

## **Religious Imagery in the Guarani Jesuitical Missions**

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### **Abstract**

Catholic images were manufactured by the labor of thousands indigenous men - selected by the priests- in all villages of the Guarani Jesuitical missions (part of Argentina, Paraguay, Brasil and Uruguay now). Later on, they became really master craftsmen. These sculptures were used both in the catholic ritual as in the shamanic guarani. Like many other objects, many of these images have persisted over time. Many of them continuing with their original purpose of worship, and other claimed for other uses. The period occurred between their initial use and current holds 'life stories' for them -processes of transformation that in some cases have changed the structure of the images.

The religious imagery transportation was in charge of the priests –through schools and churches- until 1768, when they were expelled by Charles III politics.

This heritage has survived thanks to the popular devotion but there is a question to make: where are the sculptures made by the eleven villages in the actual Misiones province of Argentina? They are not in museums, temples or houses although they were carried by the missionaries to preserve them from the destruction and fire of Candelaria and the war against Brazil.

The passage of time, the forms of provision for the worship, rituals, or the various places of deposit, have no longer features in the images which can be seen to the naked eye of the 'others'. The aim of this paper is intend to interpret the practices the migrants value and carry with them in their movements between old and new worlds.