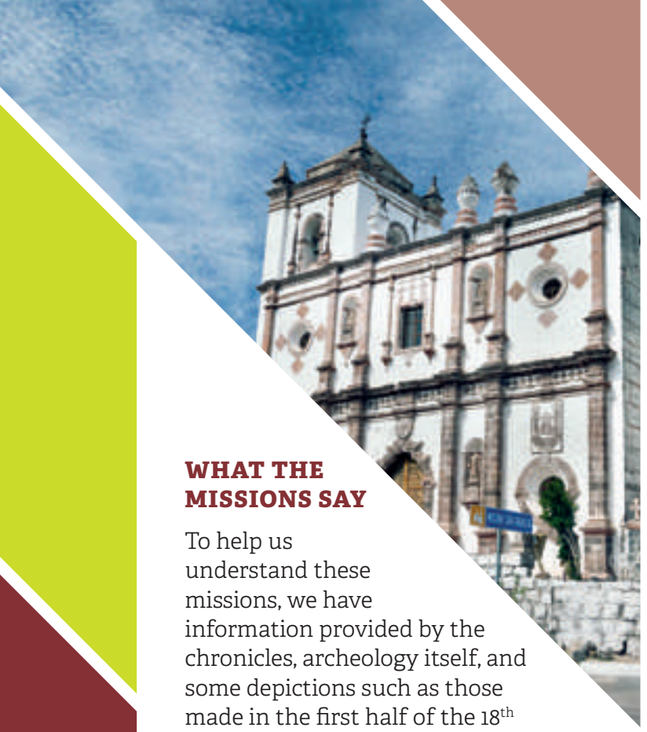


WHAT THE MISSIONS SAY

To help us understand these missions, we have information provided by the chronicles, archeology itself, and some depictions such as those made in the first half of the 18th century by Ignacio Tirsch (a Jesuit artist born in 1733 in the town of Chomutov, in the Bohemia region of what is now the Czech Republic).

MISSIONARY SYSTEM

In the specific case of Baja California, the missionary system allowed the Jesuit fathers to go one step further, exercising joint religious and civil authority. Loreto, the peninsula's first mission and territorial capital, included the prison, which had a captain appointed by the fathers and a small military garrison. As the other missions were established, the fathers were assisted by an escort. In this way, permanent populations were established in the regional headquarters or missions, which had a missionary, two or three indigenous people to assist him, and a small escort. The rest of the population attended to them through the method of alternating visits: in turns and only for a few days to work, receive doctrine, and be protected and receive supplies from the missionary.



Location

San Luis Gonzaga lies 132 km from the city of La Paz. If you take the Transpeninsular Highway exit 186 km to the north, you will find José de Comondú. 297 km to the north of this exit is the town of San Ignacio.

Information

The person in charge of San Ignacio Mission is parish priest Roberto Navarro Vargas. This mission's opening hours are from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. every day.
The person in charge of San José de Comondú Mission is Mrs. Edith Gómez. Opening hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. every day.
As this is a small community, there is no-one in charge of San Luis Gonzaga Mission, which is open all the time.

Texts: Barbara Meyer. Researcher. Baja California Sur INAH Center.
Concerns and future perspectives of the cultural heritage of Baja California State missions.
Editor: Miguel Ángel Sorroche Cuerva.

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EVANGELIZING EXPERIENCE

The Jesuit missions of Baja California, in terms of seizing territory, schemes for evangelizing the native people, and the spatial and built manifestation of their missionary enclaves, did not appear out of nowhere. They were based on previous evangelizing experiences, formulas proven beforehand by both other religious orders and the Jesuit fathers themselves within the extensive territory of colonial New Spain.





THEIR ECONOMY

You can still glimpse some examples of the Jesuit livelihood in Baja California, such as the sugar mills. The remains of the oldest of these are on display in the Misiones de Loreto Museum and there is a working example of one in San José de Comondú. Connected with sugar cane exploitation, these keep alive the memory of a crop that went from the Caribbean to the continent and arrived on these lands with the missionaries in the 18th century.

JESUIT MISSIONS
PART 2

MiNiGUIDES

Baja California Sur



- SPIRITUAL CONQUEST
- UNBEATABLE STRENGTH

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The story of Fathers Eusebio Francisco Kino and Juan María Salvatierra (Milan, 1648-Guadalajara, 1717) is one of perseverance. Father Kino's own conviction, which led him to seek a way onto the peninsula from the north to guarantee stable communication with the new foundations, is proof of this.
The missionary regime imposed on the peninsula was not conceptually far from the Jesuit plans implemented in other territories, although it did offer a series of peculiarities due to the degree of independence acquired by the Order itself, which obliged it to finance the process. This is why it created the Pious Fund of the Californias, paid for out of donations given by illustrious members of the society of New Spain.

YOUR HERITAGE MINI GUIDE

After the first mission of Nuestra Señora de Loreto was founded by Father Salvatierra on October 25, 1697, the order gradually spread over the entire peninsula, holding 15 missions or regional headquarters by the time the Jesuits were banished.



San José de Comondú Mission

Julián de Mayorga founded this in 1708 on a site previously visited by Salvatierra and supposedly adequate. However, it was unsuitable for agriculture and had little water. Francisco Javier Wagner moved it to its current site in 1736, where it had abundant water and fertile land, which enabled it to be self-sufficient and even supply Loreto.



Interior

Each nave, separated from the next by a colonnade, had its own altar and entrance door. The walls were covered with oil paintings on the life of Saint Joseph, its patron saint.

Decline

The mission closed in 1827.

Architecture

The first church was built with thick stone walls roofed by a barrel vault. It later served as a chapel to a new three-naved church that was unique on the peninsula.



San Ignacio Kadakaamán Mission

This was founded in 1728 on a site with abundant water and good land explored by Father Francisco María Píccolo in 1716. During the years that the Society of Jesus remained in California, the mission prospered and preserved its palm-thatched adobe church.





Church

Shortly after the Jesuits left, Father Fernando Consag began construction of a stone and mortar church with a Latin cross layout, which Juan Mariano Rotea continued. The Dominican friar Juan Crisóforo Gómez resumed the work already begun, which he covered with a vault and dome over the transept, completing it in 1786.

Facade

The austere plastered walls of the back and sides contrast with its baroque facade that has a *fin de siècle* touch, in which symbolism recedes to allow purely decorative, ordered, and balanced forms. We can see three coats-of-arms: that of the Spanish crown, the royal house of Spain, and the third being that of the Order of Preachers.

Interior

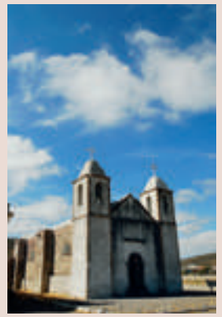
The Dominicans commissioned three altarpieces for the interior, examples of peculiar and interesting anastyle creations (without columns) that flourished in the second half of the 18th century. The main one, which exalts the Dominican Order and includes three of its most illustrious members, is dedicated to the mission's patron saint of Saint Ignatius.

Decline

The mission closed in 1840.







San Luis Gonzaga Chiriyaqui Mission

Father Lamberto Hostell founded the San Luis Gonzaga mission in 1737 for the indigenous people who lived in the extensive arid region lying between the San Javier and Santiago missions. It was run from Los Dolores until the arrival of Juan Javier Bischoff, its missionary from 1742 onwards, who established it on its current site, built the first church and missionary dwelling house in adobe, and instructed those not yet evangelized.

Church

Hostell's successor, Juan Jacobo Baegert, designed a new church and began building it in 1753. This had thick stone and mortar walls that he roofed with a barrel vault and sculptured transverse arches. The building was distinguished by its simple structure and austere internal and external decoration, as well as being the only one in California to have two towers at the front and an apse or semicircular extension at the back of the nave where the presbytery is located.

Decline

The mission continued to be used until 1768, when the mission was ordered to be closed and its indigenous people transferred to that of Todos Santos.



Interior

Its liturgical and decorative objects, including ten oil paintings, sculptures, and a tabernacle, went to the new missions founded by the Franciscan Order in Alta California.



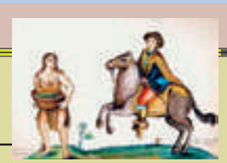
DID YOU KNOW...?
This set of missions has been unevenly preserved.

CALIFORNIA & THE JESUITS

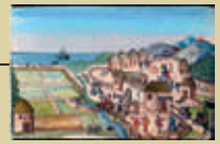
1677
The Crown decided to send an official expedition to California.



1697
The total population of the three Californian nations when the missionaries arrived was calculated at between 40,000 and 50,000 inhabitants.



1700
Starting from Loreto, the Society of Jesus expanded to the closest towns, occupying the entire central zone.



1728
San Ignacio Kadakaamang was one of the spearheads for the final phase of Jesuit expansion.

1777
Jesuit Father Ignacio Tirsch made paintings in which he depicts two of the missions: San José del Cabo and Santiago.

