

## *Images and Notes Concerning the Traditional Material Culture of the Easter Ceremony in Northern Sinaloa*

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One of the better known aspects of traditional native ceremonialism in northwestern Mexico is the Easter ceremony of the Yaqui and Mayo Indians. These culturally and linguistically related peoples, collectively termed Cáhítans or Cáhítan Speakers by earlier scholars, occupy the coastal plain from the Río Ocoroni in Sinaloa northwards to the Río Yaqui in Sonora, with additional Yaqui colonies in Hermosillo, Sonora, and in and near both Guadalupe, and Tucson, Arizona. Each year at the beginning of Lent, scores of native communities commence a complex reenactment of the Passion of Jesus Christ, which was introduced to their ancestors by Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and later blended in a complex fashion with native beliefs and practices.

Although similar Lenten and Easter ceremonies are or have been carried on until recently by Tarahumaras, Pimas Bajos, Opata descendants, and Tohono O'odham, the Yaqui and Mayo ceremonies are the best known and most copiously described in both the popular and scientific literature (see, for example, Painter 1983, 1986; Spicer 1984; Crumrine 1977). This photo essay adds images and details to the public record of the Easter ceremonies of the southernmost group of these peoples, the Mayos of northern Sinaloa.

These Mayos have been visited by anthropologists less than have the Sonoran Mayos and the Yaquis of Sonora and Arizona. Beals (1945) mentions them, of course, and in his pioneer report states the need for a thorough study of a community such as Capomos, a village situated a few miles from the colonial center of El Fuerte. Later work in the area, however, has tended to concentrate on problems of social and economic change (Erasmus 1961).

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### *THE PROJECT*

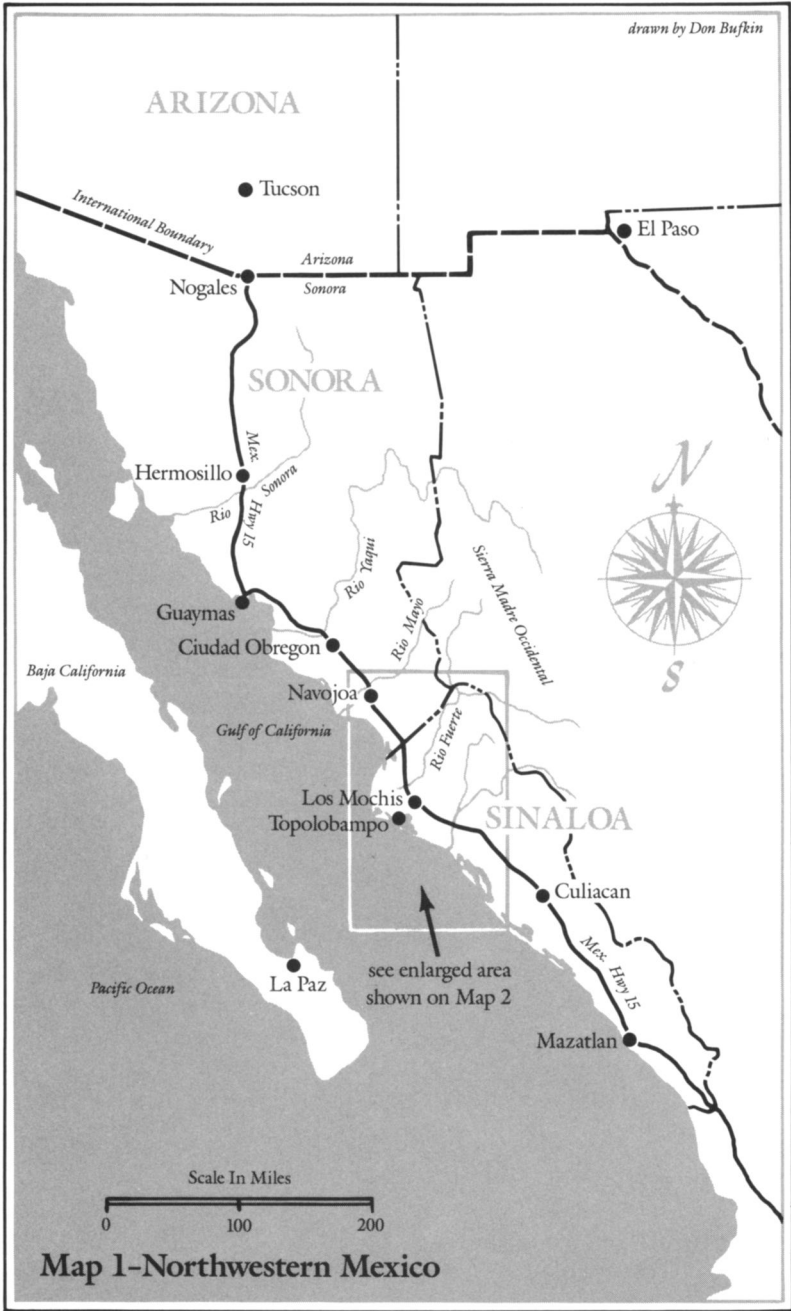
During the period from 1965 to 1970 I spent several months documenting the folk life of northern Sinaloa and southern Sonora, roughly from the Río Mayo south to the Río Mocorito. I visited blacksmiths, potters, and saddle makers (Brugge and Griffith 1977; Weakly and Griffith n.d.; Griffith 1974). I also attended and documented traditional religious fiestas, both Indian and mestizo (Griffith 1969, 1972, 1988; Griffith and Molina 1980).

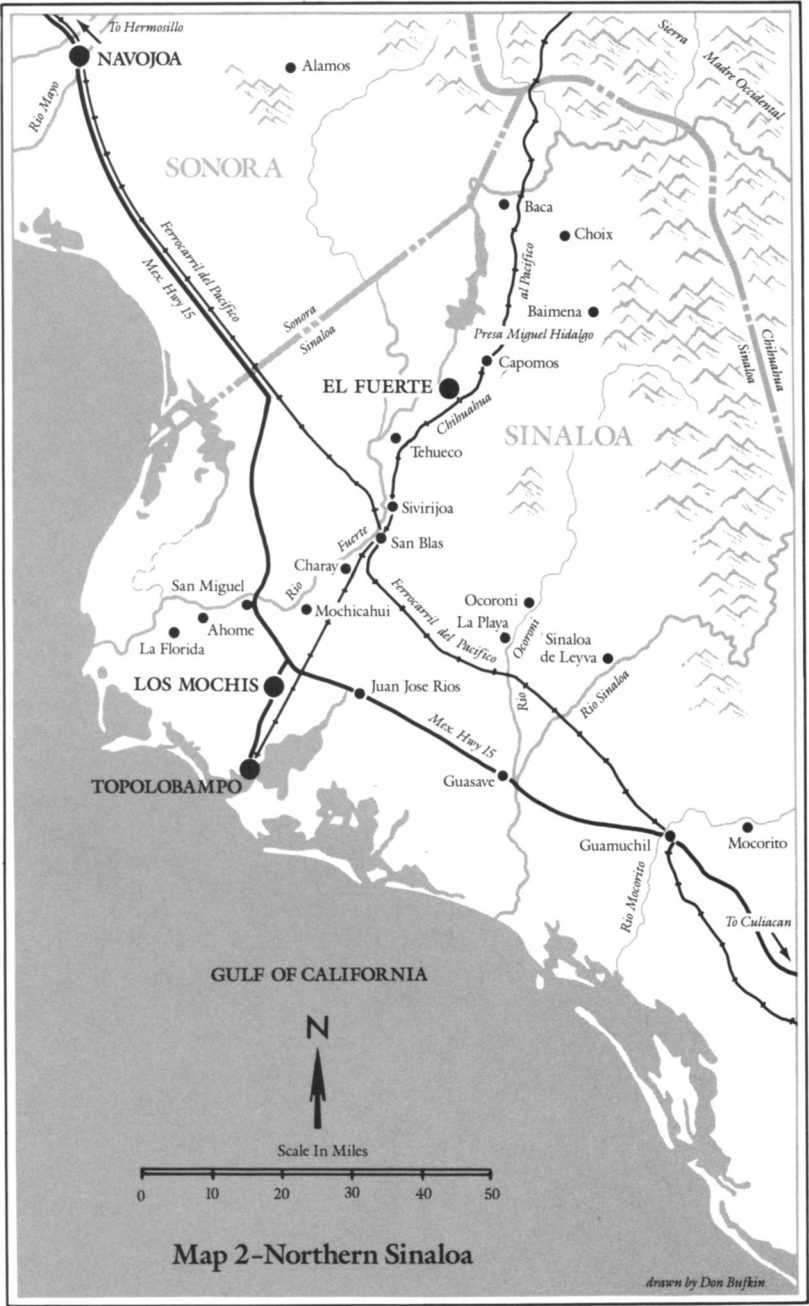
My approach was basically a survey. Based in Navojoa or Los Mochis for the most part, I would take day trips to various villages. I did little in-depth interviewing, but rather concentrated on covering a good deal of ground. I documented whatever I saw in notes as well as color slides and black-and-white photographs. Whenever possible, I returned and sought further information, using my prints as the basis for interviews and discussion. I also was concerned with making study and display collections; these are deposited in the Arizona State Museum in Tucson and the Taylor Museum of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center.

The photographs reproduced here were taken between March 1967 and March 1970. My purpose in publishing them is twofold: to make available a set of images of Sinaloa Mayo ceremonialism and to provide a framework upon which to hang some observations concerning the ceremonialism that might be of use to other scholars. This is by no means an analytical paper; rather it presents data leading towards a possible understanding of traditional native culture in northern Sinaloa. I have selected images that seem to be both evocative of the various subjects and occasions and starting points for the presentation of additional data. In some cases I have deliberately moved beyond the actual activities of the ceremonies to suggest some of the breadth of knowledge and understanding that is necessary to an intelligent treatment of these complex rituals.

The accompanying texts are more than captions; they bring together data from field observations that I consider to be both interesting and potentially useful to other students of traditional ceremonial life in northwestern Mexico. Some of the images and observations might be duplicable today; many could not due to the profound changes that were and still are taking place in the region.

This paper is not an introduction to the Easter ceremony of the Yaquis and Mayos. Readers who desire to refresh their knowledge on





the general shape of the ceremonies are referred to Painter (1983) and other references listed at the end of this article.

One comment should be made concerning the terminology used in this article. When I was doing my fieldwork in northern Sinaloa, the term I most frequently heard applied to the masked impersonators of those who persecuted and crucified Christ was *judíos* or "Jews." Another Spanish term in common use all over Sonora was *fariseo*, "Pharisee." Both these terms, especially the former, reflect the anti-Semitic mind set of many of the missionaries who introduced Christianity into the New World from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. These attitudes were shared by many, if not most, contemporary European Christians. However, I am not aware that any of the villagers whom I visited made any connection between the evil, masked personages they called "judíos" and any living group of people. The language of anti-Semitism, which survives to this day in many Indian communities, seems to be just that—a set of conventional terms. While fully aware that the use of these terms may well give offense to some readers, I feel strongly that not using them would be an inexcusable tampering with fact (see also Esser 1988, editor's note on p. 63).

### A FEW CONCLUSIONS

As I visited and documented processions, fiestas, and ceremonial art and craft forms, it became obvious to me that I was documenting an important living aspect of the local native culture. Things were changing, to be sure. Capomos, for instance, had recently revived its Easter ceremony after a lapse of some years, and I was told in several communities that the ceremonies were not as they once had been. While many participants took part as the result of a sacred vow, regarding their activity as a form of penance, a group of young men in Mochicahui informed me that they assumed their roles as *judíos* for the fun of it—surely a sign of change and secularization. But my overall impression was that a lot of people were putting considerable energy into maintaining the ceremonies, which served as foci for a wide range of traditional arts, crafts, and activities, including music, dance, embroidery, making pottery and fireworks, and oratory.

Furthermore, the ceremonies I observed and was told about were basically the same, and were very similar to those I had seen or learned

about in Mayo and Yaqui communities in Sonora and Arizona. Within this sameness, however, there seems to be room for almost infinite variations in masks, costuming, activities, and other details. The Easter ceremonies at Capomos, La Florida, and La Playa may be “the same,” but each community does them differently.

In one instance these village variations take on an intriguing pattern. Hide masks made in villages upriver from Charay—Capomos and Baca, for instance—differ in consistent ways from those made in such downriver villages as San Miguel and La Florida. These variations are discussed in some detail in the captions. This upriver/downriver distinction may possibly have echoes in other details of costume and in pascola masks and costumes—I simply have not seen enough to be sure. One of the projects I had envisioned before my research interests were directed to Arizona involved taking a closer look at these possible patterns.

These patterns might have significance for the ethnohistorian. Little recent work has been done on the history (or prehistory, for that matter) of the native peoples of northern Sinaloa. According to Sauer (1935:18), the lowland portion of the Río Fuerte was divided almost equally among three groups at the time of Spanish contact. These were the Sinaloas upriver from El Fuerte, the Tehuecos in the midriver section, and the Zuaque or Suaque near the mouth of the river. All spoke the same language as the Mayos and Yaquis further north. Along the Río Ocoroni, apparently in the general area of the modern village of La Playa, the Ocoroni were said by some to speak a distinct language (Sauer 1934:26). Today, the Indians of this entire region are called “Mayos.” Is the stylistic division of masks that I have labeled upriver and downriver in some way reflective of older cultural divisions along the Río Fuerte? There simply is no way of telling without further research.

In fact, many more questions were raised in my Sinaloa fieldwork than were answered. These questions are often specific and might have been answered had I been able to return to the villages I had visited armed with photographs for discussion. Some, such as the identification and significance of the objects attached to the statue of *El Nazareno* in the village of La Florida (Plate 12), may yet find answers. The answers to others may not be so easy to come by twenty years later.

Of perhaps greater importance than these sorts of details are a few general topics that piqued—and still pique—my interest. They in-

clude the roles played by the Holy Cross in the belief and ritual systems of villages such as Capomos and La Playa and the fascinating issue, alluded to in the captions to Plates 9 and 10, of the continuing manufacture and use of ceramic effigies and effigy vessels in some villages. In the latter case, the possibility of some sort of continuum with the greater Mesoamerican and Southwestern prehistoric effigy traditions immediately springs to my mind. The reader may well fasten upon other questions; these are the ones which most fascinate me.

But for the moment they must remain just that—tantalizing glimpses of possibilities and potential avenues for further inquiry. The field project of which they were the partial result has been in abeyance following a 1968 accident. My work since then increasingly has been focused on southern Arizona, and I do not see any real possibility of returning to work in northern Sinaloa. It is time for some of the data I collected then to be made available to other scholars.

A final word must be spoken in deep gratitude to all the *Sinaloenses*, Indian and mestizo, who graciously accepted me in their homes, workshops, churches, and ceremonial ramadas. They permitted me to document, albeit in an incomplete fashion, a few of the countless ways in which humans in their area create beauty and keep faith with their heritage. My debt to them is great.

### THE PHOTOGRAPHS

[1] Judío from San Miguel Zapotitlan gathering *limosnas* (Spanish “alms”) at the trailer park near Topolobampo, March 1967. The Spanish word commonly used in most northern Sinaloa communities for the masked characters is judío; elsewhere they are called *fari-seos* or *chapayekas* (Yaqui “long-nosed ones”). If the casual traveler in the area is made conscious of the Easter ceremony at all, it is through the Lenten activities of the judíos, who leave their villages and travel in small, fully costumed groups through the surrounding countryside gathering limosnas for the support of the Easter fiesta. They can be seen walking along roads and visiting villages and city markets, always in groups of three or more.

A typical group includes one judío with an alms box that usually contains a crucifix to indicate the sacred purpose of the expedition. Another carries a small drum and a third, gourd rattles. Any other

judíos in the group are armed with wooden lances and machetes. The leader often wears his mask tilted up on the back of his head. He is often called the *chicotero* from the *chicote* (Sp. “whip”) which he carries as a badge of office.

After a contribution has been collected, the *tambolero* (Sp. “drummer”) plays while the others dance. The judío carrying the gourd rattles frequently puts on an especially vigorous performance. He is called a *venado* (Sp. “deer”) in some villages, and his dance seems to be based on the local version of the Mayo/Yaqui deer dance. In La Florida, the venado sometimes wears a stuffed deer head atop his case mask; in Capomos in 1968 his mask was of deer hide.

This judío has come with a group from the village of San Miguel, located where Highway 15 crosses the Río Fuerte, to the fishing village of Topolobampo, a distance of perhaps 50 miles. He was photographed while soliciting alms from the small colony of North Americans who were camped in trailers and pickups on a nearby gravel spit. Although not many of the Americans I spoke with seemed to understand the precise nature of the judío activities, they felt that they were somehow involved with religious observances. According to local belief, this had not always been the case. A story told and accepted as true by Mexicans and Indians in the mid-sixties tells of an older North American couple who had parked their car by the side of the highway and were taking a short rest. They awoke to discover the car surrounded by masked judíos bearing drums and rattles and armed with bows and arrows. Thinking themselves attacked by hostile Indians, the man took out a gun and shot and killed one of the judíos.

Although I have made no attempt to document this local legend, I observed a similar but less tragic misunderstanding in 1967, when clouds of smoke from burning fields of sugar cane could be seen from the informal trailer camp near Topolobampo. A rumor flew through the camp that a revolution had started and that “they were burning the villages,” and several cars and trailers left for the border.

This judío is wearing the usual costume of the Río Fuerte. The strings of *ténovaris* (the Hispanicized Mayo word for the cocoon rattles) around his lower legs are quite long. A sash takes the place of the more common cane rattle belt; he wears a blanket around his waist and upper body. His white cape or *sábana* (Sp. “sheet”) is embroidered with flowers. Sometimes these capes can bear sexual mottoes as well; one San Miguel judío had DIOS PRIMERO/DESPUES

TU ("God first/You're next") on the back of his sábana, while another sported a cutout magazine illustration of a teenaged girl in a bikini along with the motto QUINCEAÑERA (the coming-out party traditionally given for Mexican girls when they reach the age of fifteen).

In his hand the judío carries a cardboard box containing a crucifix and a bunch of bougainvillea blossoms. Alms are placed in this box and, after living expenses for the expedition are extracted, the remainder is given over to the fiesta sponsors. At the fiesta, which starts around noon on Holy Saturday, these alms go towards paying for special food for the participants and other necessary expenses.

The mask is typical of those made on the lower Río Fuerte in that it is of goat hide (others are made of deer or javelina) with a long nose and short, pointed horns, also of hide. The mask is traditionally formed from one piece of hide, cut with the hairs in the back section sticking upwards so as to appear like an angry or frightened animal. Goatskin masks on the lower Río Fuerte tend to have long hair; up-river the hair is often shorter. The mask is typical specifically of those made in San Miguel in that only a very small area around the eyes and mouth is scraped bare. This area is usually painted red or green.



[2] Three judíos after a *konti* (Mayo "procession"), La Florida, 1968. These judíos were photographed following a regular Friday afternoon Lenten konti, in which sacred images are removed from the church and carried around the Stations of the Cross to the accompaniment of prayers and singing. The judíos accompany the processions, searching for *El Señor* (God) and mocking many of the people and activities involved.

These judíos have stayed on after the konti and are at least partly reacting to my presence as a visitor and photographer. The individual on the right is playing a four-stringed violin made from a length of *carrizo* or native cane and equipped with a regular violin bridge. He is using a commercial bow to play the old Protestant hymn "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder." When I asked whether he had learned the tune from *las aleluyas* (Sp. slang for Protestants) he indicated with exaggerated gestures that he was an "aleluya" himself!

The mask of the second judío from the right is typical of the La Florida village style, with its fine line decoration on the scraped portions of the hide. Masks are made by individual judíos, often in

group sessions at the beginning of their Lenten obligations. This can lead to strong village styles within the larger regional patterns already mentioned. Thus these are not only typical downriver Río Fuerte masks; they are La Florida masks.



[3] Three judíos from Baca in the Los Mochis market, 14 March 1968. These judíos have come on a limosna-gathering trip all the way from the town of Baca, above the lake formed in the Río Fuerte valley by the Hidalgo Dam. There were seven judíos altogether; I photographed only three of them. Their costumes are typical of those used in such upper Río Fuerte villages as Baca, Sivirioja, Tehueco, Baimena and Capomos. Their sábanas, if they wear any, are often machine-made shawls or towels, lacking the elaborate embroidery I noted in the downriver communities. Their masks are distinctive as well. Instead of long-haired goat or javelina hides with long noses attached, these masks are made from the hides of medium- or short-haired goats, with the nose indicated by clipping the hair. The ears and horns being made from one piece of leather is also typical of upriver masks.

The division between the upriver and downriver styles seems to occur at the village of Charay. Charay has its own unique mask style as well; in this village one often sees hide masks with carved wooden noses and lips attached (Griffith 1983: fig. 9; Fontana et al. 1977: fig. on p. 15). The upriver and downriver styles could be seen together in the late 1960s at the then recently established *ejido* of Juan José Rios, located south of Los Mochis on Highway 15. This ejido was formed in the early 1960s of two groups of people. One consisted of villagers who had been displaced when their upriver village of Toro was inundated by the waters of the lake behind the recently constructed Hidalgo Dam. The other group of *ejiditarios* was from the coastal area south of Topolobampo. At Friday Lenten kontis two groups of judíos were in evidence, each one maintaining the mask and costume style of its region of origin.

The flat drum with its snare string is typical of the drums made and used in Baca. Elsewhere drums may be flat as are pascolla drums or deep as are old-fashioned military drums. Only in Baca is the typical judío drum two or more feet wide and equipped with a snare string bearing a few glass beads. These drums are very similar to

those used by Tarahumara fariseos in the mountains upstream from Baca and were probably influenced by that tribe. I have been told that Tarahumara pascolas and musicians attend Baca's big San Miguel fiesta on 28 September, another evidence of ceremonial contact between the two communities.

The legend on the drum is identificatory: PUEBLO DE VACA CHOIX, SIN. Choix is the *municipio* in which Baca is located; "Vaca" is a predictable alternate spelling for Baca. In addition to village identifications, judío drums may bear drawings of flowers, women, or other motifs. Another member of this group carried a drum inscribed with YO BUSCO UNA NOVIA Y DIGO QUE VENGO DEL PUEBLO DE BACA, CHOIX, SIN. ("I'm looking for a sweetheart and I say that I come from the village of Baca, Choix, Sinaloa.") One drum I collected in Baca bore the Mexican Mennen's Baby Powder logo of a baby's head coming out of a rose, a sucking bitch or she-wolf, and some butterflies, in addition to a small cluster of flowers.

In this photograph the drummer is on the right. To the far left is the dancer or venado. His rattles are made from beer cans. The judío in the center carries a short whip. Similar whips, or quirts, were carried by at least five of the seven members of this group, including the drummer in the photograph. None of the judíos wears an embroidered sábana of the sort encountered in downriver villages.

Baca judíos often travel quite far afield in search of alms. In addition to these in Los Mochis, some three or four hours from Baca by bus or truck, I also have seen Baca judíos in the colonial mining town of Alamos, Sonora, several hours to the north of their village over rocky dirt roads.



[4] Konti at Mochicahui, 10 March 1967. This photo shows judíos running from the church at Mochicahui on their way around the Stations of the Cross. After completing their run, they reenter the church, only to emerge again accompanying a procession. Their dress is typical of this downriver village: sandals, ténovaris, bare legs, rattle belts, blankets, sábanas, and masks with wooden faces inserted in the hide cases. Many of the wooden face inserts are carved by a part-time specialist at Mochicahui named Felipe Ramos. Ramos is not an Indian, nor does he participate in traditional Indian ceremonies. In addition to supplying insert masks and other paraphernalia

to local judíos, he carves figurines of native ceremonialists for sale outside his village community.

The Mochicahui insert masks are treated in greater detail elsewhere (Griffith 1967b). Ramos is not the only carver to make them, although I found his easily recognizable work in other downriver villages. Many individuals make their own wooden inserts, which can range from human and animal faces fully as naturalistic as Ramos's work to highly stylized, crudely fashioned faces. A light, soft wood such as *chilicote* usually is preferred for these inserts. During the 1960s I also observed commercially made papier mâché and rubber face masks inserted into hide cases.

It is not clear how long this tradition of wooden inserts has been going on in Mochicahui. In a 1965 interview, Ramos claimed to have begun it a few years previously. A photograph published in 1944 (Ibarra 1944:364), however, shows a row of judíos outside the old adobe church at Mochicahui. Although the quality of the reproduction is extremely poor, two or three of the judíos appear to be wearing insert masks.

The increasing popularity of insert masks was having an interesting effect on Sinaloa judío mask styles at the time of my visits. Whereas the all-hide masks were made by groups of men consulting together and followed regional and local styles, the insert masks have introduced a strong individual element into the picture. An observer can identify a mask by Felipe Ramos no matter in what village it may be worn. The long-term effects of this innovation remain to be seen.



[5] Konti at Sivirijoa, 8 March 1968. The image of Our Lady of Sorrows has been taken out of the small village chapel and is being carried around the Stations of the Cross. Apparently there were insufficient men to carry the four poles supporting the canopy over the statue's head, so the near pole is being carried by a judío. I was told earlier that the canopy represents the sky above the Virgin.

Also in the procession was a crucifix carried by two young girls. Preceded by drumming judíos and flanked by marching judíos, the procession moved around the Stations of the Cross. The flanking judíos held a horizontal barrier of wooden spears along the sides of the procession. All the judíos in this photograph have masks of the upriver style except the one visible in the left center background. He

wears a carved wooden mask set in a helmet of synthetic wool. The insert depicts a Chinese man, with a long, drooping, braided mustache.



[6] Good Friday at Capomos; judíos uprooting a house cross, 12 April 1968. The village of Capomos is a few miles southwest of El Fuerte. It seems never to have had a colonial church, but its predominantly Indian population erects a large ramada each year as a focal point for the Lenten and Easter ceremonies.

Starting early on Good Friday morning, the judíos formed into two bands and proceeded to visit each household that maintained a house cross gathering limosnas. They quested up to the cross as though tracking it, and with their wooden spears proceeded to push aside the green branches with which it usually was covered. While the spear carriers grubbed away at the base of the cross, the leader slipped his whip around the “neck” of the cross. When the base was sufficiently loosened, he pulled up the cross. To do this, he faced away from the cross and reached behind his back. The uprooted cross would sometimes be placed on a board or bench that had been left by the householders for that purpose. The cross in this photo has been laid on the ground.

Once the cross was down, the judíos would dance around it while the drummer played his instrument. The local Spanish word for this activity is *movimiento* (“movement”). In this photograph, the tambolero (“drummer”) is on the left, with the venado (“deer”) behind him, just to the right. The man wearing a hat in the right background is the *mandón* (Sp. “commander”)—the official sponsor of the ceremony. Attached to his hat is the government permit to hold a religious procession—a permit that had to be obtained in nearby El Fuerte. On Good Friday morning he was engaged in collecting contributions of food from the householders.

The judíos in each village are carefully ranked. In Capomos the man in charge is the *joyero mayor* (Sp. “senior jeweler,” a phrase I do not understand). His two assistants are the *capitan* (Sp. “captain”) and the *guarda de espaldas* (Sp. “bodyguard,” literally “shoulder watcher”). Then there are the chicoteros, the tamboleros, and the venados. All other judíos are *soldados rasos* (Sp. “buck privates”). All the names of offices I was given were in Spanish. When there is more than one person in a given office, they are ranked within that office, using terms such as *mayor*, *segundo*, etc. All the offices except that of

chicotero are filled in a meeting held on the first Friday of Lent. The offices are assigned on the basis of skill, as in the case of venado and tambolero, or knowledge of the ritual, as in the case of joyero mayor. At the same meeting the judíos make their masks.

The office of mandón seems not to involve any monetary expenses; these are shouldered by the chicotero. The 1968 chicotero, from whom this information came, told me that the year's ceremony had cost him five hundred pesos, not counting food expenses. (The peso at that time stood at 12.5 to the dollar.) Payments were mentioned for pascolas, musicians, and the *maestro*, or lay prayer leader.



[7] Carrying the Santa Cruz down to the village of Capomos, Good Friday, 12 April 1968. Around midday, after all the house crosses had been uprooted, the judíos, who had been operating in two groups, joined forces at the church ramada. They then marched up a low hill on the eastern edge of town called *Kao Ora* (Mayo "Old Hill"). Its name in Spanish is *La Loma de la Santa Cruz* ("The Hill of the Holy Cross"). Here a three-foot cross stands all year round tied to two uprights. The judíos marched up to the cross and two of their number (the joyero mayor and one other) "shot" it with rockets tied to the end of a BB gun and a wooden machete. The cross was then lowered by means of a whip around its throat onto a cradle of spears and carried downhill to a house on the outskirts of the village. Here it was laid on a low bed and covered with black and white cloths, after an impassioned-sounding speech in Mayo from an older woman.

The cross then was carried around the Stations of the Cross, still on its bier, and placed in the entrance of the church ramada. From then until after the Gloria on Holy Saturday it was guarded by two judíos. Shortly afterwards, Christ, represented by a small crucifix, also was "shot," with a good deal less dramatic emphasis being placed on the deed and its aftermath.

In this photograph, the joyero mayor is to the left, carrying his BB gun. The other judíos are proceeding slowly down the hill, carrying the Santa Cruz on their spears. The judío on the left-hand side with the long nose and ears is a venado; the judío in the rear has his whip wrapped around the throat of the cross. The man in the hat immediately to his left is the mandón. The government permit to hold a religious procession is visible in his hat.



[8] Easter Sunday altar in Capomos, 29 March 1970. The altar in the ramada that serves this community as a church during Holy Week has been decorated with paper flowers. Hanging in front of the altar are the banners used in processions; the one in the center is inscribed with the name of the village patron, San Antonio. The decorated arch behind the altar will be carried in the processions that take the saints back to the houses where they regularly “live” later on Sunday afternoon. The masses of flowers on the altar conceal small carrying boxes with hinged fronts. These contain the image of San Antonio and a small crucifix that was used to represent Jesus during the previous week’s dramatic enactments. The object standing to the right of the altar is the Santa Cruz from Kao Ora. It has been taken up from its bier and dressed in a white *hábito* (Sp. “habit”) and a straw hat. Hábito and hat have been covered with paper flowers and ribbons.

The role played by flowers in Mayo and Yaqui religious symbolism is too complex to treat in detail here. Spicer (1980:86–88) discusses flower symbolism among the Yaquis, and both Painter (1983; 1986) and Crumrine (1964; 1977) add details in their respective works. Suffice it to say that in the religious importance of flowers Christian and native traditions have blended to create a new set of meanings.

This is not the only anthropomorphic cross I have observed in northern Sinaloa. At the village of La Playa on the Río Ocoroni I was puzzled by two large statues that were carried in a Friday afternoon konti. They were dressed in white habits and hooded but their faces seemed metallic and featureless. I discovered in conversation that they were holy crosses equipped with “heads” that appeared to have been made of gold foil. The La Playa chapel is dedicated to the Santa Cruz, and the two large crosses in it are called the Cruz Yo’owe (Sp. “cross”; Mayo “senior”—“older cross”) and the Cruz Segundo (Sp. “second cross”). For a discussion of the meanings of the Holy Cross among the Sonoran Mayo see Crumrine (1964; 1977).



[9] Cross shrine near Capomos, 9 December 1968. The Lenten and Easter ceremonies are part of a larger annual ceremonial cycle. They and the beliefs that underlie them can be understood only in the context of the rest of the belief system and the ceremonial culture

of the people whose property they are. The Holy Cross seems of great importance in Capomos, as it doubtless is in La Playa and other villages in which I did not have the opportunity for long conversations. My informant remarked when we visited this and similar shrines that the *judíos* did not take up these crosses on Good Friday. When I asked why not, he replied that they were not permitted to do so.

This site is on the old trail from Capomos to El Fuerte. It is called in Mayo *kurusim habbukawi*, a phrase that my informant translated for me into Spanish as, “Quiere decir que donde están paradas las crucecitas.” (“It means where the little crosses are standing.”) It was one of five cross shrines outside the village; the others were at *rosario kawiwi* (“*cerro del rosario*” or “little hill of the rosary”—the site of two cross shrines), *kurus mukawi* (“*el cerro del tecolote*” or “the hill of the owl”—the informant left out the word *kurus*, or “cross,” in his translation), and *kurus tawekawi* (“*donde esta la Santa Cruz de las higueras*” or “where the Holy Cross of the fig trees is located”). These crosses are believed to be at places where El Señor—God—left his footprints in the rock while walking around, and delineating, the circumference of the village. One location shows what appear to be large and small footprints. I was told that at that place, El Señor was accompanied by *El Niño Dios*—the Christ Child.

On 3 May, the Day of the Finding of the Holy Cross in the Roman Catholic calendar, the cross that usually stands on Kao Ora is removed and carried in procession to all five of these sites. This procession, which is supposed to encircle the village, is called a *konti*. The word, which also is used for the Lenten processions that follow the Stations of the Cross (and incidentally encircle the church), means “going around” or “encircling” (Spicer 1954:139).

Another use of this particular cross shrine is as a stopping place and devotional spot for people who follow the old trail to El Fuerte, by the side of which the shrine stands. Capomos is a pottery-making village, and in former years the *ollernas* (“female potters”) would pause here while taking their burro loads of pottery to town. They would rest, pray, and leave a miniature vessel or a ceramic figurine as an offering for the Holy Cross. By the late 1960s, this road was not much used by most potters, who preferred to hire taxis for the trip to town.

This photograph looks back towards the shrine from the direction of El Fuerte. The mark believed to be the footprint of El Señor is

barely visible on the left edge of the left-hand boulder. There are four crosses in the photograph. The one in the foreground is all of one piece with very stubby arms—a type of cross that also appears in the local cemetery. This cross is reminiscent of the *cross patée* with four splayed arms of equal length that appears on Mayo and Yaqui pascola masks and other pieces of ritual equipment. I have been told by Yaquis that this cross represents “Our Father, the Sun” and the four sacred directions as well as the Christian cross.

A ceramic incense burner in the form of a bird is perched atop the one-piece cross. Immediately behind it is a cross with its arm piece attached; flanking it are two others that have lost their arm pieces. Miniature ollas and incense burners are visible on the rocks in front of the cross; others (including bird and human effigies) were thrust under the boulders. For another cross at Capomos see Griffith (1970). (In previous writings, I used “Los Patos” as a pseudonym for Capomos.)



[10] Preparing stew to feed the judíos, Capomos, Easter Sunday, 29 March 1970. This photograph was taken in the kitchen area of the complex, many-roomed ramada that served as Capomos’s church during Holy Week. The woman is stirring a large, locally made, lugged cooking vessel over an open-air stove. More cooking pots and a small table stand around the edges of the kitchen.

As I mentioned in the previous caption, Capomos is a pottery-making village. Although local families normally use commercially manufactured plates and bowls for eating, locally made cooking and water storage vessels are found in every home. A brief treatment of local pottery-making may be found in Weakly and Griffith (n.d.).

However, pottery is used at Easter time for more than cooking. When I entered the eating area of the ramada on Easter Sunday, I noticed that the judíos were eating from locally made clay bowls. Later I was served from a similar bowl and informed that these bowls were being used because it was from bowls such as these that Christ and the saints had eaten. A further use of local pottery was observed in the pascola ramada, where the drinking water was kept in a locally made, two-lobed canteen with vertical, semicircular strap handles. A similar function was served in another Sinaloa village by a globular, wide-necked human effigy vessel said to be of local manufacture. These ceremonial uses in combination with the use of miniatures and

effigies shown in Plate 9 and with the effigy bull that is used in some Mayo villages as a symbol of fiesta sponsorship (Beals 1945:143, Plate 19/2) surely deserve further investigation.



[11] *Cohetero* (Sp. “fireworks maker”) Crispin Moroyoki, Las Guayavas near Baimena, 13 March 1968. When one attempts to understand the fiesta that starts on Holy Saturday and formally ends the Lenten season, one comes into contact with many aspects of traditional ceremonialism. Easter Sunday is a fiesta like others in the year, and the craftspeople and other specialists who assist at fiestas must be called into play. One such craftsman is the *cohetero*.

Crispin Moroyoki is a Mayo from near the hill village of Baimena, which is to the southeast of El Fuerte on a tributary of the Río Fuerte. The village has a now ruined mission church building and an Easter ceremony that was still active in the 1960s. Pottery bull effigies similar to the ones mentioned in the caption for Plate 10 are made and used here.

Sr. Moroyoki buys the necessary chemicals in El Fuerte and mixes them (after measuring them carefully by weight) in a small wooden barrel mounted horizontally between two posts and turned by a crank. He was photographed on the front porch of his thatched house, twisting thread with which to wrap skyrockets. Two bundles of finished *cohetes* (“rockets”) flank him.

At Capomos, rockets had several uses during the Easter ceremony. Both Christ and the Santa Cruz were “shot” by *judíos* who attached *cohetes* to their machetes or to toy rifles and pretended to fire. (Each time the deed was done, the arrangements seemed reminiscent of a formal firing squad rather than of an ambush or other act of murder.) Then, on Easter Sunday, the firing of many *cohetes* marked the processions that returned the sacred images to their usual resting places. The last to be so returned was the Santa Cruz, which was left, still dressed in the white *hábito* as shown in Plate 8. It is common practice among Yaquis and Mayos to end fiestas with the firing of *cohetes*.



[12] Statue of *El Señor Nazareno* ready for an Easter Sunday procession, La Florida, 14 April 1968. The statue is dressed in white. There is a saw hanging under its left arm and a yoke across its shoul-

ders from which loaves of bread and a small canteen are suspended. I was not able to interview villagers concerning the meaning of these objects in La Florida. However, I did discuss the photograph with a harpist from San Miguel, a man who had participated in that particular fiesta in La Florida on the day I had taken the photograph. He wasn't sure about the objects visible in the photo, thinking the saw possibly was a piece of ribbon. However, he did volunteer that there should have been a dove and an iguana somewhere with the statue. The dove represents the soul and symbolizes the death and resurrection of Christ. The iguana seems to refer to the forty days that Christ spent in the wilderness—the forty days of Lent. This experience points out once again the localized nature of many of the details of the Easter ceremonial complex.

The man wearing the head cloth and crown of leaves is one of the judíos who had served during that Lenten season. His whip, or chicote, is wrapped around his waist. On Easter Sunday at La Florida the judíos participate in a ceremony called "Running the Saints." Pairs of judíos, dressed like the man in the photograph, run back and forth between the church door and a slowly approaching procession that includes pascolas, a deer dancer, and musicians. Each pair of judíos carries between them a long wooden slat with a picture of a saint attached to its center. Procession and judíos finally enter the church.

The Easter Sunday observances represent another area in which villages differ widely from each other. In Sivirijoa, for instance, a statue of Mary Magdalena is brought from the fiesta ramada, where Christ has been entombed, to a point near the chapel. Here she encounters a procession bearing statues of Our Lady of Sorrows (shown in Plate 5) and San Juan. Her bearers report to Our Lady that the tomb is empty, that Christ is risen. An older woman carrying Our Lady of Sorrows responds, "*No te creo, Magdalena. A ver, Juan, vete a ver si es cierto.*" ("I don't believe you, Magdalen. Go see, John; go see if it is true.") This was told to me by the Sivirijoa maestro with an explanation that Mary Magdalen, because of the sort of person she was, was not considered reliable by the Virgin. The men carrying the statue of San Juan then run to the ramada and back. One of the bearers says, "*Sí, es cierto. Madre Purísima*" ("Yes, it's true, Immaculate Mother"). Then all the statues are carried down toward the ramada. On their way they meet the statue of Christ being carried back from the tomb. They are lowered three times "*en nombre del*

*Padre, del Hijo, y del Espíritu Santo* ("in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit"), and then turn around and accompany Christ back to the chapel. The fiesta is then over.

In Capomos the fiesta continues until Sunday afternoon. The judíos are very much in evidence, wearing kerchiefs over their heads and mouths. During Lent and Holy Week they had worn kerchiefs arranged in a similar way under their masks. They burned their masks and spears on Holy Saturday after the Gloria and no longer wear rattles of any kind. They still wear blankets around their waists, however, and carry their wooden machetes. Many of these have been additionally carved and decorated sometime late Saturday evening or early Sunday morning so that the handles end in human or animal heads. One part of the closing ceremony involves the judíos standing inside the church ramada with wax candles attached to the ends of their machetes, listening to a sermon in Mayo. After that everyone involved in the ceremony circles the church cross shaking hands. Finally the judíos escort the saints' images back to their appropriate houses. Last of all, the Santa Cruz is returned to Kao Ora.



[13] Procession at the "Running of the Saints," La Florida, Easter Sunday, 14 April 1968. The procession, led by pascolas, musicians, and a deer dancer, is moving slowly towards the church, while the judíos "run the saints" between them and the church door. The pascolas in the foreground display the costume typical of the Río Mayo and the lower Río Fuerte: white sweatshirt and breechcloth, locally woven sashes, and extremely long strings of ténovaris. At Capomos on Easter Sunday 1970 there was no deer dancer, and the pascolas wore street clothes and ténovaris. A pascola-style belt with bells suspended from it was passed from dancer to dancer.

In this photograph the harpist demonstrates one of several ways of carrying the large Mayo harp (larger than the harps commonly used by Yaqui musicians) in a procession. The deer dancer, in costume typical of the Mayo and Fuerte river valleys, is between the musicians and the line of pascolas. +





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