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We Will Dance Our Truth
Yaqui History in Yoeme Performances
David Delgado Shorter
University of Nebraska Press

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Introduction

TALKING ABOUT WHERE YOEME HISTORY BEGINS

Potam Pueblo, November 2, 1999. After I returned from the cemetery, Ignacio Sombra allowed me to record him talking about animam miika*, the ceremonial feeding of the departed souls. I retrieved my recording equipment from the truck and returned to the room where Ignacio, his wife, his son, and my friend Felipe Molina were sitting. Sitting upright, clearing his throat, Ignacio began, his voice more monotone than usual, his phrases paced and rhythmic:*

Kompae, ka religionta hiakim tekipanoa'u
[The religion that the Yoeme people work with,]
wohnaiki pueplo santiklesiam
[the eight holy pueblos]
hoka ve'ekatana
[from where they sit]

Inika pasion pahkota weye'epo
[this passion play that is happening]
animam pasionta weye'epo
[the passion of the soul]

Si'ime pueplo wohnaiki pueplo
[all the eight pueblos]
santiklesiam hippueme
[the ones that have the holy churches]
inika wepulsi a tekipanoam
[the ones who work it as one]

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Into inian a naatek vattukariampo
[they started it like this in yesterdays]
dia primeropo natek ian vea woi
[it started on the first of the month, but today is the second,]
yoko vea vahi miisa ultimo
[tomorrow is the third, last mass.]

Ian navuhti vicha vea wa si'ime pueplo
[Furthermore, it is like that in all the pueblos]
vea nuen aa tekipanoa
[like this they work it]
wa vato'ora inim aneme
[the baptized ones that are here.]

Inian a ta'a, iat nah kuakteka hiapsa
[They know it like this, they walk about here, alive]
malampo natekai achaimpo.
[starting from the mothers and the fathers.]

Now as I lie in this Esperanza motel room, listening to the tape and writing of the day's events, I am struck by Ignacio's description of animam miika. I thought the recording would be good material for my research on Yoeme rituals for the deceased, but now I realize its relevance to my larger research. As I follow Ignacio's recorded voice and Felipe's translations of the tape, I begin to understand how Yoeme elders represent their culture in similar terms: religion is "work" for Yoemem; "people" are synonymous with the eight holy pueblos; "holy" stresses the authoritative sanction of their towns. Those Yoemem doing the work, tekipanoa or religious labor, in the pueblos are "the baptized ones that are here," the contemporary Yoeme Catholics. They distinguish themselves from their relatives, the Surem, who live immortally outside the pueblo (civil society) and yet inside the landscape. The deceased villagers are considered present, "walking about here," a type of movement in a specific location. Mixing Spanish and Yoeme, Ignacio situates his description within a set of spatial, temporal, and religious references that are particular to his community's historical understanding of itself.

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The tape continues. Ignacio repeats these ways of talking about his culture and religious practices, references you can hear in almost any formal talk by a Yoeme elder. You see these articulations in Yoeme rituals, in their contents and forms. Although I hadn't asked him for a "formal" presentation, Ignacio clearly gave me a gift tonight, not just in his description of animam miika. His talk evidenced a distinctly Yoeme way of thinking about, historicizing, and continuing tribal religious identity.

The faint mechanical sound of the recorder's turning spindles and the audible movements of the microphone accentuate the contrast between being there with Ignacio and hearing the by-product of that moment, the recorded talk. Records, things we keep, proof of events that "really" happened, documentation — a complex chain of relations links common notions of evidence to certain forms of representation. Ignacio's voice, in a serious and subtle way, asserts that indigenous communities have relied on practical and logical representative forms. His words "make sense," since they recall and reassert Yoeme ways of knowing the world. As I contemplate how I can share this evidence of Yoeme autoethnography with others, I have to laugh. As a scholar, I'll have to take this live talk and turn it into text. How do I re-create the mud and cane walls, the smell of coffee spilled on burning embers, the ambient sounds of sleeping children breathing heavily in adjoining rooms? What have I not sensed about Ignacio's presentation? And how do I relate what I have sensed? In these cases, translation is literally transformation. I do not tell, dance, or sing Yoeme history as most Yoemem do. Rather, I write about how Yoemem understand and share their history in active, embodied, religious ways.

Journal entries like this one reflect a certain type of personal experience, moments when connections are made, insights gained. These notes from the field derive from my years of collaboration with Yoeme individuals. This particular field note was written after I had been visiting Potam Pueblo for more than five years. I start with it because it evokes the cornerstone of my larger research and offers the reader insight into the making of ethnographic knowledge. This book is thus a study of a people, but also a study of the ethnography of a people. I have been mindful to focus on the Yoeme ways of knowing, not swaying too far toward

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anthropological theories. Some readers may deepen their analysis by reading the books and articles listed in my endnotes. Because I hoped to write a social science that emphasizes the intersubjective and social dynamic between me and community members, I include field notes within chapters and transcribed interviews between chapters.

Writing ethnographic accounts became much more complicated after the "writing culture" debates and the larger crisis of representation. Although I will not rehearse those debates here, many readers will rightfully sense that these contexts surrounded the beginnings of my fieldwork and graduate training. Until now I have remained conscious that all ethnographers employ particular strategies to assert authenticity and authority. Accordingly, I have read texts and produced this text with authenticating strategies in mind. One strategy, for example, is to use my field notes, which intentionally dispute some of my own cultural interpretations. In exchange for such fractures, this ethnography keeps the dialogical process central to the project of rewriting Yoeme ethnographies. Without the real face-to-face conversations, which sometimes wander and diverge, no true cross-cultural understanding can emerge.

This book explores many facets of Yoeme religious life in Potam Pueblo, in the northern Mexican state of Sonora, and I want to begin our time together as writer and reader by explaining why I wrote this book. Based on archival, field, and ethnographic studies, I express the spatial, performative, and religious ways that many Yoemem sustain their collective identity. I also contend that these acts provide alternatives to Western academic ways of thinking about history and writing. While these linked arguments speak to multiple conversations within the study of indigenous religions, each of the chapters develops the central claim for a performative approach to understanding Yoeme place-making. Like much recent anthropological scholarship, I remap the boundary between the ethnological categories oral and literate and expand Western notions of historical expression to include nonliterate representations of "local" history through various oral and ritual practices. By focusing on place-making, my work takes Yoeme values as the starting point, since tribal

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identity is narrated in terms of a specific geographical territory. Using Yoeme myths and ceremonies as ethnohistorical representations will enable me to ground the various chapters in the symbols, forms, and logic that are recognizable to many Yoemem, especially those from the Yoeme homeland in Mexico. One of my main goals is to produce scholarship that makes sense to native communities. And as many scholarly readers will find, through Yoeme acts of inscription I argue not so much to replace but to expand the categories of "writing" and "history."

I want to address how my work relates to previous ethnographic accounts of Yoeme identity before outlining how each chapter develops themes of place-making and local historicity. This review of the relevant literatures provides readers with a baseline perspective on studies of the Yoemem in terms of their land and their sense of "otherness." Following the lead of Yoeme historical narratives, I pay attention to Yoeme relations with those who have shared and disputed rights to that geography. I examine the scholarship of Edward Spicer (1906–83), who devoted his life to interpreting Yoeme ethnicity and who developed a dynamic approach to studying identity. I also explain how the present study creates new approaches to specific theoretical and methodological issues in the study of indigenous religions. These discussions connect my work to previous scholarship and reveal the directions taken in subsequent chapters.

Previous Yoeme Studies: Names, Places, and Perspectives

My use of "Yoeme/m" rather than "Yaqui/s" distinguishes my study from the majority of written descriptions of the communities. The origin of the name "Yaqui" has long been a topic of conversation among scholars and community members, demonstrating a diversity of views regarding historical self-representation. While they are most widely known as "Yaquis," the Yoemem are referred to in some Mexican scholarship as "Cahitans." But this term is considered by many to be disrespectful, since the Yoeme words *ka hita* literally mean "not a thing" or "nothing." According to one of Spicer's earliest ethnographies (1954, 23), com-

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munity members with whom he worked preferred "Yoemem." He later writes that a form of "Yoemem" was recorded in the only seventeenth-century description of their language. Although he gives no reason why he used "Yaqui," he suggests that "Yoeme" was used solely in the context of Yoemem speaking about or among themselves (1980, 306). According to Yoeme writer and deer singer Felipe Molina (Evers and Molina 1987, 43), "We call ourselves 'Yoemem,' Mexicans and Spanish are 'Yorim,' and Whites are 'Riingom.'"

Most Yoemem on both sides of the U.S.–Mexican border, however, refer to themselves as "Yaquis." I have heard people refer to me as "the professor who calls us 'Yoeme,'" which I consider a compliment, particularly from elders. Whether they use "Yaqui" because of its widespread presence in the anthropological literature (and perhaps to facilitate Yoeme communication with outsiders), or because Yoeme language use is declining, I cannot say for sure.[1] Perhaps they are attached to a well-established name. Clearly these matters can be complicated. On both sides of the border, for example, official/legal discourse refers to "the Yaqui Nation" or "la Tribu Yaqui." Yet in Potam Pueblo one can go for days without hearing the word "Yaqui" outside of that nationalist discourse. I use "Yoeme" because my Yoeme friends do so when talking about themselves. I also take as my lead the first Yoeme-authored book, which Herminia Valenzuela (Kaczkurkin 1977) titled *Yoeme: Lore of the Arizona Yaqui People*.[2]

As with other Native American tribal names, "Yaqui" may be a term initiated by outsiders. Some community members claim that "Yaqui" originated from a misunderstanding: when a Spaniard first approached the Yoemem and asked who they were, the response was "ya aqui," "already here."[3] Another commonly heard story is that in the early years of Spanish contact, Yoemem associated themselves with the name of their central waterway, the Yaqui River. This river, called in Yoeme the Hiak Vatwe, is such a centerpiece of Yoeme history and myth that the entire area of the homelands is often called the Hiak Vatwe or *hiakim*. In both folkloric and historic accounts, Yoemem represent themselves in ways that are based on landownership and indigeneity. According to

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one of the first documented Jesuit accounts of the Yoemem (written by Andrés Pérez de Ribas in 1645), the people said, "Don't you see we are *hiaqui*, 'the ones who make sounds'?" I have also heard that a lone Yoeme walking through the desert eating organ pipe cactus fruit was asked by a Spaniard who he was, and confusing the question for what he was doing, responded, "*Aakim*," meaning "organ pipe cactus." These clearly do not exhaust the supply of "folk" etymologies. I feel more confident with the simple translation Yoemem = People, and I thereby join a recent cross-tribal move to refer to tribes by names in their respective languages. For consistency I retain the use of "Yaquis" in the contexts of proper place-names, previously published quotes, and titles, while I use "Yoemem" in my own analysis.[4]

The Hiak Vatwe, or Río Yaqui, remains a fundamental point of tribal reference in both the pueblos and ethnographic descriptions; it is the central landmark of collective identity for many Yoemem. From its 9,000-foot-high source in the Sierra Madres, this river flows south through the mountain ranges of eastern Sonora, widens downstream, and enters what Yoemem call *hiakim*, their homeland. From the mountain country to the level coastal plains bordering the Pacific Ocean, the Hiak Vatwe is the northernmost of five rivers that drain the mountains of what was once called New Spain and is now Sonora. Considered one of the most productive agricultural regions in the world (Dunbier 1968; West 1993), both Yoemem and newcomers knew that this land, as James Mahoney (1994, 7) wrote, "has held the sweetest promise of prosperity." Yoeme settlements are cradled by these mountains, sustained by these waters, and nourished by these fertile lands.

Known as the eight holy pueblos, five towns lie north of the Hiak Vatwe(Veenem, Wiivisim, Rahum, Potam, and Torim) and three towns (Vikam, Vahkom, and Ko'oko'im) lie south.[5] Although the river's course has changed over the centuries, its symbolic role defines Yoeme territory and joins its agricultural role as a vital part of ethnic solidarity. The Mexican government has attempted to diminish, if not extinguish, tribal unity by redirecting the river. Both before and after the construction upriver of the Alvaro Obregón Dam in 1952, the Mexican government

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aimed to decrease the water's flow to the Yoeme pueblos. Although this activity has destroyed entire villages, one is still struck by the beauty and fertility of the hiakim. But note, we are already caught in the links between land and history: to discuss the Hiak Vatwe necessarily involves mentioning the eight holy pueblos, which leads to issues of identity and a distinct retelling of the past.

Both Yoeme and non-Yoeme historians narrate three general phases of the Yoeme past: the religious syncretism that began in 1617, the geographic dislocation that started around 1766, and the cultural revitalization of the 1900s (Molina, Salazar, and Kaczkurkin 1983; Spicer 1954, 1980). While this characterization of Yoeme "eras" sweeps too briefly to account for the particular places, individuals, and events that constitute a tribal history, the consensus among most published and internal historical narratives does suggest that the three-part periodization roughly approximates the stages of postcontact interethnic relations.

The Yoemem defeated Spanish armies at least three times between 1533 and 1609 and therefore negotiated a contact situation on their own terms. Their engagement with the newcomers was selective and tactful. Yoemem invited Jesuit missionaries to their pueblos in 1617 and kept the Spanish conquistadors at bay at the same time. Yoeme strength clearly controlled the influence of Catholicism on precontact traditions. Like other early colonial encounters, this control included a significant amount of indigenous agency and maneuverability. Yoemem enforced and strategically maintained their territorial and cultural boundaries and sustained sovereign control of their land from pre-Columbian times through the period of Jesuit collaboration.[6]

To understand Yoeme cultural dynamics, we must grasp that roughly 30,000 Yoemem decided to befriend five or six Jesuit missionaries, ultimately choosing which aspects of Christianity and European life were sensible and adoptable.[7] Yoemem also decided which practices were to be rejected. Control maintained continuity in a time of change. During 150 years of Jesuit collaboration, Yoemem consolidated hundreds of settlements into the eight central pueblos around the Hiak Vatwe and constructed churches and plazas. They also sought to learn agricultural

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methods, governmental duties, and languages from the missionaries. As most academic and community historians agree, the Yoeme-Jesuit relationship must have been one of give-and-take, not of domination. If either group had the upper hand in terms of power, however, the Yoemem dictated and managed the conditions. This foundational control of missionization clearly shapes any interpretation of Yoeme culture: Yoeme tradition is based on a religious syncretism constructed of pre-contact worldviews and a Catholic cosmology.[8]

Any sense of sharing and mutual commitment to peace that characterized the Jesuit period slowly dissolved from the early 1700s to around 1767, when the Spanish expelled the Jesuits from New Spain. In the years before expulsion, changes in Jesuit leadership demonstrated a preference for the Mexican *encomienda* landholding system and a general distrust of Yoeme-elected religious/governmental representatives.[9] After the Jesuits departed, Yoemem once again were sole caretakers of their homelands, but now they possessed livestock, irrigation systems, metal tools, and European-influenced architecture. Some spoke and wrote in Spanish and, for a few, Latin. In the 1820s, the Mexican government began to deport Yoemem to mining camps and sugar plantations across Mexico, the Yucatan, and what is now the southern United States.[10] Mexican government officials also began allotting Yoeme lands to Mexican agriculturalists, who for 150 years had been hearing Jesuit reports about the fertile lands surrounding the Hiak Vatwe. As Mexicans waged a war for independence in the early to mid-1800s, some Yoemem fought against the Creole elite in New Spain and some against the Spanish. The continual slave raiding and outright brutality against the villagers, however, led many to migrate to areas near Sonora and the southwestern United States. We can trace these historical diasporas on a map, following the lines of train tracks, footpaths, and boat travel that led Yoeme slaves to Yucatan plantations. We can imagine the paths of migration to surrounding tribes or north into present-day Arizona. After the Jesuit era, Yoemem created another fundamental aspect of their identity: tribal life in a transnational context both in Mexico and the United States.

After President Lázaro Cárdenas established favorable agricultural

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policies in the 1930s, Yoemem began to repopulate their original pueblos in the Hiak Vatwe valley. Along with the establishment of a Yoeme "zone," these policies supported cultural revitalization. From the early 1900s, Yoemem had already formed permanent communities around Tucson and Phoenix. They thus began to define their territories in binational contexts. In Mexico, the Yoemem were the first federally recognized indigenous tribe, but in the United States they held private lots and trust land, as well as the Pascua Yaqui Reservation. Speaking with tribal members on both sides of the border would lead one to conclude that a total Yoeme population count is comparable to the 30,000 estimated at first European contact. Most still live in communities along the Hiak Vatwe, while 11,000 live in the four communities around Tucson or in the town of Guadalupe near Phoenix (Evers and Molina 1987, 19). As testimony to their sense of tribal sovereignty, some Yoemem during the late 1990s sought to issue their own passports to tribal members to allow restriction-free travel across the U.S.–Mexico border for religious purposes. By crossing this border, some Yoemem attempt to connect their northern and southern communities through indigenous paths of migration that respect no national jurisdictions (Norrell 1998, 47).

This brief outline of Yoeme postcontact history suggests that Yoemem cannot be easily included within common representations of the Native American colonial experience. Unlike many other tribes in Mexico and the United States, the Yoemem controlled substantial amounts of their own lands and community activities; only later did they come under Mexican domination. In contrast to forced conversions, we know from both Yoeme and Spanish sources that Yoemem invited the Jesuits into their territory using envoys sent to surrounding missions to observe possible benefits of missionary collaboration. This phase was not a moment of defeat but a shifting story of struggles and negotiations. The Yoemem were not displaced from their homeland or left alone by Mexican colonizers. Perhaps because of their sociohistorical predicament, their experience attracted attention from anthropologists. The name most reasonably associated with the ethnological study of Yoeme people and culture is that of Edward Spicer.

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Approaching Yoeme History

Edward H. Spicer provides an invaluable foundation for any understanding of Yoeme culture. He pioneered what Raymond Folgelson (1974) calls "ethno-ethnohistory," or "other"-centered interpretations, by documenting Yoeme history through long-term relations with Yoeme people on both sides of the border. Between 1939 and 1950, Spicer lived sporadically in Yoeme communities; he spoke Yoeme and Spanish and wrote nine books (four solely on the Yoemem) and countless articles. His long-term research with Yoemem led him to an unparalleled depth and innovative concept of cultural processes. Spicer's earlier publications (1954, 1958, and 1961) placed him at the forefront of ethnic studies as well as American Indian studies.

In her epilogue to Spicer's posthumously published book, *People of Pascua* (1988), Kathleen M. Sands appreciates his theory of ethnic persistence as a watershed understanding of collective identity. She notes, "As a cultural anthropologist with early training in culture and personality scholarship, he remained inclined to look at ethnicity in terms of ethnic group members' historical, social, religious, and personal relations with other groups" (1988, 306).[11] In contrast to other cultural anthropologists of his time, Spicer demonstrated how ethnicity results from increased contact with other cultures, not from relative isolation. This "interactionist" approach to ethnicity (Spicer 1962) anticipated Fredrik Barth's claims that people define themselves mostly in terms of who they are not. Sands commends Spicer for initiating a movement from a functionalist approach to a more contextual and dynamic understanding of identity. After working extensively in the Arizona State Museum archives researching Spicer's unpublished papers, I would add that he has provided me with much of what I have learned about fieldwork: from organization of notes to compilation of data, Spicer left a model for any anthropologist. Moreover, based on what Yoemem and non-Yoemem who knew him have said, I know that he possessed, as they say in Yoeme, *tu'i hiapsi*, a "good heart." Spicer's work is essential for any research on Yoeme ethnography and historiography.

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I specifically build on Spicer's theories of culture and ethnic identity. Spicer and Robert Redfield, his thesis advisor, shared the view that culture resided in objects, symbols, and the acts and behaviors associated with them (McGuire 1989, 165). Spicer's "interactionist" model of ethnicity emphasized that identity persistence was, at least for the Yoemem, a result of external contact. Spicer, in fact, preceded Barth in arguing against "isolationist" theories of ethnic identity that assumed interethnic contact would eventually lead to culture loss and assimilation. The combination of his behavioral view of culture and his interactionist view of ethnicity provided the reasoning for his focus on religious and political life (Sheridan 1988, 178, 184). Since Spicer understood that political and religious organizations engendered the most symbolically expressive aspects of Yoeme identity, his works progressively developed the thesis of *The Yaquis: A Cultural History* that religious symbols and rituals are requisites for enduring cultures.

I follow Spicer's lead in my methodology by drawing on fieldwork and contemporary ritual practices to better understand Yoeme history. As Thomas Sheridan notes in his critical comparison of Spicer and another historian of the Yoemem, Evelyn Hu-DeHart (1981, 1984), Spicer moved beyond simply reading the reports of Spanish and Mexicans who wrote firsthand accounts of the Yoemem. Knowing that these documents contained obvious biases and with few exceptions lacked native perspectives, Spicer brought his "modern linguistic and ethnographic research to bear upon at least some of those documents" (Sheridan 1988, 184). The difference between Spicer's and Hu-DeHart's histories of the Yoemem reveals the problems associated with both his "cultural" approach and her "narrative" approach. Whereas Spicer's work leaves many historical periods undiscussed or brushed over quickly and with little detail, Hu-DeHart's descriptions of Yoeme culture are quite often flat and incomplete because they are derived from non-Yoeme sources (Sheridan 1988; Voss 1981, 144). I draw on both historical approaches, and based on these key works, my research methodology resembles the work of Spicer most closely.

I agree with Spicer's "up-streaming" or "direct historical" approach,

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which is that contemporary Yoeme voices and practices can inform and fundamentally shape our historical accounts. I rely on both non-Yoeme written sources and Yoeme "writings" as they are inscribed in religious performances. Since nonliterate documentary styles live and change, I pay attention to current Yoeme expressive forms as clues to better understanding events in the past, much like Spicer.

Unlike Spicer, I see Yoeme oral traditions, dances, and processions as ways of understanding historic events and manifestations of Yoeme historical consciousness. The distinction is slight yet important. Yoemem do not just express their perspective on history; they practice in particularly Yoeme ways to develop a historical consciousness. Through embodied action, the Yoemem theorize, map, inscribe, and document their history. Even though my research goals coincide with Spicer's aim to better understand Yoeme social cohesion, I also want to examine how Yoeme historicism provides a means to expand Western notions of writing and the contours of historical discourse itself.

March 19, 2001. Sitting in the cold reading room of the Arizona State Museum Archives, I come across a field note written by Spicer on March 18, 1942.

> Bets, Juan Valenzuela, the Rahum maestro capilla, and I sat for a while in the afternoon in Juan's ramada before beginning work on the copying of his texts. He said, "Have you been working with Juan [Uhyollimea] on this history?" I said, "He seems to know nothing about it. He knows only about the church and Yaqui religion today." Juan said, "Well, religion is the base of all the history. You have to know about that. But there are many things which have been forgotten and which are not practiced now since the guerra. The people have lost many things, but when they were in the sierras they kept their religion, too. No matter where they were in the sierras they had a misa when it came time. They also had the visperas. That is the way it was. The maestros took their books into the sierras. As you know, the people have always kept their religion, as in Arizona. But there were formerly other things besides the matachinis and what they have now. The Aguilenos are very much apart from us, but still they have their pascolas and their matachinis.

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They haven't lost these things. You should take up the religion point for point to write your history." I agreed.

I have spent many a day in this room, searching through Spicer's field notes, photographs, and correspondence for materials that might help me better understand Yoeme history. Today, in particular, I feel far away from Potam Pueblo, where I was last week and where I will return next week. The combination of archival research and fieldwork is taxing. Perhaps I should have decided to just do one or the other. But I remain optimistic that working in the archives will provide a rich resource to accompany my trips to the hiakim. And on days like this, when I find a note card like this one, the work seems worthwhile. Then I notice today's date. I look again at the date on Spicer's field note. Almost sixty years ago to the day, Edward Spicer was sitting with Juan Valenzuela and discussing my research, as I would pick it up later.

Looking at that day's notes, I realize that Valenzuela tried to help Spicer, but not by supplying him with more data. Rather, Valenzuela clearly provided Spicer, a non-Yoeme, with an insider's perspective on Yoeme history: "You should take up the religion point for point to write your history." Perhaps it was Valenzuela's status as a community elder of Rahum pueblo or that he soon became Spicer's good friend and principal collaborator. And Spicer agrees: in the subsequent forty years, he works continuously to understand Yoeme history and identity as an outgrowth from and contribution to religious practice.

My research similarly starts from Valenzuela's perspective that "religion is the base of all the [Yaqui] history." And after speaking with Yoemem on both sides of the border, I feel as though Valenzuela may have inferred a possible destination or at least one of the benefits of the journey: "But there are many things which have been forgotten and which are not practiced now since the guerra." Could he have been suggesting that a religious studies approach to Yoeme history might offer insight into Yoeme endurance? I heed Valenzuela's call and explore various ways of understanding Yoeme identity as grounded in religious acts. In their oral traditions, written histories, and ritual performances, the Yoeme people of Sonora, Mexico, continue to perceive of their land

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as aboriginally inherited and themselves as sovereign protectors. As Valenzuela told Spicer in the Lenten season of 1942, "They haven't lost these things."

Mythology, Prophecy, and "Religion" in Indigenous Studies

A small number of scholars have written thousands of pages on the Yoemem, and few have attempted to appreciate myth and ritual as forms of historical consciousness. A number of studies provide fruitful data and analyses regarding Yoeme history, culture, dances, and folklore (Bogan 1925; Evers 1981a, 1981b; Fabila 1940; Giddings 1959; Griffith and Molina 1980; Hu-DeHart 1984, 1995; Kaczkurkin 1977; Sands 1983; Spicer 1980, 1984, 1988; Wilder 1963). Others focus specifically on certain aspects of Yoeme life: land management, localized politics, and biographies or autobiographies (Kelley 1978; Mahoney 1994; McGuire 1986; Moisés, Kelly, and Holden 1971; Savala 1980). These topics are often shown to have deep roots within Yoeme religious cosmology, and scholars of Yoeme culture rarely utilize mythology and ceremony as interpretive lenses to view nonliterate historiography. (Erickson 2003, Evers and Molina 1987, and Morrison 1992b are exceptional on this matter.) The resulting scholarship presents a picture of Yoeme society where religious perspectives and practices become reduced to "modes of thought," "religious arts," or, in one case, "secondary attributes of Yaqui identity." Without serious consideration of Yoeme mythology as historical, researchers fail to consider native ways of understanding themselves.

In stark contrast, Larry Evers and Felipe Molina give primary importance to such considerations as myths and prophecy in their 1992 collaboration, "The Holy Dividing Line: Inscription and Resistance in Yaqui Culture." Yoeme worldviews are most fully articulated in the Testamento, a collection of stories about the *vatnaataka* (the beginning or times long ago). These stories include a global flood, the establishing of tribal territory by prophets and Yoemem "singing the boundaries," the confirming of bow leaders as territorial protectors, and the formation of the eight pueblos along the Hiak Vatwe. Evers and Molina's research demonstrates

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