision, the heroic arrival of the Jesuits in the region and the providential civilizing work with the native populations stand out” (OLIVEIRA, 2015, p. 86).

In the initial descriptions of the book, Father Montoya affirms that the task of the priests of the Company would be “[...] to achieve peace between Spaniards and Indians: something so difficult that, in more than a hundred years since the discovery of the Indians Westerners to the present day, it has not yet become possible to achieve” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 18). This Herculean task could not be carried out without strategies. In this way, the concept of strategy is presented as “[...] the product of practical sense as a sense of play, of a particular social game, historically defined” and (BOURDIEU, 2004, p. 81) it proves useful, because it allows observing how the Jesuits through habitus, systems of durable dispositions, promoted their interventions in the missionary lands. So, understanding the notions of habitus and strategy is fundamental to analyze the dynamics of the religious in the field in question; because,

the existence of a specialized and relatively autonomous field is correlative to the existence of targets that are at stake and of specific interests: through the indissolubly economic and psychological investments that they raise among agents endowed with a particular habitus, the field and what is at stake in it produce investments of time, money, labor, etc. [...] Every field,

² The article *Clio in the Society of Jesus: notes on the Jesuit historiography of the reductions in Paraguay*, written by Paulo Rogério Melo de Oliveira (2015), makes an important synthesis of the historiography of this Order, as produced by the priests.

as a historical product, generates interest, which is a condition of its functioning (BOURDIEU, 2004, p. 126-128).

The practical actions of the same agent are objectively harmonized with each other without this representing an intentional search for coherence, and are similar to the practices of other agents of the same class. This priest's writings are interpreted as an expression of the movement that sought spiritual and territorial conquests, while considering that such document is a monument (LE GOFF, 1994) of the Society of Jesus. Right at the presentation of the work, Montoya (1997, p. 18) explains that his main occupation would have been "[...] catechetical teaching and his [of the Gentiles] conversion to our holy faith". In the sequence, he records that he lived "[...] all the time in search of beasts, of barbaric Indians, crossing fields and crossing jungles and mountains in his search to add them to the fold of the Holy Church and to the service of His Majesty" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 18). Further on, he notes that the undertaking of the religious, in Guairá, resulted in the emergence of 13 reductions or settlements, the effect of which was the transformation of "[...] Indians who lived according to their old customs into mountains, fields, jungle and villages [...] to large settlements and transformed from rustic people into civilized Christians with the continuous preaching of the Gospel" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 18-19).

Therefore, the intention is to bring elements to understand the forms of relationship established between the Jesuits and the Gentiles who lived in the Guairá missions and how these priests organized their strategies and actions in an attempt to shape a new way of life befitting Christianity; and, mainly, with Catholic principles.

The Guairá missions (1610-1631) in the Jesuit Province of Paraguay

The name of Father Antonio Ruiz de Montoya is intrinsic to the history of the reductions of the Society of Jesus in the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, specifically in the Guairá³ missions, where he became one of the main responsible for the organization and execution of the missionary project undertaken in the colonial process. As highlighted by Futata and Toledo (2017), these missions were partly located in the territories of Paraguay, Argentina, Chile and in Brazilian regions that ranged from Rio Grande do Sul to Paraná.

Father Montoya was not only dedicated to speaking the language of the Guarani, but also to helping the Gentiles in the struggle for their rights, as subjects of the Spanish Crown (MOURA, 2013). On the one hand, if the condition of the Gentiles belonged to Spain, it would be up to the Jesuits to build strategies for the realization of rights, among them, the impediment of being transformed into slaves by the fronts of the Bandeirantes forces. On the other hand, this relative protectionism that occurred in the Jesuit reductions implied the continuous circulation of the Catholic religious ideas and the ethos of European and Catholic culture.

Father Montoya, a great coordinator of these mission activities, had an orphaned childhood and a turbulent adolescence. He asked for authorization in the Viceroyalty of Peru to go to Chile in a plan to fight against the Araucans - so called by the Spanish because they are a people from the Arauco valley, in Chile. After a mysterious dream he decides to go to Panama. Before leaving, he wished to confess, performed the Catholic act with Father Juan Domínguez. On the same occasion, he met Father Gonzalo Suárez, of whom he became a friend; and, in 1605, Antonio Ruiz de Montoya changed his course, since, following Suárez's advice, he decided to join the Jesuit Order. After seven months in the seminary, Father Diogo de Torres took Montoya, along with other novices, to Córdoba de Tucumã.

³ "By the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), Guairá Province was cut by the dividing line to the east of its region. This treaty divided the world by an imaginary line that ran 370 leagues from Cape Verde, with the lands of the west belonging to the Crown of Castile and those of the east to the Kingdom of Portugal. [...]" (AGUILAR, 2002, p. 11).

There, he ended his seminary career, as, like Father Anchieta, Montoya had progress in training in philosophy and theology, which made him become a cleric more quickly and became involved in missionary conquests.

In Córdoba de Tucumán, Montoya continued his studies in classical letters and humanities. However, he only received a course in moral theology before his ordination. This leads us to believe that examples served as inspiration for his religious life, such as “[...] Inácio's wisdom, Javier's inspiration, Pedro Fabro's kindness, Lainez's science, Nadal's inner life, as well as the experiences of defense of the indigenous people made by José de Acosta and that of the Dominican Bartolomé de Las Casas” (MOURA, 2013, p. 68).

Montoya's ordination directed him and involved him effectively in the work of the Missions, primarily in Guairá. In 1612, Montoya was sent to the Province of Guairá to meet the priests José Cataldino and Masseta. According to his report “[...] it had been nearly six months since the priests were in Pirapó, and a year and a half since his departure from Asunción, when Father Diogo de Torres sent me to that Province” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 41).

There is a considerable emphasis, to be made, between their formation, as well as their profile, when compared to those of other religious missionaries in formation in the national territory; especially those who have been ahead of Catholicism in Brazil for some time. Bourdieu (2004, p. 122, emphasis added) raises some questions and possibilities of these intellectual priests having reinvented themselves and having new definitions over time, considering that:

where there was a distinct religious field, there is now a religious field from which one leaves without knowing, even if only biographically, since many clergy have become psychoanalysts, psychologists, social workers, etc., and exercise new forms of healing of souls with the status of laypeople and in a laicized form, we are witnessing a redefinition of the limits of the religious field, the dissolution of the religious in a broader field, which is accompanied by a loss of the monopoly of healing of souls in the sense old, at least at the level of bourgeois clientele.

Taking into account the incorporation of the religious habitus and the way he moved in the fields of activity, Father Montoya was an active cleric and defender of the Catholic Church in relation to the State and society. Ignatian, in the Bourdieusian conception, preserved the consolidated religious traditions and boosted, even more, the performance of the Catholic Church in territorial conquests. The route between departure and arrival was marked by a long period and intense difficulties, as described below:

We left together, Father Antônio de Moranta and me. Halfway through the forty-day journey, in a depopulated region, we were missing tassallhos, or large pieces of beef jerky and stick flour: which was our provision. We were left with a little corn, of which we each took a handful at noon and another at night. This squeeze caused the priest to suffer a very painful illness and, as we had news that other difficulties awaited us later, the need forced him to go back from the port of Maracaju. (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 41).

Upon verifying the warmth with which he was received, Father Montoya is curious to perceive the hospitality of the Gentiles and thus begins his mission.

For several years his evangelizing activity developed as an itinerant missionary, in the style of the first priests in the area; administering baptisms and celebrating masses, he arrived at the place they called Our Lady of Copacabana, in memory of the already well known Sanctuary of Alto Peru [...] In this tour he visited the 'Cabelludos' or 'Coronados' Indians, in the Campo region, continuing, then, in Inheay his work we rushed three priests towards their ranches and quarters (REBES, 2001, p. 28, highlighted by the author).

Father Montoya did not only achieve spiritual conquests, but with the support of the Spanish Court, he also fought against pioneers from São Paulo de Piratininga and others who came from there with the purpose of capturing the Gentiles. The Jesuit went through all the reductions that were indicated to him, mainly in the south of Brazil, and his contact took place, in a more detained way with the Guarani and Jê tribes.

The region, defined by Guairá, located in the south of Brazil, was populated mainly by Guarani and Jê peoples. Parellada (2013) points out that the Guairá bordered the Paranapanema River to the north, the Iguazu River to the south, Paraná to the west and Guarayrú Mountains to the east; these regions were bathed in fresh water and favorable for the permanent living of the tribes. This region, a member of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay, "[...] had its 'provincial' headquarters in Córdoba of Argentina and, for some time, even covered Chile" (MONTROYA, 1997, p.20).

The Jesuits arrived in Guairá in 1610. He describes that Padre Diogo de Torres sent the Italians Padre José Cataldino and Padre Simão Masseta to Guairá. The presence of these priests was inscribed in the context of "[...] a new expansionist front within the province following the expansion promoted by Domingo Martinez Irala, in 1557, with the foundation of Ciudad Real" (SILVA, 2011, p 97). The Spanish presence was also achieved through the creation of reductions. Sometimes it took place under the administration of a Spanish colonist appointed by the Crown. There were many conflicts, which is why the Jesuits were given the task of Christianizing the Gentiles. The actions of the Jesuits began with two units and extended to 13 missions, forming the "[...] Guarani Reductions of Paraguay in the past and thus today, not lastly, on the current Brazilian States of Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul, due to Guáira and Tape" (BRUXEL; RABUSKE, 1983, p. 9-10).

According to André Luís Freitas da Silva (2011, p. 68), the missionary interest "[...] of the Jesuits for the natives who inhabited the region of Paraguay's governance began to crystallize soon after the first steps of the Society of Jesus in America". This author refers to the moment when the Portuguese Jesuits arrived, in the year 1549. However, according to Silva (2011, p. 70), "[...] only in 1567 did the first Jesuits arrive in the Viceroyalty of Peru . A year after the arrival of these religious, the Jesuit Province of Peru was created". As a result, "[...] the Paraguayan territory that previously belonged to the religious sphere of the Jesuits in Brazil, came to belong to the new province" (SILVA, 2011, p. 70).

Freitas da Silva (2011, p. 71) says that "[...] Companhia de Jesus has been active in Portuguese lands since 1549 and in the highlands of Peru since 1568. Only in 1586 did he receive authorization to evangelize in Paraguay". In 1606, the creation of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay was authorized, although it "[...] only materialized in 1607 with the arrival of the first provincial Diego de Torres Bollo" (SILVA, 2011, p. 72). Father Montoya (1997, p. 34) describes the founding of this Province as follows: "[...] Father Diogo de Torres, having been appointed the first Provincial of the Province of Paraguay, gave his Province a happy start". This missionary division became responsible for the religious administration of the civil governments of Chile, Tucumã, Paraguay and Buenos Aires. However, in 1626, Chile became the responsibility of the Jesuit Province of Peru. After that, "[...] the territory of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay was formed by the lands of the civil governments of

Tucumã, Paraguay, Buenos Aires and part of the civil government of Santa Cruz da Serra” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 34)⁴. During the 16th century, these reductions took the mold of Spanish cities, following the structure codified in 1573 by the urban law of Felipe II. The format would be:

a ‘patchwork of straight streets’, which defined a series of equal blocks, almost always square, with the square in the center of the city. This law also emphasized that the land around the square should not be granted to individuals, but should be reserved for the Church. (PARELLADA, 2013, p. 252, highlighted by the author).

In 1503, as Silva (2011, p. 75, emphasis added), “[...] the governor of La Española Frei Nicolas de Ovando (1502-1509), received instructions to group the Indians in pueblos, where indigenous people should have 'land for farming and raising animals', in addition to 'church, chaplain and someone to exercise justice and government' ”. However, as Father Montoya (1997, p. 54) rightly recorded, “[...] the Gentiles lived in very small villages, but not without government. They had their chiefs, in whom everyone recognizes nobility inherited from their greatest, on the grounds that they had had vassals and ruled the people”. Despite this description of the Jesuit, the model prescribed by the Europeans “[...] was accompanied by new mechanisms of control and social administration, which were foreign to the native daily life, such as: the economic, social, political and religious practices imported from the old continent” (SILVA, 2011, p. 75). The circulation of an ideal model of organization was underway that carried different conceptions from those experienced by the Gentiles, aspects that when they were engendered, “[...] profoundly changed the way of being and living of the populations that accepted the new condition of life” (SILVA, 2011, p. 75). On the other hand, this ideal model ran through the complex process of appropriation, an aspect demarcated by the missionary action strategies of the Jesuits.

In the 17th century, the Spanish Crown invested continuously in colonial organization, associating this task with the work of reductions. According to Sergio Luis Alberto Páez (2013, p. 167), in that context “[...] Corona Española decided to subsidize missionaries for the purpose of exploring and finishing defining the territoriality that they deal with in Portugal”. This condition implied the establishment of some rights to the Indians, among them the prohibition of being transformed into slaves. According to Páez (2013, p. 167) “[...] in view of these Corona measures, Spanish traders reacted by allying with the Portuguese. This is the formation of the armies of slavers, tempted by the concentration of Indians in the missions”.

As Silva (2011, p. 78) explains, “[...] the organization of the reductions was guided by the urban layout 'al mode de los del Perú' or in the way that the Indians best adapted”. Later, they started to have another model, particularly when in the middle of the 18th century,

the Jesuit José Cardiel, cited by Guillermo Furlong, observed that the Guarani reductions had the same urban layout, with ‘plaza muy capaz de 160 varas en cuadro, las calles todas en cordel de 16 ó 15 varas en ancho; las casas son en algunos pueblos de piedra e otros de piedra solo cimentos’⁵ (SILVA, 2011, p. 78).

The exhibition so far reiterates that “[...] western expansion was characterized by bifrontality: on the one hand, new lands were being incorporated, subjecting them to the

⁴ According to Silva (2011, p. 72), Moacir Flores clarifies that “the territory of the Jesuit Province of Paraguay would cover the republics of Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, southern Bolivia, parts of the south and central-west of Brazil”.

⁵ ‘a very capable square of 160 sticks in square, the streets all in string of 16 or 15 sticks in width; the houses are in some stone towns and others of stone only foundations’.

temporal power of European monarchs; on the other hand, new sheep were won for religion and for the pope” (SOUZA, 1986, p. 32). It is important to note that the mineral resources, such as those contained in the Tambo of the iron mines, of Guairá attract the attention of the government in terms of financial capitalization. In the second half of the 16th century, the lace system was compromised by indigenous resistance. Therefore, the priests of the Society of Jesus were invited by the governor of Asunción, Hernadárias de Saavedra, to come closer and dominate the territory. The objective would be that the Jesuits, already known for the power of domination by the Gentiles, founded the reductions, because as André Luís Freitas da Silva (2011, p. 67) attests, they “[...] went to the new world to civilize and propagate the Catholic faith. In doing so, they believed they were saving the souls of native populations who lived in a kind of infidelity before God”.

The Ignatians were known for their outstanding resistance and form of territorial dominance. It is important to say that:

the priests, in addition to the resistance of the indigenous people to adhere to the reductive project, had to contain the *encomenderos* of the Spanish villages and the *bandeirantes paulistas*. These came to remove the acculturated Indians to work on their wheat plantations in São Paulo (PICANÇO; MESQUITA, 2010, p. 68).

The encomienda consisted of the colonist's right to exploit indigenous labor. In Spanish encomiendas, a group of Gentiles was entrusted by the king to a settler and his descendants, for a period of two or three generations, to protect and instruct them in the Catholic faith. As a reward for work, that commissioner received in tribute or work days the tribute that the vassal Indians produced to the king of Spain (PARELLADA, 2013). The entry of the Jesuits aimed to establish peace relations between Spaniards and Gentiles, using the strategy of Christianization of the peoples of the reductions. According to Bourdieu (1996, p. 61):

It is in the particular horizon of these specific power relationships, and struggles that aims to conserve or transform them, that the producers' strategies are engendered, the art form they defend, the alliances they establish, the schools they found and this through the specific interests that are determined there.

It is these strategies, in the field of territorial and spiritual conquest, that contribute to the establishment of the Jesuit Order in the missions undertaken. These strategies function as places of power, imposing, in a more aligned way with the conviction, rules on the individuals at stake. In this sense, “[...] the missionary project of the Companhia de Jesus emerged as an alternative proposal in the face of the brutality of the encomienda and slavery regime generated in the cities of Asunción and São Paulo, respectively” (SNIHUR, 2007, p. 236 apud SOSTER, 2014, p. 26-27).

Thus, the Jesuits began to act on the reductions. It is interesting to note the definition recorded by Montoya (1997, p. 35).

We call “Reductions” to the “peoples” or villages of Indians who, living to their former use in jungles, mountains and valleys, next to hidden streams, in three, four or six houses only, separated from each other in a matter of two leagues, three or more, the priests' diligence was “reduced” to non-small villages and to political (civilized) and human

life, benefiting cotton with which they dress, because in general they lived in the nude, not even covering what nature hid.

On the one hand, according to Father Montoya's reports, in the process of converting Gentiles, the Jesuits fought what he called the abuse of certain Guaraní rites and preached the Christian faith. He notes that:

it encourages me to seek this pacification, Christian charity, the total helplessness of the Indians. The fact that I was almost thirty years old, without letting myself be diverted to any other task, my main occupation has been his catechetical teaching and his conversion to our faith (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 18).

On the other hand, his descriptions show the strangeness of the abuses practiced by the Spaniards who directed the orders and the condemnation of the continuous presence of the São Paulo pioneers who kidnapped and turned the people of the missions into slaves. This situation can be seen in the record of their arrival at a reduction in the missions, when he counted that - in that place - there were 170 families and later, when returning to that region, they did not count more than 50 (MONTROYA, 1997). In these terms, in this, too, the presence of the priests was contained, because by means of “[...] the work of evangelization of the Society of Jesus was sought for an integrative approach in relation to indigenous peoples, who were the target of constant attacks by the *bandeirantes*.” (SOSTER, 2014, p. 26).

The first mission began with Father Marcial de Lorenzana - founder of the first Reduction, of the Society of Jesus, in the Province. To solidify this achievement, then Montoya highlights in his notes: “[...] I send Father Diogo de Torres to the city of Guaira, Father José Cataldino and Father Simão Masseta, both of whom are Italians, valiant missionaries and children faithful of the Company, as well as apostles of that kindness” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 37). In that city, the priests fulfilled their ministries, subsequently following Vila Rica, which was 60 leagues from Guairá, where “[...] they exercised their priestly ministries, and it was with great use of souls. After having fulfilled their mission among the Spaniards, the priests put their sights on the conversion of the Indians, to whom they had been sent” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 38-39). In this sequence, the priests:

They sailed that river [Paranapanê] up ten or eleven days, being on its banks uninhabited of everything, but, finally, they found themselves in a “pueblo” located on the same river, and on one side surrounded a large stream, Pirapó name. About 200 Indians lived there, who welcomed the priests with great love. There they raised the banner of the cross, built a small hut to serve as a church and gave it the title of Our Lady of Loreto (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 39).

According to Padre Montoya (1997, p.39), the priests continued to search for new villages along this river, even locating “[...] 25 small villages and others with a larger number of people. In their speeches, the priests gave the Gentiles the reason for their coming, which was to make them children of God and free them from the slavery of the devil” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 39). Thus, the fathers Masseta and Cataldino founded, in 1610, in the Paranapanema valley, the mission of Nossa Senhora de Loreto, in the sequence Santo Inácio Mini. The location of the Jesuit reduction of Nossa Senhora do Loreto is currently in the city of Itaguajé in the state of Paraná. In the vicinity of Vila Rica, Tambo das Minas de Ferro, currently Nova Cantu, in the State of Paraná, was Itacuru, Santa Ana,

Itupá, Tambo and Cunhanguirá. The peoples were distributed throughout Guairá, on the banks of the Ivaí River. This made long and exhausting journeys between Asunción and Guairá necessary so that the Jesuit priests could attend to all peoples.

The presence of priests was contained in the organization of the colonial project, as already highlighted by Laura Melo and Souza (1986). However, this condition did not imply that the missions would be an easy process, as social relations in these spaces were marked by confluences, but also by conflicts of interest between the Jesuits, the Spanish settlers who directed the reductions, the chiefs of the various villages of Guairá, the bandeirantes of São Paulo and the Gentiles. In this way, the missionaries were involved in these complex relationships to carry out their crusade for Christianization in the region of the missions.

The complexity of social relations in missionary lands

The Guarani and Jê peoples had their first contacts with travelers who left the Atlantic coast and moved to Paraguay. Some facts suggest that this coexistence with the peoples was continuous, as attested by archaeological studies:

a majority of the ceramic era made by the Guarani Indians, although many artifacts show a negative influence, such as floral motifs, such as incisions with baroque details and an association of various types of decoration, such as painting and incision. The different shapes and decorative patterns of the ceramic vessels of the Guarani and Spanish Indians, and even the same eating habits, also manifest ethnic differences (PARELLADA, 2013, p 253).

As described, the main economic activity of the indigenous people - mainly the Guarani - who inhabited Guairá, was the extraction and transportation of yerba mate, carried out by the order system (PARELLADA, 2013). However, the relationship between the Spaniards and the Gentiles was shaped by many conflicts, as described by Father Montoya. This seems to be one of the aspects that constituted the complex relations established in the lands of the missions, since the Jesuits became spokespeople for the claims to the Spanish Crown of abuses against the Gentiles. We understand that such actions, as well as such reliability, are possible through the habitus that consists of

structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as a generating and structuring principle of practices and representations that can be objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their purpose without assuming the intention aware of the ends and the express command of the operations necessary to achieve them and collectively orchestrated, without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor (BOURDIEU, 2003, p. 54).

Thus, we understand habitus as a product of social relations established, above all, in the Catholic field, and as a mechanism for the strategies used to dominate the field in question. This incorporation helps Father Montoya in the fields of activity and in his active activism as a defender of Catholic missionary principles and the causes involved in these principles - as well as the catechization of indigenous peoples.

His narrative, at the beginning of the book, shows what he calls the abuses practiced by the Spanish and the reactions of the Gentiles. While in Maracaju, due to the illness of Padre

Moranta, one of the Jesuit missionaries and companion of conquests, in addition to administering to the Gentiles the Catholic sacraments, Father Montoya (1997, p. 42) reports the conditions of these peoples who worked with herb grinding and highlights: “[...] during the whole day they eat nothing more than fungi, fruits or wild roots, which for their fortune are offered to them in the bush, while they are in continuous action and work”. In addition, he observes that there were controls carried out by a foreman: “[...] only the poor Indian sat down a little to take a breath, makes him feel his anger, wrapped in words and sometimes in sticks” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 42). The priest also asserts, about those activities: “[...] the work on that grass has consumed many thousands of Indians. I am an eyewitness to the existence of very large ossuaries of Indians in those woods” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 42). The Gentiles did not even have food, because when they did not find animals to supply their hunger, they consumed their own herb as food, “[...] their feet, legs and belly were swollen, showing their face only bones, and pallor the figure of death” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 42).

The Jesuit points out that the consumption of these herbs was not a recurrent practice among the Gentiles, denoting that they started to do this due to the intense load of abuse practiced by the Spanish colonists who administered the colonies. In this regard, Montoya (1997, p. 45) maintains: “[...] what I discovered as an ascertained thing is that, in the times when these old men [80 or 100 years old] were still young, they did not drink, it wasn't even known yet”. In addition, he describes that “[...] the natives of the land or the Indians take it in moderation once a day. The Spaniards found it a remedy against all ills. The effects turn out to be that it encourages (stimulates) them to work and supports them” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 45).

In another passage, Montoya (1997, p. 44) notes the existence of another recurrent practice of what he considered abuse of the Spaniards against the Gentiles:

I am a witness that in the Province of Guaíra, the most just or correct commissioner if he served six months of each year of all the Indians he had on order, without paying them anything. And those who were less righteous detained them for ten to twelve months.

In view of this situation, the Jesuit asks (1997, p. 44): “[...] that being so, as it really is, how much time does this bastard have left to support his wife and raise his children?”. This situation described by Montoya resulted, according to Sergio Venturini, in many inquiries made to the Spanish Crown.

On more than one occasion, there was discussion between the Jesuits and the Spanish authorities regarding the payment of taxes. The king determined a tax amount, which corresponded to a weight per year for each adult Indian. The priests stated that the amount to be paid was lower, and questioned defending the idea that the Guarani, as a soldier, should not pay taxes and, instead, be compensated by the government (VENTURINI, 2009, p. 44 apud SOSTER, 2014, p. 27).

This stance in favor of these peoples reappears when he starts to associate the resistance or even the practices of acts of violence practiced by the Gentiles against the Spaniards as “[...] the effects of carelessness in not treating the Indians well” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 46). The first situation depicts Gentiles who do not accept the gospel. Thus, he highlights: “[...] there is the city of Asunción in front of you, two nations, one of which is called Guaicurus and Guaicurut the other that did not recognize Christianity”. In these villages, according to Montoya (1997, p. 46):

They do not sow or plant crops, but harvest from the Spanish gardens, stealing as much as they can. Ordinarily they invade the cattle ranches, kill what they want, steal the tallow and the meat, selling it. In safety they go to the city and circulate in it, but the Spaniards who enter it do not have their land, because they slaughter a Spaniard as easily as they kill a cow, and because their ferocity is so great that they cannot correct the power of the Spaniards.

Even with this description of a violent group, which he called barbarian people, of bestial customs, he did not fail to observe that conversion to Christianity would be the strategy to be maintained. In another situation, he records the reactions of Gentiles already baptized into Christianity, he highlights: “[...] these Indians were so oppressed by the continuous work [...] that necessity forced them all to seek relief. They rebelled, therefore, they killed a good number of Spaniards and the survivors had to leave the city of their possessions” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 48).

These fragments indicate how Montoya's narrative reaffirmed the existing violence in the reductions created by the Spanish Crown. These notes are corroborated by the interpretation of Rebes (2001, p. 18),

a particular situation, because his activity was not limited to informing only his actions; many of his writings - such as letters to other priests, the viceroy, as well as testimonies - contain an important description and critical analysis of the situation in which the Indians lived. In some, the situation of injustice stands out, due to the mistreatment that the Indians received, proposing solutions to avoid them.

This Montoya position generated conflicts with the Spanish colonists themselves, as evidenced by their description that their superiors were concerned “[...] with the reports that certain Spaniards from Vila Rica gave them, in the sense that we were idle and did not do another something to let time pass, and for that reason it was convenient to get us out of there” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 67). It was not a harmonious coexistence, because the condition of chief of the religious missions of Guairá imposed on him the responsibility of enforcing the citizenship status that the Spanish Crown established to the Gentiles of their colonies.

Another permanent front of the Jesuits' work was the fight against the bandeirantes of São Paulo. These circulated in the region in search of wealth and Gentiles to be used as slaves in the lands of the Portuguese colony.

Costing a fifth of the price of an imported black, the captive Indian became the slave of the poor, in a society in which Europeans stopped doing any manual work. Every tiresome task, outside the privileged area of the export economy, which was up to blacks, fell on the Indian (RIBEIRO, 1995, p. 100 apud SOSTER, 2014, p. 29).

When referring to the group originally from São Paulo, Montoya (1997, p. 141) maintains: “[...] it is his 'institute' (consecrated norm!) to destroy the human race, killing human beings, if they, to escape the miserable slavery they put them in, escape them”. He also reports that the bandeirantes spent years in search of Gentiles. At one point the Jesuit priest (1997, p. 142) describes: “[...] these people entered our reductions: captivating, killing and stripping altars”. In view of this, he informs (1997, p. 142): “[...] we were in a hurry three priests heading for their ranches and quarters, where many people were already being held. We ask them to return to us those who had captivated us, as there were not a few who had

chains". On the other hand, "[...] like frantic madmen they immediately screamed, saying: 'arrest us! Arrest them, as they are traitors!' Together they fired some archangels, injuring eight or ten of the Indians who accompanied us. One of them died, right there" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 142, highlighted by the author).

The action of the pioneers spared neither the Gentiles nor the priests. In the circumstances, Father José Dómelech was imprisoned by the Paulistas. And aloud they said that they were not "[...] priests, but demons, heretics, enemies of God, and that we preached lies to the Indians. One of them pointed his shotgun at my chest, and I opened my clothes to him, so that the bullet would enter without resistance" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 142). The descriptions give an air of intense cruelty, highlighting that they destroyed gentiles with axes, entered the churches where the Indians took refuge and killed them - "as in the slaughterhouse cows are killed" (1997, p. 142), discarded or destroyed the sacred objects with no modesty. Upon returning to São Paulo, they set fire to the huts, burning "[...] many people with inhumanities of beasts" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 144).

The return to São Paulo had many Gentiles imprisoned. The priests went on to ask the São Paulo justice to intervene in defense of the Gentiles and in compliance with the legislation that protected these peoples. Montoya (1997) describes that the Jesuits, when they arrived in São Paulo, asked for justice, but were not heard. The accounts of the São Paulo invasions are extensive and intense, detailing the cruel practices committed against the Gentiles and the very destruction of the reductions, such as that of Vila Rica. The reactions consisted of the struggle waged by the Gentiles themselves, the interpellations made by the priests and the escapes before the arrival of the pioneers. As a rule, the interpellation made to the bandeirantes and to the justice of São Paulo, seems to have little effect, as described above.

Another measure undertaken by the Jesuits against the São Paulo bandeirantes was to appeal to the Crown itself. According to Silvio Ruiz Paradiso (2012, p. 202) "[...] Montoya in 1637 (on behalf of the governor, the Bishop of Paraguay and the heads of the orders) presented a formal complaint to Philip IV of Spain, about Portuguese politics sending expeditions to neighboring regions in Spanish America". In addition, "[...] Montoya was also the Jesuit priest in charge of complaining directly to the king of Portugal, about the São Paulo bandeirantes who attacked the Jesuit missions in search of Indians to be sold" (PARADISO, 2012, p. 202). This situation seemed to be one of the great struggles of these Jesuits, because "[...] from the year 1628 until the present times, they have not stopped fighting Christians, captivating and selling them" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 146).

The escape organization before the arrival of the pioneers proved to be a possibility in view of the other failed measures. Thus, in 1629, they accepted the determination of Asunción and Madrid and mobilized the departure of the Indians of Loreto and Santo Inácio. The preparation for the flight is full of details, tactics used in the face of the lack of protection on the part of the Spanish forces against the Crusaders of the Bandeirantes. The Gentiles of Loreto and Santo Inácio were left to their own actions and tactics. They did not allow themselves to be accommodated: "[...] they manufactured 700 rafts in a very short time, not counting canoes in quantity, and more than 12,000 souls embarked on them" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 153).

The struggles of the Gentiles and the priests took place not only against the Paulistas, but also against the Spaniards themselves who lived in Guairá; as Montoya (1997, p. 153-154) reports: "[...] they were waiting for us in a narrow and dangerous space, typical of the famous Salto do Paraná, on whose bank they had built a log fortress, aiming to prevent pass us by and captivate our people". The priests challenged these Spaniards to decline this action, resulting in a successful petition after lengthy negotiations. After that point on the river that proved to be impossible to navigate, the people followed their flight by land.

After eight days of traveling by land, they return - again - to sail (MONTROYA, 1997). This pilgrimage was long and of great suffering, and in 1632, they refounded the two reductions

in what is now the territory of Argentina. The escape was described in analogy to the biblical exodus, such was the end of this undertaking.

When these Israelite people, imitating Jacob, left, running away from barbaric people, sitting on the bank of that river, making tender mention of their difficulties, of the eagerness and poverty in which they found themselves driven away from their own lands, by those who, if they used of their reason, they should support them -, the Indians remembered fondly their homes, but mainly God, where he had been for them, for not a few years, adored and humbly served, and hosted in their souls in the life-giving Sacrament (of the Altar) (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 157).

One of the facets of the missions was, without a doubt, to denounce and fight against the abuses to which the Gentiles were subjected, either by the forces of the Spanish colonists or by the bandeirantes of São Paulo. Father Montoya was the head of the missions in the Jesuit Province of Paraguay. In addition, he was the one who addressed complaints to the authorities about the abuse practiced by the pioneers.

In parallel with the description of the abuses against the Gentiles, the reports indicate that Father Montoya's first contacts with these peoples were very empathetic; highlights: "[...] the Indians of this village welcomed me with great love" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 41). It is undoubtedly his arrival at the reduction already constituted by baptized Gentiles. However, even in reductions that resisted Christianization, he praised the request made by civil power to the Jesuits, recognizing that "[...] the governors made an effort for the priests of the Company to domesticate these barbaric people through the Gospel" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 47). Although he admitted the difficulty of this task and the failure of certain Jesuit missions, he left no doubt in his description of the crusade to which these priests were attached. On this aspect, he highlights:

Father Pedro Romero was in charge of this difficult company. This priest tried, with them the stratagems that his fervent desire inspired him, to pull them out of their bestial customs and implant them in Christianity. He did not succeed in many years, because they made fun of our faith. This confirmed their bestial customs, and tenaciously are determined to live until death (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 47).

In another moment, Father Montoya does not use this negative adjective to refer to the customs of the Guarani. Under the title "rites of the Guarani Indians" he describes several representations and practices existing among them.

We met some chiefs, who had up to 15, 20 and 30 women. They never had idols, although the devil was already imposing on them the idea of worshipping the bones of some Indians, who in life had been famous magicians. The captive harvested in war fatten him up, giving him freedom in terms of food and women, which he chooses according to his taste. Being fat, they solemnly kill him. Everyone touches this dead body with their hands. Portions of that body are distributed throughout the region (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 56).

There are several rites described. It does not make a value judgment of these different rituals. However, following the organization of the diary there are descriptions under the heading "our way of removing such abuses and preaching the faith". The first note is that two priests lived in each village. In addition, he notes that they founded a school for children and young people there; and to adults, he describes: "[...] the time was set for one hour in the morning and another in the afternoon, so that everyone could come to catechesis or doctrine" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 59). Judging by these fragments, investment in the formation of new representations and practices is observed, with activities aimed at children, young people and adults, an aspect that shows that one of the first tasks of the Jesuits was the mastery of the Gentile language.

Futata and Toledo (2017, p. 71) highlight that Father Montoya "[...] carried out an apostolic-political project, as he dedicated his missionary life to the conversion, civilization and defense of the indigenous, [...] so that, the missionary received the title of apostle of Guairá". In this same sense, we take into account the statement by Aguilar (2002) in which he asserts that Father Montoya was considered an apostle of Guairá for being able to contribute to the expansion of the missions, in the establishment of reductions, in the defense of the Gentiles with regard to the tempted of enemies; and, above all, with Christianization. We attribute this position in which Father Montoya found himself, mainly, to the exercise of the Jesuit habitus - this undoubtedly favored his recognition in legitimizing and boosting the conquests of the Catholic Church. This positioning contributes to their speeches, records and actions.

The authorized spokesperson is able to act with words in relation to other agents and, through his work, to act on his own things, as his speech concentrates the symbolic capital accumulated by the group that gave him the mandate and of which he is, so to speak, the attorney (BOURDIEU, 2008, 89).

Alongside this formative process, the Jesuits' own way of life constituted a strategy for shaping new ways of life among the Gentiles. The Jesuit reports that, although they dealt with Sunday sermons, "[...] with all clarity the mysteries of our faith and the divine precepts, regarding the sixth commandment [chastity] for now we keep silence in public" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 59). Here seems to be a good indication of the moral differences preached by Christian doctrine and the experience of the Gentiles. Father Montoya (1997, p. 59) notes:

the devil tried to try our purity or chastity, offering the chiefs some of his women, under the allegation that they considered it contrary to nature the circumstance of men engaged in housework, such as cooking, sweeping and others.

The dialogue followed between the priests and the said chief. The priests reported that they organized their home, surrounding with sticks to prevent women from entering. On the other hand, the chief witnessed that such behavior was strange, saying that among the Gentiles the honor of his authority consisted of having many women and servants. According to Montoya (1997, p. 60), this practice "[...] turns out to be an unusual fault among the Gentiles".

The atmosphere of these divergences takes on a more striking appearance due to the report of conflict between the priests and the chief Roque Maracanan of a village that was three leagues from Loreto. This chief receives very negative adjectives in the description made by the Jesuit: "[...] he was a true minister of the devil. He was extremely dishonest, because he had a large number of concubines" (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 60-61). The relationship between such chief and the Jesuits was tense, as the leader of the Gentiles "[...] began to disturb and rebel the

spirits of his vassals [...]” against the priests (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 61). In one of these moments, Montoya (1997, p. 61) reports that Roque Maracanan said:

It was the demons that brought these men to us, because they want, with new doctrines, to deprive us of what is old and the good way of life of our ancestors. They had many women, many servants and freedom to choose them at will, and now they want us to connect with one woman. It is not fair that this remains so, but imposes that we oust them from our lands or that we take their lives.

Beside the negative adjectives proclaimed to the said chief, the Jesuit (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 61) records: “[...] there were among them [Gentiles] many who had love for us and esteemed virtue, the good example and our doctrine. They removed him from his plans, warning him that it did not seem right or good to put it into practice, without the opinion and consultation of Roque Maracanan”. The situation of chief Maracanan was not the only one in the lands of the missions. Father Montoya describes the confrontation with Miguel Artiguaye, another leader of the Gentiles. According to this Jesuit's report, the said chief said:

You are not priests sent from God for our medicine (and well)! On the contrary, you are demons from hell, sent from your prince to our perdition! What kind of doctrine is this that you brought us? What is rest (peace) and contentment? Our elders lived with freedom, having for their own good the women they wanted, without anyone hindering them, with whom they lived and spent their days with joy. You, however, want to destroy their traditions and impose such a heavy burden on us as to tie us up with one woman (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 62).

The outcome of this conflict is quite interesting, as it builds a heterogeneous image of the towns in Guairá and reaffirms the idea of the Jesuit peacekeeping mission. In Montoya's account, it is said that Miguel Artiguaye gathered about 300 soldiers and went to ask the chief Maracanan for authorization to end the presence of the priests in these missions. In the meantime, chief Araraá suggests that the priests take shelter in his village, where they would be protected from Miguel's wrath. However, the priests decided to wait in their own homes for events, giving themselves in prayer, “[...] because this is more powerful than weapons” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 64). The next event was that Maracanan disallowed Miguel's initiative, leaving him to reach the priests and speak on his knees prostrate:

For the love of Jesus Christ and Saint Ignatius, I beg you to forgive me for the contempt that I, as a fool, did against you! I was crazy and without judgment. I have it now, because God punished my pride, and so I ask you to forgive me. And since you have preached the ease with which God forgives those who offend Him, imitate Him in forgiving me! At the same time, I ask you to support me and defend me, because I rightly fear that these people will kill me! In fact, I deserve death for my follies. But you, as true priests (“fathers”) and servants of God, will forgive and support me (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 65).

Miguel was supported and embraced by Father José, wrapping him in his arms, without failing to say: “[...] that from now on he would take care of himself and choose the true path, as he had experienced how badly he had been their chimeras out” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 66).

The end of this event that won almost all the lines of item XI - “our way of removing such abuses and preaching the faith” and the completeness of item XII - “the departure of this chief from his people, for the purpose of his evil I intend to go to consult with Roque Maracana, and what happened to him”, shows signs of the complexity of the relationships that were established, as it shows that the chief Miguel, suddenly, started to recognize his non-rectitude and the power of these priests. However, in the end, Father Montoya (1997, p. 66) describes that Miguel staged that whole situation and describes: “[...] he pretended to dismiss his young man, who was the cause of such uproar. And he brought his true wife to his home, with whom at least abroad he gave the impression of a good life, but he always lived badly, so he died”.

According to Venturini (2009, p. 39 apud SOSTER, 2014, p. 66), “[...] the greatest challenge for missionaries was to change the cultural traits of the Indians, incompatible with Christianity”. And one of these elements of incompatibility, Soster amendment (2014, p. 66), “[...] was related to polygamy practiced by law by the chiefs, who could have women who could protect and support”. In turn, “[...] as part of their strategy to eliminate it, the priests introduced the use of robes with the inhabitants and these began to have the meaning of identity, power and status” (SOSTER, 2014, p. 66-67).

As a rule, Montoya's descriptions give the chiefs and shamans the nickname of enemies of the truth and of the devil's incarnation. The selected descriptions indicate the multifaceted relationship in the mission lands. One of the best known cases is that of the chief and shaman Taubici. Montoya (1997, p. 51) recounts his arrival in a village and his meeting with this leader: “[...] he was a great chief, as well as a magician, a sorcerer and a relative of the devil. It was called Taubici: which means devils in a row or row of demons. He was very cruel and, based on any complaint, he killed the Indians” (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 51).

Furthermore, Montoya (1997, p. 51) observes: “[...] when he wanted to talk to the devil, he ordered everyone to leave his house and not stay around”. The description of the death of this leader is marked by the Manichean plot:

going along the route of their trip very happy, making fun of the priest [Simão] and his admonitions and threats, and already getting close to his village, which was 20 leagues away from Santo Inácio, they realized that there were Indians in the river with their canoes. Taubici went to them, thinking they were friends. However, as soon as they recognized him, they killed him in revenge on an Indian he had killed. His companions fled. Many were injured, but others jumped ashore. These returned without their leader and, well taught with such punishment, they again did not believe in the ministers of the devil and believe in those of God, and with that the Gospel was not little successful (MONTROYA, 1997, p. 52).

Since the missionaries were conformed by the vision that they should Christianize and civilize the Gentiles, the relations were demarcated by Manichaeism, characterizing some chiefs and shamans as the very incarnation of the devil⁶. This aspect explains the complexity of

⁶ Demonization demarcated the relationship between Europeans and Gentiles. We suggest consulting the classic works of Laura Melo e Souza, *O Diabo e a Terra de Santa Cruz: witchcraft and popular religiosity in colonial Brazil* (1986) and *Atlântico Inferno: demonology and colonization - 16th-18th centuries* (1993). Father Montoya's descriptions are inscribed in this context. We suggest consulting the book chapter *The Demonization in A Spiritual Conquest (1639)*, by Antonio Ruiz de Montoya and at the *Festa de S. Lourenço (1587)*, by José de Anchieta, written by Silvio Ruiz Paradiso (2012).

the missions, since, according to Silvio Ruiz Paradiso (2012, p. 202), the “[...] Manichaean division that was formed between the entire population on the banks of the Paraná, Uruguay and the Tape rivers was undeniable”. This condition resulted in the struggle between good and evil, “[...] fostered by the Jesuits, whose legions of this war were formed between the clergy and the converted Indians against pajés and shamans and the rebellious Indians, led by Jesus and the devil respectively” (PARADISO, 2012, p. 202).

Otherwise, in this movement, the strategy of associating European cultural elements with those of the Gentiles became relevant, as pointed out by Claudia Inês Parellada.

The visual language found on the tiles is linked to Jesuit symbology, Guarani mythology, the daily life of missions, literacy and experimentation with decorative motifs. [...] There are marks of the Society of Jesus and signatures of Jesuits, as well as the outline of churches, boats, animals, whose theme seems to be related both to the Guarani myths and to the process of evangelization in the Catholic faith (PARELLADA, 2013, p. 12).

In summary, the presentation of this item tried to indicate that social relations in Jesuit missions were multifaceted, demarcated by confluences and by many conflicts, as documented by Father Montoya's diary and summarizes Soster's research (2014, p. 61-80) when summarizing the debates in the field of human sciences.

Final Considerations

This article was part of the debate on the role of the Society of Jesus in the missions, privileging a look at the strategies established by Father Montoya in the process of organizing the Guairá reductions. Thus, without failing to consider that in his writings “[...] the extraordinary gestures, the incorruptible virtue and the faith of all superhuman missionaries, surrounded by dangers and diabolic enemies, became the threads of a narrative legendary that sacralized the past” (OLIVEIRA, 2015, p. 103-104), we sought to understand how the presence of the Jesuits was demarcated by the denunciation of abuses against the Gentiles practiced by the Spanish colonists and São Paulo bandeirantes, by the complimentary description of the converted Gentiles and for the fight against unconverted Gentiles, especially against chiefs and shamans who were represented as the incarnation of the devil in the lands of the Americas.

The lands and peoples of the Guairá region were part of the Spanish Crown colonization project. Furthermore, as it is a border region between the Spanish and Portuguese powers, the situation was more emblematic. The historical destiny of these lands was limited to expansionism and the exploitation of wealth. The Gentiles were contained in this project, transformed into labor to perform the most varied services that were necessary. In addition, from the beginning, colonization carried with them the Christianization strategy of these groups. The reductions commanded by the colonists had the help of priests. However, the invitation made to the Jesuits to establish and establish religious headquarters in the colonization regions constituted a more effective strategy for the conversion and regimentation of new Christians, in the expectation, also, that the political domination of the Spanish Crown may come to be with less physical violence.

The Jesuits' action was intense in the mission lands, reaching 100 thousand Gentiles baptized by Father Montoya (PARADISO, 2012). One of the fronts of colonization was the responsibility of the Catholic Church. In the mission lands, the priests of the Society of Jesus were tasked with promoting strategies for spiritual conquest among the Gentiles. In this way,

we highlight the writings of this Jesuit that show the confrontation with the abuses practiced by the colonists and by the Spanish Crown itself, the fight against the invasions of the reductions and imprisonment of Gentiles made by the bandeirantes, the conversion and Christianization of the peoples of the missions, the identification of representations and practices like the devil's incarnation. These strategies were contained within the conformation of the *habitus*.

Therefore, the Jesuits' performance was not only contained in the idea of the colonist or the Spanish Crown. Likewise, it was not reduced to Gentile representations and practices. Moved by the interest of Christianization and the prospect of peacemaking by the Gentiles, the crusade of these priests was marked by the denaturalization of physical violence practiced in the lands of the missions, as shown by Montoya's descriptions. The binomial peace-violence has a strong mark in their narratives, since not only Spanish colonists and bandeirantes are attributed actions of cruelty, but also to some chiefs who killed without parsimony. On the other hand, the action of the missionaries is recurrently characterized by humility, asceticism and dialogue. These representations and practices generated rapprochements with the Gentiles, since the priests were an arm of the Spanish Crown and showed themselves committed to enforce the precepts of citizenship that extended to the peoples of the colony.

At the same time, Christianization conformed relations with the Gentiles, since the institutionalization of Catholic symbols, rituals, customs and the practices of priests, such as the observance of chastity, corroborated the process of organizing missions. The strangeness, in relation to the Guaraní rites, did not cease to exist, as observed in Montoya's writings. However, in the descriptions of the customs of the Gentiles, the prospect of their correction through conversion and belonging to the Catholic community of reductions was contained, which explains the very idea of reduction, permanent presence and no longer itinerant mission.

Nevertheless, Christianization implied a strong fight against unconverted Gentiles, as, as Silvio Paradiso (2012, p. 204) analyzed, they “[...] were constantly demonized, in order to guarantee to the converted Indians that they made the choice for good”. More than that, the chiefs and shamans were painted like the rebels, “[...] committed to demoralizing priests and Christian doctrine. The pajés were outsiders by the religious, receiving adjectives varied as: miserable, familiar to the devil, sorcerers, magicians, pretenders” (PARADISO, 2012, p. 204). Therefore, these highlighted elements show the complexity of the social relations that were established in the lands of the Guairá missions.

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