

British Library Add. Ms. 25,324: a typical colonial grammar

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The manuscript Additional 25,324 from the British Library contains a grammar of the Jebero language, *Gramatica dela Lengua Xebera*, as spoken in the eighteenth century. The manuscript assumedly had been written by Father Samuel Fritz (1654–1728), a Jesuit missionary. It is a typical colonial, missionary grammar in that it is, (i), “un instrumento de la evangelización” (ZIMMERMANN, 1997: 15), (ii), “describing [the] Indian language in terms of a Latin model” (SMITH-STARK, 2007: 4).

Jebero is a North Peruvian language belonging to the Cahuapana language family. Chayahuita is the other member of the family (MUYSKEN, 2004, 447-449). Jebero is still spoken by some 2,000 people in a district called Jeberos (FABRE, 1994, 2: 318). It is an agglutinative SOV language.

In this talk, we analyze the contents of the manuscript, as well as those of a companion codex: *Vocabulario enla lengua Castellana, la del Ynga y Xebera*, Ms. Add. 25,323, in order to bring to light the religious and the cultural context in which the books were written.

The talk also includes an ethno-historical sketch of the Jebero people (PILAR 2010, www.everyculture.com/South-America/Jebero.html) and, since little is known of Jebero so far, a survey of the language as described in the manuscript, supplemented with modern data (BENDOR-SAMUEL 1961, PILAR forthcoming, Wise 1999).

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