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plural marriage, as the marker of their difference and inferiority. Gender and race/racism were mutually constitutive in white women's understandings of themselves and those they encountered in the West. Riley's careful attention to the issues of power at work in particular interactions and the larger project of America's westward expansion offers an important analytical framework for the material presented in the rest of the book.

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Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions. By James A. Sandos. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004. 272 pages. \$35.00 cloth.

One can sympathize with historian James A. Sandos's honorable impulse to launch his ambitious overview of the California mission system, which consisted of twenty-one missions built and operated from 1769 to 1836, upon a level playing field. This subject may be described more aptly as a minefield that, lamentably, has intimidated most contemporary historians so much that it is still astonishingly underwritten. Yet Sandos gamely tries to steer a balanced course between what his colleague David Weber has termed "Christophilic Triumphalist" and "Christophobic Nihilist" perspectives. In the former view (still dominating travelogues on California public television), Franciscans are evoked as selfless guides to submissive, even grateful, pagans in romantic settings, helping them transit into the coming world of capitalist labor and enlightened "civilization." In the latter opinion, missions are evoked as concentration camps in Spain's genocidal campaign to exploit, fragment, and ultimately wipe out traditional California Indian societies.

Through ten chapters Sandos tries to avoid taking sides, remaining more concerned with analytically cracking the mission system open through such themes as comparative worldviews (his chapters on "Indians at Contact" and "Serra and Franciscan Evangelization" nicely parallel each other), passive resistance by Indians to forced acculturation, the importance of the Catholic catechism and confessional as conscious devices to undermine Indian culture, the targeted assault on the traditional status of Indian women, a fresh interpretation of the role of venereal disease (often transmitted, Sandos suggests, through the traditional practice of tattooing) in the missions' skyrocketing mortality rate, a fascinating discussion on the relative success of choir participation as a conversion strategy, and a review of the still little-known frequency of armed Indian rebellions—nearly a dozen from 1769 through 1829—that bedeviled missionization from San Diego to San Luis Obispo.

Guided by what he calls a "theohistorical" approach that benefits from training in ethnohistory and religious studies, Sandos strives to provide "a balanced picture of both sides of the frontier of Indian-Spanish contact" by juggling Spanish and Indian historical behaviors in the light of their respective cosmologies and religious values. Opening with the Spanish side to the story,

he reminds us that the system's architect, Junipero Serra, was a walking anachronism. Rather than embodying the ideology of his own time, the Enlightenment, and its pragmatic, militaristic approach to handling Indians, the man was a throwback to its medieval antithesis, the sixteenth-century Counter-Reformation with its fervent piety and ecstatic mysticism. In a sense his was an imported revitalization movement that, ironically, would spark revitalizing responses among some Southern California Indian prophets.

This contrast would cause friction between the missions' way of the cross and their zeal to create little heavens on earth, isolating Indians from the corruption and exploitation of the Spanish colonies and the heavy-handed approach of the sword issuing from the presidios (adjoining military forts). Serving the desires of colonial authorities and the Crown, Spanish soldiers served corporeal punishment on runaway Indians and lapsed converts, and enforced the assimilation of Native converts into a new serfdom that Serra saw as their fall from grace. Articulating these accelerating tensions between Father Serra's visionary program and the colonial secular authority is one of the book's major achievements.

At the same time, Sandos attempts to restore agency to Indian responses to missionization, for instance, decoding the willingness of the female shaman rebel, Toypurina, to accept baptism as an expression of "protective ingratiating" in which one mollifies one's superiors in order to avoid further social control, provides cover for insubordinate strategies (the types of passive obstructionism that historian James Scott has termed "hidden transcripts"), and buys time for more defiant revitalizing uprisings.

But ultimately, Sandos's attempt at evenhandedness seems an uphill battle. For how can one ignore the fact that no Indians set sail for Spain to convert forcibly her subjects to their pantheistic belief systems and modes of social organization? The instigations and usurpations narrated by Sandos arrived the other way and without invitation. With its superior weaponry, nationalistic zeal, and religious crusade, Spain came to acquire the landscapes and rip apart the lives of an estimated 65,000 California Natives who lived between San Francisco and San Diego. So there was never a level field or much hope for the multiple, nonunited hunting-and-gathering Southern California Indian tribes. In terms of preserving social integrity, territorial autonomy, physical well-being, and religious independence, they faced overwhelming odds (which made their innovative forms of resistance and present survival all the more impressive).

For other investigators, however, Sandos's effort at a "top-down" approach to revising a history of this volatile period offers an inspiring overture, which one hopes will become increasingly nuanced through findings derived from, among other cutting-edge approaches, the painstaking "bottom-up" manipulations of mission records of the sort pioneered by anthropological archivist Randall Milliken. Sandos is to be congratulated for providing an accessible introduction to these new scholarly pathways across this fraught historical ground.

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