

RUNNING IN PLACE: THE RARÁMURI OF COPPER CANYON  
Philosophical Club, Tuesday, 28 January 2003  
Lesley Wells Clarke

THE RARÁMURI, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF THE SIERRA MADRE OCCIDENTAL MOUNTAIN RANGE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS IN NORTHWESTERN MEXICO, ARE OFTEN KNOWN TO OUTSIDERS AS THE TARAHUMARA INDIANS. THE WORD “TARAHUMARA” IS A CORRUPTION OF THE WORD THESE PEOPLE USE FOR THEMSELVES, “RARÁMURI”, WHICH IS VARIOUSLY SAID TO MEAN “THE PEOPLE” AND “FOOT RUNNERS.”

“THE WESTERN SIERRA MADRE MAY BE CONSIDERED A CONTINUATION OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS AND STRETCHES THROUGH THE GREATER PART OF MEXICO INTO CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA AS A LINK OF THE CORDILLERAS, WHICH FORM A PRACTICALLY UNINTERRUPTED CHAIN FROM BERING STRAIT TO CAPE HORN.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Lumholtz, Carl. *Unknown Mexico* (New York, C. Scribner's Sons 1902) Vol. 1, ix.

I EXPECT THAT SOME AMONG YOU HAVE VISITED THE EXTRAORDINARY AREA WHERE THE RARÁMURI LIVE, PART OF WHICH IS KNOWN AND PROMOTED AS BARRANCA DEL COBRE, COPPER CANYON.

A 20,000 SQUARE MILE REGION OF NORTHERN MEXICO, LARGER THAN THE COMBINED SIZE OF VERMONT, MASSACHUSETTS, AND NEW JERSEY, IT HAS MAGNIFICENT CANYONS, FIVE OF WHICH ARE DEEPER THAN OUR OWN GRAND CANYON OF THE COLORADO RIVER. **[PHOTO 1, Richard Fisher]\***

“CANYON RIMS RANGE FROM 6000 TO OVER 8000 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL WITH WALLS PLUNGING SHARPLY DOWNWARD 4000 - 5000 FEET.”<sup>2</sup> PINE AND OAK FORESTS AND SEASONAL SNOW FOR 6 - 8 MONTHS OF THE YEAR AT THE TOP YIELD TO THE SULTRY TROPICS OF BANANA TREES AND MANGOS IN THE DEEP GORGES.<sup>3</sup>

THE AREA ALSO BOASTS AN IMPROBABLE RAILROAD, PERHAPS KNOWN TO SOME OF YOU, FERROCARRIL CHIHUAHUA

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<sup>2</sup>Kerr, John Leeds, *Destination Topolobampo* 16.

<sup>3</sup> Bennett, Wendell C. and Zingg, Robert M., *The Tarahumara: An Indiana Tribe of Northern Mexico* (University of Chicago Press, 1935) 26.

AL PACIFICO. WITH 565 MILES OF TRACK, MUCH OF IT IN TORTUOUS TWISTS, THE RAILROAD TIES OJINAGO, IN THE STATE OF CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO AND ITS NEIGHBORING CITY OF PRESIDIO, TEXAS, ACROSS THE RUGGED SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS, TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

ENVISIONED IN 1872 BY AMERICAN UTOPIAN ALBERT KINSEY OWEN, WHO WAS SEEKING A DIRECT, PROFITABLE TRANSPORTATION ROUTE FROM OUR MIDWEST FARMS TO THE PACIFIC, THE TRACK DRAMATICALLY CORKSCREWS DOWN FROM 5000 FOOT RUGGED MOUNTAIN TERRAIN TO SEA LEVEL, ACCESSING THE PACIFIC OCEAN AT TOPOLOBAMPO, IN THE MEXICAN STATE OF SINALOA, ACROSS THE GULF OF CALIFORNIA FROM BAJA CALIFORNIA.

INDEED, WHEN CONCEIVED, THIS REMARKABLE RAILROAD WOULD HAVE SHORTENED THE EXISTING RAIL ROUTE TO THE PACIFIC, FROM KANSAS CITY TO SAN FRANCISCO, BY MORE THAN 400 MILES. BUT THE RAILROAD TOOK ALMOST A CENTURY TO BUILD, OPENING AT LAST IN 1961,

LONG AFTER THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERHIGHWAYS AND AIR  
TRANSPORT ALTERNATIVES.

THIS RAILROAD HAS A FINE STORY OF ITS OWN  
INCLUDING REMARKABLE ENGINEERING FEATS,  
BREATHTAKING VIEWS [**PHOTO 2, L. Verplancken**]\* AND A CAST  
OF CHARACTERS -- TO USE THE WORD IN ITS FULLEST SENSE --  
WHICH INCLUDED ULYSSES S. GRANT, PANCHO VILLA,  
ADMIRAL GEORGE W. DEWEY AND RAILROAD PROMOTER  
ARTHUR STILLWELL, “A BRILLIANT BUT ECCENTRIC  
FINANCIER . . .WHO LISTENED TO SPIRITS . . . .<sup>4</sup> -- AND THE  
RARÁMURI INDIANS, TO WHOM WE NOW RETURN.

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ASSUMED TO BE OF MONGOLOID STOCK WHO  
ARRIVED ON THIS CONTINENT SOME 20,000 YEARS AGO VIA THE  
BERING STRAIT, THE RARÁMURI, OR “PEOPLE”, AS THEY REFER  
TO THEMSELVES, CLASSIFIED AS UTO-AZTEKAN, ARE THOUGHT  
TO HAVE MOVED DOWN THE CONTINENT INTO THE SIERRA

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<sup>4</sup>Kerr 18.

MADRE RANGE WITH THE AZTECS, WHO THEN SETTLED FURTHER SOUTH.<sup>5</sup> THERE THE SIMILARITIES END.

TODAY MANY OF THE RARÁMURI CONTINUE THEIR SIMPLE LIVES OF SEMI-NOMADIC FARMING AND HERDING IN PRECIPITOUS ISOLATION ON POOR, STONY SOIL IN SMALL SCATTERED PATCHES OF USEABLE LAND. AROUND THEM, MOST ABORIGINAL CULTURES HAVE DISAPPEARED OR SERIOUSLY DETERIORATED. THEY, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO LIVE IN FAMILY RATHER THAN IN VILLAGE GROUPS, RETAINING MOST OF THEIR PREHISTORIC PATTERNS.

THERE IS NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER OF COMPLEX CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS APPROACHING THOSE OF THEIR COLLEAGUES WHO WENT ON TO ESTABLISH GREAT AZTEC AND MAYAN CIVILIZATIONS FARTHER SOUTH. AS CHARLES MANN REMINDS US IN HIS RECENT ARTICLE "1491" IN THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY: ". . . (T)HE AZTEC CAPITAL...WAS BIGGER THAN PARIS" IN 1519. . . "WITH WIDE IMMACULATE STREETS,

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<sup>5</sup>Collier, John, *Indians of the Americas* (New York: The New American Library, 1947) 17-20.

ORNATELY CARVED BUILDINGS, BOTANICAL GARDENS AND  
MARKETS BRIGHT WITH GOODS FROM HUNDREDS OF MILES  
AWAY.”<sup>6</sup>

I THOUGHT TO SPEAK TO YOU ABOUT THE RARÁMURI  
IN PART BECAUSE A DECADE AGO, I WAS FORTUNATE TO SPEND  
A SHORT TIME BACKPACKING IN THE SIERRA MADRE CANYONS  
AND HIGHLANDS WHERE THE RARÁMURI HAVE SOME OF THEIR  
DWELLING CAVES AND WINDOWLESS WOODEN LEAN-TOS.

**[PHOTO 3, Richard Fisher]\***

MID-AFTERNOON OF OUR SECOND DAY IN THIS  
FORMIDABLE BACK-COUNTRY, FOLLOWING A NARROW  
CANYON TRAIL, WE ROUNDED A CLIFF AND CAME UPON A  
YOUNG WOMAN WITH HER CHILD SITTING NEAR A STREAM.

**[PHOTO 4, Sue Brown]\***

WE ALL SMILED. SUE AND I STOPPED AND TOOK OFF  
OUR STRANGE-LOOKING PACKS. WE SAT QUIETLY NEAR THEM  
FOR QUITE AWHILE, SEASONED QUAKERS THAT WE ARE.  
EVENTUALLY, THE WOMAN REACHED FORWARD AND HELD

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<sup>6</sup> Mann, Charles C., *1491* (The Atlantic Monthly, March 2002) 41- 53.

SOMETHING OUT TO US. IT WAS A CARVED PINE BEAR. (I'LL HAND IT AROUND.) \*

IN EXCHANGE, WE GAVE HER A ZIPPERED WAISTPACK WHICH SHE ACCEPTED. WE MOVED ON DOWN THE TRAIL. **[PHOTOS 5 & 6, Sue Brown & Lesley Wells] \***

SHORTLY, WE PASSED A LOW CAVE, PICTURED HERE; PERHAPS, THEIR TEMPORARY HOME. **[PHOTO 7, Sue Brown]\*** RARÁMURI WOMEN AND CHILDREN SHEPHERD SHEEP AND GOATS AND ARE OFTEN GONE ON THEIR OWN A WEEK OR MORE AT A TIME. PINOLE, A BLANKET, A FIRE-STARTER AND A MACHETE ARE ALL THEY TAKE, SLEEPING AT NIGHT WITH THEIR ANIMALS GATHERED IN DRY CAVES.

THE POWER OF THIS MEETING AND OUR OTHER BRIEF ENCOUNTERS WITH THESE MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHO STEADFASTLY HAVE MAINTAINED THEIR SIMPLE, SELF-SUFFICIENT, ANCIENT CULTURE AND YET WHO SHARE WITH US, RIGHT NOW, THIS CONTINENT AND THIS TIME, HAS EVER SINCE PRICKED MY CURIOSITY.

I ADMIT I HAVE OCCASIONALLY BEEN DRAWN TO THEIR LANGUID PACE; THEIR EXUBERANT, IF OFTEN DRUNKEN, CELEBRATIONS; THEIR PRAGMATIC SIMPLICITY; THEIR UNCOMMON SELF-SUFFICIENCY. BUT MOST OF ALL, I ADMIRE THEIR SEAMLESS CONNECTION TO AND RESPECT FOR THEIR NATURAL SURROUNDINGS, AND THEIR ENDURING CARE AND RESPECT FOR ONE ANOTHER.

THEIRS IS NOT A COMPLEX CULTURE; IT IS A CULTURE OF SUFFICIENCY. CULTURES SUCH AS OURS, BY AND LARGE, FOCUS NOT AT ALL ON SUFFICIENCY, BUT RATHER ON PURPOSELY EXTRACTING SURPLUS, OF ALMOST EVERY SORT, IN ORDER TO CREATE, NOT SUFFICIENCY, BUT WHAT SOME ECONOMISTS CALL “SURFEIT”. SURFEIT, OF COURSE, IS CLOSELY ALLIED TO GREED.

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TODAY THE RARÁMURI REMAIN “AMONG THE MOST COMPACT AND UNMIXED OF ANY OF THE INDIAN TRIBES OF MEXICO,”<sup>7</sup> AND THEY ARE MEXICO’S SECOND LARGEST NATIVE

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<sup>7</sup>Collier 17 -20.



INDIAN GROUP.<sup>8</sup> THEIR ANCIENT CULTURE HAS REMAINED LARGELY INTACT. AS WILLIAM MERRILL NOTED IN 1988, “THE RARÁMURI OF THE 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY WOULD HAVE LITTLE DIFFICULTY RECOGNIZING THEIR DESCENDANTS OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY.”<sup>9</sup>

IN 1936, THE FRENCH DRAMATIST, ANTONIN ARTAUD, TRAVELED AMONG THE RARÁMURI AND OBSERVED THAT “THIS RACE, WHICH OUGHT TO BE PHYSICALLY DEGENERATE, HAS FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS RESISTED EVERY FORCE THAT HAS COME TO ATTACK IT; CIVILIZATION, INTERBREEDING, WAR, WINTER, ANIMALS, STORMS, AND THE FOREST.”<sup>10</sup>

I THOUGHT TO SHARE WITH YOU WHAT CURIOSITY HAS LED ME TO REGARDING THESE INDOMITABLE, DIFFERENT DRUMMERS. I AM NO SOCIAL SCIENTIST, NOR ANY SCIENTIST AT ALL. AND I KNOW, AFTER STUDY, THAT WHAT I BRING YOU

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<sup>8</sup>*The Tarahumara Indians*, <http://www.mexonline.com/rarmuri.htm>.

<sup>9</sup>Merrill, William, *Rarámuri Souls, Knowledge and Social Process in Northern Mexico* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

<sup>10</sup>Fontana, Bernard, *Tarahumra: Where Night is the Day of the Moon* (Northland Publishing 1979) 18.

THIS EVENING HAS COME TO US THROUGH PARTICULARLY  
DISTORTING FILTERS.

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THE EARLIEST WRITTEN REPORTS OF THE RARÁMURI  
ARE FROM A JESUIT, FATHER JUAN FONTE. BEGINNING IN 1607,  
JESUITS WORKED TO ESTABLISH MISSIONS AMONG THE  
RARÁMURI AND THIS THEY DID FOR 160 YEARS, UNTIL 1767,  
WHEN THE JESUITS WERE ABRUPTLY EXPELLED FROM THEIR  
POSSESSIONS IN ALL OF NEW SPAIN, THE SOUTHWESTERN  
EMPIRE WHICH INCLUDED MEXICO, TEXAS, ARIZONA, NEW  
MEXICO AND CALIFORNIA<sup>11</sup>, BY DECREE OF KING CHARLES III  
OF SPAIN.

JESUIT RECORDS ARE THE FIRST AVAILABLE OF THE  
RARÁMURI, AND THEY ARE VALUABLE INDEED.

LISTEN TO FATHER JUAN YSIDRO FERNÁNDEZ DE  
ABEE, S.J. ON 8 JULY 1744, WRITING ABOUT THE RARÁMURI  
FROM MISSION JESÚS CARICHIC, AFTER 137 YEARS OF JESUIT  
EFFORT AMONG THEM.

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<sup>11</sup>Kerr 22

THE INDIANS LIVE AT GREAT DISTANCES,  
SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER AND  
SCATTERED. THEY PREFER TO LIVE IN THE  
RAVINES AND CANYONS AND IN THE COLD,  
INHOSPITABLE MOUNTAINS WHERE THEY  
HAVE THEIR DWELLINGS. THEIR NATIVE  
SIMPLICITY, BARBARITY, LAZINESS AND  
SLOTH INCLINE THEM TO THIS IN  
PREFERENCE TO BEING "REDUCED" -- (THE  
MISSIONARY EFFORT WAS CALLED THE  
REDUCCION) -- TO LIVING A RATIONAL,  
CIVILIZED HUMAN LIFE. THE FACT THAT  
CHILDREN ARE RAISED FROM THEIR FIRST  
AND TENDER YEARS IN THE CANYONS  
WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST CONTROL SHOWS  
HOW HARD IT IS LATER ON TO BRING THEM  
TO. . . LEAD A CHRISTIAN LIFE. FROM  
INFANCY THEY ARE BROUGHT UP TO BE  
MOUNTAIN VAGABONDS WITH NO  
TRAINING IN EITHER MORALS OR PROPER  
CONDUCT. THEY ARE WORSE THAN BEASTS  
BECAUSE THE ANIMALS AT LEAST  
ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR SUBJECTION TO  
THOSE WHO PUT THEM IN CAGES AND  
GOVERN THEM. . . .THE ROYAL

MINISTERS. . .SHOULD REMOVE THE INDIANS FROM THEIR CANYONS AND USE ARMED FORCE TO MAKE THEM LIVE TOGETHER IN PUEBLOS. THEY SHOULD BURN THEIR HOVELS AND GRANARIES IN WHICH THEY KEEP THEIR CORN. EIGHT OR TEN SOLDIERS OUGHT TO BE STATIONED AT THIS MISSION UNTIL THE INDIANS LEARN TO LOVE THEIR PUEBLO. IF THEY FLEE FROM THE PUEBLO AFTER BEING SETTLED THERE THE SOLDIERS OUGHT TO HUNT THEM DOWN AND BRING THEM BACK. IN THIS WAY THE WILL OF OUR CATHOLIC KINGS WILL BE DONE AND SOME USEFUL PURPOSE WILL BE SERVED BY THE SWEAT Poured OUT BY THE PADRE MISSIONARIES FOR THE SALVATION OF THE WRETCHED INDIANS' SOULS.

NOW THERE IS ONE DISTORTING FILTER.

ALTHOUGH TODAY, ALMOST 400 YEARS LATER, SOME RARÁMURI HAVE SLIPPED OUT OF THE COMMUNITY AT THE EDGES, MANY, THOUGH TO NUMBER APPROXIMATELY 60,000,

STILL “LIVE AT GREAT DISTANCES, SEPARATED FROM EACH OTHER AND SCATTERED,” IN THE RAVINES AND CANYONS.

WHEN RARÁMURI OCCUPY LEAN-TOS INSTEAD OF CAVES, THEY ARE TEMPORARY AND THE ONES WE SAW WERE SIMPLY BOARDS LEANING AGAINST A LOG STRUCTURE. THERE WERE NO WINDOWS AND THE ENTRY WAY HAD EXTRA BOARDS STACKED TO BE USED INSTEAD OF A DOOR. [**PHOTO 8, John Schaefer**]\*

IN THE CAVES ONE FINDS STONES FOR GRINDING CORN, BASKETS, A FEW EARTHENWARE POTS, HALF-GOURD SHELLS, RATTLES AND DRUMS, BLANKETS AND PERHAPS SOME TINS FOR TESHGÜINO CONTAINERS. [**PHOTO 9, L. Verplancken**]\*

THEY STILL STORE THEIR CORN IN THE SAME SORT OF GRANARIES AS THEY DID WHEN THE JESUITS FOUND THEM, AIRTIGHT AND OPENED ONLY CLEVERLY, LIKE CHINESE PUZZLE BOXES. AND STILL “THEIR CHILDREN ARE NEVER CHASTISED.”

RARÁMURI PLACES ARE SIMPLY NAMED FOR WHAT THEY ARE, THEN AS NOW: THE PLACE OF THE PINNACLE, THE

PLACE OF THE NUT TREES, THE PLACE OF THE WILD ONION, THE PLACE OF THE WALNUT TREE.

IT IS THESE RAR? MURI OF WHOM I SPEAK TONIGHT.

ALTHOUGH THE JESUITS WERE WITHDRAWN IN 1767, SOME RETURNED BEGINNING IN 1900 AND IT IS A MODERN JESUIT, LUIS G. VERPLANCKEN, S.J. WHO HAS LONG OPERATED A MEDICAL CLINIC FOR THE RARÁMURI IN CREEL, MEXICO, WHO PROVIDES RECENT FIRSTHAND INFORMATION ABOUT THEM.

IN FACT, THEIR CHILDREN ARE NOT AND HAVE NOT BEEN, TRADITIONALLY, SIMPLY INDULGED. “. . .FROM THE TIME THEY ARE VERY SMALL THEY ARE GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAKING DECISIONS FOR THEMSELVES. EACH CHILD, WHEN VERY SMALL, IS GIVEN ONE OR TWO ANIMALS. HE OR SHE IS THEIR ABSOLUTE OWNER” FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM, “AND THE PARENTS CANNOT DISPOSE OF THEM WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE CHILD, THE TRUE OWNER.”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Verplancken, Louis G., S.J., *The Rarámuri or Tarahumaras*, National Parks of Northern Mexico, Fisher, Richard D. (Sunracer Publications, 1990) 33.

INSOFAR AS CULTURE IS THE LEARNING OF AND PASSING ON OF BEHAVIORS, THE CULTURAL PERSISTENCE OF THE RARÁMURI IS EXTRAORDINARY. AND THE JESUITS WERE NOT THE ONLY OUTSIDE INFLUENCE OPERATING AMONG AND UPON THEM SINCE RECORDS BEGAN. AS ANTHROPOLOGIST ROBERT ZINGG NOTES, “THE TARAUMARA HAVE HAD A CONSTANT BOMBARDMENT OF “WHITES” IN THE GARB OF MISSIONARIES, MINERS, SOLDIERS AND OFFICIALS.”<sup>13</sup>

BY 1631, GOLD MINES WERE DISCOVERED NEAR THE RARÁMURI TERRITORY AND BY 1638 SOME RARÁMURI WERE LURED INTO WORKING AS LABORERS IN THE MINES. COPPER, GOLD AND SILVER HAVE LURED OUTSIDERS IN TOO. AS A RESULT, EPIDEMICS OF SPANISH-INTRODUCED DISEASE, SMALLPOX AND INFLUENZA RAVAGED THE RARÁMURI COMMUNITY, A TRAGEDY REPEATED THROUGHOUT THE AMERICAS. AS HENRY F. DOBYNS PUTS IT: “WHEN THE SPANIARDS ARRIVED, THE INDIANS DIED.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Bennett and Zingg 356.

<sup>14</sup> Mann 43-45.

MOREOVER, IN 1649, FIVE RARÁMURI WERE BEING HELD BY A MINER AS SLAVES. THE RARÁMURI PROTESTED AND THE GOVERNOR OF THE PROVINCE OF NEW SPAIN RAIDED THEIR TERRITORY WITH HIS TROOPS, KILLING 10, TAKING 27 PRISONER, DEMANDING AND RECEIVING THE HEADS OF 2 OF 4 KNOWN REBEL LEADERS.

IN 1652 THERE WAS A MAJOR RARÁMURI UPRISING. IN RESPONSE, SPANISH SOLDIERS INFLICTED HEAVY LOSSES ON THE INDIANS. THE RARÁMURI CALLED FOR PEACE. THE SPANISH GRANTED PEACE ONLY ON THE CONDITION THAT THE INSURRECTION LEADER, TEPÓRACA, BE TURNED OVER AS A PRISONER. THE RARÁMURI COMPLIED. TEPÓRACA WAS ORDERED HUNG, BUT FIRST HE WAS ORDERED TO REPENT “SO HIS SOUL MIGHT NOT GO TO HELL”. ACCORDING TO JESUIT HISTORIAN PETER DUNNE: “. . . HIS HEART WAS OF FLINT AND HE WOULD NOT YIELD. HE WAS HANGED, THEREFORE, TO THE LIMB OF A TREE, CURSING THE SPANIARDS AS LONG AS HE HAD



BREATH TO DRAW AND DAMNING THE COWARDICE OF HIS TRIBESMEN FOR MAKING PEACE WITH THE INVADER.”<sup>15</sup>

IN 1687, A SILVER RUSH INTO THE SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS AGAIN DISPLACED THE RARÁMURI FROM SOME OF THEIR BEST FARMLAND, AND THE NEWCOMERS AGAIN LURED THEM INTO DOMESTIC AND MINING SERVICE. IN 1690, AND AGAIN IN 1697, THE RARÁMURI REBELLED, DESTROYING SOME MISSION CHURCHES AND KILLING SEVERAL PRIESTS.

THE SPANIARD IN COMMAND IN 1697, CAPT. JUAN FERNANDEZ DE RETANA, ORDERED 30 INDIANS SHOT, THEIR HEADS CUT OFF AND IMPALED ON SPEARS PLACED IN ONE OF THE RARÁMURI “HOMEPLACES” AND ALONG THEIR TRAVELED PATHS.

THE REBELLION CONTINUED FOR ANOTHER YEAR BUT AFTER 1698 THE RARÁMURI ADOPTED, AND HAVE SINCE AS A COMMUNITY, BY AND LARGE MAINTAINED PASSIVE RETREAT AND EXPANSION DEEPER INTO THE CANYONS AS THEIR

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<sup>15</sup>Dunne, Peter M. S.J., *Early Jesuit Missions in Tarahumara* ( Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948).

RESPONSE TO OUTSIDE PROVOCATION AND EXPLOITATION. AS ZINGG SAID: “THEY FOUGHT OFF THE ENTRANCE OF THE PADRES AND THE WHITES. WHEN PHYSICAL RESISTANCE WAS NO LONGER ENOUGH, THEY ADOPTED THE METHOD OF AVOIDANCE.”<sup>16</sup>

A CENTURY AFTER THE JESUITS LEFT, IN 1892, 1894-1897 AND 1898, CARL SOPHUS LUMHOLTZ, A NORWEGIAN NATURALIST-EXPLORER, LIVED AMONG THE RARÁMURI. CARL LUMHOLTZ KEPT DETAILED FIELD NOTES, SOME OF WHICH WERE PUBLISHED BY SCRIBNERS MAGAZINE, FOLLOWED IN 1902 BY HIS TWO VOLUME BOOK, UNKNOWN MEXICO, EXPLORATIONS IN THE SIERRA MADRE AND OTHER REGIONS WHICH CONTINUES TO BE THE KEY ACCOUNT OF THE RARÁMURI.

LUMHOLTZ RECORDED THAT JUST AS THE JESUITS FOUND IN 1607 AND AS IS TRUE TODAY, CORN, SQUASH, AND BEANS ARE THE STAPLES OF THE RARÁMURI DIET. THEY GROW WILD ONIONS, MUSTARD GREENS AND PEPPERGRASS AND

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<sup>16</sup> Bennett and Zingg 184.

HARVEST CACTUS LEAVES FOR FOOD. SEED CORN STILL IS PLANTED WITH A SHARP WOODEN POLE, 3-4 TO A POLE HOLE, A STEP APART, AND CULTIVATED WITH A STICK WHEN THE PLANTS ARE KNEE HIGH. **[PHOTO 10, L. Verplancken]\***

MANY USE OXEN, INTRODUCED BY THE SPANISH, TO PLOW WITH A WOODEN PLOW WITH SHARES CONSISTING OF A TREE STEM WITH A BRANCH AS A HANDLE. HOWEVER, FEW OWN OXEN. THESE ARE READILY LOANED TO OTHERS BY THEIR OWNERS AS ARE ALL NEEDED ANIMALS, AT NO COST EXCEPT THAT THE BORROWER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ANIMALS' UPKEEP WHILE IN HIS OR HER CARE. HORSES AND BURROS ARE NOT USED TO PLOW AND AS PACK ANIMALS, ONLY ONCE OR TWICE A YEAR.

TODAY, AS 400 YEARS AGO, WHAT WE MIGHT CALL THE SAVING REMNANT OF THESE PEOPLE, STILL MAINTAIN A BARTER ECONOMY OF CORN AND BEANS TRADED FOR SALT, THREAD, NEEDLES, AXES, KNIVES, MACHETES AND SOAP. OTHERWISE THEY MAINTAIN A COMPLETELY SELF-SUFFICIENT

LIFESTYLE, HIGHLY INDIVIDUALISTIC WITH NO CENTRAL GOVERNANCE, AND NO CAPITAL TOWN.<sup>17</sup>

ALTHOUGH THEY SOMETIMES USE THE ABANDONED, CRUMBLED MISSION SITES CEREMONIALLY, RARÁMURI MEMORIES ARE LONG. NONE OF THEM, TO THIS DAY, WILL LIVE IN THOSE PLACES APPROPRIATED BY THE JESUITS, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE SOME OF THE MOST FAVORABLE FOR AGRICULTURE. MOREOVER, “THE APPROPRIATION OF THEIR BEST LANDS, WHICH THE RARÁMURI HAVE SUFFERED ACROSS THE CENTURIES ON A LARGE SCALE, CONTINUES,” WROTE FR. VERPLANCKEN IN 1990.<sup>18</sup>

RAR? MURI FOLLOW A BILATERAL KINSHIP STRUCTURE MOVING HORIZONTALLY OUTWARD WITH MOTHERS’ AND FATHERS’ SIDES OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE AND WITH NEITHER CLANS NOR LINEAGES. THEY MAINTAIN AN

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<sup>17</sup>Bennett and Zingg 232.

<sup>18</sup>Verplancken 25.

INCEST TABOO.<sup>19</sup> MEN AND WOMEN ENJOY EQUAL STATUS AS FAMILY HEADS, PROPERTY OWNERS, AND DECISION-MAKERS.

ACCORDING TO BENNETT AND ZINGG, MARRIAGE IS A “CONTRACT BETWEEN TWO ECONOMIC EQUALS” ; . . . EACH PARTY ENTERS THE CONTRACT WITH HIS OR HER OWN PROPERTY.” EACH MUST CONSULT THE OTHER AND “HEED HER OR HIS OPINION BEFORE EVERY NEGOTIATION OF ANY IMPORT, EVEN THOUGH IT DEALS WITH HER OR HIS OWN PERSONAL PROPERTY.” WITHIN THE FAMILY, THE PROPERTY IS POOLED BUT THE INDIVIDUAL OWNERSHIP OF EACH PIECE IS NEVER FORGOTTEN.”<sup>20</sup> EITHER SPOUSE MAY LEAVE THE OTHER AND THERE IS NO DIVORCE CEREMONY.

AS DR. WENDELL C. BENNETT, YALE ANTHROPOLOGIST OPINED: “THE VERY ELEMENTS THAT MAKE EACH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY FREE TO LEAVE AT ANY TIME ALSO HOLD THEM TOGETHER. THE VERY LOOSENESS IS STRENGTH. THE FACT THAT EITHER MEMBER MAY GO AT WILL

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<sup>19</sup>Bennett and Zingg 231.

<sup>20</sup>Bennett and Zingg 232.

ENCOURAGES THE OTHER TO BE MORE CAREFUL IN FULFILLING HIS OBLIGATIONS. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, THE FAMILY IS ONE OF THE MOST PERMANENT UNITIES IN THE TARAHUMARA SOCIAL SYSTEM.”<sup>21</sup>

NOTHING AMONG THE RARÁMURI IS MEASURED BY MATERIAL POSSESSIONS. STATUS IN THE COMMUNITY IS MEASURED BY COMMON SENSE, BY THE NUMBER OF TIMES A PERSON HAS GIVEN FOOD TO THOSE WHO ASK, BY THE NUMBER OF GRANARIES AND LIVESTOCK, BY THE ABILITY TO PRODUCE FOOD AND TO SHARE IT -- THESE QUALITIES DEFINE RARÁMURI SUCCESS. IT IS REPORTED THAT AMONG OTHER INDIANS, WHEN TIMES WERE HARD, THE ADVICE WAS TO GO AMONG THE RARÁMURI BECAUSE THEY WOULD ALWAYS PROVIDE, BELIEVING, AS THEY DO, THAT NO ONE SHOULD BE HUNGRY.

THE RARÁMURI’S ANCIENT TESQÜINO PARTIES AND OFFERINGS, SEVERAL DAY GATHERINGS FOR FIESTAS, CURING AND CARING CEREMONIES, AND CO-OPS WITH ONE ANOTHER TO PLANT, HOE, AND HARVEST ONE ANOTHER’S CROPS, ARE

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<sup>21</sup>Bennett and Zingg 232.

ESTIMATED TO OCCUR 50-60 TIMES A YEAR. EACH ADULT IS SAID TO SPEND ABOUT 100 DAYS A YEAR DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION, CONSUMPTION, AND RECOVERY FROM THE EFFECTS OF THIS THICK AND NUTRITIOUS FERMENTED DRINK.

WHEN A WORK SESSION, OFFERING, OR FIESTA IS CONCLUDED, THE RARÁMURI ADULTS COMMONLY GET FLAT-OUT RIP-ROARING DRUNK ON THEIR TRADITIONAL CORN BEER.

TESQÜINO CAN SPOIL IN 12-24 HOURS, IT CANNOT BE STORED, AND THE ALCOHOL CONTENT IS RELATIVELY LOW. PERHAPS BECAUSE IT IS ALWAYS A GROUP ACTIVITY, NEVER AN INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY, IT HAS NOT PRODUCED THE PATHOLOGY OF ALCOHOLISM.<sup>22</sup>

NOTHING, NOT 160 YEARS OF JESUITS, SPANISH MURDERS, NOR THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT HAS DISRUPTED THIS FEATURE OF RARÁMURI CULTURE. IN FACT, IT SERVES THEIR FIESTAS, THEIR RITUAL DANCE AND FOOD OFFERINGS, THEIR GAMES, MUSIC, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURAL

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<sup>22</sup> Fontana, Bernard, *Tarahumara* 60.

CONTINUITY, AS WELL AS THEIR ABILITY TO SUBSISTENCE  
FARM AND CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER IN AN EXTRAORDINARILY  
RUGGED, ISOLATED, IF MINDBENDINGLY BEAUTIFUL, PLACE.

**[PHOTO 11, L. Verplancken]\***

THESE MEN AND WOMEN “OF NOBEL BEARING AND  
RESERVE ”<sup>23</sup> HAVE LEGENDARY PHYSICAL ENDURANCE. “THEY  
ENJOY WONDERFUL HEALTH AND . . . IN THE HIGHLANDS . . . IT  
IS NOT INFREQUENT TO MEET PEOPLE WHO ARE AT LEAST 100  
YEARS OLD.”<sup>24</sup> RARÁJIPARI IS WHAT THEY CALL THEIR  
FOOTRACES, COMMONLY 50-100 MILE BAREFOOT RUNS  
BETWEEN TWO TEAMS DURING WHICH THEY TOSS A BASEBALL-  
SIZED WOODEN BALL WITH THEIR FOOT. CHIHUAHUAN  
HISTORIAN, FRANCISCO R. ALMADA REPORTS THAT ONE RACE  
COVERED 435 MILES, CONTINUING THROUGH DAY AND NIGHT.<sup>25</sup>

IT IS REPORTED THAT IN 1993, A SMALL GROUP OF  
RARÁMURI “ASTOUNDED THE WORLD OF MARATHON RACING

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<sup>23</sup>Lumholtz 120.

<sup>24</sup>Lumholtz 241.

<sup>25</sup>Salmon, Enrique, *Raramuri in the Current Era*, Reported at  
<http://anthro.fortlewis.edu/ethnobotany/dbase/taxonomy>,(Rascon and Batista, 1985).



BY COMING IN FIRST, SECOND AND FOURTH PLACE IN A 100 MILE ULTRA-MARATHON RACE, WEARING THEIR NATIVE GARB AND SANDALS MADE OUT OF DISCARDED TIRES.”<sup>26</sup>

“A STRONG YOUNG MAN CARRIED A BURDEN OF OVER 100 POUNDS FROM CARICHIC TO BATOPILAS,” IN THE RUGGED . . . “110 MILES IN SEVENTY HOURS . . . EATING NOTHING BUT PINOLE, A LITTLE AT FREQUENT INTERVALS.”<sup>27</sup>

“STUDIES WERE MADE OF RUNNERS WHO RAN A SHORT KICKBALL RACE OF 28.6 MILES. THE AVERAGE SPEED OF THE WINNING TEAM WAS 5.81 MILES PER HOUR. EACH LOST ABOUT FIVE POUNDS; TWO HAD DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE READINGS OF ZERO DURING AND IMMEDIATELY AT THE END OF THE RACE, RISING WITHIN A FEW MINUTES TO 60 TO 80.”<sup>28</sup>

AS A CONTEMPORARY NATURALIST-EXPLORER, RICHARD FISHER, POINTS OUT, “ IN THE RUGGED BARRANCAS COUNTRY, MEN CAN EASILY OUT-RUN A HORSE AND A

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<sup>26</sup> California Native Newsletter. . *Who are the Tarahumara?*  
[http://www.calnative.com/n\\_tarahu.htm](http://www.calnative.com/n_tarahu.htm).

<sup>27</sup>Lumholtz 241.

<sup>28</sup>Tarahumara 106.

RARÁMURI RUNNER CAN TRAVERSE IN ONE DAY TERRAIN THAT WOULD KILL A HORSE.”<sup>29</sup>

THE RARÁMURI NEVER EAT THE MEAT OF THEIR LIVESTOCK, NOR DO THEY USE ANIMAL SKIN FOR CLOTHING. THEY MILK NONE OF THEIR ANIMALS.<sup>30</sup> ANIMALS ARE KILLED AND THEIR MEAT EATEN ONLY ON CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS. THE BEAR, HOWEVER, HONORED WITH THE NAME “GRANDFATHER,” IS EXEMPT AS IS THE BAT, WHICH IS CONNECTED WITH ‘EVIL BIRDS’, THOUGHT TO BE THE SIZE OF ONE’S LAST LITTLE FINGER DIGIT, AND SAID TO SNATCH SOULS. SUCKERS, CATFISH AND GILA TROUT ARE AVAILABLE IN STREAMS AND SMALL ANIMALS ARE KILLED BY THROWING STONES. THE RARÁMURI TRADITIONALLY HUNT DEER BY ENDURANCE RUNNING – NOT RUNNING FASTER THAN THE DEER BUT BY KEEPING ON ITS TRAIL UNTIL IT COLLAPSES FROM EXHAUSTION. ZINGG, WHO LIVED AMONG THEM FOR NINE

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<sup>29</sup>Fisher, Richard D. National Parks of Northern Mexico. Sunracer Publications. 1990. 53.

<sup>30</sup>Perhaps because “few Indians carry the gene that permits adults to digest lactose, a form of sugar abundant in milk.” Mann 45.

MONTHS, DESCRIBES THE DEER HUNT. “ HUNTING DEER CONSISTS OF CHASING THE DEER FOR TWO DAYS UNTIL THE CREATURE FALLS FROM EXHAUSTION, OFTEN WITH HOOVES WORN DOWN TO THE QUICK. IT IS THEN THROTTLED BY THE HUNTER OR KILLED BY HIS DOGS.”<sup>31</sup> THE TRAILS, REMEMBER, ARE “UNBELIEVABLY ROUGH, STEEP AND DANGEROUS.”<sup>32</sup>

IN A MANNER SIMILAR TO TIBETAN BUDDHISTS, AND CONSISTENT WITH THEIR LARGER VIEW OF ALL OF LIFE AS CONNECTED, THE RARÁMURI HAVE A RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR SURROUNDINGS.

ACCORDING TO ANTHROPOLOGIST ENRIQUE SALMON, WHO IS RARÁMURI, “TWIGARA” IS AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING RELATIONSHIP, “A COLLECTION OF FORCES THAT BIND THE PEOPLE TO THE LAND.” IWIGARA TRANSLATES, IN ITS SIMPLEST SENSE, AS ALL THE ENERGIES OF THE UNIVERSE THAT ARE INTERCONNECTED.”

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<sup>31</sup>Bennett and Zingg 113.

<sup>32</sup>Bennett and Zingg 24.

SALMON EXPLAINS: “. . .MY CULTURE’S NOTION OF WHAT WE CALL ‘IWI’, . . . ROUGHLY TRANSLATES INTO BREATH, AND WE SHARE THE BREATH OF EVERYTHING AROUND US. THE BREATH IS ALSO HOW WE THINK OF OUR SOUL, AND OUR SOULS ARE PARTLY SHARED WITH EVERYTHING AROUND US.”<sup>33</sup>

INTRODUCTION BY SPANIARDS OF THE AXE TO THE RARÁMURI MADE POSSIBLE BOARDS, CANOAS, AND NOTCHED LOGS. THEY USE “ROVING” CORRALS, SIMPLE LOG BOUNDARIES WITH NO CONNECTIONS OR POSTS, WITH WHICH THEY SURROUND THEIR GRAZING ANIMALS. WHEN AN AREA IS FERTILIZED, THEY PICK UP THE LOGS AND MOVE THEM TO GRAZE AND FERTILIZE ANOTHER AREA.

AS ROBERT ZINGG HAS POINTED OUT: “IN A VERY REAL SENSE, THE TARAUMARA LIVE ON THE SPARSE GRASS OF THE MOUNTAINSIDE, COLLECTED FOR THEM BY THE ANIMALS AND TRANSFORMED THROUGH THE CYCLE OF ANIMAL FOOD TO A FERTILIZER FOR THE CORN WHICH IS THE STAFF OF TARAMUHARA LIFE. THIS IS THE MOST ELABORATE, DELICATE,

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<sup>33</sup><http://www.pulseplanet.com/feat>.

AND LABORIOUS ADJUSTMENT OF CULTURE TO NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IN THEIR ECOLOGY.”<sup>34</sup>

“ SHEEP GIVE UP THEIR WOOL FOR BLANKETS, SASHES, AND RIBBONS; OXEN PULL WOODEN PLOWS; HORSES AND BURROS - NOT COMMON, BUT OCCASIONAL ANIMALS IN THE SIERRA TARAUMARA – ARE USED AS BEASTS OF BURDEN. ALL LIVESTOCK ARE A WALKING SAVINGS ACCOUNT, POTENTIAL COMMODITIES THAT CAN BE SOLD OR TRADED IN TIME OF NEED AS A HEDGE AGAINST STARVATION.”<sup>35</sup>

WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF SHEEP AND GOATS, THE RARÁMURI SUPPLEMENTED THEIR CLOTHING OF AGAVE PLANT FIBERS, WITH WOOL, AND MORE RECENTLY HAVE ADDED COTTONS FOR WHICH THEY BARTER, PARTICULARLY WITH THE LARGE NUMBER OF MENNONITE FARMERS WHO LIVE AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAINS NEAR CHAUHTEMOC, 82 MILES WEST OF CHIHUAHUA.

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<sup>34</sup>Bennett and Zingg 13.

<sup>35</sup>Zingg, Robert M. “Christmassing With The Tarachumaras.” Coyote Wisdom, Davies, J. Frank, Boatright, Mary C., and Ransom, Harry H. eds. Austin, Texas: Texas Folklore Publications No. 14, 1938. 207-224 at 47.

THE RARÁMURI HAD LOOMS WHEN THE JESUITS ARRIVED BUT THEY NOW WEAVE WOOLEN, RATHER THAN AGAVE BLANKETS, AND OMIT THE RABBIT SKINS AND FEATHERS THEY USED TO WEAVE IN FOR WARMTH. THEY WEAVE PATTERNED SASHES, ALTHOUGH NO RUGS, FOR WHICH THEY HAVE NO USE ON THEIR POUNDED DIRT OR CAVE FLOORS. THEY HAVE NO FURNITURE, MATTRESSES, PILLOWS, OR PADS.

REPORTED TO SLEEP SIMPLY WHENEVER AND WHEREVER THEY FEEL TIRED, THEY LIVE OUTDOORS AS MUCH AS IN CAVES, UNDER CLIFFS OR IN LEAN-TO SHELTERS. THEY ARE SAID TO CONDUCT ALL ACTIVITIES OUTDOORS AS WELL AS INDOORS, WHEREVER THEY HAPPEN TO BE.

RARÁMURI MAKE FUNCTIONAL POTTERY AND BASKETS. **[SHOW BASKETS]\*** IN SPITE OF HAVING NO SCISSORS, LET ALONE SEWING MACHINES, THEY SEW WELL, WITH SOME EMBROIDERY, AND MANY WEAR THEIR TRADITIONAL CLOTHING.

MANY WOMEN, CHILDREN AND MEN REMAIN BAREFOOT, WINTER AND SUMMER, BUT SOME WEAR THONG SANDALS, ORIGINALLY WITH SOLES MADE OF AGAVE FIBER, NOWADAYS OFTEN WITH RUBBER TIRE SOLES. **[PHOTO 12, Richard Fisher]\***

EVERYONE WEARS A SMALL WOODEN CROSS ON BEADS AROUND THEIR NECK.<sup>36</sup> MEN AND OLDER BOYS WEAR A LOIN CLOTH; WOMEN WEAR SEVERAL LAYERS OF PLEATED SKIRTS, OFTEN IN BRIGHT COLORS. MEN, WOMEN, AND CHILDREN WEAR SASHES, BLOUSES, AND HEADBANDS, CALLED “KOYERA”, ADDING EXTRA LAYERS. FOR FESTIVALS AND CEREMONIES WHITE CLAY BODY PAINT, TURKEY FEATHERS AND RIBBONED HEADDRESSES ARE ADDED. **[PHOTOS 13 & 14, L. Verplancken]\***. CATHOLIC FEAST DAYS WERE STILL “BEING OBSERVED WHILE THE TEACHINGS WERE FORGOTTEN” WHEN CARL LUMHOLTZ LIVED AMONG THEM.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Bennett and Zingg 261.

<sup>37</sup>Lumholtz 138.

DRUMS ARE PRACTICAL COMMUNICATORS OVER LONG DISTANCES IN GREAT CANYONS AND ARE USED CEREMONIALLY AS WELL. **[SHOW DRUM AND PHOTO 15, Richard Fisher]\***

WE HAD SEEN NO ONE OUR FIRST DAY ON THE TRAILS, AND WE RETIRED WITHOUT A FIRE OR LIGHT AT SUNSET TO OUR TENT, RESPECTING THE RAR? MURI BELIEF THAT THE DEAD ARE AWAKE AND INHABIT THE NIGHT. “NIGHT IS THE DAY OF THE MOON AND DURING THIS DAY, THE DEAD AND THE SOUL FUNCTION.”<sup>38</sup> “THE LAND OF THE DEAD IS A LAND OF OPPOSITES. NIGHT IS THE DAY OF THE DEAD.”<sup>39</sup> WHEN WE HEARD DRUMS OUR FIRST NIGHT OUT IN THE CANYONS, WE ASSUMED OUR PRESENCE WAS NOTED.

REED FLUTES AND WOODEN PEBBLE-FILLED RATTLES, AS WELL AS FIDDLES, MADE OF ASH AND ROUGHLY STYLED AFTER SPANISH VIOLINS, ARE WIDELY MADE AND PLAYED.

**[PHOTO 16, Richard Fisher]\***

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<sup>38</sup>Bennett and Zingg 323.

<sup>39</sup>Bennett and Zingg 251.



THE RARÁMURI PETITION ONORUAME WHO IS FATHER SUN AND IYERAME WHO IS MOTHER MOON. DIABLO ARRIVED WITH THE SPANISH AND HE PERSISTS IN RARÁMURI CULTURE AS AN EVIL SPIRIT UNDER THE EARTH WITH WHOM OUTSIDERS WHO HARM THE RARÁMURI ARE ASSOCIATED.

HOP-DANCING, CHANTING, AND WHISTLING ARE COMMON. EACH DWELLING PLACE HAS A CEREMONIAL PATIO ASSOCIATED WITH IT, OFTEN BEARING THREE ONE-FOOT HIGH WOODEN CROSSES REPRESENTING THE FATHER SUN, THE MOTHER MOON AND THE MORNING STAR.<sup>40</sup> “ON THEIR ARRIVAL IN AMERICA, THE SPANIARDS TO THEIR AMAZEMENT FOUND INDIANS IN POSSESSION OF THE CROSS. . . . THE CROSS TO THE INDIAN IS THE SYMBOL OF A COSMIC IDEA, PECKED ON THE ROCKS, DRAWN IN THE SAND OR MADE IN CORRESPONDING STROKES WITH MEDICINE OVER THE PATIENT’S BODY. WITH THE TARAUMARA THE CROSS IS THE PIVOT AROUND WHICH ALL CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS MOVE.”<sup>41</sup> THE STARS ARE

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<sup>40</sup>Lumholtz 2.

<sup>41</sup>Lumholtz 172, 173.

CONSIDERED TO BE THE CHILDREN OF THE SUN AND THE MOON.<sup>42</sup> ALTHOUGH THERE ARE FREQUENT RAIN AND HARVEST CEREMONIES, THE RAR? MURI HAVE NO WAR DANCE, NO SCALP CEREMONY, NO WARRIOR'S INITIATION CEREMONY, AND NO WARRIOR-HERO CEREMONY.<sup>43</sup>

WENDELL BENNETT WRITES THAT AMONG RARÁMURI, DEATH IS NOT AN OCCASION FOR GRIEF; RATHER IT IS AN ACCEPTED FACT OF LIFE, NOT THOUGHT OF AS AN END, BUT AS A CHANGE. THREE WEEKS AFTER DEATH, A FIESTA IS HELD WITH DANCING, CHANTING, OFTEN A CEREMONIAL RACE, AND OFFERINGS. REPEATED FESTIVALS HONORING THE SAME PERSON ARE HELD, FEATURING, OF COURSE, DRUMS, BODY PAINT, FIDDLES AND FLUTES, DANCING AND LOTS OF CORN BEER. BODIES ARE BURIED IN A CAVE OR GRAVE WITH FOOD PROVIDED FOR THE JOURNEY.<sup>44</sup> IT IS SAID THAT "THE SOUL IS

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<sup>42</sup>Bennett and Zingg 349.

<sup>43</sup>Bennett and Zingg 379.

<sup>44</sup>Bennett and Zingg 363.

LIKE A BUTTERFLY THAT FLIES AWAY IN DEATH AND LEAVES ONLY THE HUSK BEHIND.”<sup>45</sup>

RICHARD FISHER OBSERVES: “RESPECT FOR ANOTHER IS OF PRIMORDIAL IMPORTANCE AMONG THE RARÁMURI . . . ON ARRIVING WHERE PEOPLE ARE GATHERED, THE RARÁMURI GREET BY HAND EACH ONE OF THOSE PRESENT, EVEN THOUGH THERE BE MANY PEOPLE, . . .THIS GREETING IS ANOTHER CHARACTERISTIC MARK OF THEIR COURTESY AND OF THAT RESPECT AND VALUE THEY FEEL FOR PERSONS OVER MATERIAL OBJECTS. THEIR HANDSHAKE IS A GENTLE CARESS OF THE PALM SIMILAR TO A WESTERN HANDSHAKE, BUT WITH NO CLASP OR GRIP. THEY FEEL A GRIP OF THE HAND IS AN EFFORT TO DOMINATE THEM.”<sup>46</sup>

AS FR. VERPLANCKEN PUTS IT: “. . .THEIR ACTIONS ARE THEIR TRUTH, A TRUTH THAT NECESSARILY EVOLVES AND FITS INTO THEIR DAILY LIVES WHICH ALSO CHANGE, BUT ALWAYS FOLLOWING A RULE IN HARMONY WITH THEIR

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<sup>45</sup>Bennett and Zingg 250.

<sup>46</sup>Fisher 53.

TRADITIONS: THESE ARE CHANGES WHICH COME ABOUT AS THEY LIVE THEIR DAILY LIVES, AND NOT BECAUSE OF ANY THEORETICAL IMPERATIVES. THIS IS THEIR RELIGION AS PRACTICED IN LIVING DAY TO DAY, AND NEVER AS A CONCEPT.”<sup>47</sup>

THE SHAMAN, AN ABORIGINAL PRESENCE, REMAINS A CENTRAL FIGURE IN RAR? MURI LIFE. SHE OR HE “USES DREAM AS A MEANS OF ANALYSIS, . . .CURES BY BREATHING, SINGING, CONCOCTING HERB REMEDIES OR SUCKING OUT DISEASED OBJECTS WITH A TUBE. THE SHAMAN’S PERFORMANCE SERVES AS PREVENTATIVE AS WELL AS A CURE, IS ATTACHED TO THE MORE FUNDAMENTAL SITUATIONS OR CRISES IN THE CULTURE, AND IS NEVER ATTACHED TO THE CHURCH AND ITS FUNCTIONS.”<sup>48</sup> BEFORE SOMEONE IS ALLOWED TO BE A SHAMAN, HE OR SHE IS “EXAMINED” BY A BOARD OF OTHER SHAMANS FOR FITNESS.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Verplancken 26.

<sup>48</sup>Bennett and Zingg 360.

<sup>49</sup>Lumholtz 312.

THERE IS VERY LITTLE CRIME AND MOST ARISES DURING TESGUINADAS. THE COMMUNITY PATTERN IS THAT THERE IS A LEADING CHIEF, THREE ADVISORY CHIEFS AND A COUNCIL OF ELDERS.<sup>50</sup> SOMEONE ACTING AS JUDGE LEADS COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING AND JUDGES THE GUILT OR INNOCENCE OF PEOPLE ACCUSED OF WRONGDOING. PERSONS ASKED TO BE DECISION-MAKERS OFTEN CARRY SPECIAL CANES, OR “VARA.” THEY HAVE NEITHER CLERKS NOR LAWYERS. TRIALS OR HEARINGS ARE OPEN TO EVERYONE. WITNESSES ARE CALLED. THE DECISION IS ACCEPTED AS FINAL WITH NEITHER A NEW TRIAL NOR AN APPEAL. ZINGG NOTES: “THE GUILTY ONE ACCEPTS PUNISHMENT STOICALLY AND IS RE-ESTABLISHED TO HIS OR HER FORMER SOCIAL STATUS.”<sup>51</sup>

AFTER HEARING FROM THE PERSONS INVOLVED, THE WRONGDOER IS USUALLY SCOLDED IN FRONT OF THE COMMUNITY. THE JUDGE CAN CONFISCATE PROPERTY FOR RESTITUTION. A THIEF MUST MAKE THE VICTIM WHOLE. A

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<sup>50</sup>Bennett and Zingg 376.

<sup>51</sup>Bennett and Zingg 218.

REPEAT OFFENDER MAY BE LOCKED IN A CORN GRANARY FOR ONE OR TWO DAYS. ACCORDING TO ANTHROPOLOGIST JOHN KENNEDY, “ THE SAME INDIVIDUALS WHO ACT ROWDY, JOVIAL, AND EVEN VIOLENTLY AT A TESGUINADA BEHAVE WITH EXTREME GRAVITY AT A COMMUNITY MEETING.” AFTER SENTENCING, EACH SIDE CLASPS HANDS WITH THE OTHER AND RAISES THEM OVER THEIR HEADS, SHAKING THEM 3 TIMES. THEN THEY ALL DO THE SAME WITH THE JUDGE AND OFFICIALS.<sup>52</sup>

IT IS A PUNISHABLE CRIME TO MISTREAT A CHILD. CHILDREN ARE DISTINGUISHED FROM ADULTS AND ARE TRIED AND PUNISHED BY A SPECIAL JUDGE.<sup>53</sup> “PARENTS NEVER INFLICT CORPORAL PUNISHMENT UPON THE YOUNG PEOPLE.”<sup>54</sup>

ONLY FOR VERY SERIOUS CRIMES, LIKE MURDER, DO THE RARÁMURI TURN TO MEXICAN OFFICIALS. THEY BELIEVE THAT DRUNKENNESS EXCUSES AN INDIVIDUAL FROM BEING

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<sup>52</sup>Bennett and Zingg 218.

<sup>53</sup>Bennett and Zingg 185.

<sup>54</sup>Lumholtz 274.

HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS; THAT WHEN A DRUNK PERSON COMMITS A CRIME, THE FAULT LIES WITH THE BEER RATHER THAN THE PERSON'S WILL.

KENNEDY RELATES AN EXAMPLE HE WITNESSED. AT A TESGUINO, A MAN NAMED ROMAN KILLED THE FATHER OF TASIO BY BASHING HIS HEAD WITH A ROCK. THE NEXT MORNING, THE WITNESSES MET AND DECIDED ON A PLAN TO CAPTURE ROMAN. THEY DISPATCHED SELEDONIO TO GO TO ROMAN AND TELL HIM HE WOULD HELP HIM ESCAPE. ROMAN AGREED AND, UNSUSPECTING, FOLLOWED HIM TO THE PLACE OF DIONICIO WHERE HE WAS SEIZED AND HANDED OVER TO THE MEXICAN AUTHORITIES AND LOCKED IN A SHED PENDING TRANSFER TO THE JAIL 10 MILES AWAY.

TWO DAYS LATER, ROMAN ESCAPED FROM THE SHED AND WENT HOME. FOR SEVERAL MONTHS HE STAYED OUT LATE WITH THE GOATS AND FIRST AVOIDED TESGUINADAS, BUT THEN BEGAN TO MAKE CONTACT AGAIN WITH NEIGHBORS. NO ONE THOUGHT OF HIM AS A DIFFERENT TYPE OF PERSON BECAUSE OF HIS CRIME AND HE WAS NEVER IMPRISONED.

“SEVERAL OF HIS NEIGHBORS, HOWEVER, EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT AFTER HIS DEATH HE MIGHT END UP IN THE UNDERWORLD.”<sup>55</sup>

MOST DISPUTES ARE RESOLVED IMMEDIATELY AND FORGOTTEN. KENNEDY IS OF THE OPINION THAT “THE COMBINATION OF THEIR BELIEFS ABOUT THE CAUSES OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOR, THEIR GENERALLY PASSIVE AND SHY PERSONALITIES” -- THERE ARE NO SWEAR WORDS IN THE RARÁMURI VOCABULARY<sup>56</sup> -- “AND THE NEED FOR HARMONY UNDER THEIR ISOLATED LIVING CONDITIONS HAS LED THE RARÁMURI TO CREATE AN EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF GOVERNING THEMSELVES AND REGULATING THEIR SOCIETY.”<sup>57</sup>

PEOPLE WHO LIVE AT SUBSISTENCE LEVEL WITH A BARTER ECONOMY DEPEND UPON ONE ANOTHER’S COOPERATION AND ARE HEAVILY INVESTED IN ONE ANOTHER. THIS INTERDEPENDENCE MAY WELL FOSTER A CULTURE OF

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<sup>55</sup>Kennedy 54-55.

<sup>56</sup>Verplancken 26.

<sup>57</sup>Kennedy 54-55.



RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND EXPLAIN THE DIGNITY WITH WHICH THE RARÁMURI TREAT STRANGERS AS WELL AS ONE ANOTHER.

THE RARÁMURI CULTURE IS ONE OF PEACE, FRUGALITY, RESPECT, AND TRANQUILITY, ALL IN TUNE, SYMBIOTICALLY, WITH THE IMMEDIATE WORLD IN WHICH THEY LIVE.

AT THE VERY LEAST, RARÁMURI LIFE IS A SORT OF BALM TO OUR UPROOTED, OFTEN DESTRUCTIVE, COMPLICATED, AND ISOLATING CULTURE. ALTHOUGH WE MIGHT NOT CHOOSE TO CHANGE PLACES WITH THEM, THE RARÁMURI, OUR NEIGHBORS, SURVIVE AS A FUNCTIONING ABORIGINAL CULTURE<sup>58</sup> AND THUS, REACH BACK FOR US ACROSS THOUSANDS OF YEARS, REMINDING US OF SOME BASIC HUMAN VALUES, AND, PERHAPS, TEACHING US SOMETHING OF WHO WE ARE.

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MATÉTERA BA (THANK YOU)

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<sup>58</sup>Bennett and Zingg 392.



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