

# PROBLEM POINTS OF VARIOUS RESEARCH METHODS AND PROSPECTS FOR THEIR SOLUTION IN THE STUDY OF 16TH- TO 18TH-CENTURY SPANISH FLORIDA

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**Abstract:** Making use of the method and the results of Herbert Eugene Bolton, founder of the Latin American Historical Review who proved that Spanish heritage is crucial for understanding American history, the article examines some of the main questions every researcher studying 16th-century Spanish Florida is confronted with. The author identifies important methodological problems regarding the topic and proposes some solutions, while also initiating specific debates on the development and Christianization of Spanish Florida during the 16th to the 18th centuries. The methodological conviction of the article is that scientists cannot avoid historicism; it also shows specific problems of the narrative and typological method, as well as the potential for further analysis of such methods as source studies and documentary. One also discusses the cartographic problem and the periodization of what is considered Spanish Florida in the 16th century.

**Keywords:** Spanish Florida, Christianization, American Indians, European colonialism.

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## Introduction

Before explaining the problems raised by approaching the issue of the Christianization of Florida it should be noted that Spanish Florida can be dated back to 1513, when Juan Ponce de Leon discovered a new land situated north of Hispaniola and Cuba and called it "Pascua de Florida."<sup>1</sup> However, on the 1511 map (Fig.1), this land already existed in the representation of Peter Martyr d'Anghiera and was called the island of Bimini (*Beimeni*). Before this, between 1493 and 1513, one can relate with this area several other important events, such as the Bull of Pope Alexander VI on May 3, 1493, called "*Breve Inter Caetera*." According to this document, all the lands that were discovered were given with permission to the Crown of Castile with an important condition: "the exaltation of the Catholic

faith and the Christian religion and its strengthening and dissemination for the salvation of souls and the humility and conversion of barbarian peoples to this faith."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, governors of Hispaniola – Christopher Columbus, Bobadilla, Nicolas Ovando, and Diego Columbus – did not make Christianization their priority.<sup>3</sup>

A new era in the state policy of the Spanish Crown in relation to the aborigines of the open lands was marked by the so called "Laws of Burgos" ("Ordenanzas para el tratamiento de Los Indios") ["Leyes de Burgos"],<sup>4</sup> signed by Ferdinand II of Aragon in 1512. Their amendments are the Laws of Valladolid of 1513. From this moment on, the relationship between aborigines and Spaniards was established with equal members of both societies and Christianization became a mandatory part of Spanish politics. According to the conditions set after 1513, the



newly discovered territories were the property of the Castilian Crown and the discoverer of the new lands had limited time to settle and develop them. Their development became the main condition for granting permission for expeditions to new lands in accordance with the Indian Law (*“Requerimiento Indiano”*) of 1513. New rules of land ownership and the project of the Christianization of its natives were born in the confrontation between Ferdinand II of Aragon and the “house of Columbus” and through various court proceedings on who was to own and manage the open lands. This episode is known as *“Los Pleitos Colombinos (1492-1541)”*, when Christopher Columbus and his heirs demanded submission to the “House of Columbus” of all lands and territories previously discovered by Christopher Columbus.<sup>5</sup>

### **Problems of different Methods in the approach to the Christianization of Florida**

From the outset, we are confronted with the classical forms of methodological problems in the history of Christianity, as in all history, considering the criteria of validity of scientific knowledge regarding the influence of Christianity on the extinct peoples that inhabited the territory of Spanish Florida. However, the documentary approach, which operates with many well-preserved documents of that time in the Spanish archives, may help us overcome these problems, although the main issue here is the one-sidedness of the narrative, since everybody considers these historical events exclusively from the Spanish point of view. In this work we adhere to externalism, since we believe that raising the question of the Christianization of aborigines is necessary for understanding the cultural resources of modern society for raising spiritual potential. We use the neo-positivist historical concept of Stephen Toulmin because we believe that our understanding of that period (16th-18th centuries) has already evolved, through contemporary understandings of the social environment. In this work, we adhere to the fact that modern epistemology, as a subject of knowledge, considers those people (missionaries who arrived in Florida and carried the teachings of Christ to the indigenous) as separate subjects who contributed their feelings, emotions, and passions to this process.

As for our collective empirical subjects, we mainly consider two general ones. The first is the clergy, who were united by a common idea, goal, and, most importantly, activity – the Christianization of the aborigines in the enormous territory of Spanish Florida. The second is the local population itself, that is the natives of Florida, who also own common ideas, goals, and activities in their territories. The aborigines became the subject for Christianization, and the teaching that was carried by Christian priests became the method. The result of this communion was the conversion to Catholic Christian faith of all the tribes inhabiting Florida.

But here we are faced with another aporia. Catholic priests of various orders passed through universities and were at a high stage of their intellectual development where, as it usually happens with scientists, rational knowledge prevailed. They

also perfected and used a certain conceptual apparatus and well-established conclusions based on scientific knowledge. They expected the same from the Indians. However, the aborigines had a sensory knowledge of the world through their ideas, perceptions, and sensations. The Jesuits, Dominicans, and Franciscans tried to apply rational knowledge, destroying monuments and religious buildings of the aborigines<sup>7</sup> while trying to “reach out” to the Natives through philosophical arguments and rational conclusions. The ministers of the church felt the resistance of the local population while they were searching the imposition of their logical thinking. They did not want to see that local population came to any new idea of the world through sensory cognition. A misunderstanding of this closed the door on Christianity all along the South Florida coast for nearly 200 years. It was in this divergence of the conceptual apparatus that the success or failure of Christian missions lay.

It can be said that the priests acted as optimists who constantly preached to the natives the possibility of getting to the essence of their teachings. But the conscience of the aborigines dictated them an agnostic position when they understood that they could not grasp the essence of the Christian perspective on natural phenomena. It was exactly the scientific knowledge acquired by the priests in universities with a hierarchical system of theoretical knowledge and a high degree of abstraction that prevented them from spreading Christianity among the local population of the peoples of Florida, who had a different stage of thought development. And it was the ordinary everyday consciousness that was inherent in the aborigines of the 16th century and was the result of a superficial but necessary understanding of things in the world of nature and people. Interestingly, less educated priests were able to achieve much more in the Christianization of aborigines than their more educated counterparts. For example, the expedition in 1566 of Juan Pardo, who went deep into Florida, left a diocesan priest in one of the local settlements (that is, a priest who did not belong to any monastic order, but was a chaplain of Spanish soldiers). This priest was Father Sebastian Montero, who learned the indigenous language and for 6 years preached among the local population in the large local tribe settlement of *Guattari*, successfully converting the aboriginal to Christianity.<sup>6</sup>

### **Narrative method**

In our research we use the *narrative method* as a socio-humanistic instrument that assumes the sequencing of events. And here we are faced with the problem of building this chain of events for the Christianization of Florida. The chronological problem lies in the fact that it is impossible to understand and build a chain of events without understanding the background of the *fait accompli*, and for this it is necessary to delve into the origins of the event. Thus, the harmony of the narrative sequence in chronological order is violated. The *descriptive method* also comes into conflict and creates a problem, since different sources in different countries that participated in

the Christianization of Florida – French, Spanish, and other European countries – present the same events very differently (as shown by Simms and Meras). This leads to various difficulties in considering the objectivity of the same facts. To this there is added the problem of *the lack of writing* among the Indians in the enormous territory of Spanish Florida, and this leads us exclusively to the “one-sided” (European) interpretation of events. However, we are forced to accept this as unconditional, since almost all the described peoples disappeared in history in the 18th century, and the rare descendants have no records or memories of their ancestors. The *objectivity of the description of events* is also influenced by the “Black Legend” – the “denigration” of Spain by its opponents in France, Portugal, England, Holland, Ottoman Empire, and other countries and empires. It expanded with the religious wars in Europe between Protestants and Catholics. A separate link in this chain is represented by the works of the Dominican Las Casas – “the shortest message about the destruction of the Indies ‘and’ history of the Indies.” By praising Las Casas as a humanist, the enemies of Spain – mainly France, England, and Holland – used his works to create a negative image, showing the Spaniards as a nation of cruel and cynical conquerors, and the natives as naive counterparts. The testimony of the Las Casas combined with the mass production of books about the New World by the Huguenot publisher Theodore de Bry<sup>8</sup> still strikes the minds of many people of that time as an unjustifiably cruel crime of the Spaniards against the natives of America. Several other problems arise when using the narrative method. First, the distribution of sources by countries and regions of the world: Spanish sources, French sources, English sources, Sources of the Vatican, Sources stored in the library of various orders, Sources of the Jesuit Order, Sources of the Franciscan Order, Sources of the Order of the Dominicans. Each Christian Order that undertook the Christianization of the Aborigines did so with a different vector of its efforts, which depended on the orientation and goals of the Christian Order and the understanding of its leaders of their tasks in a certain historical period. Personal preferences of chroniclers and their personal attitude towards the participants in the events they describe are determined by the subjective nature of the respective events: personal quarrels between different parties, views, and schools, as well as conflicts between the Spanish Crown and the “House of Columbus.” This relationship is easily understood from the purely personal feud between Christopher Columbus and King Ferdinand II of Aragon and the subsequent legal struggle between the Spanish crown and the “House of Columbus,” which began in 1500 and lasted until 1541 (“Los Pleitos Colombinos (1492-1541)”).<sup>9</sup> It was also influenced by the side taken by the chronicler during the Italian Wars and other wars in Europe. Finally, the difference of religious views between Protestants and Catholics, namely the personal hostility in the relationship between the Spanish crown and missionaries decided which monastic orders participated in the Christianization of Florida<sup>10</sup> – since the relations between Christian orders also depended on the personal preferences

of the kings inheriting the Spanish crown, and the support of the crowned person of a particular Christian order and the benefits that these relations promised. However, the narrative method is necessary as a basis for understanding the sequence of events.

### Historicism as a method

Another point of view we would like to engage in this paper derives from *the historical method*, which is based on considering any phenomenon in its successive development – birth, formation, and death. We have conditionally divided the Christianization of Florida into several stages, which had all these sequences: 1) the stage of the discovery and attempts to settle the Spaniards and the efforts of the Dominican Order to Christianize the natives (1513-1549 and 1558-1561); 2) the stage of the attempts of the French Huguenots to establish their settlements in Florida and preach Protestantism among the local population (1562-1565); 3) the stage of the successful creation of Spanish settlements in Florida by the governor of Spanish Florida Menendez and the Christianization of the natives by the Jesuit Order (1566-1571); 4) the stage of the beginning and further successful Christianization of the aborigines and the creation of Franciscan missions in coastal and mainland Spanish Florida (after 1587 and until the 18th century).

But we also encounter specific problems with this method. The problem is that each of the stages of Florida's Christianization that we have described is controverted, although accepted to some extent by historians describing Christianization. The study of the experience of scientists from different countries and archaeological discoveries made during the Christianization of Spanish Florida in the 16th-18th centuries contributes to the understanding of events that took place at that time. And here one can see the intersection of such disciplines as historical demography, economic theory, bioarcheology, and archeology, as well as the history of the American state. However, the problem is that one studies the process of Christianization hundreds of years after the actual event, therefore one's ideas about the norms of relations between people, our socio-economic conditions, and mentality are far from the views and norms of life that were then into force. Thus, we can safely say that the application of the historical method led us to propose a periodization of the Christianization of Florida. It is the ordering and unfolding of the phases (the beginning, continuation, and completion of attempts to Christianize the local population) and periods into which we have divided the whole process of Christianization that has helped us to consider the whole question. Thanks to periodization, we were able to see differences in approaches to this process. The various approaches adopted during Christianization by various countries and Christian orders served as important points in determining the stages of Florida's Christianization.

The problem of historicism can also be understood through the views in Soviet science on the Christianization of America, i.e., through Marxist-Leninist ideology and its influence on



the views of Soviet and Russian scientists. If earlier in the Soviet and Russian scientific literature we saw in Christianity only the negative side of the confrontation of the primitive communal system, turned to the world and the ideal of the life of the aborigines with the highly developed society of Spain, which brought only suffering and extinction of entire peoples, now we want to reconsider our views on these events from the point of view of the mutual penetration of cultures during the Christianization of Florida.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted separately that the basis of Lenin's teaching was made up of three components of Marxism-Leninism and they were based on the theory of communist utopian socialists about a completely ideal society, including the work *Utopia* by the English Finance Minister Sir Thomas More. It should be noted that this work was written under Thomas More's impression after he met Amerigo Vespucci and had a conversation about the life of the Indians, which was presented as an ideal life before the intervention of Europeans. Trying to build such an ideal society in one place, the Englishman Thomas More and the Dominican Las Casas failed in their idealistic drive.<sup>12</sup> Also, in the case of Russian science of the pre-revolutionary period, the French negative view of the events of the Christianization of the Florida Indians by the Spaniards prevailed. This view was formed due to the excessive influence of emigrants from France on the educational process in noble families in the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>13</sup> In our context regarding the Christianization of Florida, we followed the existing rules of periodization. The "rule of reason" in the proposed periodization we see in the allocation of different critical periods in this process, based on the criteria of effectiveness and effort, the criteria of success of Christianization, and the criteria of the region. The "hierarchy rule" is that we were able to break down periodization into periods and stages. One problem arises when applying the "equivalence rule": it is quite difficult to describe events with the same completeness due to their different coverage in the literature.

### **The comparative method**

The comparative method that we first wanted to apply in the approach, and which some scholars apply to the events of the Christianization of the whole of America in different regions of the present United States (the eastern part – Spanish Florida, and the western part – California and Mexico), will be too biased and therefore unserviceable. The problem with this method is that, although the actions of the Franciscan, Jesuit and Dominican friars were aimed at one goal, namely the Christianization of Indians throughout the New World, the radical difference is that of the living conditions in Florida – which was a dangerous and uninhabited territory where hostile tribes of aborigines lived.<sup>14</sup> It was a dangerous place not only for the process of Christianization, but also for the very life of the monks, who for the most part could not withstand and left for other places, and sometimes even organized and incited Spanish soldiers to revolt and leave Florida.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, we did not compare Christianization in other parts of America, for

example, in Mexico with Christianization in Florida, either in time or geography.

### **The typological method**

The problem with the typological method is that, although we have identified groups of similar phenomena and processes in the long history of Christianization in Florida, we still provide an ideal construction of stages of Christianization and are forced to ignore many features in our creation of conditional stages of this process. Many scientists have managed to model (especially recently) the interaction of Christian missionaries, the life in the missions of Indians and Spaniards, as well as other Aborigines. The typological method is hardly suitable for us since we see atypical behavior of aborigines from different parts of Spanish Florida in different situations, related to the Spanish administration or to the priests who attempted to Christianize different tribes. For example, the Calusa tribe and other tribes of the south of Florida have never converted to Christianity and have been isolated from Europeans for nearly 200 years. Other tribes allowed the establishment of missions on their territory, but their decision led to uprisings and subsequently to the brutal killing of representatives of the church during this period.<sup>16</sup>

Scientists have studied many Native American beliefs, but not deeply enough to understand their rejection or perception of the ideas of Christianity and how Christian teaching fits into their ideas about the perception of their society. Perhaps the next useful theoretical movement would be to focus on Christianization through the global processes taking place in religion in the 16th century.

### **Archaeological approach**

Very interesting research and excavations have been and are still being conducted throughout Florida, the results of which are presented at the Florida Museum of Natural History in Gainesville and other museums in Florida. Some exhibitions are very informative and constantly updated with newfound exhibits that speak about the time of the Christianization of Florida. Some findings change the idea of what happened during the Christianization.<sup>17</sup>

Interesting studies of the Spanish Florida come from the new science of bioarcheology; paleontological data show that the Native American population lived in a world where infectious diseases and poor health were not uncommon.<sup>18</sup> This gives us a new perspective on the world, as it shows that the natives of the New World did not live in an ideal world, destroyed exclusively by Europeans when they arrived on the continent more than five centuries ago. Interestingly enough, research by bioarcheologists suggests that it is unlikely that the arrival of Europeans caused a smallpox pandemic in the early 1500s leading to an immediate drop in the population,<sup>19</sup> which reconstructs the entire perspective on the history of Aboriginal-European interaction.

The excavations revealed facts which also reconstruct the

understanding of many events related to Christianization – such as the excavations in Santa Catalina, the place of the rebellion of the Guale Indians. As a result of this event, 5 out of 6 priests were killed, some of them were even beheaded. This revolt lasted long enough and caused irreparable damage to missionary activity. Some missions were never restored. Excavations carried out by scientists throughout former Spanish Florida and described in various scientific journals give us a description of the most interesting findings that show life within the missions and settlements of the Spaniards in Florida, the state of trade and exchange between the natives and the Spaniards. For example, recent excavations conducted in Florida showed that the life of local Indians in the Christianized villages was quite rich in terms of the exchange of goods in places where they had access to objects coming from Italy, Spain, and other parts of Europe.<sup>20</sup> They give an idea of how each group of aborigines voluntarily accepted or rejected a new world for them.

### **The consideration of issues related to working with primary sources**

The question about working with sources, which used to be the most fragile link in the modern world, has moved to a new level in the last decade. Since all the correspondence between the Spanish administration of Florida and Spain, between members of various Christian orders, as well as reports on Christianization and the work of the Spanish administration in this direction, were scattered in different countries and sources in different languages, they have been previously impossible to collect. However, thanks to the digitization and to the new era of the Internet and instant translators, archives in Spain, France, the Vatican, the United Kingdom have become available, and their translations have ceased to be the lot of only a small number of linguists.

One must acknowledge that the origin of the consideration of the question of Spanish influence on American history in general and the history of Spanish Florida in particular is due to Herbert Eugene Bolton (1870–1953), who became a pioneer in considering the history of the United States from the point of view of its constituent cultures and first appreciated the influence of Spain in his work from 1916, *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest, 1542–1706*. His work is also associated with the Coronado Expedition and Spanish Florida, through which his expedition partially passed. It was also Bolton who founded the magazine *The Hispanic American Historical Review (HAHR)*. The legacy of his thought was taken up by John Tate Lanning (1903–1954), as he wrote about the Spanish Enlightenment while working at Duke University.

The theme of Christianization of Spanish Florida can be followed in the works of leading American scientists and scientists from other countries of the 20th and 21st centuries – Professor Gannon<sup>21</sup>, Professor John H. Hann, who was the author of many studies on Native American life in Florida<sup>22</sup>, Professor Milanich<sup>23</sup>, Professor Woods<sup>24</sup>, Dr. Francis<sup>25</sup> and Saber Gray<sup>26</sup> from the St. Petersburg University of South

Florida (USFSP), Arbesú David, Browne Ayes J.J., Clark M.R., Daniels G. C., Fusion R.H., Gorman M., Hadjo H., Kole K.M., Marquart W.D., Meras G.S., Quinn D. B., Salas R. S., Thompson V.D., Widmer R.J., Purdy B. etc.

We have found important materials in books published by the Hakluyt Society<sup>27</sup>. We have used the different Religions Encyclopedias which we found<sup>28</sup> in USF and Catholic University of Saint Leo in Florida. In order to find old and new documents useful for our research, either articles or books, we have used the main digital internet platform in the Portal de Archivos Españoles<sup>29</sup>, as well as the Spanish Online Library<sup>30</sup>, the Library of Congress<sup>31</sup>, the Russian State Library<sup>32</sup>, the USF Library<sup>33</sup>, the Saint Leo University Library<sup>34</sup>, the UF Library<sup>35</sup>, the online Encyclopaedia Britannica<sup>36</sup>, JSTOR<sup>37</sup>, and other database of scientific articles. Thanks to all these sources, we can consult the works of chroniclers of the expeditions of Ponce de Leon (1513), Aylon (1526), Narvaez (1527), de Soto (1539), Tristan de Luna (1559), Menendez (1565). In 1619, the monk Luis Jerónimo de Oré published his work *The Martyrs of Florida (Relación de los mártires de la Florida del P. F. Luis Jerónimo de Oré)*, in which he describes all the events from 1513 to 1617, at the time when he himself visited there.

One has also considered the most informative works and reports written by Spaniards who were captured by the Indians. They are sometimes even more valuable than the reports of the chroniclers, and include the works of Alvarez Nunez Cabeza de Vaca and of Hernando de Escalante Fontaneda.<sup>38</sup>

### **Several other questions that affect the methods of studying the Christianization of Florida in the 16th century**

#### **The cartographic problem**

The cartographic problem deals with the question of what is considered to be *de jure* and *de facto* Spanish Florida in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. One must understand and keep in mind that Spanish Florida was much more extensive than the American state of Florida in its present borders. This is an important point in the approach not only to the Christianization of Florida, but also to the entire world history of that time. In the 16th century, the Spaniards organized several expeditions to the coast of Florida, starting in 1513 after its discovery; all of them were exploratory in nature and were eventually failures.

The expeditions of Narvaez, de Soto, de Luna, and several others passed through dozens of different villages, covering various places of residence of the aborigines, forever changing their worldview, and disrupting the delicate balance of the ecosystem and affecting the future of the aborigines. The impact of Spaniards on the lives of inhabitants was unprecedented, bringing in a moment many mental changes of aborigines and many physical diseases from which the local peoples were not immune. Their way of life and perception of the world have changed forever.<sup>39</sup>

De Soto's expedition in 1539–1542 traveled through the lands of more than 80 tribes, extending the borders of Spanish



Florida far to the West. And after that, the 1559-1561 de Luna expedition also passed through many lands, including all the numerous States of the present United States, *y compris* Texas. Under Menendez's governorship, these areas will expand inland and far north. Spanish Florida, according to maps of the time, included many of the current States up to South Carolina, where Captain Juan Pardo reached on the orders of Pedro Menendez (the current city of Anderson in South Carolina) in 1566. The same Captain Pardo went west from the Atlantic coast to the state of Tennessee, where he established relations with the Indians and left the settlements.<sup>40</sup> And the borders of Spanish Florida can be considered the territory even up to the state of Virginia. This can be safely done, since in 1570, at the initiative of the leader's brother, the Cacique of the local tribe, Don Luis, an expedition was sent to the country of Gale to Christianize the population. This Don Luis was baptized by the Spaniards and had a conversation with the King of Spain himself.<sup>41</sup>

Therefore, to circumvent this important problem, we will take in this work for the maximum coverage of the territories of Spanish Florida not the current borders of the state of Florida, but the maximum points that the Spaniards have reached in their expeditions and installation of the Christians' missions, since all their actions were based on this goal – namely the Christianization of the local population. This is evident from the documents provided to the expedition after 1513, in which the Christianization of the local population was prescribed as one of the main factors in the conditions for granting permission for the expedition according to Indian Act of 1513 (“*Requerimiento Indiano*” 28 *Julio 1513*).

#### **Periods of study for the cartography of Spanish Florida as an open land in the 16th century**

1. Logically, when “Pascua de Florida” was discovered by Juan Ponce de Leon in 1513<sup>42</sup>, it extended *de jure* essentially from the present-day Gulf of Mexico and present-day Key West to Alaska and the Arctic Circle, and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. Ponce de Leon thought it was an island, so he put it accordingly on the map.<sup>43</sup> The navigator Anton de Alaminos, who was with the Ponce de Leon expedition in 1513 and participated in many expeditions between 1513-1519, considered Florida a huge territory and doubted it was an island. *De facto*, the borders and the territory of this new land were unclear.<sup>44</sup>

2. In 1519, this territory was *de facto* and *de jure* bounded in the south by Cortes, who created “new Spain” on the territory of modern Mexico. This was reflected on the map of the Governor of Jamaica, Francisco de Garay, based on the maps of the pilots of the expedition of Alonso de Pineda. It was Garay's map that finally showed that Florida was not an island, but a peninsula, and Spanish Florida began to appear on maps of that time as a huge territory named “Terra Florida”. The border between Spanish Florida and New Spain was now clearly delineated.<sup>45</sup> The Panuco River now bounded the territory of Spanish Florida from the southwest.<sup>46</sup>

3. In 1524, Verrazano's illegal expedition from Cape Fear to Cape Breton allowed the French to claim their discoveries.<sup>47</sup> The second blow to the borders of Spanish Florida was inflicted by a Frenchman – J. Cartier, who used to be in the Verrazano team. In 1534, 1535-1536 and 1541-1542, three expeditions of the French navigator J. Cartier took place, who discovered and explored the Bay and the St. Lawrence River and the surrounding territories.<sup>48</sup> There were also undertaken the illegal expeditions that discovered Canada, later claimed by France. Maps were changing. The territory of Spanish Florida has been changed *de facto*, but *de jure* this fact was still very controversial. However, after 1535, it can be said that the territory of Spanish Florida extended from the borders of French Canada to Key West (from north to south) and from the coast of the modern Atlantic Ocean to the borders of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean (from east to west).

4. In 1562-1565, the French captured Spanish Florida and built Fort La Carolina. This fort was conceived by France as an important strategic center to control all the routes of Spanish ships from the New World and as a center of pirate attacks and illegal trade in order to undermine the influence of Spain and establish a French protectorate over the Caribbean Sea. If the plans had come to fruition, the entire Atlantic coast from Canada to Florida would have been under the rule of France. However, Fort La Carolina was destroyed in 1565 by the Spaniards led by Governor Menendez, who founded the first permanent Spanish settlement on the territory of the modern USA; it has survived to this day – as Fort San Augustine.<sup>49</sup>

5. With the first settlement of the British, namely the settlement of Roanoke on the coast of North Carolina, further restrictions of Spanish Florida begin both *de facto* and *de jure*.<sup>50</sup>

#### **The problems of language interaction between Spaniards and aborigines**

There is also a very important problem that any researchers of Christianization face, namely the problem of the interaction of languages and mutual understanding between Spaniards and the inhabitants of the New World.

1) *Representatives of the local population* themselves acted as interpreters. Very few priests could speak the Aboriginal language and they tried to learn it – which they succeeded very rarely. Most often, representatives of the church used translations of individual Indians who had learned Spanish. However, this approach was quite unsuccessful since the specifics of colloquial speech and the primitiveness of translation for the aborigines from the learned language of the monks were not perceived by the local Indians. They were often incomprehensible and did not cause any sympathetic understanding and actions on their part.

2) There were *Christians who had lived for some time in the tribes of Florida* and who became interpreters for the expeditions. These people could have had a stronger influence and could have given a more accurate translation. Such Christians – Spaniards, Portuguese and French, most often shipwrecked off the coast of Florida and released from

captivity by the Spaniards – had lived together with the natives for several years. Their translation had a stronger influence on the minds of the natives. However, they were not monks themselves and Christianization was not their profession. Also, after their release, they were busy with administrative issues and translations for the Spanish administration or the leaders of the expeditions, so they simply did not have time for constant simultaneous translation of the monks who told the Indians about Christianity (for example: John Ortiz, Hernando Fontaneda, Cabeza de Vaca, and others). It is important to remember that their status as former slaves among the aborigines also did not give them a reason to talk to their former masters about the advantages of the Christian religion.

3) *The most significant achievements* in the Christianization of aborigines were achieved by those ecclesiastics who were able to learn the local language of any tribes of Florida aborigines and gradually tried to integrate Christianity into the system of local beliefs. Thus, they did not sharply reject the existing beliefs of the natives, but gradually turned the Indians to the realization of the advantages of living in a Christian mission over the usual way of life (for example: diocesan Juan Montero in 1566).<sup>31</sup>

4) But *the greatest achievement* in Christianization was achieved by those monks who were able to establish Christian missions by inviting local Caciques and their families to live in such missions, thereby strengthening them and their power and setting an example to the rest of the local population.

5) *The behavioral positions* of the preaching clergy were often an important point in the perception of Christian teaching by aborigines. However, the most important thing was the monks' intolerance of other beliefs and their attitude to places of religious and folk festivals as satanic. This led to rapid conflicts between the priests and the locals. This was because the monks did not study deeply the beliefs of the Indians because of the perception of their culture as primitive (for example: the period of the Jesuit Order in Florida between 1566 and 1572).

If we take a closer look at the linguistic problem, we will be able to identify an important factor determining the main tools on which the whole complex of medieval science was built – rationality, teleology, moral symbolism, deduction, and scholasticism. These simply could not be used because of linguistic misunderstanding due to the sheer absence of words which to connect the aborigines and the monks. The aborigines lacked the concepts used by the monks educated in monasteries and universities in Europe. The clergy had to “go down a few steps” to convey the teachings of Christ to the aborigines living a simple life so that they could be understood. Instead of this, they tried to raise Indians to their scholastic level – a difficult and sometimes impossible task.

*The linguistic problem* was the main cause because of which even the best possible intentions of the missionaries were destroyed. Due to the lack of knowledge and to the short time to learn the language, the basics of the communicative function were annihilated. Moreover, even if the communicative function could still be at times faintly present and allow a

minor degree of communication between aborigines and priests, other major problems still occurred:

1) *The meaning-forming function* as the basis of the form of expression of thoughts was not involved due to the lack of appropriate words.

2) *The epistemological function* was also not involved, as the acquisition and transfer of new knowledge was minimal due to the lack of appropriate words.

3) *The socio-cultural function* of the transfer of socio-cultural experience between aborigines and missionaries was also blocked.

When language problems arose between the natives and the missionaries, the argument expressed in language was always lost, and also its orientation lost its meaning. Its sociality was wrongly involved, namely the assumption that the addressee was at the same stage of development as the missionaries. Therefore, the understanding of the basics of religion simply did not initially fit into the framework of a simple linguistic understanding between the parties.

An important point is also that the problem of argumentation of Christ's teaching was only oral and almost never visual, which would have been more consistent with the thinking of the Indians. The Indians repeated the rituals of the Catholic Church without understanding their essence.

Different Christian Orders did not use each other's experience during the Christianization of Aborigines and relied solely on logical reasoning, ignoring completely the empirical experience of previous contacts of aborigines with the Europeans. This explains the reasons for the uprisings in the West Indies and Florida, when the locals expelled the missionaries. But the experience of such uprisings of aborigines in the past was not taken into account.<sup>32</sup>

## Results and conclusion

Thus, in conclusion, we would like to summarize our thesis and draw some important conclusions regarding the problems in the approach of the Christianization of Spanish Florida from the 16th century to the 18th century. First, the problems with the *narrative method*: we take this method as the basis on which the erroneous foundation of the general picture of the Christianization of Florida is built. Second, the *historical method*: when considering the Christianization of Spanish Florida, we adopted it as a method that helped us divide the narrative of Christianization into large stages and phases. Third, the *comparative method*: we have shown that the problem of the comparison between the Christianization of Florida and the simultaneous Christianization of the territories of modern Mexico and California is significant and should not be compared to and measured by the success or failure of Christianization because of the huge differences in circumstances, approaches, conditions, and mentalities between tribes. Considering the *prospects of working with primary sources*, we understand that the documents of the time of Christianization are quite detailed and complete thanks to the Spanish bureaucratic machine, but we do not have written



data generated by the local population. European sources seem nevertheless to be sufficient enough sometimes in order to consider the path of the Christianization process. It is also necessary to solve the *problem of understanding what is Spanish Florida* both *de jure* and *de facto*. We believe that it is necessary (for the *de jure* point of view) to take into account its maximum territory. The *typological method* led us to the formula of interaction between aborigines and Spaniards, which we have articulated<sup>23</sup> in our 2019 article and presented in the table at its end (Table 1). In solving the *problem of the linguistic approach* between missionaries and Aborigines, we came to interesting conclusions that allowed us to understand the failures in the Christianization of Florida and better show the progress of this process. Thus, solving the problems of the methodology of the study of Christianization in the 16th century, we came to the representation and construction of a cyclical system of

*periods of Christianization of Florida in four stages:*

1) The first stage is that of the discovery of Florida and of the Spaniards' attempts to settle in it, as well as of the efforts made by the Dominican Order to christianize the aborigines in 1513-1549 and 1558-1561. 2) The second stage is that of the attempts made by the French Huguenots to establish their settlements in Florida and preach Protestantism among the local population in 1562-1565. 3) The third stage is that of the successful establishment of Spanish settlements in Florida by the Governor of Spanish Florida Menendez and of the Christianization of the aborigines by the Jesuit Order of 1566-1571. 4) The fourth stage is that of the beginning and further successful Christianization of the aborigines and the establishment of missions by the Franciscan Order in coastal and mainland Spanish Florida after 1587 and until the 18th century.

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$A \times (D + E) + B + C = \Sigma,$ <p>The values A, B, C, D, E can be either "0" or "1".</p>
<p>A - the conclusion of a military agreement with the leader of the tribe for military assistance from the Europeans in the event of his war with other tribes;</p>
<p>B - the growth of prestige and strengthening of one's power among fellow tribesmen (signs of attention and respect from the Europeans: expensive gifts, observance of rituals, and the ceremony of greeting the leader etc.);</p>
<p>C - the ability to exchange for new goods in order to get an impetus in the development of your society with new iron tools and weapons (that is, obtaining by exchange of iron tools for cultivating the land, using a wheel unknown to the natives for movement, iron axes, swords, knives, etc.);</p>

