

Loca Sancta in the New World:
The Creation of Sacred Space in the Spanish California Missions, 1769-1823

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ABSTRACT

Art historical scholarship on the California missions has been largely formalist, focusing on church architecture and religious art. The ritual aspect of sacred placemaking, while integral to the experience of these spaces, has received little attention from historians of visual culture. Architectural survival and preservation have also obscured the contested nature of sacred space, which was an ongoing negotiation between Christianity and Indigenous religions, between the spiritual and industrial agenda of the mission, and between the Franciscan missionaries and the military governors. This study of historic architecture and place investigates the interplay of the built environment and faith practice in the missions through an interdisciplinary lens which draws on ritual theory, material culture studies, and postcolonial thought. It seeks to understand how sacred spaces were created on both sides of an uneven power relationship, situating it within the wider context of the Spanish colonial program in America and linking the missions to a longer western Christian tradition of sacred place making through architecture and performance.

Franciscan missionaries founded twenty-one missions in Alta California between 1769 and 1823, in the closing decades of the Spanish empire in America. Missions were spiritual-industrial enterprises established in frontier lands for the purpose of gathering the dispersed and semi-nomadic Indigenous peoples into settlements where they could be converted to Christianity and introduced to agriculture and related trades, under the guidance of missionary priests. A multidimensional approach that considers extant architecture, period images, Franciscan documents, travelers' accounts, artifactual evidence, and contemporaneous Indigenous perspectives is employed in order to recover

the performative nature of sacred space, and to reclaim spaces of Indigenous cultural persistence, erased by ruin and a prevailing Christian narrative.

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INTRODUCTION

The twenty-one missions founded by Franciscan missionaries in Alta California between 1769 and 1823, transformed the landscape and culture of what was then a remote northern territory of New Spain, yet their role as creators of place has received little attention from historians of visual culture. Missions were religious and economic centers established on the frontiers to congregate the dispersed and semi-nomadic Indigenous peoples into fixed settlements, where they could be converted to Christianity and introduced to agriculture and related trades, under the guidance of missionary priests. The mission church, which was the architectural highlight and spiritual core of the built complex, has been the subject of several formal studies. However, the process of sacred placemaking as the interplay of built form and ritual, which was integral to the experience of these spaces, is understudied. Questions of style, artistic influence, and maker attribution have dominated the conversation. Furthermore, architectural survival and preservation have obscured the contested nature of sacred space, which was an ongoing negotiation between Christianity and Indigenous religions, as well as between the spiritual and industrial agenda of the mission. Evangelization and economic exploitation, the twin goals of Spanish conquest, were often in competition and outright opposition. The balance between religious and secular interests shifted as Spain's fortunes waned after the sixteenth century, and ideas of the Enlightenment changed perceptions of personal liberty, and paternalistic institutions.

The Spanish government authorized the establishment of missions in Alta California, enlisting Franciscans in what was intended as a short-lived orientation program for the Hispanicization of Native Californians, to be quickly followed by their integration

into regular Spanish settlement towns. In spite of government efforts to hasten the assimilation of the Indigenous population into the traditional Spanish urban plan, the Franciscans managed to keep control of the missions for more than sixty years. In 1834, the Secularization Act issued by the newly independent Mexican government forced the missionaries to cede authority to the civil government administration, despite their protests that the Native Californians in their charge were not ready for self-governance.¹ Contrary to the plan which called for distributing mission lands to the Indigenous mission residents for their own cultivation and management, the properties were mostly parceled out as ranchos to well-connected Hispanic settlers in Mexican California.

Widespread mismanagement in the post-secularization period resulted in the failure of mission enterprises, abandonment, and neglect of the buildings. By the time California acquired statehood in 1850, most of the missions had fallen into ruin. The plight of the Indigenous peoples worsened, as their claims to mission lands were eroded by bureaucratic requirements, and they found themselves having to work for the new landowners in order to survive. The discovery of gold in northern California beginning in 1848, and continuing in the next several years, brought a massive influx of people into the area, exacerbating the marginalization of Native Californians.

Crafting the Past: Myth and History

By the late nineteenth century, a railway system transformed the state from an isolated outpost to a popular destination for travelers. Carleton Watkins' photographs of the missions, beginning in 1876, are some of the earliest images taken of them before

¹ Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821.

restoration (figs. I-1 to I-4). Henry Chapman Ford's sketches and paintings, mostly done in the 1880s, lent a romantic aura to crumbling walls and collapsed towers set in the picturesque landscape (figs. I.5 to I.8). Helen Hunt Jackson, an early advocate for the disadvantaged Native Californian communities, published her observations about their impoverished living conditions, and actively lobbied Congress to improve their situation.² However, she garnered greater attention for her cause by writing a fictional love story between a mixed-race Scottish-Native American woman and a Native American man in early post-Mexican California. Her novel, *Ramona*, was published in 1884 and became a bestseller. The missions, and particularly the churches, were surviving relics of a past which came to be viewed through an idealized lens. The Spanish craze which ensued from nostalgic images and literature may have been based on myth, but it helped seed the historic preservation movement in California and paved the way for serious historical scholarship.

Previous studies on the California missions have either concentrated on the formal qualities of the built environment or the social and economic aspects of colonization. Rexford Newcomb's *The Old Mission Churches and Historic Houses of California: their History, Architecture, Art and Lore* (1925), was one of the first empirical efforts to document the building history and formal qualities of each mission church. Newcomb traced each site's evolution from early thatched structures, to their eventual replacement with more permanent adobe and stone buildings, growing larger and more well-appointed in relation to the mission's growing prosperity. He made some of the earliest measured drawings, noted architectural style commonalities, and listed art and furnishings. In its scope and level of detail, Newcomb's relatively early work remains a creditable reference

² See Helen Hunt Jackson, *Glimpses of Three Coasts* (Boston: Roberts Bros., 1886).

on the California missions, despite its almost exclusive focus on form. In his own study, *Architecture of the California Missions* (1958), Kurt Baer organized the missions into three non-exclusive typologies based on the stylistic sources of their architectural composition and decorative elements: Fortress, Plateresque and Baroque, and Neoclassic (figs. I.9 to I-12).³ Art historian Norman Neuerburg investigated the decorative painting which adorned the walls and ceilings of the missions. *The Decoration of California Missions* (1991) identified western sources and Indian motifs, and discussed materials and techniques. Neuerburg also named several artists who came from among the missionary, Native Californian, and soldier ranks, as well as journeyman painters from Mexico, Spain, and parts of the United States (figs. I-13 to I-18).⁴ Clara Bargellini, whose work focuses on Mexican colonial art, co-authored *The Arts of the Missions of Northern New Spain 1600-1821* (2009) and published other essays which shed light on the provenance and studio influences of several paintings which hung in the California missions. James Sandos' *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (2004), Steven Hackel's *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (2005), and Lisbeth Haas' *Saints and Citizens: Indigenous Histories of Colonial Missions and Mexican California, 1750-1850* (2014) are some of the

³ Kurt Baer, *Architecture of the California Missions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 26-39. Baer acknowledges that the California examples cannot match the sophistication and elaboration of the European and Central Mexican models because of the limited material and labor resources in the region. Nevertheless, he singles out a few examples: The massive stone walls, thick buttresses, and severe façade of Mission San Gabriel resemble a fortress; the arched framing over the star window and the anticlassical dome on the left tower at Mission San Carlos Borromeo recall the sculptural freedom of the Baroque and the playfulness of the Plateresque; the façade of Mission Santa Barbara is unmistakably Classical.

⁴ Norman Neuerburg, *The Decoration of California Missions* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Bellerophon Books, 1991), 64-66, 71-72. Neuerburg singles out the interior of Mission San Miguel Arcángel, created by the Spanish artist Esteban Munras around 1821 or 1822; it is the only mission interior that has been kept intact (with a few minor retouches) to the present day. The decoration of the Asistencia de San Antonio de Pala, at satellite of Mission San Luis Rey, was done shortly after its founding in 1816. It is notable because it features the handiwork of anonymous Indian artists.

more notable mission scholars who have written history from an anthropological and sociological perspective, emphasizing the relationships between the missionaries and the Native Californians, and the effects wrought by environmental and demographic changes brought by the Spaniards. Rose Marie Beebe and Robert Senkewicz, whose work is distinguished by careful translation of original language sources, have also published extensively about the missionary-Native encounter. Their latest collaboration, *Junípero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary* (2015) offers insight into the Franciscan mission founder's motives and aspirations, drawn from his personal and official communications.

Though robustly diverse, the academic discourse has been focused on the missions as a transformer of California history. While this is a legitimate and relevant view of their significance, the California missions can also be situated within a wider context of the Spanish colonial project in America through the common narrative of place and identity formation at a cultural contact point. This cultural connection to the Iberian Peninsula, and to Mexico, which the United States shares a border with, is an overlooked aspect of an American history which often overemphasizes Anglo-British frames of reference. Furthermore, art and architectural historical studies in this field have seldom employed a theoretical and historical lens to analyze the mission program using a paradigm of sacred space, thus linking to a longer tradition of sacred place making through architecture and ritual. More specifically, this project seeks to answer questions about how sacred space was created—that is—conceived, represented, built, and memorialized in an environment that increasingly prioritized economic production over spiritual edification. Finally, it inquires as to the place of the California missions in relation to other religious centers

which were built throughout the centuries long arc of the Spanish colonial empire in the New World.

Definitions

An analysis of religious space shares theoretical and methodological perspectives with a more broadly conceived field of sacred space studies, which looks beyond cathedrals, temples, stupas, burial grounds and other sites of religious significance. Secular groups have claimed monuments, battlefields, natural landscapes and similar places of communal meaning or commemorative importance as hallowed ground, and have advocated for their protection from destruction, or encroachment by other interests. Emile Durkheim defined religion as a social system,

*“. . . a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community . . . “*⁵

The sacred is a quality of virtue or power that things acquire when they are “set apart and forbidden” by the community, thus creating the distinguishing and opposing categories of the sacred and the profane, within and without, clean and unclean, which characterize religious systems. The California missions that are the focus of this analysis were established to convert Indigenous communities on the Spanish colonial frontier to Catholicism. Sacred space is defined here as a distinct place where an individual or group experiences a sense of connection to the supernatural, or the divine, while engaged in faith-based spatial practice. The site can be physically marked by a natural form, such as a mountain; or visibly signaled by a man-made structure, such as a temporary ring of stones,

⁵ Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, translated by Karen E. Fields (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 44.

or a more permanent building. Ritual observance may or may not be anchored to a consistent location. When the space is dedicated to a type of religious ritual, it acquires a stable meaning over time for the participants and believers of the practice's underlying faith. When performance is not fixed to a specific place, sacrality is rendered transitory, moveable. This aligns with a Durkheimian view of the sacred which Chidester and Linenthal described as "situational" in contrast to the "substantial" determination proposed by Rudolf Otto and Mircea Eliade, who posited that the sacred inherently resided in certain things which elicited otherworldly, or numinous experiences in believers.⁶ The situational definition applies to the California missions, whose sacred spaces were wrought by the creation of the built environment and the institution of ritual practice.

Terminology, Modes of Address, Naming Conventions

It is necessary to define and clarify the use of certain terms which will appear repeatedly and interchangeably in the text.

California, Alta California, vs. Baja California

The Spanish empire encompassed the Baja California peninsula and the region to its north, then called Alta California. Mexico acquired independence from Spain in 1821 and at that time claimed both Baja and Alta California. It ceded the latter to the United States in 1848, at the end of the Mexican-American War. Alta California became the thirty-first state of United States in 1850. In this document, Alta California and California are

⁶ David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal, *American Sacred Spaces* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 5. Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige* was published in German in 1917 and in English as *The Idea of the Holy* in 1923. *The Sacred and the Profane* by Mircea Eliade was published in 1957.

used to refer to the same territory north of the Baja peninsula. Baja California is specified as such.

Indian

Columbus believed he was just off the mainland of India when he landed in the Bahamian archipelago in 1492, not realizing that the American continent and the Pacific Ocean still stood between him and Asia. The islands were thus called the “Indies” and the Natives dubbed “Indians.” The latter term came to be applied to all Indigenous peoples in the New World. This appellation continues to be used and accepted in present day California mission scholarship, and by several Native American organizations (e.g., American Indian College Fund) and heritage institutions (e.g., Chumash Indian Museum).

Native Californians, Indigenous peoples, Native peoples

These phrases collectively refer to the original residents of the territory that the Spaniards called California. At the time of Spanish settlement in 1769, it is estimated that there were 310,000 Indigenous inhabitants of California. The anthropologist Alfred Kroeber identified six major linguistic groups which comprised several tribes or tribelets who shared a language (and related dialects) and occupied a definite territory.⁷ Missions were situated close to the coast and inland transport routes, and also near local villages to facilitate proselytization to as many people as possible. When possible, the particular tribes or tribelets are named, especially when discussing a specific mission.

⁷ Robert Heizer and Albert Elsasser, *The Natural World of the California Indians* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 3-27.

Neophyte, Baptized Indian, Mission Indian

The Franciscans designated the newly baptized Indian as a “neophyte” to reflect that he/she was still in the early stages of learning to be a Christian. Due to limited resources and productivity, the missions could not house every baptized Indian. For instance, at the missions of San Diego and San Luis Rey, only those neophytes training for specialized jobs, orphans, unmarried girls, widows, the sick and elderly lived onsite; the remainder stayed in their Native villages, or rancherías, situated not far from the mission.⁸ A neophyte who did live in the mission complex for an extended period was called a mission Indian.

Father, Padre, Friar, Fray

The vast majority of Franciscans who came to Alta California as missionaries were ordained priests. Padre and Father are synonymous and are used as nouns or titles. Friar is traditional term for a member of the Mendicant religious order. Fray is a title used to precede the name of the friar (e.g. Fray Junípero Serra).

Christian, Catholic

The three major branches of Christianity, represented by Roman Catholicism (sometimes simply called Catholicism), Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism, are differentiated by specific doctrinal beliefs and practices. While Protestant missionaries later came to the American continent, the terms Christian and Catholic are used interchangeably in the context of California and the period under discussion. An avid Catholicism distinguished the Spanish Christian faith. The religious orders (Franciscans,

⁸ Kent Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants: the Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 57, 65.

Dominicans, Augustinians) who first came to the New World came mostly from Spain; all were Catholic. The Alta California missions were founded by Franciscan missionaries. In this document they are referred to as such, but can also be designated more broadly as Catholic, or Christian.

Methods and Materials

Mission churches, often the only architectural survivors of a ruinous period following secularization in 1834, were the first subjects of the California historic preservation movement. Most have been heavily restored, and while the furnishings are from the period, few are original to the location, since widespread looting and undocumented removal of objects preceded restoration efforts. This study triangulates mission-era documentation such as building reports, account books, and inventories, against present-day site observations, restoration records, and objects with verified provenance, in order to recover the sacred spaces as built and as furnished.

Performance is ephemeral, and therefore elusive to visual capture in the pre-digital era. Reconstructing it requires a multi-dimensional approach which enlists extant architecture, period images, Franciscan reports, travelers' accounts, archaeological evidence, and contemporaneous (albeit sparse) Indigenous perspectives. Of the latter, only one first-person account exists. Pablo Tac was born at Mission San Luis Rey and wrote about the architecture, daily life, and Indigenous customs still practiced during his time. Other narratives have come from Native Californians born shortly after the mission period, and who learned from oral histories passed down through family members. Archaeological findings can corroborate or challenge the written documentation. Material culture

recovered from the private spaces of the mission Indians include objects which could have been used in Indigenous ritual. These suggest that sacred spaces in the missions were not confined to Christian practice, but also included the appropriation of sites for pre-Spanish faith ceremonies held discreetly, or in disguised form, in front of the missionaries. Period images can also offer investigative possibilities, if scrutinized alongside the descriptive eyewitness accounts of religious performance. Most of these spaces, like the rancherías, or Indian dwellings within the mission complex, are no longer extant, but are depicted in the visual record.⁹

Outline of the Work

This project approaches architectural history with an interdisciplinary lens, drawing upon ritual studies, cartographic theory, and postcolonial thought in order to understand the relationship between building and place.

Chapter One traces the origins of the missions, as a concept, and as interpreted in architectural precedents. The idea of a separate space for Indigenous communities grew out of the early abuses of the Spanish colonial system. Over time, various architectural responses evolved out of different contexts: from a primarily religious sanctuary in the metropolitan districts of central Mexico, to an adjunct colony near military forts along the silver mining trail, and to the quasi-industrial establishments of Alta California. These

⁹ Edith Buckland Webb Collection, Vol. 7 C: Indian Villages, Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library, Santa Barbara, California, United States. I am indebted to Edith Buckland Webb for assembling one of the earliest collections of historic images and information about the mission rancherías, which had mostly vanished by the beginning of the twentieth century. Her *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, first published in 1952, is a seminal study of the spaces and people who lived in the California missions, and remains an important reference to this day.

different built forms are discussed as part of a broad chronology leading to the decision to establish missions north of the Baja California peninsula.

The universalizing tendency of mapping, and the assignment of new names erased ethnic identities and fashioned new histories for Indigenous places, and helped shape the image of California as a Christian landscape even before the missions were established.

Chapter Two considers how sacred space was envisioned prior to actual encounter, and how spatial representations, first derived from religious cosmography, and gradually modified to reflect post-Columbian discovery, presented the image of the world to popes, monarchs, explorers, and missionaries. It discusses the idea of the New World, and the ideal of the civic polity as rooted in a Christian humanist philosophy. The trajectory of early modern cartography, and its development as an instrument of colonization, is examined.

Chapter Three introduces the ritual-architecture paradigm conceived by Lindsay Jones, for the analysis of sacred architecture. Jones, a historian of religions, suggested that we interpret religious buildings as sites of fluid and varied experience rather than analyze them as formal symbols of fixed sacred meaning. The chapter foregrounds an awareness of religious material culture, which is often taken for granted because of its ubiquity, and argues that more than just an index of ritual, ceremonial objects functioned as carriers of meaning, and active agents of sacred space creation.

Chapter Four presents three California mission case studies which illustrate the creation of sacred space as a multifaceted process, beginning with christening the chosen site with a new name. It adapts Jones' hermeneutical approach to religious architecture by

linking the histories of building and ritual for each case study, thus presenting a fuller picture of how the missionaries inscribed Christianity on a frontier landscape.

Chapter Five addresses the contestation between Indigenous and Christian beliefs, which co-existed in the mission, and at times merged in the same space. By using primary and ethnographic sources to interrogate the negative and peripheral spaces in period drawings, the images are read “against the grain,” in an attempt to recover the lost spaces of Indigenous ritual within the mission. Such a decentralized visual analysis pushes back against a narrative of absolute Christian triumph currently enforced by the survival and restoration of the mission church.

Chapter Six summarizes the evidence in light of the arguments and guiding questions of the dissertation, offers conclusions, and suggestions for further study.

The **Appendix** contains data tables which present the architectural developments, religious furnishings, and number of Indian baptisms for each mission case study in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 1

A Space Apart

The idea of a separate space for the religious conversion and Hispanicization of Native Americans gained currency shortly after the establishment of the first settlements in the New World. Beginning in the sixteenth, and through the early nineteenth century, missionaries, social reformers, and military commanders implemented this concept. The various forms this “separate space” took on reflected the characteristics of the local culture, the limitations of the physical environment, and the shifting balance of power between the church and state. The Alta California missions, established in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reflected the shifting architectural styles, Catholic doctrinal reforms, and emerging Enlightenment ideas of the time. A brief overview of the built environment of religious space in the Spanish American colonies will provide context for the development of the mission.

Reconquista, the centuries long battle between Christians and Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula, culminated in the surrender of the last Moorish stronghold of Granada to the forces of the Spanish Catholic Monarchs, Ferdinand II and Isabella I, in January of 1492.¹⁰ In the same year, Christopher Columbus embarked on the first expedition financed by the Spanish Crown, tasked with finding a route to the rich Eastern lands of gold and spices mythologized in Marco Polo’s travel accounts. After landing in the present-day islands of the Bahamas, Cuba, and Hispaniola, Columbus returned to Spain with a few

¹⁰ Moors were the Muslim people of Northwestern Africa who conquered parts of Spain and Portugal beginning in the 8th century.

nuggets of gold and a group of Indigenous people that he had taken from the islands.¹¹ Flush with confidence from the triumph of the *Reconquista*, Ferdinand and Isabella commissioned three more voyages with the express goal of colonizing new territories by claiming land and converting heathen peoples to Christianity.

The less noble aspects of human nature, fueled by greed and exacerbated by the slack accountability of remoteness, took over very shortly after the establishment of the first settlements in the northern Caribbean. Columbus proved to be a callous administrator. He tried to sell some of the individuals that he brought back to Spain as slaves, but was prevailed upon by the Spanish rulers to set them free. In 1499, he initiated an early form of the *encomienda* system in the colonies by assigning land grants to settlers, along with the right to demand labor from the Native residents.¹² Derived from the verb *encomendar*, meaning “to entrust,” the *encomienda* originated in post-*Reconquista* Spain, when Muslim and Jewish peoples were given over to the protection of the conquering Spanish lord, who would then be entitled to tribute for his stewardship. In the New World, the *encomendero* was entrusted with the welfare and catechization of the Indians who worked for him, but the labor conditions quickly became abusive in the search for gold. Several priests who had come to the new colonies to spread Christianity witnessed this harsh treatment, and launched protests both from the pulpit and in writing to the Spanish government. Among the most memorable early objections came in the form of a fiery Christmas mass sermon delivered by the Dominican friar Antonio de Montesinos in the Cathedral of Santo

¹¹ Christopher Columbus, “Journal of the First Voyage of Columbus,” in *The Northmen, Columbus and Cabot, 985-1503: The Voyages of the Northmen; The Voyages of Columbus and of John Cabot*, eds. Julius E. Olson and Edward G. Bourne (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 87-258. This account based on the translation by Clements R. Markham for the Hakluyt Society in 1893 is available as an online facsimile edition at www.americanjourneys.org/aj-062/. Accessed February 17, 2020.

¹² Oreste Popescu, *Studies in the History of Latin American Economic Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 83.

Domingo in 1511. He denounced the cruelty of the landowners, many of whom were among the wealthy churchgoers in the audience,

*“Why do you so greatly oppress and fatigue them, not giving them enough to eat or caring for them when they fall ill from excessive labors, so that they die or rather are slain by you, so that you may extract and acquire gold every day? And what care do you take that they receive religious instruction and come to know their God and creator, or that they be baptized, hear mass, or observe holidays and Sundays? Are they not men? Do they not have rational souls?”*¹³

The outcry moved Spain to respond by promulgating the Laws of Burgos in 1512, which prohibited mistreatment of the Native peoples, and stipulated that they be sheltered, fed, and clothed adequately, and given a proper Christian education.

Among those who were present at the famous sermon of Montesinos was Bartolomé de las Casas, a Dominican priest, originally from a family of New World settlers. He would become one of the most prolific critics of the *encomienda*, and would publish treatises over a period of twenty years, advocating for the creation of separate Indian villages to protect them from the oppression of the forced labor system. He initially envisioned settlers carefully selected for their integrity—farmers with their families, religious and secular leaders, and other skilled professionals—living among the Native peoples to help develop an economically viable Christian community by teaching catechism, and training them in agricultural methods and other useful crafts. In 1518, he refined this plan, specifying that the Indian villages had to be sufficiently removed from the central districts to mitigate interference with their religious inculcation. He requested land on the northern coast of Venezuela and Colombia, where he proposed to establish ten

¹³ Excerpt from Antonio de Montesinos: "Christmas Eve Sermon of 1511" on Just Treatment of Indians, <https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/quotes/antonio-de-montesinos-christmas-eve-sermon-of-1511-on-just-treatment-of-indians>

towns, each colonized with one hundred farmers, led by a cacique, supervised by Dominican or Franciscan friars, and a bishop.¹⁴ His proposal of 1519 called for the formation of a new brotherhood of men, dubbed the “Knights of the Golden Spur,” who would participate in the project of colonization away from the *encomienda*. His conception of a special garb for this order—a white habit marked with a red cross on the chest—likely reflected his idealistic standards for the caliber of men who would be recruited. Las Casas backed his petitions with statistical forecasts of population growth, production yields, and the resulting revenues for the royal treasury. His efforts paid off in 1520, with the concession from Charles V, the King of Spain, of coastal territories in modern day Paria, Venezuela. The royal order further granted his request of twelve missionaries from the Dominican or Franciscan orders, and fifty men of his choosing to form the Knights of the Golden Spur. The project was a dismal failure, overcome by interference from local *encomenderos*, the moral failure of the chosen knights, and Indigenous resistance. This setback convinced Las Casas that the only people to be trusted with non-exploitive colonization were incorruptible religious personnel. He argued for primacy of missionary authority in the colonial experiment in his treatise, *Del único modo de atraer a todos los pueblos a la verdadera religión* (*Of the only means of attracting all peoples to the one true religion*), written from 1536-37. Shortly after, with the help of other Dominican friars, he embarked on his own project in the fiercely resistant Guatemalan province of Tezulutlán. His moderate success there helped pass the New Laws of 1542, which abolished Indian slavery, prohibited new *encomiendas* and restricted existing ones. It was a short-lived triumph however, because landholders staged massive protests against the decree, causing

¹⁴ A cacique is an Indigenous captain, or leader.

the Spanish government had to rescind many of its provisions.¹⁵ The *encomienda* system would persist until the eighteenth century, but the New Laws nevertheless represented a turning point in the struggle for Native rights. Furthermore, the idea of a separate Indigenous space guided by religion, apart from the profane world, would endure and prove influential in the development of various colonial built environments, from the fortress-like *conventos* of central Mexico to the *reducciones* or *congregaciones*, later known as *misión*es in frontier territories, including California.

Conventos – Sacred Spaces in Central Mexico

Tenochtitlán, the Aztec capital city which Hernan Cortés entered in 1519, was a sophisticated urban metropolis, with a population greater than any city in Spain in the sixteenth century. Organized into four districts around a sacred precinct which housed two major temples, it featured imposing stone architecture, a palace for its ruler Moctezuma, orthogonally laid out residences, temples, and specialized markets in each district.¹⁶ Cortés took advantage of inter-tribal conflict between the Aztecs and the people from the neighboring province of Tlaxcala, enlisting the help of the latter to conquer the city in 1521. Upon its ruins, he established Mexico City, the capital of New Spain. Missionaries soon followed to lead the evangelical front of colonization. The Franciscans were the first to arrive in 1524, followed by the Dominicans in 1526, and the Augustinians in 1533. They proceeded to establish religious sites for worship and catechism in the urban centers, close to or on top of Indigenous temples, following a long tradition of appropriating pagan sites

¹⁵ Popescu, *Latin American Economic*, 88-91.

¹⁶ James Early, *The Colonial Architecture of Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 2-4.

for Christian purposes.¹⁷ These early conversion centers in Central Mexico were known as *conventos*, though they were much more than monasteries as their names would suggest.

By 1540, a standard architectural plan of the *convento* had evolved.¹⁸ It had a church, friars' residences arranged around a cloister, a patio (also called an *atrio*) which was a walled square forecourt entered through a main gateway on axis with the church and marked with a central cross. The patio often had an open-air chapel which facilitated preaching to larger numbers of people than could be accommodated in the church and therefore often served as the primary space for celebrating mass. It was also used as a schoolroom for teaching catechism to children. Some *conventos* had *posas*, which were four small rectangular chapels at the corners of the *patio*, used during processional ceremonies (fig. 1.1)

George Kubler's *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century* (1948) is still one of the most comprehensive to date, and includes a detailed study of the development of the open chapels in *conventos*. Based on Franciscan reports from the period, he singled out an early version of a courtyard chapel from 1539 in the *convento* of San Francisco in Tlaxcala. Situated at the top of a ramp, similar to an Aztec temple, it predates the famous, seven-aisled structure of San José de los Naturales, usually recognized as the first open chapel, built in 1547 next to the *convento* of Santiago de Tlatelolco in Mexico City.¹⁹ Aside from its grand scale, San José was also notable as the site of the first school to teach music, and European arts and crafts to the sons of elite Indian families.²⁰ Samuel Edgerton and Jaime

¹⁷ Samuel Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion* (Albuquerque, University of Mexico Press, 2001), 47.

¹⁸ Early, *Colonial Architecture of Mexico*, 57.

¹⁹ George Kubler, *Mexican Architecture of the Sixteenth Century* v.2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948), 329-32.

²⁰ Edgerton, *Theaters*, 38.

Lara have extensively analyzed the *convento*, and particularly its patio, as a site of the pageantry and performance which characterized Catholic religious practice in the sixteenth century.²¹ Edgerton stressed the multi-purpose nature of the patio and posited that it likely evolved out of the need to proselytize large numbers of Indigenous people in the densely populated cities. He nevertheless proposed several other inspirations for a walled rectangular sacred space. The eschatological writings of Joachim de Floris, a twelfth-century theologian, were particularly influential in some Franciscan circles. Several of the missionaries who came to the New World believed that its discovery signaled the final spiritual age he predicted, and that their part in bringing it about was the conversion of the newly found pagan peoples.²² The popularity of apocalyptic images of Jerusalem as a celestial city, depicted in quadrangular form by many fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish and Flemish artists reflected the prevalence of the millenarian view of a world near the end of days (fig. 1.2). Edgerton also suggested a derivation of the patio from the atrium outside the early Christian basilica churches, or a possible relationship to the Muslim courtyard preceding the prayer hall, which would not be farfetched given Spain's Moorish architecture. Finally, he proposed a theory of "expedient selection" in religious conversion, citing the fact that Indigenous sacred rituals and dances were performed in quadrangular outdoor spaces.²³ *Conventos* have been described as fortress monasteries because they were often enclosed by crenellated walls (fig. 1.3). Such military features were not functional but may have been deliberately chosen by the missionaries for its foreboding aspect, to signal protection for the Native converts, and to announce the *convento* as a sacred space,

²¹ Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion* and also Jaime Lara, *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004).

²² Early, *Colonial Architecture of Mexico*, 12.

²³ Edgerton, *Theaters*, 55-58.

a refuge from the abusive conquistadors.²⁴ The construction of cathedrals, *convento* complexes, and smaller churches in Mexico peaked between 1540 and 1560. As many as 400 conventos were built by 1600; about thirty-five survive today.²⁵

Congregación, Reducción, Misión – Sacred Spaces in the Frontier

As the colonial program expanded into less populous areas to the north of Mexico City, it was necessary to establish towns that would attract settlers to the New World. A separate community for Indigenous people appealed to religious and secular authorities who had different yet intertwined agenda, respectively, the salvation of souls and the creation of an Indigenous labor force. Missionaries on the frontier thought it would be easier to teach the Indians if they were shielded away from the profane world. Government officials saw it as an efficient way of rounding up scattered tribes into a central location that could be transformed into an agrarian center to support the settler town. The settlements, called *reducciones* or *congregaciones*, were named after the method of relocating Indigenous peoples and grouping them into new communities, achieved through a spectrum ranging from gentle persuasion to military coercion. Some early examples are notable for success on the evangelical front. Vasco de Quiroga, a lawyer from Spain who came to Mexico in 1530, was a devout Catholic whose concerns for social justice led him to propose a plan which echoed the social engineering ideas of Las Casas. He was also strongly influenced by Thomas More's *Utopia*, which he had read in the library of his close friend Juan de Zumárraga, a Franciscan priest and the Archbishop of Mexico.²⁶ In 1532 he

²⁴ Lara, *City, Temple, Stage*, 37-39.

²⁵ Early, *Colonial Architecture of Mexico*, 45.

²⁶ Popescu, *Latin American Economic*, 92.

used his own money to purchase lands near Mexico City and in adjacent Michoacán. He proceeded to establish Native towns along the systems outlined in More's ideal republic, and which he intended primarily for the evangelization and welfare of the Indians. Their well-publicized success was more long-lived than Las Casas' project at Tezulutlán, prompting the Spanish Crown to appoint Quiroga as Bishop of Michoacán in 1537. That same year, the Mexican bishops called for the founding of more *reducciones* as they moved to colonize the frontiers, reflecting the evangelical enthusiasm which was at its height in the sixteenth century.²⁷ In 1540, Ignatius of Loyola, a Spanish soldier who experienced spiritual renewal while convalescing from injury, founded the Society of Jesus, an order specifically geared towards the creation of an active, mobile ministry of men educated in the humanistic tradition. The Jesuits were among the first to use the word "mission" to describe their purpose.²⁸ Imbued with the Christianizing zeal of the time, they first proselytized in Asia and Africa, and later established *reducciones* on the American mainland, achieving the most success in their settlements in Paraguay and Brazil during the seventeenth century. In Mexico, they proselytized mainly in the northern territories of Chihuahua and Sonora. It was in these regions that Jesuit missionaries Juan María de Salvatierra and Eusebio Francisco Kino were respectively working when they collaborated on a shared goal to settle Baja California. Unable to obtain funding from the state, they got assistance from private benefactors, and subsequent approval from the Viceroy to found missions there in 1697. In October of that year, Salvatierra established the Misión Nuestra

²⁷ Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary* (Norman, Okla: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 213.

²⁸ Gauvin Alexander Bailey, *Art on the Jesuit Missions in Asia and Latin America, 1542-1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 6.

Señora de Loreto on the east coast of Baja California.²⁹ It would be the first of eighteen establishments begun by the Jesuits, who worked in the peninsula until their expulsion in 1768.

The Agenda to Civilize: Hispanicization and Conversion

Apart from the religious aims of creating a separate community, it is also worth considering the Spanish project of civilizing, or Hispanicizing the colonized peoples from a more secular perspective. Renaissance scholar John M. Headley has posited that the Classical ideals of a broadly integrated civic community fueled the culturally hegemonizing projects which characterized European empires. Spain, he argued, had a Mediterranean culture that was deeply rooted in Classicism. Moreover, the union of all peoples as declared by Saint Paul to the Galatians 3:28:

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

strengthened the link between Spain’s civic and religious agenda during the late Renaissance.³⁰ He discussed the contemporaneous writings of the Milan-based humanist, and ex-Jesuit, Giovanni Botero (1544-1617), to tease out three separate but intertwined processes of the colonization of the New World: the Christianizing, the imperializing, and the civilizing. This last objective involved the cultivation of settlements, which would be especially relevant in the frontier, where unlike the urban communities in Central Mexico, people led semi-nomadic lifestyles in dispersed groups. In the sixteenth century, the

²⁹ Miguel Leon-Portilla. *Loreto’s Key Role in the Early History of the Californias* (San Diego: California Mission Studies Association, 1997), 12-14. Kino had planned to travel to California with Salvatierra but he had to remain in Sonora to help pacify Indians who led a rebellion in the Pimería Alta.

³⁰ John Headley, “Geography and Empire in the Late Renaissance: Botero’s Assignment, Western Universalism, and the Civilizing Process,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 53 no. 4 (Winter 2000): 1119-1120.

reducciones were seen as an instrument for conversion, but also of creating a civic polity, whose members would discard their Indigenous, “barbaric” ways and learn

“to wear clothes, sit in chairs, eat at tables rather than off the ground, sleep in beds, and have one wife.”³¹

While the common goal of conversion united missionary endeavors, Headley gestured to subtle differences among the religious orders. The Jesuit policy of establishing a base level of economic stability and “civility” before baptism distinguished them from their Franciscan contemporaries, who valued poverty and drew a sharper distinction between Christianization, and Hispanicization, observing that the latter could have corrupting consequences. The first twelve Franciscans who arrived in Mexico were part of a religious current that longed for a revival of the values of poverty and the simple life espoused by their founder. From their European perspective, the clothing and bare living conditions of the Nahuas embodied those ideals. In his *Historia Ecclesiastica Indiana*, a chronicle of Franciscan evangelization in the New World during the sixteenth century, Jeronimo de Mendieta wrote,

“The common native's dress is an old mantle torn into thousand pieces, that if St. Francis were still living in this world and would see these natives, he would feel ashamed of himself and be confused, admitting neither that poverty was his sister nor that he should be praised on her account.”³²

The missions of Alta California, established over two centuries after Mendieta authored his *Historia*, would reflect an abiding Franciscan embrace of spartan living and suspicion of worldly attitudes. By the late eighteenth century, the difference between

³¹ Headley, “Geography and Empire,” 1141-1147.

³² Francisco Morales, “The Native Encounter with Christianity: Franciscans and Nahuas in Sixteenth-Century Mexico,” *The Americas* 65, no. 2 (Oct 2008): 148.

religious and civic practice, once tightly knit together, would become more pronounced and sometimes come into open conflict in the missions.

Missions, Presidios, and Pueblos

The missionary quest for souls paralleled the conquistador's hunt for gold and silver; both efforts drove exploration beyond Aztec territory. The discovery of silver mines in Zacatecas in the late 1540s brought a wave of miners and settlers to the area, which was over 300 miles northwest of Mexico City. The Indigenous population often raided the caravans carrying supplies to the north and silver to the south. In addition, the northern peoples were more nomadic, and rebelled against the colonial program to replace their traditional lifeways with Spanish culture. This led to the establishment of military forts, called presidios, at strategic sites in the north, to protect the silver traffic, and to serve as a base for quashing Native revolt. By the 1580s, the Spanish government enlisted religious personnel to form new *reducciones* (which along the northern frontier were more often called missions) to help westernize the Indigenous population.³³

In these remote areas, the relative absence of urban culture, fixed settlements, and permanent architecture meant that the missions would need to become more than a place for religious instruction and Hispanicization. As an agricultural enterprise, they became providers of goods and services for the nearby presidios. The initial layout of the complex adapted the *convento* scheme, but was expanded to include workshops, storehouses, animal pens, offices, and homes for the baptized Indians. Mission properties also included extensive farming and pasture lands.

³³ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 214.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, the new Bourbon rulers of Spain instituted several reforms geared towards asserting secular state authority over religious institutions, promoting efficient administration and increased productivity of the colonial economies. The government began to view missions and presidios as outmoded and expensive vehicles of colonization. Military inspections of the northern presidios in the 1720s and 1760s yielded the conclusion that many were not worth the cost of maintenance, and that in some locations the soldiers were not performing military work but simply acted as assistants to the friars at the missions.³⁴ Other government officials opined that it was cheaper to attract settlers through land grants than to pay missionary salaries from the Royal Treasury.³⁵ The mission as a religious domain became secondary to their utility as orientation centers for laborers who could work in the settlers' haciendas. Missionaries were pressured to accelerate the path to secularization by abbreviating the time Indians spent at the missions before being assimilated into the adjacent Spanish settler towns, or pueblos. It was in this growing climate of disapproval that the missions of Alta California were established.

Missions in Alta California

The earliest explorations of the coast of California above the Baja peninsula were driven by the search for treasure, and a northwest passage to Asia, neither of which yielded much success.³⁶ After the galleon trade was established in 1565, interest shifted to finding potential landing spots for the ships coming from Manila, the main Spanish port city in

³⁴ James Early, *Presidio, Mission, and Pueblo: Spanish Architecture and Urbanism in the United States* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 2004), 6.

³⁵ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 86; also Early, *Presidio, Mission, and Pueblo*, 160-61.

³⁶ Henry Wagner, "Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century. Chapter IV: The Voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 7, No. 1 (Mar 1928): 20-21.

Asia. These vessels carried Asian textiles, spices, ceramics, and other riches from the orient, to be exchanged for silver mined in the American colonies. They sailed northeast from the Philippine archipelago to the latitude of Japan, then headed east until they espied the northern coast of California, around present-day Mendocino. From there, the ship would follow the land mass to the tip of the peninsula, and navigate to Acapulco on the west coast of the Mexican mainland, where the cargo would be unloaded. Spain commissioned several exploratory expeditions to chart the region, most notably those led by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1542, Sebastian Cermeño in 1594, and Sebastian Vizcaíno in 1602. While these resulted in the mapping of several locations such as present-day San Diego, Monterey, and Drake's Bay, plans for an interim galleon port did not materialize. Alta California, distant and accessible only through rough seas and land routes over hostile Indian territory, remained unsettled.

In the late eighteenth century Russian and English incursions into the Pacific northwest convinced Spain of the need to secure her territorial interests. Russian fur traders traveled from their settlements in the northern Pacific to hunt seal and sea otter, while English explorers continued to look for a northwest route through the Arctic Ocean connecting the Atlantic to the Pacific. Since the relative remoteness of Alta California made it difficult to attract settlers, military authorities fell back on the old model of mission and presidio, and by 1768 had decided to colonize the previously charted sites of San Diego and Monterey. Carlos III had ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and her colonies the year before; Franciscan missionaries from the College of San Fernando in Mexico City were given custody of the Baja California missions, and further tasked with the expansion to Alta California. Junípero Serra, a Franciscan who had previously worked

in the missions of the Sierra Gorda region in Mexico, was appointed Father President of the California missions. On October 31, 1768, Serra met with José de Gálvez, Inspector General of New Spain, to plan the usual two-pronged approach of military subjugation and religious conversion of Alta California. Four expedition parties, two by land and two by sea, were sent to San Diego where the first mission was officially founded on July 16, 1769. The second, named after San Carlos Borromeo, was established in Monterey the following year. The Dominicans, led by Fray Juan Pedro de Iriarte, petitioned for a share of the evangelical ministry in California. In 1772, Viceroy Bucareli approved the division of mission administration between the Dominicans and the Franciscans, giving Baja California to the former and Alta California to the latter.³⁷ Serra would found seven more missions before his death in 1784. His successors would go on to establish an additional eleven, with Mission San Francisco Solano in Sonoma being the last one in 1823 (fig. 1.4). Mission properties were extensive, encompassing agricultural lands beyond the central core of church and residences. Some establishments grew to have nearby sub-missions called *asistencias*, which had their own smaller church, living quarters, farms, and ranches. Abundant harvests at Mission San Luis Rey called for the construction of an additional granary at a ranch in nearby Pala, some twenty miles away.³⁸ Rancho de Pala eventually became the *Asistencia* of San Antonio de Pala, and is the only sub-mission that survives close to its original state today. Mission San Rafael started out as an *asistencia* for the treatment and convalescence of sick Indians from Mission San Francisco de Asís. The site

³⁷ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, vol. 1 (San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1908), 460-69.

³⁸ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey Mission* (San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1921), 20.

was chosen for its milder climate, which the Franciscans hoped would mitigate the high mortality rate among the Indians in the primary location across the bay.³⁹

Junípero Serra and the Fernandinos

In describing the ideal Christian Indian village in the 1500s, Las Casas had stressed the importance of recruiting religious men who were disciplined, hard-working, and determined to lead a spiritual and economic enterprise. The difficulties of finding such exceptional individuals increased in the seventeenth century, when the Christianizing fervor of early conquest had given way to disillusionment and fatigue. In order to keep up with the demand for missionaries, and also to revive flagging enthusiasm for this type of work, the Franciscans established apostolic colleges specifically for their recruitment and training. Antonio Llinás established the Colegio de Santa Cruz in Querétaro in 1683. It was followed in 1707 by the Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Zacatecas, and in 1733 by the Colegio de San Fernando in Mexico City.⁴⁰ Junípero Serra was a thirty-five-year-old Franciscan priest and theology professor when in 1749 he decided to leave Mallorca, the island where he had spent all of his life, to be a missionary. In doing so, he joined a wave of over 15,000 priests and other religious personnel from Spain who sailed for the New World over the course of the Spanish colonial era.⁴¹ Fellow Mallorcans Francisco Palóu and Juan Crespí trained with Serra at the San Fernando college. For most of the mission period, the Franciscans who came to Alta California were Fernandinos.⁴²

³⁹ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Francisco or Mission Dolores* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1924), 163. The asistencia of San Rafael was established in 1817, and was declared a full mission in 1822.

⁴⁰ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 74-75.

⁴¹ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 60.

⁴² Towards the end of the Spanish period in California, in the years just prior to secularization, Franciscans from the College of Guadalupe in Zacatecas were sent to the northernmost California missions.

Prior to his California appointment, Serra worked in the Sierra Gorda from 1750 to 1758, and was president of its five missions from 1751-54 (figs. 1.5 to 1.9). The Fernandinos had been enlisted by José de Escandón to congregate the Pame people in the region. A military officer who had risen quickly through the ranks by violent suppression of Native revolts, Escandón subscribed to the view of missions as a short-lived orientation for Indians, where they could learn agriculture and ranching, prior to integration into the Spanish settlements. In the Sierra Gorda, he wanted the Pame to work in the haciendas he had planned to establish in the area, and was not above draconian methods of resettling, such as sending soldiers into the mountains to burn Indigenous dwellings. Early in Serra's tenure as president, he complained about Escandón's proposal for a town that would be located too close to the mission.⁴³ This experience arguably influenced his later actions in California, where he was frequently involved in disputes with the commanding military officer over what he perceived as encroachments on his authority. In 1773, he wrote the Viceroy, Antonio Bucareli, requesting the removal and replacement of the California governor Pedro Fages, with whom he had multiple disagreements. He further asked for affirmation of the missionaries' authority over the Indians and the soldiers within the mission compound.⁴⁴ Serra's fierce determination to create and preserve a sacred space amidst a growing global ethos of science and progress has caused different historians to characterize him as medieval, heroic, or misguided, depending on their intellectual lens.

⁴³ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 87-89.

⁴⁴ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 237.

Contesting Sacred Space

The mission's economic and social spheres intersected with those of the nearby presidio and later, the pueblo.⁴⁵ Despite the growing skepticism about the efficacy of missions at assimilating Native Californians into Spanish society, the Franciscans actively sought to limit contact between mission Indians and outsiders, such as soldiers and civilians. Serra had opposed the establishment of the pueblos. His hostility was likely due to the negative experiences the Fernandinos had in the Sierra Gorda under Escandón, who situated civilian settlements very close to the missions. When Governor Felipe de Neve approved the founding of the first pueblo in Alta California, San José de Guadalupe, near the Mission of Santa Clara in November 1777, Serra expressed his displeasure in a letter to Viceroy Bucareli:

*"In private conversations I had with the Señor Gobernador, I only discussed the manner in which the pueblos of Spaniards have begun to be established, which, in my opinion, did not seem to be the best thing to do. The purported reason for the pueblos was that they would provide people who would stock the royal warehouses with provisions so that the stability of these possessions would not depend on the arrival of the ships. However, instead of supporting those pueblos, this would be better achieved by increasing and fostering the missions, which would also help in terms of spiritual advancement . . . But everything I said served no other purpose than to express my feelings on the topic, for it fell on deaf ears."*⁴⁶

Serra's successor, Fermín Lasuén, held similar views about keeping the mission Indians relatively cloistered from the non-Franciscan world. The dispute over the training of neophytes by journeyman artisans from Mexico illustrates one of many instances of this struggle. Skilled craftsmen such as blacksmiths, stonemasons, and carpenters were always

⁴⁵ There were two civilian settlements, or pueblos established during the mission period: San José in 1777, Los Angeles in 1781, and Villa Branciforte in 1797.

⁴⁶ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 348.

hard to come by on the frontier. Serra successfully petitioned the viceroy for three blacksmiths and three carpenters, who arrived in San Diego in 1774. Governor Fages followed up in 1790 with his own request for professional mechanics, teachers, millers, and a surveyor. The first craftsmen—a master stonecutter, a master tailor, and two journeymen—recruited specifically to train mission neophytes came to Alta California in 1791.⁴⁷ Lasuén, by then President of the Missions, understood that he had been granted freedom by the viceroy to distribute the craftsmen among the different missions as he saw fit. The new governor of California, Diego de Borica, instead ordered that the artisans were to reside at the presidios, and that the Indians travel from the missions to receive training from them. In a letter to Borica dated July 23, 1796, Lasuén demurred,

*“. . . if the artisans are placed as the presidios, as Your Lordship has planned, it will be impossible, or at least very difficult, as experience shows, to give the Indians the instruction contemplated. They are neophytes; and to be at the presidio, away from the missionaries and independent of them, is very much in conflict with such a status.”*⁴⁸

The same preference for sequestration is evident in Lasuén’s response to the suggestion of baptizing and instructing the Native Californians in their own villages, and permitting them to live there instead of in the missions. While he acknowledges that this arrangement is sometimes necessary, as in the case of San Diego because the land was not fertile enough to make the missions agriculturally self-sufficient, it was inferior to actually housing neophytes onsite whenever possible. He stressed this in an 1802 letter to Fray José Gasol, Father Guardian of the College of San Fernando,

⁴⁷ Mardith Schuetz-Miller, *Building and Builders in Hispanic California 1769-1850* (Santa Barbara, Calif: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994), 15-16.

⁴⁸ Fermín Lasuén, *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, vol. 1, trans. Finbar Kenneally (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965), 389.

“ . . . Everything is taught them by the missionaries, and whether or not they observe them depends exclusively on the vigilance of the latter and their incessant watchfulness.”⁴⁹

In her analysis of Alta California mission complex layouts, Catherine Ettinger has noted that earlier establishments in northern Mexico, such as in the Sierra Gorda, the Pimería Alta, and Nuevo Santander, were planned as seedling town settlements, and thus often situated in the middle or close to other pueblos. The fairly permeable boundaries between mission, presidio, and pueblo hardened in Alta California, whose missions reflect a spatial organization that isolated, rather than integrated the Indians into Spanish society. The location of barracks, the use of fences, and the mass housing of mission Indians were some of the distinguishing features which fostered an insular sense of community that was enclosed and controlled from within.⁵⁰ In spite of its growing role as a regional economic driver, the material enunciation of demarcation between the religious and secular spheres allowed the Franciscans to claim the mission as their domain—a space set apart for matters of the spirit.

Cultural Persistence

Under the tutelage and exhortations of the priests, the Native Californians participated in the mass and other celebrations during the liturgical year. At the same time, they persisted in their pre-conquest beliefs and rituals, observing them alongside the new Christian practices. While in most parts of the Spanish empire, missionaries would subject

⁴⁹ Letter to Fray José Gasol, June 16, 1802, from Fermín Lasuén, *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, vol. 2, trans. Finbar Kenneally (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965), 276-279.

⁵⁰ Catherine Ettinger, “Spaces of Change: Architecture and the Creation of a New Society in the California Missions,” *Boletín* 21, no. 1 (Fall 2004): 30-36.

catechumens to a substantial amount of instruction (sometimes up to a year) prior to baptism, Junípero Serra, known for his evangelical zeal, advocated for administering the sacrament after barely a month of reciting prayers by rote.⁵¹ The newly baptized Indian was designated a “neophyte” to reflect that he/she was still in the early stages of learning to be a Christian. This played into the paternalistic view of Indians as children who were not fully developed in their abilities to live a civilized, moral life. The missionaries took the acceptance of baptism as a commitment to conversion, which would be furthered by education. On the other hand, it is highly unlikely, given the language and cultural barriers, that the Indians understood the implications of a ceremony which involved having water poured over their heads. They entered the missions for other reasons. Some saw a source of survival, given that their natural food sources were being co-opted by the growing number of Spanish settlers, who brought their own crops and animals. Others saw a way of gaining new knowledge and learning new skills taught at the missions.⁵² Still others perhaps wanted to escape a Native hierarchy where they felt disadvantaged. It is doubtful that they would have knowingly agreed to a radical restructuring of their way of life which included restrictions on their behaviors, movements, and social relationships. Open resistance manifested itself in rebellions which involved violence against the soldiers and missionaries, destruction of the mission buildings and sacred objects, and mass desertions by the mission Indians. Attacks on Mission San Diego de Alcalá in 1775, and on Mission San Gabriel in 1785 were led by baptized Indians who held positions of authority within

⁵¹ Steven Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 142.

⁵² See Randall Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1769-1810* (Menlo Park, CA: Ballena, 1995). In *Children of Coyote*, Steven Hackel embarks on a similar probe for the Indians at Mission San Carlos Borromeo, arguing that the environmental and demographic collapse brought by the Spaniards were cataclysmic and detrimental to the Indigenous peoples of the Monterey area.

the internal mission political structure set up by the friars. The 1824 Chumash revolt named after the Indians from the Missions of Santa Barbara, Santa Ines, and La Purisima was the largest uprising in Alta California mission history.

More subtle and consistent however, were the daily acts of cultural persistence which included architecture, foodways, and leisure activities. The priests allowed the practice of Native traditions as long as it did not interfere with the schedule of work, or violate Catholic teachings, particularly those concerning idolatry and sexuality. However, documentary and artifactual evidence suggest that pre-Spanish religious observances continued in secret within the mission complex, or were disguised in hybrid rituals which the priests either did not detect or tacitly ignored. In a frontier situation where the colonized greatly outnumbered their colonizers, the equilibrium between imposition and accommodation was perennially negotiated.

CHAPTER 2

Envisioning Sacred Space: Cosmography and Early Modern Cartography

The measurement, description, and visual representation of the earth's surface, as practiced through present-day geography and cartography, are driven by scientific methods of observation which involve increasingly sophisticated technology. The roots of these disciplines, however, reach back to a Classical and Medieval cosmology, or view of the world as a unified system of correspondence between the celestial and terrestrial spheres. The secularization of thought which began in the early modern period and flowered in the Enlightenment, would seem to suggest that all vestiges of religious ideology were swept away with the establishment of geographical and cartographical science. Cartographic historians however, have questioned the presumed objectivity of maps, even those derived from modern, scientific techniques. They assert that far from being simple mimetic translations of space derived from first-hand inspection, maps are active agents of shaping how the world is perceived; they have the power to promote a particular mindset and social values as accepted truth.⁵³ This made the map well suited to the charting of empires. Indeed, Denis Cosgrove has described the territorial inscription of cartography as the most enduring legacy of European colonization from the mid-fifteenth to the mid-twentieth century.⁵⁴

⁵³ Raymond Craib, "Cartography and Power in the Conquest and Creation of New Spain," *Latin American Review* 35 no. 1 (2000): 13.

⁵⁴ Denis Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision: Seeing, Imagining and Representing the World* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2008), 21.

In his review of the state of cartographic theory and critique, Raymond Craig paid particular attention to the work of Latin American scholars like Walter Mignolo and Barbara Mundy, who have analyzed how early modern maps in New Spain were deployed to convey the colonizer's perspective of territory, and suppress the Native world view.⁵⁵ Absent in most of the theoretical discussions on cartography is California, whose links to Spain have been relegated to a pre-history of the United States, an Indigenous and Hispanic narrative on the fringe of the mainstream Anglo-American tradition, buried by non-English layers of coloniality.⁵⁶ For the Native Californian peoples, this constituted a double erasure, first with the coming of the Spanish, then through annexation by the United States.

The first officially commissioned explorations of Alta California began two centuries prior to the founding of the first mission of San Diego de Alcalá, named after the port, in 1769. An examination of these voyages reveals the consistent tension between the Spanish colonial paired objectives of economic exploitation and religious conversion. When the decision was made to settle Alta California, Spain was a diminished global player, forced to cede territories after the War of Spanish Succession, and economically hobbled by flagging industry, a heavy dependence on imported manufactures, and the cost of several wars. An economic lens has understandably dominated the narrative of the California missions, as they were primarily established to be self-sufficient centers of agricultural production and industry. More controversial in the historical scholarship are the serious efforts of the Franciscans to assert their own evangelical agenda despite their

⁵⁵ Craib, "Cartography and Power," 21-23.

⁵⁶ Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden, Ma.: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 7. Mignolo differentiates between colonialism as specific historical periods and places of imperial domination; and coloniality, which he defines as the logical structure of colonial domination underlying the Spanish, Dutch, British, and US control of the Atlantic economy and politics.

reduced importance to the state. Missionaries planned the economic production spaces of the missions, employing maps and geographical data to select the most suitable sites. At the same time, they actively reserved and privileged sacred space, often marking it before all others shortly after territorial possession. This ability to see both kinds of spaces on the same map, and to manage the contestation between them, reflects the same intellectual dialogue that characterized the development of geography and cartography. A consideration of the historical trajectory of cartography can illuminate the conceptual frameworks that shaped how Europe visualized the New World, and how they legitimated the colonial project which included the appropriation of the land, and for the missionaries, the creation of sacred space.

The Tripartite World and the Fourth Continent

The human impulse to comprehend and represent the material world is an ancient one. In *Timaeus*, Plato described an ordered universe created by a Divine Craftsman, whose providential design was made manifest by geometry.⁵⁷ Cosmography, the belief that the celestial and terrestrial spheres made up a unified system which corresponded to each other, was at the foundation of most early geographical treatises and maps. These often combined symbolic, mythical, as well as factual information about the known regions of the earth. It was such a world vision, influenced more by Classical and Christian thought than physical evidence, which shaped the initial apprehension of the lands discovered by the Columbian expedition—lands hitherto unknown to the western world. Theologians and philosophers grappled with the disruption of the spatial order, and endeavored to explain how the new

⁵⁷ Denis Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye: A Cartographic Genealogy of the Earth in the Western Imagination* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 35.

continent fit into God's master plan. Politicians and merchants considered its implications for the expansion of state sovereignty. This Eurocentric perspective, which produced the historical texts and the spatial representations of the post-Columbian world, has been the subject of postcolonial critique.

Edmundo O'Gorman issued one of the earliest challenges to the historical narrative about the "discovery" of America. He used the analogy of a caretaker of an archive happening upon an ancient papyrus in a cellar, who turns it over to a professor of Classical literature. If the professor recognizes that is it in fact a text by Aristotle, unknown to the world until that moment, O'Gorman reasoned that credit for discovery belonged to the professor, not the caretaker who simply stumbled upon and did not understand what it was in the first place. Columbus believed he had arrived at the edge of Asia when in fact he had landed in Hispaniola, an island in the Caribbean, hence O'Gorman likened him to the caretaker rather the professor.⁵⁸ He argued that America was not a pre-existing entity waiting to be discovered, but rather it was "invented" according to the European world view at that time. In 1492, it was believed that the world comprised three continents: Asia, Europe, and Africa. The invention of America involved its integration into this composition as the fourth continent. Further, it was a place for the expansion of European culture, reflecting the Classically rooted belief about Europe as the source of civilization, and St. Augustine's interpretation of the biblical passages describing the fates of Noah's sons, who populated the world after the Great Flood.⁵⁹

Walter Mignolo explicated the tripartite view of the world in the fifteenth century as visually represented by a popular image called a T-O map, first illustrated in the

⁵⁸ Edmundo O'Gorman, *The Invention of America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961), 15.

⁵⁹ O'Gorman, *Invention*, 46-47; 136-39.

Etymologiae, a compendium of universal knowledge assembled by the Christian theologian Isidore of Seville (560-636 CE). The map depicted a circle inscribed with a T, which divided the known world into Asia, Europe, and Africa; each continent was inscribed with the name of one of Noah's sons: Shem for Asia, Ham for Africa, Japheth for Europe (fig. 2.1). The assignments were based on St. Augustine's exegetical writings on the generations descended from each son.⁶⁰ Since Shem meant "named," it was interpreted that Christ would descend from his line, which came to pass through Abraham, who was born in Asia. Japheth signified "enlargement," and his progeny was believed to have populated Europe, the seat of the Roman Catholic Church. As such it was the place for magnification of the Christian faith, fulfilling the prophecy of Japheth's name. Africa was designated as home to the heirs of Ham, the middle and accursed child; they were condemned to slavery for their forefather's sin. Since Ham also meant "hot," bondage was linked to climate and later, race.⁶¹ The *Etymologiae* became a significant encyclopedic source in Christian Europe, and was reprinted many times until the late sixteenth century.

America was thus accommodated into an existing Euro-Christian cosmography, dubbed a "New World," though it was only new to the men who were learning about it for the first time. Europeans then characterized Native Americans as people who must have also descended from Japheth, but were in a primitive stage of development, either because they lacked Christianity (in the case of central Mexico) and/or Classical markers of civilization, such as permanent architecture (in the case of semi-nomadic frontier

⁶⁰ St. Augustine. "The City of God (Book XVI)." newadvent.org. <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/120116.htm> (accessed January 15, 2020). Chapters 1-2 interprets Genesis 9: 18-27.

⁶¹ Mignolo, *Idea*, 27-29. Mignolo argues that St. Augustine's *City of God* laid the foundations for the association between geography and race as early as the fifth century.

communities). It was also around the sixteenth century, after Juan Elicañó completed the global circumnavigation of the Magellan expedition, when the search began for a northwest sea passage that connected that Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. This was ostensibly driven by the desire to find alternate routes for east-west trade, but O’Gorman suggested that it also occupied Christian theologians, who wanted to answer the question of how Native American peoples made their way to a separate continent.⁶²

The Catholic Church used cartographic language and imagery to legitimate the colonial project. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI he issued the bull of *Inter Caetera*, which divided the world between the then dominant global powers, Spain and Portugal. The bisection was marked by a meridian located one hundred leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde islands, and which ran through the north and south poles.⁶³ The fact that in reality, Spain and Portugal, the dominant naval powers at the time did not respect the edict is not the point. That a papal decree could reference an imaginary demarcation which could only be apprehended through a map, attested to the power of spatial representation as a shared view of the world. It also provided the two countries specified with rhetorical language to invoke when defending their right to possession, and sanctioned the use of religion to colonize Indigenous peoples. *Inter Caetera* granted ownership of America to Spain, and charged her with converting its Native peoples,

“Moreover we command you in virtue of holy obedience, that, employing all due diligence in the premises, as you also promise—nor do we doubt your compliance therewith to the best of your loyalty and royal greatness of spirit—you send to the aforesaid countries and islands worthy, God-fearing, learned, skilled, and experienced men, in order to instruct the

⁶² O’Gorman, *Invention*, 138.

⁶³ The location of the dividing line would later be revised by the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, and again by the Treaty of Zaragoza in 1529.

aforesaid inhabitants and dwellers therein in the Catholic faith and train them in good morals."⁶⁴

Patricia Seed has analyzed the sixteenth-century debates about the humanity of the newly encountered people dubbed Indians, which pondered the question of whether or not they were capable of accepting Christianity, therefore defining them as children of God and worthy of salvation. She argued that both secular and religious authorities had a vested interest in declaring the Indians as fully human, since their political power was linked to their ability to evangelize the New World, according to the papal bull *Inter Caetera*. Seed further pointed out that the discussions invoked Classical and Christian texts from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, despite their problematic application to Native American cultures, once again illustrating the Eurocentric perspective of the discourse.⁶⁵

The "invention" of America through a colonizer's gaze disregarded the Indigenous peoples' view of their own place in the world, and replaced their history with one that cast their home as a young territory and their lifeways as a primitive state waiting for the civilizing influence of Europe. Mignolo asserted that the Christian triad of the T-O map was a western imaginary that continued to underpin the revised maps post 1492.⁶⁶ Martin Waldseemüller illustrated the first map to include and name America in 1507 (fig. 2.2). Though there is no clear physical division between Europe and Asia (and there is a visible overland route between Africa and the East), Waldseemüller assumes that the notion of three continents is common knowledge, and describes America as a fourth part of the world. He named it after Amerigo Vespucci, who in 1501 sailed from Portugal and

⁶⁴ William Henry Scott, Demythologizing the Papal Bull "Inter Caetera," *Philippine Studies* 35, No. 3 (1987): 348-354.

⁶⁵ Patricia Seed, "'Are These Not Also Men?': The Indians' Humanity and Capacity for Spanish Civilisation," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 25 no. 3 (1993): 635-650.

⁶⁶ Mignolo, *Idea*, 24-26.

explored the coast of Brazil, eventually being persuaded that the Columbian voyages had not reached Asia, but in fact had found a new section of the earth.

*“Inasmuch as both Europe and Asia received their names from women, I see no reason why anyone should justly object to calling this part Amerige, i.e., the land of Amerigo, or America, after Amerigo, its discoverer, a man of great ability . . . Thus the earth is now known to be divided into four parts. The first three parts are continents, while the fourth is an island, inasmuch as it is found to be surrounded on all sides by the ocean.”*⁶⁷

At this point, Waldseemüller was referring to South America, but the vision of a new continent would later encompass Mexico and the rest of North America, which was explored and mapped later in the century. In 1570, Abraham Ortelius published his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, which revealed the extent of the North and South American landmasses, and the Pacific Ocean, which was better known after the circumnavigation of 1522 (fig. 2.3). Ortelius’ map manifested a spatial shift, with the Atlantic Ocean moving to the center previously occupied by the Caspian Sea on Waldseemüller’s map. This subtle visual rearrangement signaled a westerly expansion, perhaps unconsciously reinforcing a Eurocentric narrative of civilization. What has been normalized, and therefore forgotten, is how “Occidentalism,” the epistemic foundation of modernity as a western phenomenon, is rooted in a fundamentally Christian cosmology.⁶⁸

The Columbian voyages necessitated a re-evaluation of the known physical world. Spain’s role in shaping the global map came with her status as the first European country to reach the American continent, and to successfully circumnavigate the earth. The *Casa*

⁶⁷ Charles George Herbertmann, ed., *The Cosmographiæ Introductio of Martin Waldseemüller in Facsimile: Followed by the Four Voyages of Amerigo Vespucci, With Their Translation Into English* (New York: The United States Catholic Historical Society, 1907), 70. Accessed online Feb 7, 2020. <https://hdl-handle-net.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/2027/pst.000020045005>

⁶⁸ Mignolo, *Idea*, 34-35.

de Contratacion was set up to oversee commercial operations, and house classified documents regarding exploration in the colonies. Together with Portugal's *Casa de Mina*, they represented the earliest formal attempts to accumulate and organize geographical knowledge. In 1508, a special department for geographical and cosmological affairs was created within Spain's *Casa*, where the *Padron Real*, the master world map, was updated and kept secret from rival countries. Its first head, or Pilot Major, was Amerigo Vespucci.⁶⁹ While the *Casa de Contratacion* was a pioneering scientific institution, the Spanish empire was also a fervently Catholic empire, and therefore the early maps of America represented both spaces of potential worldly treasure, as well as possible holiness. The latter vision of the New World as a fertile ground for the seeds of Christianity inspired a transoceanic evangelical crusade that rivaled the greed for material treasure. Cartographic vision preceded physical encounter of the territory, and maps furnished missionaries with an image of the place to be made sacred.

The Colonizer's Tool

While St. Augustine's racially charged patristic text was used to justify the Christianizing of America, early modern cartography became an instrument of colonial power because of its ability to present a unified image of space, and to create new spatial identities through naming.

⁶⁹ David Turnbull, "Cartography and Science in Early Modern Europe: Mapping the Construction of Knowledge Spaces," *Imago Mundi* 48 (1996): 7-11.

Regularizing Space

The representation of three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional, mathematically rationalized surface is a legacy from Ptolemy (b. 100 CE), the Greek astronomer and geographer whose work was rediscovered and translated in the fifteenth century. Along with the development of linear perspective, the publication of his *Geografia* during the Renaissance is credited with a paradigm-changing view of space, encouraging a hegemonic vision of the world which aided the programs of colonization.⁷⁰ The *Geografia* included several maps, including one of the earliest diagrams of the known world.⁷¹ Ptolemy originated the convention of latitude and longitude lines with his graticule, a grid system which divided his map into sectors (fig. 2.4). The grid created a homogenized view of territory which suppressed the irregularities of actual spatial boundaries, and the diversity that lived within the area represented by each cell. The graticule privileged space over place, and reduced complex locational characteristics to a set of numbered coordinates. As colonial territories were mapped accordingly, space lost its human dimension and assumed the nature of impersonal nature of factual data, of mathematical geometry.⁷² This image of space as a system of uniform, interchangeable units, was easily extended to the human landscape. José de Escandón, the military officer in charge of the Sierra Gorda during Serra's tenure, also colonized Nuevo Santander, the area south of present-day Texas on the Gulf coast of Mexico. There, he decided to forego the mission-presidio system in favor of ranchos and pueblos, and forcibly uprooted

⁷⁰ John Headley, "Geography and Empire," 1124-1128. Headley also gestures to Panofsky who argues that Renaissance perspective ushered in a modern vision of the world.

⁷¹ No actual maps from Ptolemy's manuscript survived; translators reconstructed them from his calculations and published them as an atlas accompanying the text, in the fifteenth century.

⁷² J. B. Harley, "Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe," *Imago Mundi* 40 (1988): 66.

northern Pame people from their homes in the Sierra Gorda to work in the Nuevo Santander haciendas.⁷³

The rationalization of colonial space is easily explained as an economically motivated approach; regularized units are more easily systematized and efficiently administered. However, as previously discussed, Spain's civilizing agenda, derived from Classical and Christian thought, envisioned a global community, that while physically discrete, was homogenously bound by a belief in one true God. Francisco Palóu related an incident involving Junípero Serra in California, which seemed to confirm the steadfastness of those convictions. In July 1771, Serra took a party of newly arrived missionaries, some soldiers, sailors, and Indians with him to found the new mission of San Antonio de Padua. Upon reaching a promising spot for establishment, they hung a bell from an oak tree and Serra began to ring it vigorously while crying,

"Come, gentiles, come to the Holy Church and receive the faith of Jesus Christ."

Since there was no one there, one of the missionaries asked him what he was doing, to which Serra replied that he hoped that this bell might be heard throughout the world. He further cited Sor María de Jesús Ágreda, a seventeenth-century Spanish mystic who claimed to be able to bilocate to the colonies in North America and preach to the Indians there, as justification.⁷⁴ Serra believed in the universality of Christianity, and that a miraculous woman could simultaneously be in two places across the globe to unite people through faith. The map of the world represented more than physical terrain to him; it was an image of a world that could be gathered together under one Kingdom of God.

⁷³ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 95-96.

⁷⁴ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 225-26.

Naming

Naming can be particularly insidious because it bestows a new identity on a site, erasing previous histories in the process. The Spanish custom of naming places after Catholic saints and celebrations created new associations and instituted new practices related to Christianity. In turn, this imposed what the geographer and map historian J. B. Harley called “toponymic silence” on ethnic place narratives.⁷⁵

The 1542 exploration of the Alta California coast led by Juan Cabrillo is notable because the account lists the names of several Indigenous towns as learned by Cabrillo and his crew from the Native peoples they encountered on their voyage. In one instance, he wrote that at latitude thirty-five degrees and twenty minutes, they came upon a coastal town whose inhabitants sailed out on several well-built canoes to greet the Spaniards. The place was thus dubbed “Pueblo de las Canoas,” but the report noted that its Native name was “Xucu.”⁷⁶ Most historians agree that Cabrillo had encountered members of Chumash tribes who lived in the vicinity of Santa Barbara, but errors in his measurements of latitude have made it difficult to reach agreement as to their exact locations. In 1798, Father Fermín Lasuén, president of the California missions informed the governor about the founding of Mission San Luis Rey. He explained that the site was called San Juan Capistrano el Viejo by the Spaniards, and Tacayme by the Native community.⁷⁷ Such instances of presenting name equivalencies are rare in the period records of the California missions. Furthermore,

⁷⁵ Harley, “Silences and Secrecy,” 66.

⁷⁶ Wagner, “Voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo,” 46-49. Wagner’s essay, while dated, is a diligent translation of the Urdaneta manuscript in the Archives of the Indies in Seville, Spain. He includes a photocopy of the manuscript in the journal article.

⁷⁷ Lasuén, *Writings* vol. 2, 84-85.

Spanish maps did not feature Indigenous place names, and territorial representations from the Indigenous perspective were not published, and thus suppressed.⁷⁸

Maps enabled and empowered the colonial enterprise. The mapping, naming, and mathematical location of place in relation to a fixed point (in this case, Europe) primed it for measurement, observation, conquest.⁷⁹ This process describes the preparation for a military invasion as well as the prelude to creating sacred space. The mapping and naming project of European empires effectively redrew the world from the colonizer's standpoint, and in Spain's case, rechristened it as well.

Mapping Alta California

Hernan Cortés, the Spanish conquistador who headed the siege and conquest of Tenochtitlán, is credited with being the first European to establish a settlement in Baja California, in present day La Paz. Beginning in 1535, he led and organized expeditions which sailed from the western coast of Mexico, explored the Gulf of California, navigated to the southern end of the peninsula, and reached as far north as Cedros Island off its west coast. Alta California was explored and mapped by subsequent excursions, two of which are discussed here for their significant contributions to the cartographical history of the area.

⁷⁸ Walter Mignolo, "Colonial Situations, Geographical Discourses and Territorial Representations: Towards a Diatopical Understanding of Colonial Semiosis," *Dispositio* 14 No. 36/38 (1989): 94.

⁷⁹ Headley, "Geography and Empire," 1122.

Cabrillo expedition, 1542

In 1542 Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, a soldier who was part of Hernan Cortés' foray into Aztec Tenochtitlán, was commissioned by Antonio de Mendoza, Viceroy of New Spain to explore the western coast of California, above the Baja peninsula. He got as far north as Mendocino, recording stops at several places along the way including San Diego Bay, Santa Catalina Island, Santa Pedro Bay, Santa Monica Bay, Carpinteria, Point Concepción, Monterey Bay, and Point Reyes.⁸⁰ Cabrillo did not survive to return from the voyage; he fell during an onshore trip and died from his injuries in one of the Channel Islands off the coast of Santa Barbara.

W. Michael Mathes has questioned the place of honor that California historians have given to the Cabrillo voyage, which he described as “merely a reconnoitering of the coast and a passive taking of possession for the crown.” Cabrillo is given credit as the first European to reach Alta California, but his primary intent was to search for gold and possibly a northwest passage to China, rather than to settle and colonize. No cosmographers or cartographers were among his party, who were primarily selected for their knowledge of ship building and operation. The choice of Cabrillo, a soldier who had experience piloting a ship but did not possess professional training (which had a formal licensing process in Spain by 1508) suggested that the viceroy had no overarching vision of Alta California besides as a potential site of treasure or part of a route to Asia.⁸¹ No original logs or charts from the expedition survive, and the most referenced source is a summary by the

⁸⁰ These are the present-day names. Most of Cabrillo's toponyms in Alta California were replaced by Vizcaíno's. There is also some disagreement among scholars about what locations they match up with, as several of Cabrillo's measurements were erroneous.

⁸¹ W. Michael Mathes, “The Expedition of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, 1542-1543: An Historiographical Reexamination,” *Southern California Quarterly* 76, No. 3 (Fall 1994): 248-249.

Spanish navigator Fray Andrés Urdaneta, derived from a notary's report, which in turn was compiled from first-hand accounts. As discussed earlier, Cabrillo described the Native California tribes he encountered, and provided several Indigenous place names for their villages, but there is no mention of conversion or their potential for Christianization.⁸²

Vizcaíno Expedition, 1602

Most of the present-day place names in Alta California were bestowed during the 1602 expedition by Sebastian Vizcaíno. Gaspar de Zuñiga, then Viceroy of New Spain, likely chose Vizcaíno, a merchant who had previously searched for pearl fisheries along the Gulf of California, for his experience with coastal reconnaissance. Based on the failure of a previous effort led by Sebastian Cermeño in 1595, it was decided that the voyage would originate in Acapulco and sail up the western coast of California towards Mendocino.⁸³ Cermeño was tasked to find ports for the Spanish galleons, which by then plied the very lucrative route between Manila and Acapulco. He attempted to do this using the galleon ship he commandeered; he sailed across the Pacific and navigated towards Mendocino, then followed a southern route down the coast. The length and rigors of the voyage rendered his crew exhausted and famished, and the great value of his cargo heightened the urgency of reaching the unloading point at Acapulco. These conditions were not conducive to stopping and scouting for promising harbors along the way. His main vessel was shipwrecked. In the smaller boat left for them to use, they had little time and

⁸² Wagner, "Voyage of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo," 21.

⁸³ Henry Wagner, "Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century. Chapter VI: The Voyage of Alvaro de Mendaña; Chapter VII: Juan de la Isla and Francisco Gali; Chapter X: The Antecedents of Sebastian Vizcaíno's Voyage of 1602," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 7, No. 3 (Sep 1928): 256-263. For details of Cermeño's failed voyage, see Henry Wagner, "The Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 3, No. 1 (Apr 1924): 10-20.

resources to fulfill their exploratory mission. Cermeño and what was left of his crew straggled back to end their voyage at Chacala, several hundred miles north of Acapulco. Thus his outing did not add much to the one undertaken by Cabrillo, save for bestowing two place names which would later be superseded. His designation of the Bay of San Pedro would be changed to Monterey Bay during the Vizcaíno tour of 1602. The bay he christened for San Francisco is today known as Drake's Bay.⁸⁴

Mathes has compared the Cabrillo and Vizcaíno voyages, arguing that the difference in their goals explained the lack of maps from the former and the deliberate planning for cartographical results which characterized the latter. A shift in Spain's vision of California (from a pathway to riches or the East, to a strategic settlement site) brought about the corresponding change in purpose between the 1542 and 1602 explorations.⁸⁵ It also accounts for the careful logistical planning by the viceroy, especially after the disastrous outcome of the 1595 expedition. Like Cermeño before him, Vizcaíno was charged with finding secure ports for the galleon ship. To this end, his fleet was outfitted with vessels specifically suited to coastal exploration. His instructions to map the territory, specify locational coordinates, and to investigate all the ports, bays, islands, rivers and other features of the land implied the assignment of definitive toponyms.⁸⁶ Two cosmographers accompanied the trip: Geronimo Martin Palacios and Fray Antonio de la Ascension of the Barefoot Order of the Carmelites. The marked contrast in planning,

⁸⁴ Cermeño (and previous maritime explorers) missed the current great bay of San Francisco, which was disguised by its narrow entrance through the Golden Gate Strait. It would not be sighted until 1769 by the landbound party headed by Gaspar Portolá.

⁸⁵ Mathes, "Expedition of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo," 249.

⁸⁶ Antonio de la Ascension and Henry R. Wagner, "Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century. Chapter XI: Father Antonio de la Ascension's Account of the Voyage of Sebastian Vizcaíno," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 7 No. 4 (December 1928): 297. Also Mathes, "Expedition of Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo," 251.

logistics, and personnel underscored the importance of mapping to territorial possession and placemaking.

The cosmographer Antonio de las Ascension was one of three Carmelite friars on the tour and his account is unsurprisingly infused with religious language. He began by asserting Spain's claim to California as righteous, given to the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella by Pope Alexander VI, as specified by the *Inter Caetera* bull of 1493. According to Ascension, Philip III, the current King, was carrying on the legacy of his forebears, and possessed of

"the same zeal as they for the good of the souls under his charge, always endeavors by all ways and means possible to advance and amplify his empire and Christianity over all this new western world."

To this end, Ascension noted that the viceroy had requested religious personnel

*"accompany the expedition, and to take possession of that Kingdom of California, in order to undertake their conversion at once."*⁸⁷

His invocation of the map, the papal bull, and the mission to proselytize summarizes the imbrication of visual representation, possession, and evangelization—operating in the same physical space—in creating place for one culture, erasing it for the Other.

One of the earliest maps to consolidate the illustrations in the Vizcaíno account manuscripts (fig. 2.5) illustrates the coast and the names he gave to key places, many of which are still in use today. Several were derived from the Catholic calendar of feast days. The bay and port of San Diego was so named because Vizcaíno's ships entered it on November 10, two days before the feast of San Diego. On November 28, they cast anchor near an island off the coast and named it Santa Catalina, as that saint's feast day had just transpired three days prior. The Santa Barbara Channel, and the Santa Lucia mountain

⁸⁷ Ascension and Wagner "Ascension's Account," 295-98.

range were named in the same manner. They passed through the channel on December 1 and sighted the mountain sierra on December 14. The Carmel River got its designation from the order of the friars traveling with Vizcaíno. Point Reyes was reached on January 6, in time to observe the day of the Three Kings. Not every place name had a religious significance. Monterey was named in honor of the expedition's sponsor, Viceroy Gaspar de Zúñiga, the Count of Monterey. Point Pinos near the entrance to Monterey Bay was called thus because of the forest of pine trees in the vicinity.⁸⁸ On the map, the clustering of names along coastline reflected the expedition's primary interest in securing ports for the galleons. While the Spaniards knew that places beyond the coast were not uninhabited, the blank space portraying the interior territory revealed their cartographic lens.

The persistence of the Vizcaíno toponyms illustrates the significance of the journey and the credibility attached to the maps and charts it yielded. The most updated reference used by the 1769 expeditions to Alta California, *Navegacion Especulativa y Practica* by José González Cabrera Bueno, was a navigation guide for the galleon ships.⁸⁹ Published in 1734, it relied heavily on the sailing instructions recorded by Vizcaíno's pilot Francisco de Bolaños, and augmented by the cosmographer Fray Antonio de la Ascension.⁹⁰ Father Crespi, who traveled on the land party led California governor Gaspar Portolá in search of Monterey, wrote about their difficulty in determining whether they had

*“reached the latitude in which Cabrera Bueno and Vizcaíno placed the port, that is to say, in thirty-seven degrees.”*⁹¹

⁸⁸ Ascension and Wagner “Ascension's Account,” 347-357; 363-366.

⁸⁹ Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California*, vol. 2 (San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1912), 24.

⁹⁰ Antonio de las Ascension and Henry R. Wagner, “Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century. Chapter XI: Father Antonio de la Ascension's Account of the Voyage of Sebastian Vizcaíno (Continued),” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8, No. 1 (Mar 1929): 34.

⁹¹ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, vol. 2, 44.

They would miss it the first time, but finally recognized it on a second reconnaissance trip, exclaiming,

“This is indeed the Port of Monterey for which we are searching; for it is to the letter as Sebastian Vizcaíno and Cabrera Bueno describe it!”⁹²

Inscribing a Christian Landscape

The Visitor General José de Gálvez, who planned the settlement of Alta California using the presidio and mission configuration, directed that the first establishments be founded at the ports of San Diego and Monterey, and that the former was to be named after San Diego de Alcalá, following Vizcaíno’s designation. He also specified that another mission be located between the two, and that it should be called San Buenaventura, a Franciscan saint. He approved of naming an additional mission after San Francisco, and thought it fitting that future ones be named after saints of the eponymous Order.⁹³ The twenty-one missions in Alta California followed the customary pattern of adopting names of holy Catholic figures or events. Some of the titular saints, such as San Francisco de Asís, San Francisco Solano, Santa Clara, San Antonio de Padua, San Luis Obispo, San Buenaventura, and San Juan Capistrano were significant Franciscan personages. The mission’s chosen name linked it to Christian history, shaped its art and iconography, and determined the most important celebrations outside of Christmas and Easter.

At the time of his death in 1784, Junípero Serra had established nine missions during his fifteen years in Alta California. The buildings were little more than palisade and thatch structures; credit for construction of the current mission churches belongs to the

⁹² Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, vol. 2, 73.

⁹³ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries* vol. 2, 6-8.

Father Presidents that followed him, particularly Fermín Lasuén, his direct successor. Serra is a controversial historical figure, valorized as a hero and founding father of California, as well as vilified as a colonist and destroyer of Indigenous cultures. What is undeniable is his imprint on the California map as we know it today. The missions founded during his tenure spanned more than half the California coast. Their spread—from the southernmost San Diego de Alcalá to the northernmost San Francisco de Asís —represented almost the entire range of mission locations. Only San Rafael and San Francisco Solano were located above San Francisco. Serra's cartographical achievement was the inscription of a unified Christian landscape that muted, if not totally effaced Native Californian identities and histories. A 1787 map displaying the California mission sites up to that time displayed a similar pattern to Vizcaíno's, illustrating that Indigenous communities near the coast were first targeted for conversion, and confirming that it was the secular agenda which outlined the map for sacred space (fig. 2.6). By contrast, an ethnographic map of California, created in 1925 by pioneering anthropologist of Native American culture Alfred Kroeber, illustrated the different tribal communities in pre-Spanish California, by territory and linguistic group (fig. 2.7). It revealed a diversity and complexity that was more aligned with the Native Californians' relationships to place and each other before the imposition of Christian names and Spain's territorial priorities.

Enlightenment and Sacred Space

Empiricism, intellectual reasoning, and individual liberty—ideas which defined the eighteenth-century Enlightenment—brought about a gradual rearrangement of societal priorities. The Spanish Bourbon monarch, Carlos III, subscribed to these values, and

instituted governmental reforms aimed at reviving the economy. Religion took a secondary seat to science, and the spiritual gave way to the secular. The expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain and her colonies beginning in 1767 signaled to church authorities, once firmly entrenched in the highest political echelons, that they no longer had co-equal status in affairs of state.

Spain's glory had dimmed by the late 18th century when Viceroy Carlos Francisco, the Marques de Croix decided that it was vital to protect their territorial interests in Alta California. By this time all the missions in Mexico had already been secularized, and the whole system was viewed as retrograde and inefficient. Nevertheless, missions were thought to be the least expensive way to quickly establish a presence in California if administered by members of the Mendicant orders (like the Franciscans) who had taken a vow of poverty. The suppression of the Jesuits had also provided a source of funding for what was thought to be a short-lived project. Beginning in 1697, members of the Order secured royal permission to collect donor contributions for their evangelization projects in California, and through astute investments had accumulated what came to be known as the Pious Fund. It was among the assets seized by the Spanish Crown in 1767, and became the main source of funding for the missions.⁹⁴

The Franciscan padres who came to California were aware of the changing political winds, and were not naïve to the state's main motivation for settling it. Nevertheless, they yoked their own evangelical aspirations to Spain's desire for economic progress. What the government officials envisioned as a ten-year program of tutelage extended into more than sixty years before secularization in 1834. During their tenure, the Franciscans endeavored

⁹⁴ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries* vol. 1, 595-596.

to cast the missions as a space apart from the corrupting influences of the outside world, despite the contradictions presented by the fairly porous movement of people in and out of the complex. The mission, in relation to the presidio and the pueblo, was conceived as a sacred space writ large, but its urgent and worldly reality as an agricultural center led to increased demands on productivity. While the missionary's yoke was thought to be gentler than that of the hacienda owner, labor remained forced, and conditions became more strained once Mexico channeled resources into its war for independence from Spain beginning in 1810, effectively cutting off subsidies to the missions. This evolution from the cloistered community as imagined in the 1500s to the overextended economic engine of the early nineteenth century was arguably inevitable, given the inextricable relationship of church and state in the Spanish empire. While the Franciscans accepted their role in the colonial order and recognized the necessity of working alongside soldiers in the process of establishing a mission, their primary objective of spiritual salvation and moral guardianship often put them in conflict with military authorities. Missionaries understood that conversion would require obliterating or appropriating pre-Christian sacred spaces and rituals. In the last years of a declining Spanish empire, in the age of Enlightenment, they were likewise aware that their sacred space would compete with the economic space of an increasingly secular state. This heightened dimension of contestation is what sets the California missions apart from the first utopian communities founded in the sixteenth century

As the mission evolved into a spiritual-industrial enterprise, it became important to carve out an inviolable and visible space of sacrality in the mission church. The missionaries set to achieve this by building in the most exalted style possible, furnishing

with the best art and religious objects they could acquire, and establishing a rhythm of ritual that engaged participants through spectacle. The missions of California, founded in the last decades of the eighteenth century, and in the waning years of the Spanish empire, were a final plea for a sacred space as a model of Christian colonization.

CHAPTER 3

Creating Sacred Space: A Ritual Architectural Perspective

Academic studies of mission church architecture have largely focused on style categories, design sources, local influences, and attribution of work to specific builders and artisans. In general, the performative aspect of creating sacred space has been underexamined by historians who investigate early modern architecture.⁹⁵ Furthermore, most architectural scholarship has focused on a particular version of the church building, which represents just one of several iterations of the structure in the timeline of the mission. While this attention to surviving artifacts represents an empirical approach, it also reinforces a teleological narrative of European forms and material permanence as the ultimate architectural goal and the most worthwhile object of inquiry. An examination of the church building within a ritual context over time represents the active and intertwined process of architectural development and placemaking, and addresses the limits of formalism.

Whose Sacred Space?

Sacred space was to be created for the practice of the conquering faith. While this evangelical charter of the missions was clear, most historians have shown less interest in the spiritual needs of the colonists. Fray Antonio de la Ascension, one of the

⁹⁵ Samuel Edgerton and Jaime Lara are among the few scholars who have investigated performative spaces. In *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (2001) and *City, Temple, Stage: Eschatological Architecture and Liturgical Theatrics in New Spain* (2004) respectively, they analyze the *conventos* in sixteenth-century Mexico as sites of syncretic Indian and Christian pageantry. I define the term “syncretic” here, as referring to physical forms or social practices that simultaneously bear characteristics from disparate cultures, as a result of said cultures having sustained contact and interaction with each other. Its use is not meant to automatically suggest resistance or conflict, though this can sometimes be the case.

cosmographers on the Vizcaíno expedition, wrote that the viceroy had requested religious persons, priests, preachers and confessors of the Barefoot Order of Nuestra Señora del Carmen to come on the journey

*“in order that this fleet should not go without ecclesiastics to administer the sacraments to those who accompanied it . . .”*⁹⁶

The Carmelites were therefore charged not just with conversion of the Indigenous peoples of California, but with the preservation of the colonizers’ souls. In her examination of art in Jesuit and Franciscan mission churches, Clara Bargellini noted that Mass accoutrements such as vessels and vestments made up the minimum of what was considered necessary for establishment. Ritual objects took precedence over images, except for a crucifix and perhaps a picture of the patron saint. This underscores the essentiality of ceremonial worship in a Christian community, which she astutely observed, included the Indian converts as *well as* the missionaries and soldiers in the mission. Bargellini challenged the supposedly didactic role of some art, such as the images celebrating the lives of St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Francis of Assisi (founders of the Jesuit and Franciscan orders, respectively). and other depictions of martyrdom. These, she argued, reflected the aspirations of missionaries more than they instructed the neophytes on model behavior.⁹⁷ Official documents confirm the importance of providing for the religious welfare of the Spanish community in Alta California, which included the soldiers, their families, and civilian settlers. In 1786, José Antonio Rengel, the temporary Commandant General, complained to Fray Fermín Lasuén, then Father President of the missions, that mass had

⁹⁶ Ascension and Wagner “Ascension's Account,” 298.

⁹⁷ Clara Bargellini, “Art at the Missions of Northern New Spain,” in *The Arts of the Missions of Northern New Spain: 1600-1821*, eds. Clara Bargellini and Michael Komanecky (Mexico City: Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, 2009), 63-65.

not been celebrated at the presidio of San Francisco for the last two years. Lasuén responded that he was unaware of this omission, which was in violation of existing government regulations, and would remedy the situation right away.⁹⁸

The neophytes' experience of the mission church is difficult to assess and impossible to generalize, given their different concept of sacred space. Native Californians believed that sacred spirits dwelled in nature. Christians put their faith in a deity who created nature, and in an extra-terrestrial heaven.⁹⁹ Most of the evidence gleaned from Franciscan reports, travelers' descriptions, and a few ethnographic accounts suggests a reception that was varied, specific to the mission, the priest, and the individual subject of conversion.¹⁰⁰ An incident discussed in a 1787 letter from Father Lasuén to the California governor Pedro Fages demonstrates that the church had acquired a meaning for the Indians at the mission: as a space imbued with a protective power. Lasuén had written about Bruno, a runaway Indian who had sought refuge in the church at Mission San Carlos Borromeo. The Franciscan asserted

"the immunity of the holy place and the importance attached to it more than to any other place in the world ..."

and pleaded the case for the fugitive's release after commensurate punishment, noting that he had already been physically beaten by a soldier.¹⁰¹ At the time, the church at Mission San Carlos Borromeo was still the modest structure of adobe and thatch where Lasuén welcomed the noted French explorer, Jean-François de Galaup, the Count of La Pérouse,

⁹⁸ Lasuén, *Writings*, vol.1, 137-138.

⁹⁹ David Weber, "Arts and Architecture, Force and Fear: The Struggle for Sacred Space," in *The Arts of the Missions of Northern New Spain: 1600-1821*, eds. Clara Bargellini and Michael Komanecky (Mexico City: Antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso, 2009), 3-4.

¹⁰⁰ Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 161-62. Hackel summarizes the Indians' responses to Catholicism as individual, idiosyncratic, and often grounded in experimentation and ambivalence.

¹⁰¹ Lasuén, *Writings*, vol. 1, 152.

the previous year. The image of the visit captured by the artist traveling with La Pérouse depicts the rustic edifice which Bruno turned to for protection (fig. 3.1). The stone edifice associated with the mission today had not yet been built, but seventeen years after mission establishment, the church had come to signify a place of sanctuary for both European Christians and Indian neophytes. In this case, meaning was not specific to a particular architectural edition, but to the space it signified.

From *Enramada* to Iconic Image

The central ritual of the Christian mass, the Eucharist, is not fixed to a historic site or inherently spiritual place. The flexibility of sacred placemaking at the missions reflected this “mobility of the sacrificial space.”¹⁰² An *enramada*, a makeshift open shed fashioned out of tree branches, was the first sacred space to be constructed. Under this shelter, the first mass was celebrated to mark the selection of the mission site. The building of immediately necessary structures would then ensue. A chapel (usually the first room to be provisioned), missionary quarters (often abutting or across from it), rooms for the soldiers, areas for storage and cooking formed the basic core of a mission. The sites that drew more converts, saw more abundant harvests, and increased their economic productivity, saw a corresponding development in the built environment. As the congregation grew, the simple chapel would be expanded, rebuilt, or wholly moved to another site. Earthquakes, fire, and flood also played a role in the decision to repair or relocate. Junípero Serra founded Mission San Carlos Borromeo in Monterey on June 3, 1770, but shortly after found another site near the Carmel River which he deemed superior because of the arability of the soil, the

¹⁰² Cosgrove, *Apollo's Eye*, 57.

abundant supply of water, and the proximity to the local communities he wished to convert. He moved the mission to its present location within a year, leaving the presidio in place. Over a period of twenty-six years, six chapels were constructed on approximately the same site before the current stone edifice, which was dedicated in 1797.¹⁰³ Mission San Francisco de Asís was founded on June 29, 1776. The present-day adobe church, inaugurated in 1791, was preceded by one of humbler construction: wood, plastered with clay and roofed with *tule*.¹⁰⁴ Mission San Luis Rey, established on June 13, 1798, became one of the largest and most prosperous missions; its growing congregation quickly outgrew the first, and the second church. The third (and current) adobe structure was inaugurated in 1815. The trajectory of building at a mission can be gleaned from missionary reports, but period images of the earliest days are rare. In 1963, Franciscan historian Maynard Geiger delved into the considerable archives at the Santa Barbara Mission Archive and Library, and worked with the artist Russell Ruiz to visually reconstruct the architectural development of Mission Santa Barbara, from its founding in 1786 up to the first known image drawn by Alfred Robinson in 1829 (figs. 3.2 to 3.5).¹⁰⁵ Like the others, Mission Santa Barbara went through a few versions of the church, in different locations, before settling on the form and situation of the present building.

An incident in April 1776 demonstrated how seriously the priests treated the sacred nature of a space, no matter how humble or temporary it was. Carlos, an Indian who had

¹⁰³ Martin Morgado, "Non Recedet Memoria Ejus: The Story of Blessed Junípero Serra's Mission Carmel Grave," *California History* 67, no. 3 (September 1988): 152.

¹⁰⁴ *Tule* was a local grass that was used as building material.

¹⁰⁵ Maynard Geiger, *A Pictorial History of the Physical Development of Mission Santa Barbara: from Brush Hut to Institutional Greatness, 1786-1963* (Oakland, Calif: Franciscan Fathers of California, 1963), 2-15; and Alfred Robinson, *Life in California: during a residence of several years in that territory* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846), 45. Geiger actually reconstructed the mission complex up to 1833, since Robinson's image only depicted a view of the façade from the approach to the mission.

participated in the rebellion at Mission San Diego in November of the previous year, had apparently repented his actions and had taken refuge in the church. Father Vicente Fuster, the missionary in charge at San Diego, found himself locked in conflict with Fernando Rivera y Moncada, the military governor, who demanded that Carlos be turned over to his soldiers for punishment. Against Fuster's wishes, he had Carlos removed, which caused the Father to excommunicate him and all the men involved in the arrest. Rivera argued that the declaration of sanctuary was invalid for the crime, and furthermore, the church was merely an area in the warehouse where the Mass was celebrated and other sacraments administered. He appealed to Junípero Serra, but the Father President sided with Father Fuster and maintained that the excommunication would be upheld until the prisoner was returned.¹⁰⁶ Clearly, the missionaries believed that the performance of ritual sanctified space, and enforced its violation with the threat of banishment from the Catholic Church.

Architecture, when it is aptly composed and situated, is able to create a sense of place by the force of visibility.¹⁰⁷ The sight of a California mission in the natural landscape evoked a picturesque charm for many who encountered it for the first time. Few expressed it more poetically than the French merchant Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, who came to Mission San Luis Rey in 1827,

“ . . . after one and a half hours of travel, we descried before us, from the top of a slight eminence, the superb buildings of Mission San Luis Rey, whose brilliant whiteness was sent to us by the first light of day. At the distance we were from it, and by the uncertain light of dawn, this edifice, of a very beautiful pattern, supported upon many pillars, had the look of a palace; the architectural defects not being grasped at this distance, the eye seized only upon the elegant mass of this fine building. The verdant valley in which this mission is placed, already enlivened by great herds which could as yet be seen only as white and red spots,

¹⁰⁶ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries* vol. 2, 185-88.

¹⁰⁷ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1977), 163-65.

stretched to the north as far as the eye could reach, where the landscape was bounded by a group of high mountains, whose outlines and summits were but softly made out through the light morning mists. Unconsciously I stopped my horse to examine alone, for a few minutes, the beauty of this sight . . . ¹⁰⁸

Significant architectural developments ceased after secularization in 1834, when the mission lands were distributed among the new Mexican elite, and the church turned over to the local parish. Historic preservation efforts have since then been oriented towards the conservation, rebuilding, or (in some cases) recreation of the church which existed at that pivotal moment in mission history. The preservation movement however, did not begin until the closing years of the nineteenth century. Before then, the mission buildings would suffer from neglect, abandonment, and looting under the government of Mexico, and afterwards the United States. During those ruinous years, their crumbling remains continued to be drawn commentary from travelers, many of them artists who executed mission drawings, often in series. Edward Vischer, a German émigré to Mexico, visited California in 1842. Shortly after, he relocated to San Francisco where he continued to work as a businessman, but also began making pencil sketches of the missions. He published them as a collection titled *Missions of Upper California* in 1872. Vischer's first impression of Mission San Luis Rey echoed that of Duhaut-Cilly, who came there fifteen years prior,

"I realized, of course, that the present condition could hardly be more than a reflection of the former splendor . . . Although the steeple of the church had never been completed, it nevertheless looked quite imposing between the cemetery and the almost endless arcade of the dwellings. The inner arcade, enclosing a spacious square, contained the workshops in which the looms and other equipment could still be seen . . . the forsaken shops, the neglected gardens and plantations with their isolated

¹⁰⁸ Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, "Duhaut-Cilly's Account of California in the Years 1827-28," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8 no. 3 (Sept 1929): 236.

groups of palm trees were witnesses of bygone days which will never return."¹⁰⁹ (fig. 3.6)

Henry Chapman Ford, a Chicago-based artist who moved to Santa Barbara in 1875, produced what were arguably the most popular images of the missions. He consulted several sources—earlier drawings (including Vischer's) photographs, and his onsite sketches—in an effort to create the most accurate representation of the missions before their widespread deterioration. His *Etchings of the Franciscan Missions of California* was published in 1883.

Helen Hunt Jackson, an activist for Native American rights, detailed the mistreatment, marginalization, and outright massacre of Indigenous peoples at the hands of white settlers and later citizens of the United States in her book, *Century of Dishonor* (1881). After a trip to California, she became an advocate for the former Mission Indians and their descendants, many of whom were disadvantaged by the Mexican takeover and whose communities were further decimated and impoverished after U.S. statehood. Her efforts to lobby Congress to action met with mixed success, but it was her novel *Ramona* (1884) which created the biggest stir. A fictional romance set in Mexican California about a mixed-race Native American woman, *Ramona* launched the "Spanish craze," a national wave of interest in the era of the missions and ranches. She had intended for the book to highlight the lamentable plight of the Native Americans, but instead it infused the popular imagination with halcyonian notions of the Spanish California past. Together with landscape paintings that portrayed idyllic visions of the mission on canvas, they fueled an artistic vogue dubbed the Mission (or the Spanish Colonial) Revival, whose aesthetic

¹⁰⁹ Edward Vischer, translated by Erwin Gustav Guude, "Edward Vischer's First Visit to California in the Year," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 19 no. 3 (Sept 1940): 210.

California would embrace as its historical style. Henry Chapman Ford died in 1894; that same year Charles Lummis established the California Landmarks Club which led the charge on the restoration of the missions, and pioneered the California historic preservation movement. The image of idealized missions and missionaries that helped birth it was however, a myth, destined for later historical correction and contentious political debate. Moreover, the earliest projects focused on the mission churches, which were oftentimes the only structures left standing at that time, albeit in serious disrepair. This cast the church, a symbol of sacred space, as the synecdochical image of the mission, and the icon of California Spanish heritage.

A Ritual Architectural Perspective

By the eighteenth century, the mission, which began as a pastoral religious ideal, had been transformed into an agricultural enterprise run by spiritual pastors. Planting and pasture fields, workshops, storage spaces, and living quarters occupied the greater portion of the mission lands. The church however, announced its importance as the tallest and most architecturally detailed structure in the built complex, visibly differentiating itself as the core sanctum, a space reserved for worship and the most holy rituals of Christianity. The labor and financial resources devoted to church building and furnishing attest to the deliberate creation of sacred space on the part of the missionaries.¹¹⁰ Unlike building on top of “pagan” temples in Central Mexico, the site selection for missions was based on agrarian viability and the presence of a sizeable Indigenous population. This meant that the missionaries had to create sacred meaning for a place that had no apparent or lasting

¹¹⁰ M.C. Duggan, “With and Without an Empire: Financing for California Missions Before and After 1810,” *Pacific Historical Review* 85, no. 1 (2016): 23-71.

association with local worship. This was accomplished by changing the built environment and by the introduction of new spatial practices in the form of Christian ritual. Early on, the missionaries had noted the performative proclivities of the Native peoples they encountered. Father Juan Crespi, a Franciscan who in 1769 traveled with California Governor Gaspar Portolá from San Diego in search of Monterey, kept a diary of the expedition and recorded their experience with what were likely Chumash Indians in the vicinity of present-day Santa Barbara,

*“Toward evening we received the visit of the chiefs of each village, who came one after the other in all their finery of paint and overloaded with feather ornaments, holding in their hands split reeds, the motion and noise of which they used in order to keep time at their singing and dancing. This they did so well and so uniformly that the effect was very harmonious. The dances lasted all the afternoon and we had hard work to send our visitors home. We dismissed them, and begged them by means of signs not to return and trouble us during the night; but this was in vain, for as soon as darkness set in they came back . . .”*¹¹¹

Following the pattern of appropriation and accommodation from two previous centuries of missionary work in the New World, the Franciscans restructured Indigenous time markers to the Catholic liturgical calendar, and reoriented pre-Spanish celebrations towards Christian practices, in an attempt to graft new traditions onto established ones. The Winter Solstice for instance, was aligned with Christmas. Feast days of saints and other festivities at the missions included Indigenous dances and games, albeit in a form that was excised of elements which the priests deemed overtly idolatrous or licentious. This was part of the colonial process to weaken Indigenous structures and replace them with Christian ones.¹¹²

¹¹¹ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, vol. 2, 36.

¹¹² Kristin Dutcher Mann, “Christmas in the Missions of Northern New Spain,” *The Americas* 66, no. 3 (Jan 2010): 338.

The Limits of Formalism

The California mission churches are small and rustic compared to the cathedrals or the fortress-like *conventos* in Central Mexico. Their modest scale and relative simplicity are comparable to contemporaneous mission churches on the northern frontier of New Spain, such as San Ignacio de Caborica (figs. 3.7 and 3.8) in Sonora, Mexico. In both locations, the choice of material (adobe, fired clay bricks, protective lime whitewash), and the crudely carved but otherwise plain surfaces reflect the natural and labor resources in the region.

Formal analyses of California mission architecture seek to identify the hallmarks of a distinct Spanish colonial style as distinguished by local influences. Early studies documented frequently occurring features such as curved pedimented gables, terraced bell towers or pierced espadañas (gabled wall towers with arched openings for bells), arcaded corridors, wide projecting eaves and low-pitched red tile roofs.¹¹³ Later historians have focused on designer and maker attributions, the particularities of local ornament, and the agents of cultural transfer discernible from the imported furnishings¹¹⁴. These types of studies present two limitations for the analysis of architecture that was intended as sacred space.

First, they neglect or downplay ritual practice, beyond an acknowledgment that they existed as a part of the religious conversion program. As previously noted, the syncretic

¹¹³ Rexford Newcomb, *The Old Mission Churches and Historic Houses of California: Their History, Architecture, Art and Lore* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1925), 103-104.

¹¹⁴ Norman Neuerberg has published detailed investigations of the art and decorative painting in the missions. Mardith Schuetz-Miller has focused on the designers and artisans who worked in California. J.M. Mancini, has examined mission furnishings from the Pacific trade.

rituals performed in the atria of sixteenth century *conventos* in Mexico, have been the subject of notable studies, but there are few that investigate religious practice in the later missions on the frontier. The general consensus is that evangelical fervor peaked in late sixteenth century and slowly declined thereafter. This follows the trajectory of the Spanish empire, which more than any colonizing power, wedded religion and territorial conquest. Scholarship on religious ritual and sacred spaces has also focused on earlier periods up to the Middle Ages, reinforcing the view that religious life disappeared after the Enlightenment. In her call for a renewed inquiry into the material and visual cultures of religion, Sally Promey challenged “the secularization theory of modernity, harnessed to a developmental model of civilization” which claimed that religion no longer played a significant role in Western culture.¹¹⁵ The documentary evidence as it has been usually mined, would seem support this “secular turn” in Spanish governance of the colonies beginning in the eighteenth century. The Bourbon emphasis on productivity, and the push to replace missionaries with parish priests confirmed that the need for a local labor force to service the settler-colonists outweighed the need to turn Native Californians into models of Catholic piety. Missions were viewed as an arcane but less costly method of introducing Indians to western modes of life.¹¹⁶ Yet Junípero Serra, who had headed up the Sierra Gorda missions and therefore had encountered anti-mission sentiment, may have found an opportunity in to break new ground and reinstate the earlier ideals of missionization in Alta California. His intense battle for control of the missions as indicated by his bitter feuds with every California governor during his lifetime attests to this. He was aware that the

¹¹⁵ Sally Promey, *Sensational Religion: Sensory Cultures in Material Practice* (New Haven: Yale University, 2014), 4.

¹¹⁶ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 85-88.

missions were intended to be short-lived affairs, oriented towards economic production, but constantly defended their primacy as conversion spaces. Serra and his Franciscan brethren (many of whom worked alongside him in the Sierra Gorda) understood that they had to carve out both physical and social space for spiritual practice. A large part of the missions was devoted to the quotidian tasks of planting, animal tending, and small-scale crafts. Therefore, it was crucial that the church be differentiated and rendered sacrosanct through architecture and performance. While several studies have been devoted to analyzing the former, the latter is taken for granted. One must be reminded that the new Christian practices imposed upon the neophytes were an entity just as culturally alien as the architecture.

Serra was a performative evangelist, known for his bombastic preaching style, and his public demonstrations of religious zeal. Prior to his California assignment, he preached in and around Mexico City, where on one occasion, he began to flog himself in the middle of a sermon.¹¹⁷ While such dramatic behavior was not uncommon during that time, it illustrates his eagerness to communicate through bodily action, in addition to words. He consciously utilized ritual and performance to create Christian sacred space in California, undeterred by the rusticity of early mission structures. His fervent and ambitious efforts at proselytization through sermons and religious practices, rather than memorable building projects, distinguished his tenure as president of the missions. Yet today, a statue of his likeness at almost every site cements his image with the architecture.

Second, a formalist approach is usually confined to a mature form of the church building, and dismisses earlier structures as temporary, or interim stages to a “final”

¹¹⁷ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 104.

expression. This fixed view of architecture denies the meanings that are fashioned, bricolage-like, as both building and practice develop in response to conditions on the ground. This is especially true of colonial and religious spaces, which are sites of cultural contestation and negotiation.

Capturing Ritual

A ritual-architectural paradigm offers a diachronic approach which addresses the limitations of formalism previously outlined, and explores the boundaries between architectural history and other disciplines. Lindsay Jones, a historian of religion, proposed that we analyze sacred architecture as sites of ritual, or as he termed it, “eventful places.” He suggested we look at the history of instances where “built forms, human beings, and festival occasions all interact and coalesce,” and recognize the multiplicity of meanings that they engender for different people over time. He referred to these occasions as ritual-architectural events.¹¹⁸ For architectural historians, this means an approach to the study of buildings that goes beyond stylistic assessment and considers how actual use shapes experience in a dynamic and multivalent way. In the case of mission churches, sacred space was created by elements other than design and material choices; indeed holy rituals were performed in provisional “chapels” before the first adobe brick was made or the first stone quarried. The challenge for scholars of visual culture, is how to make ritual, which is a process, visible. An investigation of written documentation in consonance with material culture offers a possible approach.

¹¹⁸ Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, 2000), 46-50.

The Liturgical Calendar

The Catholic liturgical calendar prescribed the schedule of Catholic holy days, which were anchored by Christmas and Easter, and punctuated with other religious commemorations. The Feast of the Corpus Christi (which was observed sometime in May or June), the feast day of mission's namesake or patronal saint, church dedications and anniversaries were observed with much pomp and pageantry; people from neighboring missions would be invited to participate in the festivities, as would travelers who happened to be in the vicinity at the time. Two mission era documents provide a view into the religious schedule at the missions. The first is the *Patente*, or the official letter of José Gasol, Father Guardian of the College of San Fernando, to the missionaries of Alta California. The second is the choir book of Narciso Duran, a Franciscan missionary in Alta California.

The *Patente* of José Gasol, dated October 1, 1806, was a detailed set of guidelines and instructions for mission administration and the conduct expected of the padres who worked there. It also included a summary of a prior *patente* sent in 1775 by Francisco Pangua, who was Father Guardian at that time. Among the items specified by Gasol were rituals that had to be observed at all missions: Ash Wednesday, which is marked by marking the foreheads of the faithful with ashes on the first day of Lent; Candlemas, which is celebrated with the blessing of candles and a procession to commemorate the presentation of Christ in the temple at Jerusalem, forty days after Christmas; Palm Sunday, wherein churchgoers carried and waved palm fronds to recall the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, which culminated in his crucifixion and resurrection from the dead; Rogation Days, which are observed on April 25 and the three days before Ascension Day, with acts

of penance and a procession; and the Feast of the Corpus Christi in honor of the Eucharist, which was also marked with a procession. The *Patente* also prescribed a daily routine of prayer to be signaled by the bell, obligatory Sunday mass, and admonitions to hear confessions and perform the Way of the Cross during Lent.¹¹⁹

Narciso Duran was a Franciscan missionary from the College of San Fernando who came to Alta California in 1806, and worked at Mission San José for twenty-seven years. He served as Father President of the missions from 1825 to 1827, and 1831-1833, but he is best known for his accomplishments in training the highly regarded choir composed of Indian neophytes at Mission San José. Alfred Robinson, who attended the mission feast day in 1831, remarked on the excellent musical performance, noting that the Indians had been practicing daily for more than two months under Father Duran.¹²⁰ The last three pages of the Duran choir book, now preserved at the Santa Barbara Mission Archive and Library, list each song and corresponding page number, specifying the name of the associated feast day and the date in chronological order, e.g. “*Dia 24 de Junio S. Juan Bautista; Dia de S. Pedro 29 de Junio; Dia de S. Buenaventura 14 de Julio* (figs. 3.9 to 3.11).” In this “table of contents,” musical performance reveals the march of liturgical time at the missions, and hints at other ritual elements such as prayers, blessings, processions, etc., which were likewise keyed to the schedule.

¹¹⁹ Francis Guest, “The Patente of José Gasol, October 1. 1806,” *The Americas* 49, vol. 2 (1992): 207-09, 224-25.

¹²⁰ Robinson, *Life in California*, 114.

Material Culture of Performance

While the written record can verify the observance of ritual, material culture recuperates its physical experience. The most frequently administered sacraments in the church were the Eucharist (which was celebrated during Mass), baptism, and marriage. A record of each one was entered into mission's sacramental registers, which were usually part of the official book of communications, called the *Libro de Patentes*. Duran's choir book is evidence of music played for specific feast days, but each celebration also called for the revelation, concealment, wearing, and movement of objects and people in a specific manner and sequence. The account books and inventories for each mission list a great variety and number of accoutrements involved in these rituals. Objects such as chalices, monstrances, priestly vestments, candles, incense burners, processional crosses, irons for making the communion hosts, baptismal fonts and shells, holy liquids and their vessels, and musical instruments were integral to the sensory apprehension of sacred space.

A number of art historical studies have focused on the painting and sculpture in the church, with several noting that Junípero Serra was famously particular about the art he ordered for the missions; he often specified minute details of dress, color, and expression. Saint Claire was to be portrayed

“with our habit, and her veil, not in the style of nuns from here but rather falling over her shoulders, as she is painted in Europe.”¹²¹

Saint John Capistran needed to have a

“handsome, resolute, and devout appearance.”¹²²

¹²¹ Bargellini, “Art at the Missions,” 69.

¹²² Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 148.

Scholars have related the paintings to influential studios in Mexico and Europe, and discussed recurring subjects and themes as evidence of their didactic roles.¹²³ Others have explored the Franciscan theological underpinnings that they suggest.¹²⁴

Sacred objects on the other hand are often overlooked because they are always there, present at the beginning, in a sense. On the initial journey to Alta California, Junípero Serra set sail from La Paz for San Diego with supplies for the missions: church bells, baptismal fonts, images, sacred utensils, vestments. These were essential to the celebration of the first mass (usually under an *enramada*) once the expedition had safely landed on shore and secured the area. An initial endowment of one thousand pesos marked the establishment of each mission, along with a number of religious objects, frequently a chalice and paten, a ciborium, or a tabernacle.¹²⁵ These items, usually listed as “gifts from the King” emphasize the centrality of ritual, and its precedence over permanent building. Ritual objects were thus the initial carriers of meaning; their presence and prescribed use signaled a religious event, activated the space, and shaped the experience of divine presence which the ritual-architectural moment was meant to evoke (figs 3.12 to 3.20).

A few of the original objects used at the missions are extant, either housed in the church or in the mission museum. Their significance has been obscured by the church building, which aided by the popular images created and disseminated since the late nineteenth century, has now become the dominant symbol of sacred space. The objects, on the other hand, are a foregone conclusion; they have become part of the normative frame

¹²³ Pamela Huckins, “Art in the Alta California Mission Churches, 1769-ca. 1834” (PhD diss., New York University, 2011), 95–130.

¹²⁴ James Nolan, “Anglo-American Myopia and California Mission Art: Part One,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 58 no. 1 (Spring 1976): 4-5.

¹²⁵ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, vol. 1, 332-35.

of a Christian church. That is, they are what we have come to expect in the setting. We only notice them if they seem inappropriate, or stand out in some way. In fact, the meanings and uses of the ritual objects were dictated by the Catholic church, as much as the architecture redefined the built environment, in order to impose a new order on the colonized culture.¹²⁶ This is the case for considering ritual objects in conjunction with sacred architecture; they are an equal agent of sacred placemaking.¹²⁷

Indigenous Engagement

A ritual-architecture analysis acknowledges the superabundance of architectural meaning. That is, the meaning of architecture is abundant and always in flux.¹²⁸ The same ritual-architectural event could be experienced differently depending on whether one was a missionary, a soldier, a European visitor, or a mission Indian. Neophytes were compelled to come to church, attend Mass, and participate in other Christian ceremonies throughout the year. The range of their attitudes predictably included fear and resentment, indifference and boredom, interest, and in some cases, enthusiasm. The latter emotion could apply to music, which was one of the more effective inroads to conversion. Neophytes who displayed aptitude, especially young boys who were born, baptized, and raised at the mission, were recruited into the choir. Father Narciso Duran devised a system for teaching

¹²⁶ Astrid Windus, "Putting Things in Order: Material Culture and Religious Communication in the Seventeenth Century Bolivian Altiplano," in *Image---Object---Performance: Mediality and Communication in Cultural Contact Zones of Colonial Latin America and the Philippines*, eds. Astrid Windus and Eberhard Crailsheim (Münster: Waxmann, 2013), 242-243.

¹²⁷ Neither is this type of analysis exclusive to Catholicism. In *The Beauty of Holiness: Anglicanism and Architecture in Colonial South Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), Louis Nelson interpreted the chalice, baptismal font, and pulpit in an eighteenth-century South Carolina church as vessels of God's grace, their materiality negotiating the physical and transcendent worlds for believers who received the Eucharist, participated in baptismal rites, and listened to the Word of God.

¹²⁸ Jones, *Hermeneutics* vol. 1, 34.

European musical notation using simple visuals which could be easily seen and followed while performing in church. Father Juan Bautista Sancho, a trained musician, adapted pieces that he conducted in Spain for his new pupils in Alta California.¹²⁹

At Mission Santa Barbara, Father Antonio Ripoll's expansion of the choir created a new elite group that arguably disrupted the Chumash social order and group solidarity.¹³⁰ This was in evidence during the Chumash Revolt of 1824, an Indian uprising which involved the missions of Santa Barbara, Santa Ines, and La Purisima. After a successful standoff with soldiers, the Santa Barbara mission Indians fled to the interior, fearing retributions, and wanting to start a new community. Father Ripoll, together with Father Sarria, then President of the Missions, and a contingent of soldiers went to persuade them to come back, offering a pardon and other reassurances. An agreement was eventually reached, and a group of Chumash agreed to return. Father Sarria gave an account of how they celebrated the truce before heading back to Santa Barbara,

*"On June 13, a mass of thanksgiving was celebrated in a very beautiful wooded at the place where we had met with the Indians. This year the date coincided with the Feast of the Holy Trinity. The same Indians who had fled displayed their musical talent as they sang under the direction of their choir master Jayme, who had been one of the first to have taken part in the uprising."*¹³¹

Not just Jayme, but all the mission singers returned. Furthermore, on June 18, while still enroute to Santa Barbara, the traveling party celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi. The Indians constructed an *enramada* and sang Christian songs while Fathers Sarria and Ripoll

¹²⁹ Kristin Dutcher Mann, *The Power of Song: Music and Drama in the Mission Communities of Northern New Spain, 1590-1810* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press and Berkeley, Calif: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2010), 171.

¹³⁰ James Sandos, "Christianization Among the Chumash," *American Indian Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (Winter, 1991): 79.

¹³¹ Rose Marie Beebe and Robert Senkewicz, "The End of the 1824 Chumash Revolt in Alta California: Father Vicente Sarria's Account," *The Americas* 53, vol. 2 (October 1996): 279.

celebrated mass.¹³² Not all of the Chumash who abandoned the mission during the rebellion came back, and those who did surely had various reasons for doing so. For the singers however, their key role in Christian rituals likely created an attachment to the mission which, though fraught with contradiction, influenced their decision to return. The pleasure which they must have derived from the mastery of musical performance meant that they were more fully engaged while in church, and thus more likely to access mental states akin to the religious. The celebration of Corpus Christi with a makeshift *enramada* also underscored their understanding that the Mass and their singing had the ability to manifest Christian sacred space in the wilderness.

Church performances that called for active participation from the Mission Indians outside of structured liturgy were another way to foster group religious experience. Christmas pageants which involved elaborate staging, costumes, and creative acting were popular in both Jesuit and Franciscan missions in northern New Spain beginning in the seventeenth century and continuing into the Mexican period. Father Ibanez, a missionary who worked at San Antonio de Padua and Soledad is credited for introducing the *pastorela*, a play based on the shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth, to Alta California. Staged in the tradition of medieval religious dramas, the story lent itself to extra-liturgical embellishments, such as folk songs, improvised musical instrumentation, and an expanded cast to include more members of the community.¹³³ Neophytes who played significant parts in the Christmas program were likely more inclined to feel a sense of connection to the Christian story they helped re-enact, and experience a sense of belonging in the church.

¹³² Sandos, "Christianization Among the Chumash," 83.

¹³³ Mann, "Christmas in the Missions," 340-346.

The act of building and making is not a religious ritual, but it has the ability to forge meaning and a relationship between the maker and the finished work. The Chumash took great pride in the superior quality of their craftsmanship, which the Franciscans recognized early on. In his diary of the trip from San Diego to San Francisco in 1769, Father Crespi wrote about his admiration for the houses in Chumash territory. He was also impressed with their canoes and musical instruments, noting the fine carving of their flutes and pipes.¹³⁴ In 1786, Father Lasuén presented gifts made by the Chumash to the Count of La Pérouse, along with a letter praising their makers,

*"I shall be happy if Your Lordship will be pleased to accept these three objects which are made of rush, and the one that is made of stone. All were fashioned by the Indians of the Santa Barbara Channel. In the region between San Diego and San Francisco, which are the limits of Upper California, I have not seen among the natives any artifacts of greater value."*¹³⁵

At Mission Santa Barbara, Father Ripoll tapped into this individual and community pride when he enlisted Chumash as carpenters, brick layers, stone masons, plasterers, roofers, and blacksmiths to build the present stone church. Begun in 1815, it was finished in five years and inaugurated in a three-day celebration that allowed them to bask in their monumental achievement. The solemn religious ceremonies during the day were followed by raucous revelry at night, featuring fireworks, building illuminations, and bull-baiting. Soldiers from the presidio, missionaries, Indians, and musicians from neighboring missions came to Santa Barbara, as did the governor who traveled all the way from Monterey.¹³⁶ The festivities were so memorable, they served as the inspiration for the modern-day Santa

¹³⁴ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 381.

¹³⁵ Lasuén, *Writings* vol. 1, 142-143.

¹³⁶ Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 156.

Barbara annual week-long fiesta.¹³⁷ It is telling that during the 1824 Revolt, the Chumash did not damage the church before fleeing the mission, and instead locked it and handed the keys to the Father Antonio Jayme, who was laid up sick in his room.¹³⁸ They may not have regarded the church as a religious sacred space in the way the missionaries intended, but their actions made it clear that they valued the structure and wanted to protect it. There are echoes of this sentiment in from Andrew Galvan, the current Ohlone curator at Mission San Francisco de Asís, who described his building as one “built by Indians and for Indians.”¹³⁹ Without minimizing the fact that most of the labor was forced, Galvan maintains that the history of mission Indians is more than a tale of victimhood, and he claims Mission San Francisco de Asís for his ancestors based on their literal physical investment in building the sacred space.

*“These walls bear the DNA and the fingerprints of the mission Indians who lived here.”*¹⁴⁰

A Process Over Time

Junípero Serra died in 1784, and did not live to see any of the current mission churches built. It is certain that he envisioned grander futures for them, beyond their beginnings as pole and thatch huts. Before he passed away at Mission San Carlos, he referred to a planned stone church that would replace the current adobe structure, which in turn had superseded a previous one made of wood.¹⁴¹ The first Franciscans who came to California were not designers or builders. While they probably had published architectural

¹³⁷ Sandos, “Christianization among the Chumash,” 80.

¹³⁸ Beebe and Senkewicz, “End of the 1824 Chumash Revolt,” 280.

¹³⁹ Andrew Galvan, “I Was Born an Indian,” *Boletín* 22, no. 1 (2005): 133.

¹⁴⁰ Andrew Galvan, post-lecture meeting with author, Mission San Francisco de Asís, July 28, 2018.

¹⁴¹ Frances Rand Smith, *The Architectural History of Mission San Carlos Borromeo California* (Berkeley: California Historical Survey Commission, 1921), 45.

pattern books and the memory of churches in their home lands to guide them, they were hampered by the lack of skilled labor. Western ideas executed with local materials and construction techniques likely produced early mission churches which were more improvisational and vernacular in appearance. *Commoditas, firmitas, venustas*—the Vitruvian principles of Classical building—influenced architectural critique in the early modern period, and arguably persist to this day. The building philosophy of the Native Californians, which favored permeability and ease of construction/disposal over solidity and permanence, did not fully align with these tenets. Since these early buildings no longer exist, it is easy to relegate them to teleological stages which culminate in a recognizable western style for Christian architecture. This is what Dell Upton describes as “the view from Rome,” by which he means a perspective that reifies the dominant culture. It comes from the architectural historian’s fixation on identifying styles by shared features of a polity, ethnicity, religion, geography, etc. Such a view ignores the fluidity and porosity of architecture.¹⁴² If we are to go beyond this narrow vision, a consideration of the mission church beyond the one that was standing in 1834 would be helpful in recognizing that even Christian sacred space may not always have looked “Christian.”

Formal studies of the surviving mission churches support an empirical approach, which has helped illuminate patterns of artistic exchange and stylistic developments. Permanent structures are powerful storytellers, even more so if they become part of a prevailing zeitgeist. The mission church which has become inextricably bound with California’s identity is of a specific building iteration in the mission timeline. While evocative, it also threatens to reduce history to a moment, and elide the processual nature

¹⁴² Dell Upton, “Starting from Baalbek: Noah, Solomon, Saladin, and the Fluidity of Architectural History,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 68 no. 4 (Dec 2009), 464-65.

of architecture and placemaking. The early versions of the mission church, along with their furnishings, and the non-homogenous nature of their congregations have to be acknowledged as part of the ritual-architectural history of sacred space in the missions.

CHAPTER 4

Case Studies

Three missions are featured as case studies to illustrate the creation of sacred space as a multifaceted process of mapping, architecture, and performance. The criteria for selection—location, major Indigenous group(s) affiliation, and year established—were designed in order to represent sites from the northern, middle, and southern coast of California, to include a diversity of Indigenous cultures, and to cover missions founded both during Junípero Serra's tenure as President of the Missions (1769-1784) and afterwards. The availability of relevant visual, textual, material, and ethnographic evidence was also a consideration. Mission San Carlos Borromeo, the earliest of the three cases, was Junípero Serra's home base, and in many ways the flagship mission. Being situated close to the port and presidio of Monterey, it was a frequent destination for explorers and merchants. Mission San Francisco de Asís is the northernmost case study; its frequently damp winters and chilly summers proved to be a challenge in terms of keeping its residents healthy, and resulted in the later establishment of the missions of San Rafael Arcángel and San Francisco Solano, in sites deemed more climatically salubrious. San Francisco de Asís was likewise located near an eponymous presidio and port whose eminent placement by a large and well-protected bay made it a significant military and trading post. Mission San Luis Rey, the southernmost of our three examples, was founded by Fermín Lasuén, who succeeded Serra as Father President of the Missions. It grew to be one of the most agriculturally prosperous establishments, and the monumental scale of its church reflected the large Indian population it managed to recruit.

Each case study showcases a mission church architecture that reflects late Baroque and Neoclassical influences from western Europe, filtered through the lens of Mexican designers (as documented in two sites), and built with local materials and labor. In all cases, the architectural trajectory moved from modest, improvisational structures to larger, more permanent and stylistically sophisticated buildings. The concept of enduring, architectural sacred space was also summoned in the decorative wall paintings of almost every mission, where the illusion of space was summoned by faux arches, niches, canopies, railings, and drapery. The original interior of Mission San Miguel showcases several examples of real structures juxtaposed with painted ones. The balustrade of the choir loft is repeated in paint on the upper portion of the side walls (fig. 4.1). A painted classical temple serves as the frame for an actual statue of Saint Joseph (fig. 4.2). The ubiquity of marbleized paint finishes (fig. 4.3) likewise indicated the missionaries' preference for sturdier material (stone instead of wood) but also gestured to the loftier construction of historical western exemplars.

Similar rites of possession were performed at the establishment of each mission. They uniformly involved a mass under an *enramada*, blessing of the land with holy water, and adoration of a cross. Auditory performances—songs, bells, cannons—accompanied these visual displays and movements. Aside from establishing a physical presence which was in some cases disconcerting to the Native peoples, these rituals fostered bonds of fellowship among the missionaries, soldiers, and settlers, creating an incipient identity for their community in foreign territory. The Franciscans imposed a daily routine of work and prayer, which was fairly consistent across each site. The larger rhythms of the agricultural cycle and the Christian liturgical year dictated the seasonal activities. Despite this, cultural

accommodations existed in the form of time off given to mission Indians to celebrate their traditional festivals, which were usually keyed to astronomical events such as the Winter solstice, or to observe personal rituals, such as those related to the death of family members (which were unfortunately common and frequently occurring). Indigenous practices were sometimes contentious because they provided occasions for lapsing into pre-Catholic and (in the eyes of the missionaries) heretical ways. This constant negotiation of cultural and religious performance occurred at every site, and was most visible in the Indigenous dances and performances featured in threshold and outdoor spaces.

Adapting the paradigm recommended by Lindsay Jones to a California mission church requires that we track a timeline of architectural development and ritual for each site. Written documentation about building progress comes in the form of Franciscan reports and travelers' accounts. Ritual performance can be gleaned from the rich inventories of ceremonial objects, and from the Christian liturgical calendar, which is dominated by the major celebrations of Christmas and Easter, and punctuated with the observances of the feast days of saints. The patronal saint's day is doubly significant because it often coincides with the anniversary of the mission's establishment. Modern awareness of Christian holy days and practices has given them an almost *de facto* nature, and encouraged a "blindness" to the other evidence of ritual which can be found in written narratives, inventories, and sometimes in surviving artifacts. Religious objects not only corroborate the schedule of Christian celebrations but more importantly, demonstrate how new meanings emerged from their physical materiality. David Morgan argues that the study of culture (of which religion is a part) must go beyond the scrutiny of texts to include the consideration of material culture because meanings and "world-making" are constructed

through practice, and practice often involves things. Thus an embodied knowledge, which transcends words, is cultivated through the senses.¹⁴³

Franciscan reports, such as the letters written by mission presidents Junípero Serra and Fermín Lasuén, contain several references that allow us to trace the trajectory of church building, from the improvisational *enramada* of the first mass, to more fixed structures as the complex grew. Visitors who saw the missions during the Spanish colonial era provided an outsider's opinion of the church, its furnishings, and the rituals they observed. Information can likewise be gleaned from mission records, which survive in various degrees of completeness. Account books reveal a stream of religious art and furnishings arriving from Mexico, or sourced through the Spanish galleons which plied the Pacific routes to Asia. Inventories, especially those taken in the last years leading up to secularization, confirm that most churches were amply supplied with the accoutrements necessary for mass, processions, and other Christian celebrations. The ruinous period of the late nineteenth century resulted in looting, defacement, and elemental exposure of the mission buildings and interiors. As the mission churches declined in importance, some artifacts, such as paintings, sculpture, and ritual objects were transferred to other places of worship. This was the case in Mission San Carlos Borromeo, whose vestments, books, candelabra, and monstrance were moved to the presidio church at Monterey around 1849.¹⁴⁴ Others were kept in the families of the Mexican elites who took over the mission lands and converted them into ranchos. In some cases, an artifact (such as a baptismal font

¹⁴³ David Morgan, "The Materiality of Cultural Construction," in *Material Religion* 4 no. 2 (2008): 228.

¹⁴⁴ Celeste Pagliarulo, *Harry Downie and the Restoration of Mission San Carlos Borromeo, 1931-1937* (Los Angeles: Historical Society of Southern California, 2004), 2.

at San Carlos Borromeo) would be relocated to another part of the mission, to be later unearthed by the restorer Harry Downie.¹⁴⁵

The current churches have been restored with an eye towards “period accuracy” rather than veracity of provenance; each museum displays objects original to the mission, as well as comparable examples representing late eighteenth to early nineteenth century colonial Mexico. Despite these limitations, the following case studies attempt to juxtapose building reports, inventories, extant artifacts, and accounts of specific ritual in order to portray the process of sacred space creation from the Franciscan perspective. An itemized list of the architectural developments at each mission, and the religious art and sacred objects which came into the church is presented in table format in the Appendix. In addition, the number of Indian baptisms at the mission is juxtaposed with building and furnishing data as one measure of evangelical progress. Culled from various sources, the data tables are not meant to be comprehensive, but nevertheless provide evidence of ornate (and sometimes luxurious) ritual objects in the mission church, even prior to construction of the final building edition. They demonstrate that the humble construction of the early mission chapels belied their relatively rich interiors. Furthermore, the number and diversity of ceremonial paraphernalia underscores the complexity and specificity of Catholic ritual and the attendant material culture that mediated that experience for the participants.

Spain wielded the missions as instrument of conquest, an active attempt to impose a new world order on a subjugated territory and its peoples. Along with a modicum of military force, social control was implemented through the reshaping of the material

¹⁴⁵ Celeste Pagliarulo, *Harry Downie and the Contents of Mission San Carlos Borromeo, 1931-1967* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library, 2005), 10.

environment and the restructuring of the rhythms of daily life. The details of each case study suggest that official records of building, furnishing, and conversion (at least as indicated by baptism figures) provided documentation to justify the missions' religious agenda and defend their claim to sacred space in the face of growing skepticism about the efficacy of their methods. The Indigenous response was less systematically organized, but suggests myriad reactions to the conversion program, reflecting the complicated nature of the success (or failure) of the evangelical mission in California.

Despite these commonalities, each case study provides an opportunity to focus on distinct dimensions of sacred space creation, as will be discussed in site-specific examples gleaned from the written documentation, visual records, and material evidence. Christianity did not supplant pre-Spanish religious beliefs. Some Indigenous faith practices were accommodated into Christian celebrations while others were driven underground, as were the sacred spaces for Indigenous rituals. The evidence for the latter will be discussed in a succeeding chapter.

Case Study One: Mission San Carlos Borromeo (Carmel)

Year established: 1770

Major Indigenous groups: Ohlone, Esselen, Salinian

Latitude: 36.5425° N

Site Selection and Naming

In 1602 the Spanish Crown commissioned an expedition headed by Sebastian Vizcaíno to map the California coast, primarily to identify secure ports for the Acapulco-bound Spanish galleons. Three ships sailed from Acapulco on May 2, and made their way north, following the coast. On December 16, they entered a bay which was recorded to be at thirty-seven degrees latitude corresponding to the location and description of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño, who had landed there on a previous voyage and called it the bay of San Pedro.¹⁴⁶ Vizcaíno renamed the area Monterey, after Gaspar de Zuñiga, then viceroy of New Spain and the fifth count of Monterey. As was customary, the priests celebrated mass at every port where they disembarked and stayed for a few days.

“The following day the General ordered the necessary things to be taken ashore, so that Father Andrés and Father Antonio could say mass every day while they had to remain. This was done, and a large capacious tent was set up under the shade of a very large live-oak to serve as a church.”¹⁴⁷

Over a century and a half later, José de Gálvez, the Visitor General of New Spain, ordered the establishment of a presidio and mission in Monterey. The contingent led by Gaspar Portolá followed Vizcaíno’s descriptions in search of the place, and recognized the oak tree

¹⁴⁶ Sebastian Cermeño and Henry Wagner, “The Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño in 1595,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (April 1924), 6, 15.

¹⁴⁷ Ascension and Wagner, “Voyage of Sebastian Vizcaíno,” 357.

described by Fray Antonio de la Ascension, as it was still standing in 1770. Once again, the tree served as a bower for the celebratory mass offered this time by Junípero Serra on June 3, 1770.¹⁴⁸ On that date, he founded the Mission of San Carlos Borromeo, the name chosen by Gálvez, in honor of the Spanish monarch Carlos III and Carlos Francesco, the Marques de Croix who was also the Viceroy of New Spain.¹⁴⁹ Father Crespí, who was on hand, recorded the scene,

“On June 3rd, 1770, Pentecost Sunday, on the shore of the port of Monterey, there being assembled Don Gaspar de Portolá with his officers . . . Fr. Junípero Serra, with Fr. Juan Crespí, an arbor (enramada) having been erected on the very spot by the side of the little ravine, and near the live-oak where in the year 1602 the Rev. Carmelite Fathers, who had come with the expedition of the Comandante Don Sebastian Vizcaino, had celebrated the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, an altar was arranged, the bells were suspended, and the celebration began with the loud ringing of the bells.”¹⁵⁰

A year later, Serra obtained approval to move the mission south, near the Carmel River, which had previously received its appellation from the Carmelite priests who accompanied Vizcaino. Serra deemed the Carmel site to be more agriculturally viable and closer to the Native settlements, which the Spaniards called rancherías. The mission’s name was amended as San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo, in order to distinguish it from the initial chapel in Monterey, where the presidio remained.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ The oak tree died in 1904, but the site, located in present day Monterey State Historic Park, is marked by a statue of Junípero Serra. “CHL No. 128 Landing Place of Sebastian Vizcaino and Fray Junípero Serra – Monterey,” California Historical Landmarks, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.californiahistoricallandmarks.com/landmarks/chl-128>. A fragment of the tree is displayed in the museum of Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo.

¹⁴⁹ Gálvez had chosen two patron saints: San Carlos Borromeo for the whole mission and St. Joseph specifically for the church. See Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Mission San Carlos Borromeo (Carmelo): The Father of the Missions* (Ramona, Calif: Ballena Press, 1973), 26. For the references to Carlos III and the Marques de Croix see Junípero Serra, *Writings of Junípero Serra*, vol.1, ed. Antonine Tibesar, trans. Maximin Piette (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), 171.

¹⁵⁰ Engelhardt, *San Carlos Borromeo*, 24.

¹⁵¹ The presidio chapel became the Cathedral of San Carlos in the mid-nineteenth century.

The Alta California missions mostly took on the names of Franciscan saints, or religious figures with connections to the Order of the Friars Minor, or to Spanish royalty. Carlos Borromeo (1538-1584) was not a Franciscan, but he was born into a noble family in the Duchy of Milan, which was a Spanish possession during his lifetime. He became its Archbishop and Cardinal, and was a major figure in the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Milan was ceded to Austrian control after the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714), but Carlos Borromeo, canonized in 1610, symbolized the illustrious Spanish past. That the mission at Monterey was (through a shared name) associated with him, the Spanish monarch, and the viceroy at the time, indicated the prestige accorded that particular place. Monterey's place of honor in Alta California was arguably determined almost two centuries prior, when he designated it for the Spanish official who had financed his expedition. His ships entered the port of Monterey on December 16, 1602. There they paused the journey for a significant time, to take stock of remaining resources, the condition of the crew, and the information they had gathered thus far. Encamped under the memorable oak tree, they heard mass every day, and on December 29 sent the *Almiranta*, one of the three sailing vessels, back to Acapulco carrying with her the men who were too sick to continue the voyage, and copies of all the charts which had been drawn up to that point. It must have been deemed a good location to shelter in for a spell; Ascension described it as a "fine port" and wrote about enough water sources to sustain the crew.¹⁵² Vizcaíno was apparently impressed enough with the site to give it the name of his benefactor, the viceroy, who was also the Count of Monterey. Conveniently, "Monterey" roughly translates to "King's mountain," so it would seem that the association with eminent

¹⁵² Ascension and Wagner, "Voyage of Sebastian Vizcaíno," 357-359.

personages was fitting from the start. The flagship mission, Serra's headquarters was founded there in 1770, and shortly after he began referring to the presidio in Monterey as the "Royal Presidio." In a letter to Viceroy Carlos Croix, he thanked him for the gift of vestments, acknowledging the special attention given to Mission San Carlos,

*"I received the complete vestments—especially chosen and the finest of all that came—by the generosity of Your Excellency as a gift to this your favorite Mission of San Carlos de Monterey."*¹⁵³

Though he later moved to nearby Carmel, travelers would normally arrive at Monterey first to visit the presidio. By the late eighteenth century, Monterey was a major stop for exploratory and trading vessels from Europe and the United States. In 1776, the Spanish government officially designated it as the capital of California, replacing Loreto.

Architecture

Early Days

The early buildings were primitive structures of wood poles, twigs and branches covered with mud. The first such cabin functioned as the missionary dwelling and general storage area, with a space designated as a chapel. It was likely in such a building that the first baptism in Monterey was performed on Dec. 26, 1770. After obtaining approval to relocate the mission, Serra began the move to Carmel in late June of 1771. He described the state of construction at the mission at the end of 1772,

*"The main building is seven varas in width and fifty in length. It is divided into six rooms, all with their doors and locks. The walls made of stout poles are plastered inside and out, and the principal rooms are whitewashed with lime. One of these is used for the time being as a church."*¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Serra, *Writings*, vol.1, 197, 199.

¹⁵⁴ Serra, *Writings*, vol.1, 353.

A vara is 2.75 feet, therefore the church occupied a room in a building approximately nineteen feet wide by one hundred thirty-eight feet long. An official report signed by Father Francisco Palóu in December 1773 noted that the mission had a

*“little church of pine boards and cypress wood with a flat roof covered with earth.”*¹⁵⁵

It is not clear whether he was referring to a separate edifice, or the same room in the building that Serra described from a year earlier.

Adobe Church

In the same report, Palóu also wrote that they were building a larger church—twenty-five by one hundred ten feet—part adobe and part wood, with a *tule* roof, since that material offered better protection against the rains than earth. By the end of the next year, other buildings at the mission would be similarly built. Juan B. De Anza, a military officer tasked with finding an overland route to California from Sonora on the Mexican mainland, and later with establishing a settlement in San Francisco, stopped by Monterey and Carmel in March 1776. Pedro Font, one of the Franciscans on the De Anza expedition, commented on the mission church,

*“The Mission has a rather spacious and well made church, although it is of palisades and tule for the most part, and it is somewhat adorned with paintings.”*¹⁵⁶

In Serra’s final report of 1783, he described a church of adobe with a thatched roof, twenty-two by one hundred ten feet.¹⁵⁷ Whether it was the same church that Font described is

¹⁵⁵ Engelhardt, *San Carlos Borromeo*, 58. A more detailed account of building progress is covered in pp. 54-65.

¹⁵⁶ Engelhardt, *San Carlos Borromeo*, 49.

¹⁵⁷ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 403. Serra gives the measurements as forty varas long by eight varas wide.

uncertain, but it likely the church that Serra requested to be buried in when he died in 1784. An unpublished manuscript in the Mission Carmel Archives states that the “Serra Adobe Church,” named for his gravesite, was in fact the fifth structure on approximately the same site at the mission.¹⁵⁸ It is possibly the same church visited in 1786 by Jean-François de Galaup, the Count of La Pérouse who led a famous but ill-fated expedition around the world. The welcome ceremony which greeted his party at Carmel was sketched by Duche de Vancy, the artist on the tour, and is earliest known image of any mission in Alta California (fig. 3.1) La Pérouse described the church:

“neat but covered with thatch . . . decorated with tolerable good paintings, copied from those of Italy.”¹⁵⁹

He specifically mentioned the pair of paintings depicting Heaven and Hell, which mission records list as arriving in 1774. Another sketch, probably of the same church, but drawn from another vantage point, was made by José Cordero, who came with the explorer Alessandro Malaspina in 1791 (fig. 4.4). The structure depicted in the image from George Vancouver’s visit in 1792 (fig. 4.5), looks slightly different; it might have been the provisional church built while the “Serra Adobe” was dismantled and a new stone church built in its place.

Stone Church

Father Fermín Lasuén, Serra’s successor, detailed the building progress of the stone church in his letters. Manuel Esteban Ruiz, a master mason and stone-cutter from Mexico, was contracted to work at the presidio and mission and to teach his craft to the neophytes.

¹⁵⁸ Morgado, “Non Recedet,” 152-153.

¹⁵⁹ Jean-François de Galaup La Pérouse, *A Voyage Round the World*, performed in the years 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788, by the Boussole and Astrolabe, vol. 2 (London: Lackington, Allen and Co., 1807), 191.

He came to Carmel in December 1792, and the first stone was laid on July 7, 1793.¹⁶⁰ The completed church was blessed in September 1797. Its appearance in 1827 was captured during the visit of Frederick Beechey, an English naval officer and geographer (fig. 4.6). The French navigator Cyrille Pierre Theodore LaPlace made his own sketch of Mission San Carlos in 1839. His drawing provides a view from the back, revealing the quadrangle which had been completed by 1814 (fig. 4.7).¹⁶¹ The church was built after Serra's death, and there is no evidence that he had a hand in its design. However, the curved pediment of the façade, pierced by a multi-lobed window over the main entrance (figs I.10 and I.11) is reminiscent of the church at Mission San Miguel Conca in the Sierra Gorda (fig. 1.7) which Serra established in 1754. Francisco de Guerrero y Torre's star-shaped windows at the Pocito Chapel of the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City (fig. 4.8) built between 1777 and 1791, could also have served as the inspiration for Ruiz's design at Carmel.¹⁶²

A parallel architectural development occurred in the homes of the mission neophytes, which they initially built in the vernacular fashion. In 1786, La Pérouse noted that there were about fifty Indian dwellings to the right of the church. These would have been the houses of the Ohlone, Esselen and Salinian people who lived at the San Carlos mission. He described them,

"Their form is semi-circular and six feet diameter by four high. Some stakes of the thickness of a man's arm, stuck in the ground and meeting at the top, composed the framing. Eight or ten bundles of straw, ill arranged over these stakes, are the only defence against the rain; and when the weather is fine, more than half the hut remains uncovered, with the precautions, however, of two or three trusses of straw to each habitation, to be used as circumstances may require."

¹⁶⁰ Lasuén, *Writings* vol. 1, 323.

¹⁶¹ Engelhardt, *San Carlos Borromeo*, 139.

¹⁶² Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Volume 1: 1607-1860* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983), 49.

The Indians did not share his apparent concern for what he judged to be the flimsiness of their structures, instead expressing appreciation for their openness, light assembly, and ease of disposal,

*"This general architecture of the two Californias has never undergone the smallest change, notwithstanding the exhortations of the missionaries. The Indians say, that they love the open air, that it is convenient to set fire to their house when the fleas become troublesome, and that they can build another in less than two hours."*¹⁶³

While these houses are not depicted in the reception scene, they are visible as round topped forms in the background, on the right half of the image from Vancouver's 1792 visit (fig. 4.5). The Native resistance to a new form of housing was eventually overcome, at least in part, as the missionary report of 1806 mentioned the construction of fifty-two homes for the mission Indians, this time made of adobe with tile roofs. In the sketch from Beechey's 1827 visit, they appear as the rows of buildings behind the church, to the right (fig. 4.6).

In the gradual shift of building style, one can trace a movement from the values of flexibility and ephemerality, towards fixity and permanence, as wrought by the material of construction. This trajectory, which occurred at all the missions, promoted a change in norms, and therefore a change in culture: from semi-nomadic to rootedness, from provisional to permanent, and from a view of building as cyclical to one of culmination. The Native Californians believed in the sacred quality inherent in natural forms and creatures. Their ritual spaces were seasonally constructed in the open, and then left to decay naturally. For instance, the sacred enclosures built by the Chumash peoples were always outdoors, and made from poles and woven *tule* mats.¹⁶⁴ Likewise Fray Antonio de la

¹⁶³ La Pérouse, *Voyage*, vol. 2, 192-193.

¹⁶⁴ Fernando Librado, *The Eye of the Flute: Chumash Traditional History and Ritual as told by Fernando Librado Kitsepawit to John P. Harrington*, ed. Travis Hudson (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 1977), 39-41.

Ascension, who chronicled the 1602 Vizcaíno expedition, observed what he believed to be a sacrificial space on the island they named Santa Catalina,

“The soldiers ran all over the island and in one part of it fell in with a place of worship or temple where the natives perform their sacrifices and adorations. This was a large flat patio and in one part of it, where they had what we would call an altar, there was a great circle all surrounded with feathers of various colors and shapes, which must come from the birds they sacrifice. Inside the circle there was a figure like a devil painted in various colors, in the way the Indians of New Spain are accustomed to paint them. At the sides of this were the sun and the moon. When the soldiers reached this place, inside the circle there were two large crows larger than ordinary ones, which flew away when they saw strangers, and alighted on some near-by rocks.”¹⁶⁵

While the foundational *enramadas* and the outdoor processions testified to the performance of Christian religion in natural surroundings, Christianity reoriented worship towards interior settings. The elemental spaces of Indigenous rituals were supplanted by enduring Christian sacred architecture.

Post-Secularization: Ruin and Restoration

The secularization of 1834 resulted in abandonment and neglect of the mission buildings, leading to the decay and obliteration of most structures. The crumbling walls of the church were evident in Edward Vischer’s photograph, taken in 1865 (fig. 4.9). The roof had collapsed in 1852; its skeletal remains are more apparent in Carleton Watkins’ image from 1883 (fig. I.1). In 1884, Father Angelus Casanova, then pastor of the San Carlos church at Monterey, replaced the roof with one that had higher pitch than the original, so that it came to a point over the curved pediment, changing the distinctively curved profile of the façade. (fig. 4.10). The ceiling of the interior, which originally soared into parabolic arch, was

¹⁶⁵ Ascension and Wagner, “Voyage of Sebastian Vizcaíno,” 351.

flattened into a rectangular vault with rounded corners (fig. 4.11). In 1931, Henry John (Harry) Downie, a craftsman from San Francisco who was on his way to start a furniture business in Santa Barbara, stopped by Monterey to visit a friend. There, he met Monsignor Philip Scher, the pastor of the Cathedral of San Carlos (originally the presidio chapel), who commissioned him to restore some overpainted sculptures for the Monterey church. A natural interest in the California missions and previous experience working at various maintenance jobs at Mission San Francisco de Asís (where he was baptized) led him to undertake a comprehensive renovation of the Carmel mission. From 1931 to 1936, he worked on the restoration of the church building, returning it to the original roof line (fig. 4.12) and ceiling shape (fig. 4.13). The most valuable furnishings of the mission church were dispersed after secularization. Some were removed to the presidio chapel at Monterey, others were claimed by prominent families for their own private devotional spaces, still others were lost in the general liquidation that occurred in the property takeover. Downie tracked down and restored several statues, most notably two figures—Our Lady of Bethlehem (fig. 4.14), and Saint Joseph (fig. 4.15)—given by the Visitor General José de Gálvez to Junípero Serra as gifts for the mission. The statue of Our Lady of Bethlehem was originally owned by the Archbishop of Mexico, who gave it to the Visitor General José de Gálvez in 1769, to serve as a rallying figurehead for the 1769 expedition to Alta California. As such, the statue was dubbed *La Conquistadora*; it was present at the first mass in San Diego, and at Monterey. Gálvez then presented it to Junípero Serra, who took the statue with him when he moved to Carmel. It is currently installed in the Our Lady of Bethlehem side chapel. The statue of Saint Joseph was another gift from Gálvez, who had chosen his namesake saint as the principal patron of the mission church.

It is currently installed on the left side of the church sanctuary. Downie created and installed the current reredos¹⁶⁶ in 1956. He based his design on historical descriptions of the original altar screen, which was destroyed in 1849. He also looked to period examples from Mexico, where the previous one was made. (fig. 4.16).¹⁶⁷

Religious Furnishings

The earliest ritual objects were mostly sourced from the missions in Baja California, several of which Serra collected and packed himself on the way to San Diego.¹⁶⁸ His reports to the viceroy regularly detailed the distribution of bells, vestments, altar linens, silver vessels and other ritual accoutrements among the different missions. Some of the extant items from the mission period are displayed in the museum today (fig. 4.17).¹⁶⁹ The wooden and gilded tabernacle, chalice, silver missal stand, candlesticks, and altar (or prayer) cards were part of the normal implements of the Mass, and would have been visible at all times on the altar during the ceremony. Consecrated hosts were kept in the tabernacle, which could take on the form of a simple box, or a more elaborately crafted “dwelling” for the Body of Christ. It was in effect, the most sacred space in the church, and usually had a lock to further signify its precious contents. The chalice held the wine, which would have been transformed into the Blood of Christ by consecration. The missal stand held open the book which contained the order of the mass so it could be more easily read by the celebrant.

¹⁶⁶ A reredos is a decorative screen painted or hung on the wall behind the altar. It is usually composed of multiple sections of frames or niches featuring paintings or statues of saints and religious figures.

¹⁶⁷ Celeste Pagliarulo detailed the restoration of the mission church and its interiors in her two books: *Harry Downie and the Restoration of Mission San Carlos Borromeo, 1931-1937* (Los Angeles: Historical Society of Southern California, 2004); and *Harry Downie and the Contents of Mission San Carlos Borromeo, 1931-1967* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library, 2005).

¹⁶⁸ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries* vol. 1, 333-35.

¹⁶⁹ An extensive list of ritual objects acquired by the mission is in the Appendix.

Altar cards, engraved with prayers which were intoned during the ritual, provided similar assistance. Candlesticks held the only source of illumination in the church, which could be dark in the early morning hours when mass was usually held. The flickering light bouncing off the brilliant and polished surfaces of the objects would have created an arresting visual, meant to inspire solemnity and awe among the mission neophytes. The results were mixed, but Alfred Robinson's impressions of a mass he attended at Mission San Gabriel in 1829 indicated that it had the desired effect on some Indian converts,

*"In the morning, at six o'clock, we went to the church, where the priest had already commenced the service of the mass. The imposing ceremony, glittering ornaments, and illuminated walls, were well adapted to captivate the simple mind of the Indian, and I could not but admire the apparent devotion of the multitude, who seemed absorbed heart and soul, in the scene before them."*¹⁷⁰

Several rituals involved the use of water which had been previously blessed by the priest. Holy water, as it was then called, would be poured over the head of the newborn child or adult convert during baptism, to symbolize their entry into the Catholic Church. The priest often used a baptismal shell which was dipped into a larger font which held the holy water. Other rituals required the sprinkling over water over a wider area, such as during initial rites of territorial possession, to drive away evil spirits.¹⁷¹ An aspergillum, either in the form of a brush or a perforated orb at the end of a handle, was better suited to this task. It would usually come with its own bucket which held the holy water, into which the brush or orb was dipped.

In 1773, Serra lamented on the poor condition of the mission church furnishings to Viceroy Bucareli, and requested that new or more gently used objects be sent.¹⁷² In 1776,

¹⁷⁰ Robinson, *Life in California*, 31-32.

¹⁷¹ Engelhardt, *San Carlos Borromeo*, 25.

¹⁷² Serra, *Writings*, vol.1, 329.

he asked the Viceroy for a monstrance to be used at the newly founded Mission San Francisco de Asís. The following year, Bucareli made a gift of the requested item to Carmel instead; Serra then sent his mission's monstrance to San Francisco.¹⁷³ A monstrance is at its core, an (often elaborately) ornamented glass case mounted on a pedestaled stand, used to display the consecrated host, which was called the Blessed Sacrament. The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation maintains that bread is changed into the physical body of Christ during the celebration of the Mass, and therefore becomes a sanctified object. The Bucareli monstrance, named for its donor, is perhaps the most clearly documented mission-era object at San Carlos Borromeo. There are several ritual occasions which call for the exposure of the Blessed Sacrament, but the monstrance figured most prominently during the feast of the Corpus Christ, which began with a mass, after which the consecrated host would be installed in its glass case and displayed on the altar for everyone to venerate. A procession would follow, led by the priest holding the monstrance aloft under a canopy, followed by torch bearers and candle carrying participants. The procession route often involved pausing at one or more stations where the monstrance would be set on an altar for additional prayers and blessings.

Ritual Accounts

Serra's performative devotion was recorded by his biographer, Francesco Palóu. His great attention to the inventory of ritual objects in each mission and frequent requests to augment, replenish, and upgrade them confirm his belief in the power of ceremony and spectacle to inspire emotion and transform a humble structure into a sacred space. From

¹⁷³ Junípero Serra, *Writings of Junípero Serra*, vol.3, ed. Antonine Tibesar, trans. Maximin Piette (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), 227-229.

the onset, religious practice and architecture (albeit modest in the beginning) defined the new Christian identity of the site. On June 14, 1770, less than two weeks after the mission founding, Serra celebrated the feast of the Corpus Christi with as much pomp and grandeur as could be mustered in the rude built environment at Monterey. He sang the High Mass in the church, which at this point was the middle room of a hastily constructed warehouse. Then he led a procession of the Blessed Sacrament in a square which had been cleared out for the occasion. In a letter to Gálvez, he proudly described the efforts they made to elevate their surroundings,

“The men from the ship got ready the church—the middle part of the storehouse which had already been finished. They decorated it with signal flags, and the ceiling was covered in the same way. It was done in such a tasteful manner that in me it excited devotion. The space, or square, in which the procession was to take place was cleaned up, and hung with green branches forming arches under which we walked. Bells were rung, guns were fired, hymns and sacred songs were sung—everything went off in fine fashion and could not have been improved upon.”¹⁷⁴

He also recounted his concern that besides a monstrance, they did not have the customary accessories to stage a grand procession. On the night before the feast, he was pleasantly surprised by the discovery of glass lanterns among the supplies on board the ship, and the further realization that these lanterns were equipped with sockets so that they could be mounted on a stick and held aloft to light the altar during the mass, and the monstrance during procession. The celebration of the following year was even more splendid. Twelve Franciscans from the College of San Fernando in Mexico City had arrived in Monterey a few days before the feast, which fell on May 30, 1771. Serra orchestrated a procession featuring

¹⁷⁴ Serra, *Writings*, vol.1, 185-187.

“twelve priests in their vestments, following the Holy Eucharist borne by the Father Presidente proceeding under a baldaquin or canopy guarded by the military in uniform.”¹⁷⁵

Upon moving to Carmel, Serra had a large cross planted in the center of the spot intended for the quadrangle, between his shack and the temporary church. He venerated the cross daily, in full sight of the Spanish soldiers and mission Indians whom he hoped would follow his example.¹⁷⁶ The Franciscan order, which had custody over the holy Christian sites in Jerusalem since the thirteenth century, had a special devotion to the *Via Crucis*, or Stations of the Cross, which represented a sequence that marked the route walked by Christ from his sentencing to the crucifixion in Calvary. Franciscan churches and monasteries often featured effigies of the Stations along a processional path, which the faithful walked, stopping to worship at each station. This ritual was especially popular during Lent, but also on Fridays to commemorate Christ’s death on Good Friday. All the California mission churches had images of the Stations of the Cross, and Serra was devoted to the practice. Before his assignment to California, he was sent to the Sierra Gorda missions in the Querétaro province of Mexico, where he worked from 1750 to 1758. There, he had Stations of the Cross installed from the Church of Mission Jalpan to a Chapel of Calvary erected on a hill just outside of town. During Lent, he would carry a heavy cross each Friday and follow the prescribed route, in imitation of Christ.¹⁷⁷ Even in the penultimate Friday of his life at Mission San Carlos Borromeo, he did not fail to perform the ritual in the church with everyone there present.¹⁷⁸ While there is no written record of

¹⁷⁵ Engelhardt, *San Carlos Borromeo*, 30.

¹⁷⁶ Engelhardt, *San Carlos Borromeo*, 32.

¹⁷⁷ Francesco Palóu, *Life and Apostolic Labors of the Venerable Father Junípero Serra: Founder of the Franciscan Missions of California*, trans. C. Scott Williams (Pasadena, Calif.: George Wharton James, 1913), 29.

¹⁷⁸ Beebe and Senkewicz, *Junípero Serra*, 412.

Serra having built the *Via Crucis* in the Carmel landscape as he did in Jalpan, two Spanish era accounts suggest that a similar feature was built sometime during the mission period. Juan Alvarado, an eyewitness at the inaugural of governor Pablo Vicente Sola in 1815 in Monterey recalled the festivities, which began at the presidio and then and continued the next day at the mission.

*"A part of the road from Monterey to Carmel was called that of Calvary. Along it at equal distances were planted twelve crosses, representing the twelve stations of the "via crucis;" and here on every Good Friday religious ceremonies, appropriate to the season, were celebrated."*¹⁷⁹

Frederic Beechey likewise mentioned seeing them when he visited in 1827, and a cross visible in the foreground of the sketch by William Smyth may be such a one as he described. (fig. 4.6).

*"Before the valley of San Carmelo opens out, the traveler is apprized of his approach to the mission by three large crosses erected upon Mount Calvary; and further on by smaller ones placed at the side of the road, to each of which some history is attached."*¹⁸⁰

Serra asked to be buried in the sanctuary of the adobe church next to Father Crespi, who had passed away in 1782. The original location of his grave under the present stone church was confirmed by a series of exhumations beginning in the late nineteenth century and leading up to the process for elevation to sainthood in the twentieth. The evidence indicated that his successors wanted to leave his remains undisturbed and therefore took pains to build the new church so that his final resting place would be in roughly the same place as in the previous structure.¹⁸¹ While his beatification and subsequent canonization remain controversial, especially in the Native American community, the Franciscan

¹⁷⁹ Theodore Hittell, *History of California*, vol. 1 (San Francisco: Calif.: N.J. Stone & Co., 1898), 639.

¹⁸⁰ Frederick Beechey, *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait*, vol. 2 (London: H. Colburn and R. Bentley, 1931), 69.

¹⁸¹ Morgado, "Non Recedet," 152-160.

missionaries who carried on after him in Alta California revered him and treated his grave as a holy site. For them, Serra's actions during his life had in effect sacralized the space that he was buried in.¹⁸² Robert Ousterhout's observation on the successive architectural reconfigurations of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem suggests an analogous perspective of the mission that served as Serra's headquarters in Alta California. The site which Christians believed to be actual location of the Crucifixion, Entombment, and Resurrection of Jesus was sacred, and therefore the building which stood upon it was also to be venerated. The holiness of the architecture was derived from its site, and thus stones, walls, and other features of earlier iterations of the church were reused and integrated into later versions.¹⁸³ A similar process took shape at Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo because of its association with Junípero Serra. Several churches, each one larger and more architecturally elaborate than the last, were built around the same general area at the mission, but Serra's death arguably fixed the site of holiness; great measures were taken to build the new church around his grave. Throughout his restoration project at Mission San Carlos Borromeo, Harry Downie made every effort to preserve the existing structure, to return spaces to their original use, and to utilize original building materials he found onsite. Even his own addition, such as an outdoor shrine for a statue of the Virgin Mary, was made from timber, tiles, stones, and adobe bricks fashioned from crumbled remains almost entirely sourced from mission property.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Smith, *Architectural History of Mission San Carlos*, 46. Also see translator's note in Lasuén, *Writings*, vol. 1, 324.

¹⁸³ Robert Ousterhout, "Architecture as Relic and the Construction of Sanctity: The Stones of the Holy Sepulchre," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 62, vol. 1: 4-13.

¹⁸⁴ Pagliarulo, *Harry Downie and the Restoration*, 42, 17.

Case Study Two: Mission San Francisco de Asís (Dolores)

Year established: 1776

Major Indigenous groups: Ohlone, Miwok, Patwin, Wappo

Latitude: 37.7644° N

Site Selection and Naming

The names of the first three missions—San Diego, San Carlos Borromeo, and San Buenaventura—had been selected by the Visitor General José de Gálvez when the initial settlement of Alta California was planned. At that time, Junípero Serra had asked him if there was no mission to be named for San Francisco, the founder of the missionaries' religious order. Gálvez replied that

“If San Francisco wants a mission, let him cause his port to be discovered, and it will be placed there.”¹⁸⁵

The Franciscans did find such a port, but they arrived there through an unexpected detour, because the mission of San Francisco de Asís was originally planned for a different site altogether. In 1595 Sebastian Cermeño, captain of a Spanish galleon, was given charge to find safe harbors for the richly laden trading vessels that plied the transpacific Manila-Acapulco route. Sailing from Manila, he caught sight the coast of California around Mendocino on November 4, and proceeded southwards. On November 6, the land came to a point; which he navigated around to enter a small bay. The formal ceremonies of territorial possession were held the next day, and Francisco de la Concepción, a priest traveling on the ship, named the bay and the port after San Francisco de Assisi, the founder

¹⁸⁵ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 3-6.

of his religious order.¹⁸⁶ Seven years later, Sebastian Vizcaíno, this time sailing north from Acapulco, stopped at the same point of land which Cermeño encountered on his way down from Mendocino. Since it was January 6, the Feast of the Three Kings, he called the place Punta Reyes (present-day Point Reyes).¹⁸⁷ Cermeño and Vizcaíno, like other navigators before them, missed the larger harbor of present-day San Francisco, located more than fifty miles to the south. It remained unmapped by Europeans until 1769, when Gaspar Portolá, leading an expedition to find Monterey, failed to recognize his target and instead arrived on the shore of the Golden Gate strait, the entrance to the current San Francisco Bay. From there, they spotted Point Reyes across the Gulf of the Farallones, realized that they were looking at Cermeño's *Bahia de San Francisco*, and attempted to reach it on foot. However, their reconnaissance efforts (as well as subsequent ones led by Pedro Fages in 1772 and Fernando Rivera y Moncada in 1774) revealed that what they deemed an easily traversable estuary—the Golden Gate—in fact opened into an immense bay. When subsequent investigations revealed that it was not easily accessible without boats, the appellation of San Francisco was transferred to the larger, newly mapped harbor, which was more eminently situated and protected. At the close of 1774, Viceroy Bucareli, anxious to settle the territory, commissioned the military officer Juan Bautista de Anza to lead a contingent of soldiers and colonist settlers from Sonora, Mexico to the new “port of San Francisco,” and charged Junípero Serra with founding two missions in the bay area.¹⁸⁸ Pedro Font, a Franciscan missionary traveling with De Anza, helped select a favorable site for a mission

¹⁸⁶ Cermeño and Wagner, “Voyage to California of Sebastian Rodríguez Cermeño,” 14. In the late nineteenth century its name was changed to Drakes Bay, as it was believed the English naval explorer Francis Drake had landed there in 1579.

¹⁸⁷ Ascension and Wagner, “Voyage of Sebastian Vizcaíno,” 363.

¹⁸⁸ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 19-24.

by a creek, which they named Dolores, since they camped there on the feast day of Our Lady of Sorrows.¹⁸⁹ The mission of San Francisco de Asís thus also came to be known as Mission Dolores.

Architecture

Early Days

After successfully leading a contingent of soldiers and colonists from Mexico to Alta California, De Anza went back to his presidio in Tubac, in present-day Arizona. The task of actually establishing a presidio and mission in San Francisco was given to Lieutenant José Moraga, who arrived and set up camp on the banks of the Dolores Creek on June 27, 1776, accompanied by missionaries Francisco Palóu and Pedro Cambón, and the settlers. On June 29, the missionaries celebrated mass under an *enramada* built expressly for the occasion.¹⁹⁰ Construction then began in earnest at both the presidio and mission site.¹⁹¹

The first mission church was fifty feet long by fourteen feet wide (eighteen by five varas). Like all early structures, it was built of wood palisades plastered over with clay, and was roofed with *tules*. Though humble, the missionaries endeavored to set it apart by decorating it with various cloths, flags, bunting, and pendants.¹⁹² In this sacred space, they performed the formal rites to mark the official opening of the mission on October 8. The celebrations included high mass and a procession in which the image of St. Francis was

¹⁸⁹ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 39.

¹⁹⁰ June 29, 1776 is considered the founding date of the city of San Francisco.

¹⁹¹ De Anza had chosen the location of the presidio by the Golden Gate, the entrance to the San Francisco Bay.

¹⁹² Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 55.

borne on a litter and then placed on an altar. The occasion was lent as much pomp and spectacle under the pioneering circumstances by the firing of guns and ship cannon, firecrackers and rockets.

Second and Third Palisaded Churches

In 1782 a new church, sixty-eight feet long by sixteen feet wide (twenty-five by six varas), and also of palisades superseded the first one. The following year, Father Palóu decided to move the mission 1100 feet west from its original site near the Dolores Creek, to its present location. He laid the foundations for the current mission church, which measured one hundred ten by twenty-two feet (forty by eight varas). Next to it, he also built a provisional church, eighty-two feet long by twenty-one feet wide (thirty by seven and a half varas). Like the first two churches, it was built of palisades, plastered with clay, and roofed with *tule*, but for the façade, they used adobe, which the Indians had started to make at the mission.¹⁹³ In 1787, Governor Pedro Fages visited the missions and remarked that San Francisco had a rather meager church, like the ones at San Buenaventura and Santa Barbara. He must have been referring to this third structure.¹⁹⁴

Adobe Church

Construction on the fourth and present adobe church, whose foundations Father Palóu prepared in 1783, began in 1788. It was dedicated 1791 and roofed with tiles in 1794.

¹⁹³ Maynard Geiger, "New Data on the Buildings of Mission San Francisco," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 46, No. 3 (Sep. 1967): 196-200.

¹⁹⁴ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 109. Fages wrote that it was "but an apology for a church."

One of the earliest accounts of the mission complex comes from George Vancouver, captain of the British ship *Discovery*, who sailed into San Francisco harbor on November 14, 1792. While being very complimentary of the cordial welcome he received from Herminigildo Sal, the commandant of the presidio, and Fray Antonio Danti, the head of mission, Vancouver expressed disappointment at the condition of what he considered to be an important Spanish port. He was unimpressed by the unsophisticated architecture, which consisted of mud walls and thatched roofs. Archibald Menzies, the naturalist who traveled on the expedition described the walls as,

*“built of turf and mortar in the form of large bricks workd (sic) up and incorporated with straw or grass and afterwards dried in the sun until they became hard and appeard (sic) to be durable.”*¹⁹⁵

Despite his critical commentary, Vancouver did notice that both the presidio and the mission church were visibly distinguished from the other structures. The presidio church, though small, stood out because it was whitewashed and looked neat in comparison to the other buildings. He also noted the contrast between the elaborate architecture and furnishings of the mission church and the relative simplicity of the missionary dwellings,

*“Close by stood the church, which for its magnitude and architecture and internal decorations, did great credit to the constructors of it, and presented a striking contrast between the exertions of genius and such as bare necessity is capable of suggesting. The raising and decorating of this edifice appeared to have greatly attracted the attention of the fathers; the comforts they might have provided in their humble habitations seemed to have been totally sacrificed to their accomplishment of this favorite object.”*¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁵ Archibald Menzies and Alice Eastwood, “Archibald Menzies Journal of the Vancouver Expedition,” *California History* 2 no. 4 (Jan. 1924): 271.

¹⁹⁶ Joshua Paddison, *A World Transformed: First Accounts of California before the Gold Rush* (Berkeley, Calif: Heyday Books, 1998), 73-82.

The church that Vancouver saw was an adobe building whose roof of grass and reeds would not be replaced with tile for another two years, and yet it was visibly the most important space in the mission.¹⁹⁷ Vancouver's observations underscore the use of architecture to differentiate and elevate sacred space from its surroundings. Menzies corroborates this, stating that everything about the church was clean and in good order.¹⁹⁸ Father Pedro Cambón, who succeeded Father Palóu, is credited with the design of the church at Mission San Francisco de Asís. Two tiers of thick columns, with the lower set elevated on massive platforms, dominate the façade. The small openings in between the columns, the pitched roof, and the almost equal height to width ratio of the building help to convey a solid, rather squat stability (fig. 4.18). J.M Mancini speculated that Father Cambón may have drawn lessons from the architecture of Philippine churches during his trip to Manila in 1780. The pronounced horizontality of buildings in the Southeast Asian archipelago were partly a response to being located in a seismically active zone; California was no stranger to earthquakes and Father Cambón was aware of this.¹⁹⁹ Whether or not he was directly influenced by the churches in Manila, Cambón had real reason to be concerned about stability, which apparently guided his design choices. In 1787 a violent windstorm destroyed large parts of the provisional church and its contents. Since work on the adobe church had not even commenced, the damaged structure had to be repaired and rebuilt. Cambón widened the foundations of the adobe church laid by Palóu, and designed the two large steps or gradines upon which four substantial columns were mounted and projected

¹⁹⁷ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 118. The church was partly roofed with tiles in 1794.

¹⁹⁸ Menzies and Eastwood, "Vancouver Expedition," 271.

¹⁹⁹ J. M. Mancini, "Pedro Cambón's Asian Objects," *American Art* 25, No. 1 (Spring 2011): 45-48.

from the wall by one-third vara. He deliberately introduced these features to increase structural firmness.²⁰⁰

The earliest drawing of the present church is from 1816, by Ludwig Choris, an artist on the Russian ship *Rurik*, commanded by Otto von Kotzebue. Upon landing in San Francisco on October 2, they were invited to the festivities in honor of the mission's titular saint on October 4. Choris captured an Indigenous dance staged by the mission neophytes, depicting colorfully costumed and painted performers in front of the church, with two grey-clad missionaries watching from just outside the main portal (fig 4.19). He cropped the façade on the left edge of the image, but the two levels and the thick columns are visible. Kotzebue's party, visiting twenty-four years after Vancouver, saw a mature mission complex whose central quadrangle had been completed, as had a number of auxiliary adobe and tile-roofed buildings, which Choris included in the picture. These secondary structures outside of the main square included dwellings for the mission neophytes, built in 1793, 1796, 1800, 1801, 1802, and 1811.²⁰¹ *Le Bordelais*, a French vessel helmed by naval lieutenant Camille de Roquefeuil, entered San Francisco Bay in 1817. He was impressed by the mission church and thought its furnishings compared favorably with those in smaller European towns,

*"The church is kept in good order and handsomely decorated; the sacred utensils and the pictures are the work of Mexican artists, and exceed in richness and taste what is generally seen of this kind in most of the towns of the second and third rank in France and Germany."*²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Geiger, "New Data," 197-198.

²⁰¹ Geiger, "New Data," 201-202.

²⁰² Camille de Roquefeuil, *A Voyage Round the World Between the Years 1816-1819* (London: Sir Richard Phillips and Co., 1823), 24.

The Hidalgo rebellion of 1810 marked the beginning of the Mexican Revolutionary War against Spain; soon after the supply ships from the mainland stopped arriving, and with it the goods purchased from the annual missionary stipend, which had also ceased to be paid. Despite these obstacles, the missionaries found ways to procure what they needed, either through trade with foreign merchant vessels or by commissioning local artisans. Eventually, the lack of support from Mexico, and the increasing pressure on the missions to produce essentials for the settler communities resulted in food shortages, social tensions, and decline in the Indian population, which was already weakened by disease and associated infertility. Mexican independence and takeover of California in 1821 worsened the plight of the missions, as the new government moved to secularize and divest them of most of their properties.

Frederick Beechey, who arrived in San Francisco on the British ship *Blossom* in 1826, encountered a mission that was in decline, its buildings in disrepair, and the number of Indian residents dwindling. The image captured by the expedition artist William Smyth conveys a dreariness amidst the figures scattered about the scene (fig. 4.20). French navigator Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, writing about his stop in 1827, observed that while the mission church and building complex reflected a prosperity from previous times, most of the structures were sliding into ruin, with no more than two hundred and sixty Indians, down from seven hundred at the time of Roquefeuil's 1817 visit.²⁰³ Alfred Robinson, who was at the mission in 1829 and 1830, echoed this impression, and also alluded to the frequently damp and overcast weather which had consistently made it difficult to grow crops and wreaked havoc on the health of the mission Indians.

²⁰³ Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, "Duhaut-Cilly's Account of California in the Years 1827-28," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8 no. 2 (June 1929): 142.

*"Its dilapidated walls, and dark tiled roof, well accorded with the bleak and cheerless scenery with which it was surrounded; for the cold, blustering sea winds, as they sweep over the hills, chill and destroy vegetation."*²⁰⁴

Post-Secularization: Ruin and Restoration

An image of the mission taken prior to 1861 depicted the ruinous state post-secularization (fig. I.2). By this time, the gold rush which began in 1848 had transformed the surrounding area of Yerba Buena, which was renamed the City of San Francisco. The mission church remained a place of worship, but the adjacent buildings were converted to a brewery, two taverns, a dancing room, a saloon, private lodgings, and a hospital.²⁰⁵ The church became an oasis of sacred space amid the growing commercial and urban sprawl. A growing congregation necessitated the construction of a larger church in 1871. The monumental scale of the Baroque edifice was erected right next to Father Cambón's church, dwarfing it. The stability of the Franciscan missionary's design and structural integrity of the Indian-built mission church would be vindicated in 1906, when it survived the historic Great Earthquake of San Francisco. Its left neighbor sustained significantly more damage. (fig. 4.21).

Religious Furnishings

The abundance of religious furnishings in the inventories of all missions present an opportunity to recuperate their use in rituals and their role in shaping the experience of space through a discussion of some examples.²⁰⁶ All neophytes were initiated into the

²⁰⁴ Robinson, *Life in California*, 57.

²⁰⁵ Edna Kimbro and Julia Costello, *The California Missions: History, Art, and Preservation* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 2009), 190-193.

²⁰⁶ An extensive list of ritual objects acquired by the mission is in the Appendix.

Catholic Church through the ritual of baptism, which involved the priest using a shell or similarly shaped vessel to scoop holy water from a standing baptismal font, and pouring it over the convert's head while reciting prayers. Mission San Francisco de Asís, like all churches had at least one baptismal font, usually placed near the main entrance or in a recessed side space. Holy water fonts in the form of shallow receptacles set into small wall niches were also a ubiquitous feature in mission churches. A believer would dip their fingers into the water and make the sign of the cross, touching their forehead, heart center, and each side of their chest while loudly or silently invoking the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This ritual would be performed upon entering or exiting the church as an acknowledgement of crossing the physical threshold of a sacred space, and shifting one's mental state. At the mission of San Francisco de Asís, blue and white Chinese porcelain dishes purchased in Manila by Father Pedro Cambón were installed in the two wall niches.²⁰⁷ They are extant but obscured by a contemporary bowl which has been placed on top of them (figs. 4.22 and 4.23).

The exquisitely carved and gilded reredos on the altar wall was crafted in Mexico, and arrived at the mission in 1794. The high quality of the sculpted figures and surface painting effects easily make it the centerpiece of the church (fig. 4.24). It certainly would have been among the “handsome decorations” that Roquefeuil praised. Master craftsman Harry Downie consulted this example when he made the altar screen for the restoration project of the Mission San Carlos Borromeo church, whose reredos was likewise sourced from Mexico, and would have been installed shortly before or after the 1797 inauguration.²⁰⁸ Like most missions, San Francisco de Asís started out with a simpler altar

²⁰⁷ Mancini, “Pedro Cambón,” 31.

²⁰⁸ Pagliarulo, *Harry Downie and the Contents*, 6.

screen. Behind the magnificent reredos is an older mural depicting Christian symbols and decorative motifs, painted by a mission Indian artist or artists, sometime between 1790 and 1791. Vancouver, who looked favorably upon the church furnishings, likely saw and approved of it. The mural still exists in a deteriorated state; only the top third has been photographed due to the challenge of accessing the narrow space behind the reredos. A composite photograph assembled by the Ben Wood, an artist, and Eric Blind, an archaeologist (figs. 4.25 to 4.27) revealed a central niche flanked by symbols of the Sacred Heart (pierced with three swords) and the heart of Mary (pierced with one sword).²⁰⁹ The Indigenous painter(s) likely copied the Christian iconography from a book or print, under the guidance of a friar. Like the architectural progression from simpler, vernacular buildings to European-derived forms, the mural's replacement with a more sophisticated and three-dimensional altar screen indicated the preference for western architectonic forms to shape sacred space.

Another mission era object displayed in the church today is the large painted canvas, called a *monumento*, hanging on the right wall (fig. 4.28). Listed in the inventory of 1807, it would have been hung in the front of the church, to hide the altar on Holy Thursday. Often featuring religious scenes in large architectural settings, the installation and removal of the *monumento* signaled the start and end of the culminating days of Lent. Furthermore, its depiction of perspectival space framed by Classical architecture reinforced the western model of visualizing and building sacred space.

Relics and reliquaries appear in the mission inventory and are mentioned in Franciscan reports. Father Palóu recorded the laying of the cornerstone of the second

²⁰⁹ "The Hidden Mural at Mission Dolores," Shaping San Francisco's Digital Archive, accessed March 1, 2020, http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=The_Hidden_Mural_at_Mission_Dolores

church on April 5, 1782. Among the objects that were buried together with the stone were relics from the bones of St. Pius and other holy martyrs.²¹⁰ Relics, which were the body parts or personal articles of saints and martyrs, were considered inherently sacred by virtue of being an actual physical fragment of the person, or coming into contact with them. The practice of venerating objects such as images and relics was a controversial subject in the early Catholic Church because of its uncomfortable resemblance to idolatry. Doctrinally, the matter was resolved in the Second Council of Nicea, held in 787 A.D., where their veneration was accepted as a righteous tradition, and it was decreed that relics were necessary to the consecration of a church.²¹¹ The mission documents do not specifically mention the source of the relics, but given that all of their requests were coursed through the College of San Fernando in Mexico City, it is reasonable to suggest that the college maintained its own collection or sourced them from other Franciscan churches in Mexico, Spain, or Rome.

Ritual Accounts

Sacred space and sacred time were interwoven by ritual in the missions. The liturgical calendar marked a cycle of religious observances which peaked at Christmas and Easter, interspersed with the feast days of important saints. Additional events, such as church dedications and individual specific rituals were often scheduled to coincide with a day of Christian significance. October 4 was the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, and so it

²¹⁰ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 100. Other objects included an image of St. Francis of Assisi, five medals of various saints, and silver money to signify Treasures of the Church. These items would all have been blessed prior to entombment in the foundations.

²¹¹ Charles Hefele, *A History of the Councils of the Church, from the original documents*, trans. William R. Clark (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1896), 370-380.

was an obvious choice for the formal opening of the mission named after him. The first three neophytes at Mission San Francisco de Asís were baptized on June 24, 1777, which was appropriately, the feast of St. John the Baptist.²¹² In September 1779, Juan Francisco de la Bodega, captain of the ship *La Favorita*, anchored in San Francisco Bay after a perilous journey of exploration along the northwest American coast. To express his gratitude, he gifted the mission with a precious item he carried on board: a bronze engraving of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, encased in a silver frame and protected by glass. For the enshrinement ceremony, Father Palóu selected the first Sunday of October, the same day they were celebrating the Feast of St Francis.²¹³ This deliberate selection of dates for individual events tethered the initial and future celebrations to Christian tradition, linked the meanings of personal and community anniversaries with a larger historical memory of Christian events and people, and anchored them in the space of the mission church.

Rituals also marked the movement of sacred space, as when a new church built in a different location superseded the previous one. On July 15, 1785, José Moraga, the first presidio commander of San Francisco, was interred in the third mission church which was a provisional structure until the fourth (adobe) church was ready. On April 8, 1791, an entry in the burial register noted that his Moraga's remains were moved from the old church to the new one, and that it was executed with the ceremony appropriate for his position.²¹⁴

²¹² Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 57-61. The actual opening of the mission was moved to October 8 because Captain Moraga had not returned as expected from an exploratory trip of the surrounding area by the chosen date. However, October 4 was kept as the mission's anniversary date.

²¹³ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 75-76.

²¹⁴ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 117.

Christian doctrine and ideals guided the building, shaping, and activation of sacred space. When implemented on the frontier of a foreign territory, and as part of a colonizing program, the particulars of local conditions called for adjustments and improvisations, to both architecture and ritual. Choris' portrayal of dance—an essential aspect of Indigenous ritual practice—being performed as part of the celebrations on the feast day of Saint Francis is a rare visual document of the accommodation that occurred in order to encourage the embrace of a new religion by the Native Californians (fig. 4.19), and which must have occurred frequently, given its many accounts in the written record. It is worth noting however, that these were held outside the church, reserving that building's interior for more traditional Catholic ceremonies. Outdoor spaces, especially the area in the immediate vicinity of the church, provided opportunities for both Christian and Indigenous spectacles to merge. The result was a performance that had the potential to blur boundaries between cultures and create a distinctly Christian Indian expression of faith, and experience of the sacred.

Case Study Three: Mission San Luis Rey, est. 1798

Major Indigenous tribes: Quechnajuichom, Ipai, Capeno, Cahuila

Latitude: 33.2322° N

Site Selection and Naming

The first mission and presidio in Alta California were established at San Diego in July 1769. Shortly after, Gaspar de Portolá, the governor of California, led a contingent of soldiers, missionaries, and Indian guides to find Monterey, the second planned location for military and religious settlement. Along the way, they noted promising sites for future missions (based on proximity to a ready water source, arable land, and the presence of many friendly Indian communities). One such place was a valley where they encountered many Native Californians who seemed open to their preaching. They named the place San Juan Capistrano, in honor of a canonized Franciscan priest, preacher, and crusading soldier. When a mission named after San Juan Capistrano was founded further up north in 1776, it became necessary to distinguish the two locations. Hence, the name of the valley was changed to San Juan Capistrano el Viejo (Old San Juan Capistrano). In 1798, Father Fermín Lasuén, president of the missions who succeeded Junípero Serra, selected it for the site of Mission San Luis Rey, the eighteenth mission in Alta California. For its patron saint, Viceroy Branciforte selected the canonized King of France, Louis IX (1214-1270).²¹⁵ This departure from the traditional Franciscan figure was likely a gesture to the French lineage of the Bourbon rulers of Spain. Lasuén however, chose the official founding date of June 13 in order to have it coincide with the feast day of Anthony of Padua, a Franciscan saint.

²¹⁵ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries*, vol. 2, 27-28, 494-496.

In his letter to Governor Diego de Borica, Lasuén acknowledged the Indigenous place name, reporting that he at last founded the mission

*“in this place known as Tacayme by the natives and as San Juan Capistrano by our first discoverers . . . ”*²¹⁶

Architecture

Early Days

Father Domingo Rivas, a priest from the San Diego presidio was on hand for the mission founding event and witnessed the quick construction of the *enramada* prior to the inaugural rites. He described the provisional church and missionary quarters, neither of which were larger than thirty feet long by fifteen feet wide, as little more than pole and thatch buildings, quoting a phrase from Isaiah 1:8 in likening them to “a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.” Lasuén left after a few days, leaving Father Antonio Peyri and Father José Faura in charge of executing plans for more permanent buildings, which initially consisted of a church, missionary dwellings, and other necessary spaces. Stone was discovered for the foundations, and the missionaries oversaw the cutting of timber for beams and frames, and directed the making of adobe bricks, which would serve as the main building material. By December of 1798, construction of the church, the priests’ quarters, soldiers’ quarters and dwelling for the corporal of the guard—all of adobe walls and thatch roofs—was finished. Two hundred and three neophytes lived at the mission, and the missionaries had officiated thirty-four marriages. Additional structures, such as a guardhouse, a storeroom for the corporal, a granary, and other rooms for storage large were erected in the following

²¹⁶ “sicut tugurium in cucumerario,” Lasuén, *Writings*, vol. 2, 84.

years. By 1801 half of all the mission buildings had tile roofs. They would all be roofed with tile the following year.²¹⁷

Second Church

In 1802, a second church of adobe, roofed with tile, was erected to replace the first one, which had already been expanded to accommodate the growing number of neophytes at the mission. At one hundred thirty-eight feet long by nineteen feet wide by seventeen feet high, the missionaries estimated that it would accommodate a congregation of one thousand. The register for that year indicated that there were five hundred thirty-two neophytes at San Luis Rey. By 1807, the Indian population reached one thousand and twenty-five. The foundations for a third church were laid in 1811.

Third Church

The current building was designed by the master mason José Antonio Ramírez, who was also responsible for the mission churches at Santa Barbara and San Buenaventura. It emulated a cruciform plan with its long nave and deep bays at the transept. Constructed with adobe, *ladrillos*, and tile, it was inaugurated in 1815.²¹⁸ The earliest image is from Alfred Robinson's 1829 visit to the mission (fig. 4.29). At one hundred sixty-four and a half feet long by twenty-seven feet wide by thirty feet high, it exceeded its predecessors in size and likely in architectural sophistication. Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, visiting in 1827, commented on the elegant colonnade which gave the mission a palace-like appearance, the

²¹⁷ Details of the successive church constructions are in Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey Mission* (San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1921), 9-18.

²¹⁸ Kimbro and Costello, *California Missions*, 240. Ladrillos are fired adobe bricks, as opposed to traditional ones that are sun dried. The kiln-firing makes the material more durable.

graceful dome and cupola crowning the tile roof, and the brilliant whiteness of the (limewash-coated) adobe walls.²¹⁹ At the end of that year, the neophyte count was recorded as one thousand eight hundred sixty-six.

Asistencia of San Antonio de Pala

In addition to its main complex of church, workshop, dwellings, and farm lands, Mission San Luis Rey maintained outposts, ranches, and a sub-mission (or asistencia) where its extensive herds and flocks of livestock were pastured, and extra grain was stored. Each site had a house for a caretaker, living quarters for the mission Indians stationed there, and a small chapel. The Asistencia of San Antonio de Pala was first mentioned in the 1810 missionary report. At that time, it was described as a ranch where a granary had been built. By 1818, it had apparently grown considerably, as its chapel had to be lengthened, and additional adobe and tile roofed structures—more Indian dwellings, and two large granaries—were constructed. The following year, more than three hundred people had been baptized at this location.²²⁰

Post-Secularization: Ruin and Restoration

The church structure managed to survive the destructive effects of post-secularization, but the other buildings in the once thriving establishment gradually surrendered to the elements after widespread abandonment and neglect. The church interior however, was mercilessly looted. A drawing by Alexander Harmer (1856-1925) captured

²¹⁹ Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, “Duhaut-Cilly’s Account of California in the Years 1827-28,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8 no. 3 (Sept 1929): 226.

²²⁰ Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey*, 20, 35-36.

a desolate scene of two women sitting inside the church, gazing at the remains of the reredos (fig. 4.30). The dome had begun to cave in, and the roof was on the verge of collapse. In 1892, Franciscan friars from the College of Zacatecas in Mexico asked the diocese for permission to establish a monastery and seminary at Mission San Luis Rey, whose core properties had been restored to the Catholic Church by President Abraham Lincoln in 1865. The rehabilitation of the site began with the church, which was rededicated on May 12, 1893. In a ceremony which must have been reminiscent of the 1815 inauguration, a small procession entered the church, with a cross-bearer at its head. High Mass was celebrated, followed by a reading of the *Patente* from Rome authorizing the new Franciscan institution. Then the patron saints were declared (San Luis Rey and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe) and three young men from Mexico knelt in front of the altar to receive the habit of the Franciscan Order and thus begin their novitiate. The Superior General of the Franciscans appointed Father Joseph Jeremiah O’Keefe as supervisor of temporal matters and the restoration of the mission (fig. 4.31). Under his direction, the church was brought back to its former glory. By the time he retired in 1912, the roof was replaced, the dome repaired, the adobe walls replastered, a new floor installed, and a portion of the quadrangle reconstructed.²²¹ His successors have continued the rebuilding project he began. Present-day photos reflect the painstaking work of several decades (figs. 4.32 to 4.35).

²²¹ Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey*, 240-245. Also Kimbro and Costello, *California Missions*, 240.

Religious Furnishings

Requests for supplies, tools, and church items for use at the missions were coursed through the College of San Fernando, to be paid for with the annual stipend of four hundred pesos per padre, disbursed from the Mexican treasury.²²² Franciscan records illustrated the padres' efforts to appoint the church with devotional art in the form of paintings and statues, and with objects necessary for the performance of daily and seasonal rituals—mass, baptisms, weddings, last rites, processions and other celebrations—as specified by Catholic doctrine. The earliest edition of the mission church, despite its rusticity, was the setting for religious ceremonies which utilized objects, often of precious material and elaborate make. Throughout its architectural trajectory, the efforts to furnish the church paralleled, and perhaps even exceeded, the pace of construction.²²³ The performance of daily mass was a multisensory affair of candlelight, song, bell ringing, and incense. The intonations, flames, smoke, and colorful priestly vestments likely resonated with the Indigenous peoples, whose own pre-Spanish rituals featured music, dance, feathered costumes, cult objects, and ceremonial burning. Official correspondence, account books, and inventories are among the period documents that provide insight into the materiality of Christian religious practice at the mission.

A few extant artifacts are now part of the mission museum collection, among them the original reredos used in the church in 1815 (fig. 4.36). This particular example features the letters I H S, with the H surmounted by a cross. Since this is the traditional monogram of the Jesuit order, it is likely that the reredos was originally installed in a Jesuit church.

²²² The missionaries never received actual money from the College; their stipend was credited towards the goods they ordered.

²²³ An extensive list of ritual objects acquired by the mission is in the Appendix.

The first missions in Baja California were established by the Jesuits, and Serra stopped by several to collect supplies for the Alta California missions before he began his journey to San Diego. It was also not uncommon for the Franciscans to receive objects which previously belonged to other churches in Mexico in response to their petitions for religious goods.

In a 1799 letter to Fray Miguel Lull at the Missionary College of San Fernando in Mexico, Lasuén mentioned that he was waiting for the arrival of consecrated chalices and altar stones for Mission San Luis Rey.²²⁴ One of these is currently on display at the museum (fig. 4.37). An altar stone is a consecrated slab, often with a receptacle for relics, which is used on the altar table for the celebration of the Mass. Their presence made the altar a sacred ground on which bread and wine could be transformed into the body and blood of Christ. The inventory of 1808 listed these, as well as other essential mass and sacramental accoutrements—vestments and altar cloths; missal and ritual books; small bells; coins; vessels for bread, wine, holy oils and water. Also included were an iron communion host maker; and a baptismal font and shell—which were likely brought to the mission when it was established or shortly thereafter.²²⁵ A comparison of these two objects illustrates a hierarchy of rituals, and underscores the significance of the term “neophyte” given to the mission Indians. Some rites, like baptism, were essential for membership in the Christian community. Others, like Holy Communion, were reserved for those whom the missionaries deemed more advanced in their spiritual development. A host maker was a scissor-like implement fitted with matching flat plates at the ends of crisscrossing handles, which would be used to flatten bread batter into wafers and baked in a fire oven (fig. 3.18 is an

²²⁴ Lasuén, *Writings*, vol. 2, 118.

²²⁵ Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey*, 11.

example from Mission San Buenaventura). The plates were often carved with Christian symbols which would be embossed on the wafer in the process of baking. The mission records at San Luis Rey, like other sites, reflected the small numbers of Communion recipients relative to the total population.²²⁶ Only a few neophytes were considered adequately prepared to receive the consecrated host in the form of Holy Communion, also known as the sacrament of the Eucharist. Catholic Church doctrine required that it only be administered to those who fully understood its significance. The concept of transubstantiation normally required a lengthier period of catechetical education than was given to the mission Indians, especially those who were already adults at the time of baptism. On the other hand, the baptismal font and shell were the among the first objects they experienced. The baptismal font, unlike the iron host maker, was installed and clearly visible in the church (often in a separate space to one side) and thus encountered daily (fig. 3.20 is an example from Mission San Gabriel). Only those mission Indians assigned to help with making the communion wafers would have attached personal meaning to the host iron, whereas all would have likely associated memories with the baptismal font, illustrating that meanings were layered and multivalent for ritual objects as they were for architecture.

Ritual Accounts

*"I blessed water, the place, and a large cross which we venerated and raised...We intoned the Litany of the saints. Following this, I sang the Mass, preached during it, and exhorted all to co-operate in so holy a work. We brought the function to a close by singing the Te Deum Laudamus."*²²⁷

²²⁶ Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey*, 220.

²²⁷ Lasuén, *Writings*, vol. 2, 84-85.

Thus did Father Lasuén describe the founding ceremonies, which took place on the morning of June 13, 1798. That afternoon, fifty-four children (twenty-five boys and twenty-nine girls) were presented to him for baptism, which he performed under the *enramada* set up the previous day for the Mass. Father Rivas, who had assisted in the Mass and found it unremarkable, was by contrast, moved by the scene he witnessed,

*“From me it drew tears of joy as I beheld the same venerable old man, re-vested with alb, stole, and cope, and assisted by the two companions, commencing to gather the fruit of their labors by administering the holy sacrament of Baptism to thirty and more little ones, the oldest of whom was only five years of age. With this function closed the first day of the new Mission.”*²²⁸

He specifically mentioned the priest’s vestments, which would have added to the visual aura of the moment. A special vessel would no doubt have contained the holy water which was blessed and used for that day’s rites; a baptismal shell would likely have been employed. The ceremonial paraphernalia helped to elevate the occasion despite its rustic, makeshift setting.

A consideration of religious material culture frames the architecture as active sites of ritual, through the daily observance of Mass and prayers, as well as the special feast days throughout the liturgical year. Auguste Duhaut-Cilly was at Mission San Luis Rey for the two-day festivities in honor of Saint Anthony of Padua in 1827. The celebration included a high mass which featured music sung by the Indian choir. The priest would have donned vestments of a different color to signify the feast day; the altar might also have been dressed with finer linens. After the mass a painted image or statue of Saint Anthony would have been paraded along a route just outside the church, accompanied by processional candles, which were larger than regular tapers, and carried on tall poles. Celebrations often

²²⁸ Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey*, 11.

combined sacred and secular performance, as Duhaut-Cilly observed. He acknowledged that other merrymaking activities—including bullfights, cock racking, a type of jousting on horseback using willow poles, traditional Indian games and dances— were not strictly religious in order to encourage widespread participation.

*“These were religious solemnities; but in order to attract the widest possible number of attendants, the president of the mission was accustomed, at such a time, to keep open house, and to produce all the amusements, shows, and games dear to Californians; hence few persons in the boundary were missing at so attractive an assembly, and the vast buildings of San Luis were hardly sufficient to lodge the number of men and women gathered there.”*²²⁹

Everyday life in the mission likewise combined the holy and the ordinary. In the museum are two quadrangle bells which arrived in 1814 and 1818 respectively (fig. 4.38). Unlike the altar bells in church, which signaled specific parts of the mass, these were rung to announce the daily routine of work and prayer, which followed a set rhythm at all the missions. At sunrise, the bell would summon everyone over nine years of age to the church for Mass, which would be followed by a recitation of specific Christian tenets, collectively called the *Doctrina* (the sign of the cross; the Our Father, the Hail Mary, and Hail Holy Queen prayers; the ten precepts of the Church; the seven sacraments; the fourteen articles of faith; seven spiritual works of mercy; the seven capital sins and the virtues opposed of the soul; the three theological virtues; the four cardinal virtues, the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit; and the four last things), and concluded with the *Alabado*, which was a hymn of praise to the Virgin Mary. A breakfast of *atole* (a gruel of corn or grain) which had been prepared in large communal kettles would be distributed to the different families, who would then eat in their respective dwellings. Work would then commence: the men headed

²²⁹ Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, “Duhaut-Cilly’s Account of California in the Years 1827-28,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (September, 1929): 229-232.

for the fields or workshops; the women occupied themselves with tasks such as spinning and preparing wool for the looms, and other duties assigned by the head matron; the children were gathered in the large reception room for catechism and Spanish lessons. At noon, the bell announced dinner, which was *pozole* (a type of broth containing meat or legumes). After a post meal rest, the work resumed at two o'clock, and continued until five in the afternoon. The bell would ring to signal the end of the day; once again all would gather in church to recite the *Doctrina* and other prayers, and end with the *Alabado*. At six o'clock, everyone ate a supper of *atole*. On Sundays and feast days, the bell called the community to the church in the morning for Mass, at the end of which, each neophyte's name was called out from the *Padron* (registry), so he or she could come forward and kiss the priest's hand. Besides the afternoon recitation of the Rosary, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and other short prayers, the rest of the day was free.²³⁰

Alfred Robinson stopped by the mission in 1829 and observed the daily rituals of mass, prayer, and song, noting that while some Indians were less than enthusiastic participants, the furnishings helped to create the appropriate atmosphere. He also remarked that while the church's façade was elaborate enough, its interiors were more impressive.

*"The church is a large, stone edifice, whose exterior is not without some considerable ornament and tasteful finish; but the interior is richer, and the walls are adorned with a variety of pictures of saints and Scripture subjects, glaringly colored, and attractive to the eye. Around the altar are many images of the saints, and the tall and massive candelabras, lighted during mass, throw an imposing light upon the whole. Mass is offered daily, and the greater portion of the Indians attend; but it is not unusual to see number of them driven along by alcaldes, and under the whip's lash forced to the very doors of the sanctuary. "*²³¹

²³⁰ Engelhardt, *Missions and Missionaries* vol. 2, 253-256. Also Guest, *Patente*, 224-225.

²³¹ Robinson, *Life in California*, 25-26. He also thought the church was made of stone, probably because the white lime coating hid the adobe surfaces. Alcaldes were officials elected by the mission Indians from among their ranks to act as intermediate supervisors under the friars.

CHAPTER 5

Looking Against the Grain: California Mission Images and the Recovery of Lost Ritual Spaces

Scholars engaged with postcolonial studies are challenged by the imbalanced nature of primary sources from the period. The surviving art, architecture, and written records are disproportionately from the dominant, or conquering culture. Several historians have recommended that archives should be read “against the grain” to expose the underlying and unwritten biases and agenda of their authors. Zephyrin Engelhardt, one of the earliest Franciscan historians of the California missions, turned to account books, official documents, personal letters, and reports from explorers, merchants, and other travelers who came to the missions. His magisterial three-volume *The Missions and Missionaries of California* (1908-1913), was an expansive and detailed narrative, beginning with the first colony founded by Hernando Cortés in the Baja peninsula in 1535, to the aftermath of secularization in 1834, and the early efforts at restoration in the late nineteenth century. He also produced separate histories of several of the missions, tracing their architectural and agricultural progress, the initial rise and eventual decline of the resident Indian population. While the breadth of his research into historical archives is impressive, Engelhardt’s lens is unambiguously pro-Franciscan: he vigorously defended the padres against the negative commentary of several mission visitors and his contemporary historians, citing an anti-Catholic sentiment. Present day mission scholars like Robert Senkewicz and Rose Marie Beebe have taken a more measured assessment of primary sources. In *Junípero Serra:*

California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary (2015), they cast a discerning eye towards the correspondence of the Franciscan founder of the Alta California missions, offering sensitive new translations and analyses of his missives to and about the military commanders in charge of the territory. The letters often detailed his side of the bitter disputes over administrative control of the missions. Read in the context of Serra's personal and professional history, they reveal a missionary who was suspicious of Bourbon reforms and who was astute to the political headwinds he was up against. In a similar vein, Maynard Geiger and Clement Meighan introduced *As the Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries 1813-1815* (1976) with commentary on the day-to-day living realities of being in a remote outpost, which influenced the missionaries' responses to the questionnaire sent by the Spanish government to the colonies in 1812. Meighan in particular recommends that we read between the lines, suggesting for instance, there is a hint of impatience or exasperation with the nature of some questions; and that similarly worded answers could indicate that the missionaries discussed them among each other, or read other responses before composing their own. He also offers a new reading of the missionaries' observations in light of later anthropological perspectives.²³² In his edited compilation of visitors' accounts of the missions, Francis Weber likewise frames each narrative within the context of the author's cultural background, motive, and ideological persuasion.²³³ Pablo Tac, the only Indigenous author of a first-person mission account, wrote about life at Mission San Luis Rey, and created a

²³² Maynard Geiger and Clement Meighan, *As the Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries 1813-1815* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Santa Barbara Mission Archive and Library, 1976), 3-9.

²³³ See Francis Weber, *The California Missions as Others Saw Them, 1786-1842* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1972).

dictionary and grammar translating between Spanish and Luiseño, the language spoken by most of the Native Californians at the mission. In her analysis of Tac's writings, Lisbeth Haas has argued that his sense of history and pride in his Indigenous identity survived, and shaped his expressive style.²³⁴

The visual record of the missions, on the other hand, has not been subjected to the same level of scrutiny. Period images of the mission church and complex have been analyzed for compositional style and historic accuracy, but seldom investigated beyond what is portrayed on the canvas. Likewise, extant architecture, by its very nature obscures what no longer exists. The mapping and naming of places in the New World imposed what Harley termed a "toponymic silence" by which the colonizer's spatial representation sweeps away the ethnic identity of place. On the map, the conquered territory effectively becomes a canvas upon which a new image which conforms to the designs of empire is created. While acknowledging that these silences may be a form of censorship, or an inadvertent result of lack of information, or a combination of both, Harley maintains that the absence of something, as much as its presence, deserves the historian's attention.²³⁵ This investigative lens can likewise be applied to the silences or absences in visual representations. An interdisciplinary approach that leverages multiple sources can enrich the analysis of mission images by probing what they portray, but also what they do not show. This reading of the visual record "against the grain," can reveal the silenced spaces and rituals of Indigenous faith which simultaneously endured and was transformed by contact with Christianity.

²³⁴ Lisbeth Haas, *Pablo Tac, Indigenous Scholar: Writing on Luiseno Language and Colonial History, c. 1840* (Berkeley: University of California, 2011), 3-4.

²³⁵ Harley, "Silences and Secrecy," 66-70.

“Invisible” Spaces

Cultural contact is historically characterized by adaptation to and accommodation of local context, even in imbalanced power relationships. The art and architecture of the California missions, have been studied as regional expressions of the late Baroque and Neoclassical styles of the period, which integrate Indigenous ornamental motifs.²³⁶ While not as readily visible, a similar cultural negotiation occurred in the religious beliefs of the newly baptized Native Californians. The missionaries who came to America understood that they had a better chance of conversion success if they avoided wholesale imposition of Christianity, but rather appropriated or re-directed Indigenous themes when similarities presented opportunities to do so. They noted the strong performative aspects of local culture and sought to channel those impulses by engaging them in song, teaching them to play western musical instruments, and encouraging the performance of Indigenous dances during the celebration of Catholic feast days. For their part, the different Indian groups of each mission sought to integrate the new knowledge and practices of the Christian faith with their pre-Spanish customs. The padres forbade rituals that overtly referenced local deities that they considered “pagan,” and outlawed dance performances that featured sexually suggestive movements, but in other aspects the line between prohibition and tolerance was constantly negotiated. Franciscan and Indian accounts alike confirm the reality of this tension, but seldom discuss them in terms of the spaces in which they occurred. The survival, preservation, and in some cases the total reconstruction of the

²³⁶ The works of Kimbro and Costello, Baer, and Neuerburg have already been cited. Also see Lanier Bartlett, *Carved Ornamentation of the California Mission Period* (Los Angeles: Federal Works Agency Work Projects Administration, 1940).

mission churches in California, and their continued use as places of Catholic worship have defined them as sacred space. This has reinforced the perception that faith-based practice and religious experiences at the missions were predominantly Christian. The architectural survivors of the built environment have skewed the apprehension of religious mission life and obscured the persistence of Indigenous rituals, which often occurred in spaces that no longer exist and have been marginalized by the historical record. Liminal spaces like the open plaza just outside the church were the site of both Christian and Indian performance. The rancherias afforded the mission Indians some private and social spaces where they could express their pre-Christian beliefs through covert rituals.²³⁷

Travelogue Images

Travelers who stopped by the missions between 1786 and 1842 wrote about the complex of church, residences, workshops, farm, and pasture lands administered by one or two missionaries, monitored by a handful of soldiers, but kept operational by the larger population of Indian neophytes who tended the crops and cattle, tanned hides, wove cloth, and processed tallow. Illustrations, ranging from schematic drawings to more formally composed paintings accompanied some of the travel commentaries and conveyed the early images of the missions to distant audiences.

The earliest visitors to the missions were European naval explorers commissioned to investigate the New World and gather scientific data about its lands, its vegetation, and its people. Sometimes an official artist, or a similarly inclined amateur would be among the contingent, and his drawings would be included in the published accounts of the

²³⁷ Rancherias are the Indian dwellings or villages which existed inside the missions and further afield. In this essay, they refer to the villages within the mission complex.

voyages. The mission of San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel was a popular stop for travelers who sailed into nearby Monterey harbor along the northern coast of California. The 1786 reception accorded Jean-Francois Galaup, the Count of La Pérouse was recorded by the designated artist of the expedition, Gaspard Duche de Vancy. The British navigator George Vancouver surveyed the northwestern coast of North America from 1792 to 1794 and visited several missions in California, including San Francisco de Asís, Santa Clara, and San Carlos Borromeo. Vancouver commented on the beginnings of construction of a new church at San Carlos Borromeo in 1793; it would be dedicated in 1797, and later drawn by William Smyth, who accompanied the British explorer Frederick William Beechey to California from 1826 to 1828.

By the early nineteenth century, the ships coming to the major ports of San Diego, Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Francisco were also interested in trade, especially after California became part of a newly independent Mexico in 1821. Several merchants stopped at the missions to barter for hide and tallow. Among them were Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, commander of the French vessel *Le Heros* which entered San Francisco harbor in 1827. In the course of business, he stopped at the missions of San Francisco de Asís, Santa Cruz, San Carlos Borromeo, Santa Clara, San José, Santa Barbara, San Diego, San Luis Rey, San Francisco Solano, and San Gabriel. Other entrepreneurs hailed from the newly formed United States. Alfred Robinson's memoir, *Life in California* (1846), was one of the first extensive travel narratives of early California written by an American, and included drawings of the missions of Santa Barbara, San Buenaventura, San Luis Rey, and San Gabriel. He arrived in 1829, as an agent for a Boston-based trading firm. For several years, he worked up and down the California coast, negotiating for hides, and in 1836 he married

a woman from a prominent family of *Californios*—people of Spanish descent who were born in California.

The discovery of gold in Coloma in 1848, and the Mexican American War (1846-48) which led to U.S. statehood for Alta California in 1850, instigated a flood of people moving across the country to find fortune or settle into new circumstances on the west coast. H.M.T. Powell joined a group of prospectors who left Illinois in 1849 and followed the Santa Fe Trail taken by many during the California Gold Rush. He kept a diary of his extended travels until he sailed on the return trip out of San Francisco in 1852. His journal contained his personal reflections on the events of the day, and featured skillfully executed drawings of ten California and two Arizona missions; and views of San Diego, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara. He annotated his sketches with observations about the architecture, the interior furnishings, and people he met on site. William Rich Hutton, an engineer from Washington, D.C. came to California as a payroll clerk for the U.S. volunteer troops in 1846, and worked as a surveyor and draftsman until 1852. During that time, he also made watercolor and pencil drawings of California scenes, including the missions of San Luis Rey, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, San Juan Bautista, and San Carlos Borromeo. The first known attempt to deliberately create a complete series of mission images was undertaken by the artist Henry Miller in 1856. He succeeded in drawing all but the northernmost missions of San Rafael and San Francisco Solano.

These images are valuable because they provide visual records of the mission complexes prior to ruin and later rehabilitation. Most follow a predictable format: a depiction of an expansive landscape centered on the mission church, with schematically

outlined rancherías positioned peripherally, or in the distance.²³⁸ The Indian dwellings, none of which are extant, were usually located a short distance apart from the central cluster. In the drawings, they are recognizable as conical *tule* huts, or as the rows of adobe and tile roofed structures described in mission building reports. The large majority of these pictures present still views of architecture and landscape; human figures and activity are sparse if not totally missing. The few examples that prominently portray people—both missionaries and Indians—are rare. The church as a dominant architectural presence in an image that also mitigates the importance of people, presents the mission as a hegemonic Christian space, and obscures the cultural persistence of the Indigenous residents who always outnumbered the small contingent of priests and soldiers.

Historic preservationists, museum curators, and archaeologists have consulted these period images to inform church restoration efforts, exhibition displays, and excavation projects. Historians of visual culture, such as art and architecture, have paid them less attention. Mission art historians have focused on religious paintings and sculpture in the mission church. A few architectural historians of the mission period have examined these images to discern the spatial patterns of daily life suggested by site layout, but most have focused on formal analyses of style and ornament.²³⁹ There has yet to be a study that probes the secondary spaces in the visual record of the missions. These spaces—the plaza outside the church, and the Indian rancherías—are consigned to the periphery, often portrayed as empty; rendered mute because the rituals which animated them are invisible.

²³⁸ The core spaces of the mission complex were often arranged in a quadrangle around a central courtyard. The living quarters of the missionaries usually abutted the church. Nearby were guest rooms, women's dormitories, kitchen, workshops, main storage and supply rooms.

²³⁹ See Catherine Ettinger, "Architecture as Order in the California Missions," *Southern California Quarterly* 85, no. 1 (April 2003): 1-12 for a study of spatial relationships within the mission.

Relevant, contemporaneous textual sources can bring these neglected spaces into focus, and recover an active Indian presence that was very much at the center of mission life, and which has been erased or diminished by these pictures.

The Written Record

The aforementioned expeditions are known because their accounts and images were published, often shortly after the return voyage. Each author framed his narrative of the mission architecture, the natural environment, the missionaries, and the Native peoples of California through his own lens. La Pérouse, subscribing to the Enlightenment ideas about personal liberty, criticized the infantilization of the Native Californians even while being appreciative of his cordial reception at Monterey.²⁴⁰ Archibald Menzies, a naturalist who was aboard the *Discovery*, the vessel captained by George Vancouver, was more sympathetic to the mission padres.²⁴¹ Duhaut-Cilly acknowledged that some missions were better run than others; he was especially complimentary of Father Antonio Peyri's management of Mission San Luis Rey.²⁴² Alfred Robinson's remarks reflected an anti-Catholic prejudice but he conceded that some Indians seemed sincerely moved by the Catholic Mass ceremonies.²⁴³ Powell's journal entries provided a glimpse of the beginning of the ruinous period of the missions, the diminished populations and activities around them, but also of the continuing practices from the Franciscan years.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁰ La Pérouse, *Voyage*, vol. 2, 191-196.

²⁴¹ Menzies and Eastwood, "Vancouver Expedition," 273.

²⁴² Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, "Duhaut-Cilly's Account of California in the Years 1827-28," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (September, 1929): 231.

²⁴³ Robinson, *Life in California*, 25-26, 31-32.

²⁴⁴ Douglas, Watson, ed. *The Santa Fe Trail to California 1849-1852. The Journal and Drawings of H.M.T. Powell* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1931), 204, 210, 214, 222.

Mission Documents

The surviving records of a mission are a source of useful information about the significant life events of its residents, and the rituals which attended them. Births and deaths are a window into the widespread battle with disease, and the constant struggle with infertility which accounted for significant population depletion. They also represent baptisms and last rites, which along with marriages, and confirmations, are a marker of evangelical progress through the administration of sacraments, which were received through a church ritual. Account books can yield insight into the kinds of material goods purchased, which indicated the material priorities of the mission enterprise. In the first years of establishment, most of the supply orders were for agricultural implements. Between 1800 and 1810, the account books of missions Santa Clara, San José, La Purísima and San Diego (by then all in existence for three or more years) were dominated by religious items such as art and ritual objects, relative to tools which could have boosted production. This changed after 1810, when Mexico's war with Spain strained the royal treasury and cut off funding to the missions, leading to economic hardship and societal unrest.²⁴⁵

The Respuestas

In 1812, Don Ciriaco González Carvajal, the Secretary of the Department of Overseas Colonies, forwarded a questionnaire to the Spanish colonial officials. It made its way to Fray José Senan, then president of the missions, who sent it to each of the twenty establishments in California.²⁴⁶ The twenty-four questions were on a variety of topics

²⁴⁵ Duggan, "With and Without an Empire," 23-71.

²⁴⁶ San Francisco Solano, the twenty-first mission, had not yet been founded.

ranging from the social organization of Native peoples, their origins and history, beliefs, customs, and social disposition, and general administrative issues such as the progress of the colonial project and associated costs. It is not known whether the replies compiled by Senan, collectively called the *Respuestas*, ever reached Spain. For the historian, they have become a rich source of insight into how the padres viewed the mission Indians, and allow a glimpse of the lived experience of a missionary on the frontier. The responses paint a complex picture of negotiation between two cultures. Several responses indicated that missionaries were aware of the observance of traditional Indian rituals, both in the Native villages outside the mission, but also within the mission complex, in the rancherias, or neophyte dwellings. Just how much of this was happening—whether it was anecdotal and sporadic or more reliably confirmed and widespread—is not clear. The larger political context must also be taken into consideration. In 1800, a royal decree prohibiting the construction of new mission churches without the approval of the California governor likely conveyed a sobering message to the Franciscans, namely that their mission enterprises, which were already being pressured to secularize, were not a priority for government funding. The friars understood that their answers to the questionnaire were going to be part of the official record. It is reasonable to assume that that they wanted to present a positive, successful image of the mission effort and therefore they would not emphasize recidivism on the part of the neophytes. The *Respuestas* arguably can be read as a diplomatic account of the realities on the ground, especially with regards to the continuation of pre-Spanish faith practices.

Native Accounts

Indigenous perspectives are extremely valuable but sparse. The only first-hand account of mission life from an Indian viewpoint was penned by Pablo Tac. Born at Mission San Luis Rey in 1820, Tac must have exhibited a precociousness in his Christian education; he and Agapito Amamix, another boy from the mission, were selected for priesthood by Father Antonio Peyri, the head friar at San Luis Rey. Before they were both ten years old, they started assisting the padre at masses, and moved to Mexico City for initial schooling. In 1832 Father Peyri, deciding that he could no longer stem the tide of injustice that he felt imminent secularization would bring, left Mission San Luis Rey to return to Spain, taking with him Tac and Amamix, then about twelve and thirteen. He arranged to have them enrolled at the Colegio Urbanum de Propaganda Fide, a school for training missionaries in Rome, where they began their formal studies in 1834. Amamix fell ill the following year and never fully recovered, dying in 1837. Tac went on to distinguish himself in his humanistic education, and took his first vows towards priesthood in 1839. Sadly, he too succumbed to illness and passed away in 1841, leaving behind a written body of work that included a Luiseno grammar and dictionary translated into Spanish and Latin, ethnographic notes, a history of the Quechla under Spanish rule, a dialogue, and a prayer.²⁴⁷

The recollections of mission Indians, as told to anthropologists, are another source of historical narrative. Between 1912 and 1915, the ethnolinguist John P. Harrington interviewed the few remaining Chumash Indians who had lived in the missions during the Spanish and Mexican periods.²⁴⁸ His chief informant was Fernando Librado, also known

²⁴⁷ Quechla is the Indigenous name of the territory where San Luis Rey was established, while “Luiseño” is derived from the name of the mission. Tac used both terms in his writing.

²⁴⁸ The Chumash were a distinct group of Native Americans who lived along the southern coast of California, in an area roughly defined by San Luis Obispo in the north to Malibu in the south.

as Kitsepawit, who was born in 1839, a few years after mission secularization.²⁴⁹ Librado grew up in Mission San Buenaventura, and moved around the different missions in Chumash territory—Santa Barbara, Santa Ines and La Purisima—where he had friends and relatives. Later scholars have mined Harrington’s voluminous papers and often cryptic notes at the Smithsonian National Anthropological Archives, and have produced edited volumes of Chumash lore, most of them culled from Librado’s memories.

The Power of Dance

The missionaries restructured not just the built environment, but the spatial practices that shaped the quotidian and the larger cycles of time. They imposed a daily schedule of farm and craft work punctuated by prayer, meals, and social breaks. This regimen was foreign to the Native Californians, who were organized into loose familial and social groups that moved within a defined territory, and whose lifeways and rhythms varied according to the natural resources and limitations of their immediate geography. The cycles of planting and harvest, complicated by the vagaries of weather, dictated the labor demands, while the liturgical calendar announced the religious celebrations which were observed with processions, feasting, and performances. The latter provided the Indians with occasions to recuperate aspects of their pre-Spanish faith practices, which had been replaced with Catholic Mass, prayers, and songs. Dance as an essential element of sacred ritual was common to all the different linguistic groups and site specific tribelets in

²⁴⁹ John Johnson, “The Trail to Fernando,” *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 4, no. 1 (Summer 1982): 135.

California.²⁵⁰ Dancers were seen as having supernatural powers because the practice was believed to produce knowledge and healing in the body, and was therefore a way of retaining some agency even while under Spanish control.²⁵¹ Fernando Librado described several dances named after animals that were featured in pre-Christian myths and cosmology, among them the Blackbird, the Barracuda, and the Swordfish.²⁵² Pablo Tac made several references to dance in his Luiseno dictionary and history. His many dance-related anecdotes underscored its presence in all significant life events.

*“In Europe they dance for joy, for a feast, for any fortunate news. But the Indians of California dance not only for a feast, but also before starting a war, for grief, because they have lost the victory, and in memory of grandparents, aunts and uncles, parents already dead. Now that we are Christians we dance for ceremony.”*²⁵³

The missionaries observed the common and insistent attachment to dance and believed it to be part of irrational beliefs and unfounded notions, and as something to be discouraged because of its unorthodoxy. In response to the question about superstition, the missionaries at Mission Santa Clara wrote,

*“Some old persons spread the belief that certain offerings and rituals need to be made to ward off the devil . . . they hold at times secret, nocturnal dances always avoiding detection by the fathers.”*²⁵⁴

The padres did not fully understand the potentially subversive power associated with dance, but connected it with what they considered pagan beliefs, such as making offerings to non-

²⁵⁰ Tribelet is a term coined by the anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, who did extensive studies on Native Americans. A tribelet is smaller than a tribe; it is a group of villages, with a total number of 100-500 people.

²⁵¹ Haas, *Pablo Tac*, 22. Also Russell Skowronek, “Sifting the Evidence: Perceptions of Life at the Ohlone (Costanoan) Missions of Alta California,” *Ethnohistory* 45, no. 4 (Autumn, 1998): 681.

²⁵² Fernando Librado, *Breath of the Sun: Life in Early California as told by a Chumash Indian*, Fernando Librado to John P. Harrington, ed. Travis Hudson (Banning, CA: Malki Museum Press, 1979), 25-26.

²⁵³ Pablo Tac, Minna Hewes, and Gordon Hewes, “Indian Life and Customs at Mission San Luis Rey,” *The Americas* 9, no. 1 (July, 1952): 101.

²⁵⁴ Geiger and Meighan, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 50.

Christian deities. Fearing recidivism into pre-Christian religious practice, they sought to regulate it. Consequently, dance was the subject of many disputes and could spark rebellion, as in the aborted plot to overthrow Mission Gabriel in 1785. Nicolás José, one of the instigators, was a mission Indian who was prohibited from performing a mourning dance for his deceased son.²⁵⁵

Visitors were struck by the Indian dances they saw during mission feast days, often pronouncing them to be unfamiliar and unsettling. The exhibitions they witnessed may have been carefully censored for blatantly erotic or idolatrous movements, but the dancers might nevertheless have experienced transcendent moments during performance, a chance to spiritually connect with a pre-Spanish mindset through bodies which were now controlled, monitored, and in some cases literally locked up.²⁵⁶ Dance did not just heighten their states of mind, it also transformed the space, if only for the moment.

The Spaces

Since baptism required that they renounce their “pagan” beliefs, Indian neophytes could not physically construct their traditional sacred spaces within the mission. Nevertheless, there is evidence that they retained many aspects of their Indigenous faith and found both subtle and covert ways to express it. They held religious ceremonies in private, often makeshift spaces that were sacred for the ritual moment rather than permanently marked by architecture. They also found ways to experience sacred moments

²⁵⁵ James Sandos, “Toypurina's Revolt: Religious Conflict at Mission San Gabriel in 1785,” *Boletín* 24 no. 2 (Fall, 2007): 9.

²⁵⁶ Ettinger, “Spaces of Change,” 37-39. The *monjerios*, or women’s dormitories, were a distinct feature of the California missions. It was a separate room in the mission complex where unmarried young women were locked up for the night, under the supervision of an older woman, usually a soldier’s wife. This was ostensibly to protect their virtue from a constant threat of sexual assault by the soldiers, but it also imposed Catholic abstinence and chastity on the single neophytes.

in threshold spaces, where meaning would be ambiguous. The boundary between the sacred and that which is not—the profane—is not always defined by a fixed physical entity. Through ritual, sacrality can shift, overlap, and evolve, particularly when there is more than one belief system operating in the space. The travel commentaries, Franciscan reports, and Indian recollections often situated dance and related rituals in physical spaces. Yet these abundant descriptions of costumes, music, and movement have seldom been deployed in the visual analysis of mission images that privilege the church and neglect the negative and peripheral spaces in the picture.

Thresholds

The plaza just outside the church doors, which was often the site of processions and dances, is save for a few exceptions, portrayed as empty space. It is a threshold, and by definition, a momentary pause, a prelude to something or someplace more significant. Because of this transient nature, threshold spaces have the potential to relax the borders of spatial identities and associated practice. In the mission, threshold spaces opened up possibilities for Christian and Indian sacred spaces to overlap, and to evolve in response to each other. The earliest image of a plaza ceremony was from the visit of the La Pérouse expedition to Mission San Carlos Borromeo in 1786. Gaspard Duche de Vancy drew the scene of their reception which began outside the church, at that time still a modest thatched structure (fig. 3.1) This did not prevent the missionaries from staging a warm welcome that summoned as much spectacle as they were able.

"They received us like lords of the manor making their first entry on their estates. The president of the missions, in his ceremonial habiliments, and with holy water in his hand, received us at the door of the church, which was illuminated as on the grandest of festivals; and conducting us to the

*steps of the high altar, began to chant a Te Deum for the success of our voyage . . . Before we entered the church, we had crossed a square, where Indians of both sexes were ranged in a line”*²⁵⁷

De Vancy depicted the scene leading up to the church, where assembled were two reception lines separating the male and female Indians, likely from the Ohlone, Esselen, and Salinian peoples who lived at the San Carlos mission.

Church feast days manifested the liminal character of the plaza, featuring both Christian pageantry and Indian dances as part of the celebrations. A rare and compelling image of such a performance was captured at Mission San Francisco de Asís by Ludwig Choris, the artist on board the Russian ship commanded by Otto von Kotzebue (fig. 4.19). Upon entering the port of San Francisco on October 1, 1816, they were welcomed at the presidio and invited to the nearby mission for the feast of the patronal saint on October 4. Kotzebue’s log goes into detail about the colorful scene they witnessed,

*"Half of the men adorn themselves with feathers and with girdles ornamented with feathers and with bits of shell that pass for money among them, or they paint their bodies with regular lines of black, red and white. Some have half their bodies, from the head downward, daubed with black, the other half red, and the whole crossed with white lines. The men commonly dance six or eight together, all making the same movements, all armed with spears. Their music consists of clapping the hands, singing, and the sound made by striking split sticks together which has a charm for their ears; this is finally followed by a horrible yell that greatly resembles the sound of a cough accompanied by a whistling noise. The women dance among themselves, but without making violent movements."*²⁵⁸

Choris published a book of lithographs based on the drawings he made during the Kotzebue expedition. His *Danse des habitants de Californie a la mission de St Francisco* vividly

²⁵⁷ La Pérouse, *Voyage*, vol. 2, 191.

²⁵⁸ Michael Komanecky, ““The Treasures of Sentiment, the Charms of Romance, and the Riches of History”: Artists’ Views of the California Missions.” in *California Mexicana*, ed. Katherine Manthorne (Laguna Art Museum: University of California Press, 2017), 175.

captures the mission Indians, who were most likely from the coastal Ohlone tribelets of the region, dancing in the plaza with the adobe church in the background.²⁵⁹ Two Franciscan padres are also shown just outside the church entrance, keeping a watchful eye over the performance to make sure that it did not cross over into objectionable territory. Alfred Robinson's detail of a dance during a feast day at the mission of San José in 1830 had a lot in common with the scene drawn by Choris. Despite his personal disapproval of the performance, the description confirms that similar events took place in other missions.

*"They were dressed with feathers and painted with red and black paint: looking like so many demons. There were several women amongst them. Soon they formed a circle, and commenced what they called dancing, which was one of the most ludicrous specimens of grotesque performance I had ever seen. It did not appear to me that they had any change of figure whatever; but fixed to one spot, they beat time with their feet to the singing of half a dozen persons who were seated upon the ground."*²⁶⁰

Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, visiting San Luis Rey in 1828 on the occasion of the feast of St. Anthony, also wrote about watching a dance of the Indians with Father Antonio Peyri. He commented on some aspects which struck him as non-Christian but were tolerated by the priest.

*"The harmony of the songs governing the time was at once plaintive and wild: it seemed rather to act upon the nerves than upon the mind, like the varied notes from an Aeolian harp during a hurricane. From time to time the actors rested, and at the moment the song stopped, everyone breathed at the same time into the air with a loud noise, either as a mark of applause or, as I was assured, to drive away the Evil Spirit; for, though all are Christians, they still keep many of their old beliefs which the padres, from policy, pretend not to know."*²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ San Francisco was established in a region mostly populated by coastal tribelets who called themselves the Ohlone.

²⁶⁰ Robinson, *Life in California*, 114-15.

²⁶¹ Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, "Duhaut-Cilly's Account of California in the Years 1827-28," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (September, 1929): 231.

Alfred Robinson also visited Mission San Luis Rey the following year and included a drawing in his book (fig. 4.29). He delineated the gracefully curved gable of the mission church, its stately bell tower, and the attached neoclassical colonnade against a mountainous backdrop. Apart from a pair of riders on horseback in the lower right corner, and a few barely discernible figures dotted across the picture, the scene suggests a serene, even deserted mood. Yet Duhaut-Cilly's text questions the image; he identifies the empty plaza as a place of Indigenous ritual, and confirms the makeshift nature of sacred space, especially in the context of an uneven power structure.

The dedication of the church at Mission Santa Barbara in 1820 was a three-day celebration marked by procession, feasting, and dances. The Franciscan report details a very lively scene which included a mixture of solemnity (mass, chanting, altar illumination) and raucous revelry (bell ringing, firecrackers, bull-baiting). On the second day, a vigil was held in the church for the deceased, after which the celebrations continued outside.

*"Immediately after going out, the soldiers, cavalry as well as infantry, continued the festivities as they had commenced on the preceding day, while the Indians had their dances and all diverted themselves as best they could."*²⁶²

Fernando Librado recounted being present at another church blessing, that of the Mission San Buenaventura when the last tile was put on the roof. The Blackbird, Barracuda, and Swordfish dances were performed in the plaza after mass had been said. While the church was completed in 1809, Librado is most likely recalling an event in 1857, when

²⁶² Edith Buckland Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions* (Los Angeles: Warren F. Lewis, 1952), 279-80.

reconstruction due to earthquake damage was completed²⁶³ These first-hand accounts written by a missionary and retold by a mission Indian challenge the rather tranquil landscapes of Santa Barbara (fig 5.1) and San Buenaventura (fig. 5.2) drawn by Henry Miller. It is also worth noting that Miller executed them in 1856, and the San Buenaventura event which Librado recalled likely happened in 1857, indicating that Indian dances continued to be part of Christian celebrations. What began as an accommodation by the priests who wanted to engage the Native Californians in church rituals evolved into a distinct practice of a resulting syncretized faith.

Rancherias

The architectural evolution of the missions can be traced in the Franciscan reports of building activities. These include descriptions of the rancherias, or the Indian dwellings within the complex. The first Native Californians who moved to the mission as newly baptized Christians lived just outside the main cluster of buildings, where they built dwellings in the traditional manner. Archibald Menzies, traveling with George Vancouver, came to the mission of San Francisco de Asís in 1792. He wrote of a

“village close to the Mission, which contained about five or six hundred Natives converted to Christianity,”

and described their houses,

“Their habitations or wigwams were aptly compared to a crowded cluster of bee-hives each of which was of a hemispherical form about nine feet high and nearly the same in diameter and consisted of slender sticks or rods stuck in the ground and lashed together with thongs into the above form and afterwards closely thatched all around with bulrushes, excepting a small hole left on one side just sufficient to creep

²⁶³ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 25-26. The editor, Travis Hudson, notes that while the church was completed in 1809, Librado is most likely recalling an event in 1857, when reconstruction due to earthquake damage was completed.

in at. The fire is placed in the middle of the wigwam and as no particular aperture is left at the top for the smoke to go out at, it was observed oozing out through the thatch."²⁶⁴

While there were some variations in shape and size throughout California, this is a fair description that matches the observations of the cultural anthropologist Alfred Kroeber, whose pioneering research on Native Americans remains significant.²⁶⁵ Over time more permanent adobe and tile-roofed structures replaced the traditional Indian dwellings in most missions. In 1796, twenty such dwellings were constructed for as many neophyte families at Mission San Francisco de Asís.²⁶⁶ In 1800 another row of eight houses was added to the Indian village, each dwelling measuring seven varas wide by three and one half varas high (nineteen and one-fourth by nine and one half feet). All were roofed with tiles, each with a door and a window. Twelve more were built in 1801, and seventeen additional dwellings in 1802.²⁶⁷ They are visible on the right side of William Smyth's drawing from the Beechey expedition of 1826 (fig. 4.20). Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, visiting San Francisco in 1827, confirmed that the mission was much improved since Vancouver's visit. He wrote of a large church, a completed square and a solid wall of buildings, beyond which were the Indian dwellings, laid out regularly as in streets.²⁶⁸ A similar pattern occurred in other missions. William Rich Hutton, was at Mission Santa Barbara in 1848, and drew similar rows of housing to the left of the main buildings (fig. 5.3), as did H.M.T. Powell in 1850 (fig. 5.4), and Henry Miller in 1856 (fig. 5.1).

²⁶⁴ Menzies and Eastwood, "Vancouver Expedition," 273.

²⁶⁵ A. L. Kroeber, "Types of Indian Culture in California," in *Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology* vol.2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1904-07), 83.

²⁶⁶ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 120-121.

²⁶⁷ Engelhardt, *San Francisco*, 137.

²⁶⁸ Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, "Duhaut-Cilly's Account of California in the Years 1827-28," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8 no. 2 (June 1929): 142.

Some missions did not enforce the new living situations. Duhaut-Cilly described and sketched a different arrangement at San Luis Rey in 1828 (Figure 5.5) and provided some hint at Indian resistance to the adobe dwellings,

*“To the north, two hundred paces from the mission, begins the rancheria, or village of the Indians. It is composed of thatched huts, merely, of various shapes, the larger number conical, scattered or grouped without plan over a great extent of ground. Each one of these hovels holds a family, and all together contained at this time a population of more than two thousand persons. In the beginning, stone houses, distributed with regularity were built for the Indians and this method is still in use at several missions. It is believed to have been observed since that this kind of dwelling did not suit the health of the Indians, accustomed to their cabins; so that many of the padres have decided to let them build themselves huts to their taste.”*²⁶⁹

These rancherias were the social and private spaces of their residents. Pablo Tac wrote about the daily routines of a multi-generational family at Mission San Luis Rey.²⁷⁰ The domestic rhythm of gathering wood, preparing meals, eating and chatting around the fire must have been a source of comfort and helped preserve familial bonds, especially for the older Indians who remembered a life before the mission. In their privacy of their homes, they could also practice some pre-Christian rituals, especially those that the missionaries would likely prohibit. Fernando Librado recounted a dance performance he saw at Mission San Buenaventura around 1838, which may have been frowned upon, had it been conducted in the plaza on a Catholic feast day.

“Encarnacion danced the Seaweed Dance in the adobe house in front of the Mission one afternoon. This house was between the east and middle rows, while the west row bordered the garden wall. The old woman had a little hut south of these adobes, and she came from her hut all dressed up. She was naked except for her dancing skirt of feathers,

²⁶⁹ Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, “Duhaut-Cilly’s Account of California in the Years 1827-28,” *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8 no. 3 (September 1929): 228. Duhaut-Cilly mistook the whitewashed adobe of the Indian dwellings for stone.

²⁷⁰ Tac, Hewes and Hewes, *Indian Life and Customs*, 100-101.

*which consisted of two tiers of black feathers and a tier of long feathers below.”*²⁷¹

He also explained that when a couple got married, the Indians held a private wedding ritual performed in one of the adobe-tiled buildings prior to the Catholic ceremony. Adobe houses matching his description were extant in 1856 as seen on the left side of the Miller sketch (fig 5.2).

Archaeological excavations of mission rancherias and burial areas have yielded artifacts that could have had Indian ritual significance, such as clam and olivella shell beads, charmstones, bone and stone shaman’s sucking tubes, rock crystals, and abalone pendants.²⁷² In other sites, the remains of birds such as golden eagles, ravens, and owls were unearthed. Birds of prey had symbolic significance in several Indian myths and were part of certain religious ceremonies; their presence in Indian spaces could suggest they may have hosted covert pre-Christian rituals.²⁷³

Intersecting Spaces

Ferdinand Deppe was a German naturalist who also worked as a business agent in California during the Mexican years. He visited Mission San Gabriel in 1828, and produced two similar paintings exhibiting a rarely portrayed diversity in the mission complex (fig. 5.6). Established in 1771, the Tongva, Serrano, and Cahuilla peoples of Southern California made up most of its Indigenous residents. The church, distinctive for its prominent buttresses, was completed in 1805. It is an architectural presence on the California landscape, a statement of Franciscan tenacity and Indian labor prevailing over a paucity of

²⁷¹ Librado, *Breath of the Sun*, 26-27.

²⁷² Skowronek, *Sifting the Evidence*, 686.

²⁷³ Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants*, 97.

resources. Priests, Indians, soldiers, and civilians each represent the intersecting social spaces in the built environment of the mission. A Catholic procession taking place just outside the church claims the space as Christian for the duration of the ritual; an Indian dance immediately following it would palpably shift the atmosphere. Deppe depicted varying degrees of acculturation in terms of dress and living space, gesturing to the persistence of Indian culture in the mission, fifty-seven years after it was established. While some Indians were persuaded to move into the adobe neophyte dwellings seen on the left side of the frame, some still chose to live in their *tule* houses, seen in the foreground. In public, under the watchful eye of the priests and soldiers, they behaved like good Christians. In their private spaces, they persisted in their old beliefs. When asked about idolatry among the Indians, the missionaries of San Gabriel responded,

*“Idolatry is still practiced by some Indians. It is being extirpated however, by dint of effort. It would disappear all the faster if the old people and young ones did not live together for the former are the ones who mislead the young.”*²⁷⁴

While the Franciscans understood the battle for sacred space, and used architecture to stake their claim on the landscape, the real spaces they wanted to conquer were Indigenous bodies and minds. Catherine Bell argued that ritual is a bodily practice employed in the construction and enforcement of power relationships.²⁷⁵ She echoed Michel Foucault’s view of the body as the basic unit that power operates on when she identifies it as the physical target of ritual,

*“The strategies of ritualization are particularly rooted in the body, specifically, the interaction of the social body within a symbolically constituted spatial and temporal environment.”*²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Geiger and Meighan, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 57.

²⁷⁵ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 197.

²⁷⁶ Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 93.

However, Foucault conceived of power not as a strictly top-down, one-sided imposition associated with absolute rule. His theory analyzes the local, contingent, and imprecise shifting of power according to the “micro-relations, the local interactions and petty calculations of daily life.”²⁷⁷ Despite their status as colonized subjects, the deliberate actions taken by mission neophytes to preserve pre-Spanish identity alongside their Christian indoctrination affirmed this negotiation of power at a personal and everyday level.

Against the Grain

Each type of historical document—textual, visual, artifactual—carries the limitations of its medium, and the bias of its creator. The written records of the mission period are heavily inflected with Franciscan perspective and the western gaze. It is therefore important to seek out the Indigenous voice to decentralize the narrative, even while bearing in mind that the ethnographic process introduces other issues associated with memory. Material culture, particularly that gleaned from archaeological sites, is often viewed as concrete, unbiased evidence, but interpretation can be challenging when the artifacts are fragmentary. Even period images can paradoxically obscure as the artist makes compositional choices that lead to perceiving center and periphery, foreground and background. By reading visual sources “against the grain” we are able to question what is visible and reveal what has been erased. This yields a more complex, and arguably more balanced, and fuller picture of the past.

²⁷⁷ Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 200.

While the church was the most visible sacred space in the mission, the liminal zone of the plaza, and the relative privacy of the rancherías provided occasions for spatial practices which evoked sacred meaning of the non-Christian kind. Recovering the rituals that animated these spaces challenges the romantic views that these images offer, and recuperates the missions as places of indigeneity.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The history of placemaking has long been linked to imperial designs. The creation of sacred space is a form of placemaking which appropriates physical territory and the shared imaginary of social space for a specific religious worldview. Religion and empire share an agenda to possess space. The fashioning of communal identity through architecture and ritual practice is a long tradition reaching back to historically significant sites like Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Venice to name a few. The same dynamic played out in the elaborate festivals held in the fortress *conventos* of Central Mexico, the processing through the Via Crucis stations in the Sierra Gorda mission at Jalpan, and the veneration of the cross in the early mission quadrangle at Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo.

Possession

At the founding of Mission San Carlos Borromeo, after Junípero Serra performed the ceremonial Mass, accompanied by singing and blessing of the cross and the land with holy water, Father Palóu described another set of possession rites which followed,

*“When this first function of the Church was concluded, the commander proceeded to take formal possession of the land in the name of our King, Don Carlos III by raising anew the royal standard, which had already been unfurled after the erection of the holy cross. To this were added the customary ceremonies of pulling up some grass, throwing stones and earth to the four winds, and drawing up a record of all that had taken place.”*²⁷⁸

²⁷⁸ Engelhardt, *San Carlos Borromeo*, 24-25.

Prior to their setting foot in Monterey, however, another kind of possession had already taken place—a visual and mental ownership made possible by spatial representation. Centuries earlier, Pope Alexander VI granted dominion of half the world to Spain by conjuring up an imaginary division on the globe. Maps enabled a vision of the world, and revealed what could be possessed. The unexpected “discovery” of the American landmass, which had been previously unaccounted for, called for a revision not only of physical maps but also of the collective European imagination about what the new territory represented. The logic which led to the concept of a New World waiting for the civilizing hand of Christian Europe was based on a medieval cosmography sourced from St. Augustine’s meditations on the sons of Noah. Missionaries took spiritual ownership of the fourth continent, which they saw as a new pasture, a fresh ground to sow the seeds of their faith. The scientific shift in cartography further enabled and amplified the agenda of early modern empires, and Christianity likewise employed maps as a tool for building the kingdom of God on earth. The Franciscan missionaries who came to California were preceded by navigators who revealed the contours of physical terrain and also christened it with new toponyms. Maps set the stage for the propagation of faith.

The Shrinking Sacred Space

The missions of Alta California were the final version of a project that was based on a utopian vision. It was yet another attempt at a separate space for the Christianization and Hispanicization of an Indigenous community, to nurture spiritual growth apart from the pecuniary interests of the settler colonists. However, what was conceived in the religious climate of a geopolitically dominant Spain in the sixteenth century, was less

compelling in the late eighteenth century, in the final throes of her empire. Missions were religious conversion centers, yet under the eighteenth-century Bourbon economic reform programs, they were also meant to be agricultural nodes for economic development. The pressure to produce grain and manufactured goods for the presidio and adjacent settler towns increased with the beginning of the Mexican Revolutionary War in 1810. In the California missions, the space for holy practice was contracting, hemmed in on different sides by workshops, storehouses, and housing.

The Shifting Sacred Space

Omur Harmansah, art historian of the ancient Near East, wrote about the role of festivals in creating urban space in Upper Mesopotamia,

*“The ceremonial event, which is referred to here as the festival, is a civic spectacle that transforms the society through the society’s bodily participation, while it also transforms the spaces within which the event occurs. This transformation is possible through the organizing gestures of the collective body. Festival are politicized stages for the construction and reversal of social values, the making and unmaking of collective memories, and the affirmation and negation of social hierarchies.”*²⁷⁹

His description is equally applicable to the power of religious celebrations in the frontier California missions. While the performance of Christian rituals has been confirmed by copious quantities of liturgical church objects recorded in inventories, and the reports of Catholic feast day observances, the importance of dance to the Native Californians suggests that they were able to use their performances for their own cultural identity making. Without extant architecture however, their sacred spaces are lost, thus giving a misleading or incomplete picture of religious life at the missions. Liminal spaces provided

²⁷⁹ Omur Harmansah, *Cities and the Shaping of Memory in the Ancient Near East* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 106.

opportunities for appropriation and negotiation of the boundaries between Christian and Indigenous faiths. A recognition of this can help begin to recuperate the silenced practices of the mission Indians.

The Role of Architecture

While sacred space is mobile, permanent structure has the power to cement meaning to site, and to influence the formation of memory. Architecture visibly signaled sacred space even when ritual was not being performed. This is evident in the comments of travelers who were struck by the sight of the mission church as they approached it. Physical survival and historic restoration of the church has made it a synecdoche for the mission, and in turn, the mission a symbol of Christian triumph. Lindsay Jones' ritual-architectural paradigm reminds us that while architecture is not as physically malleable in comparison to social space, it participates in the creation of meaning, which is not monolithic, but is superabundant.²⁸⁰ Dell Upton similarly argues for a fluidity of architectural meaning, which is lost when we focus exclusively on a style and a period.²⁸¹ Geographers have likewise argued that historians are preoccupied with time as the generator of evolution and progress, and have relegated space to a static container where only time moves forward.²⁸² Architecture, which frames space, is a formal object to be visually unpacked, but it must also be apprehended as an element that people shape by their actions.

²⁸⁰ Jones, *Hermeneutics* vol. 1, 34.

²⁸¹ Upton, "Starting from Baalbek," 458.

²⁸² Craib, "Cartography and Power," 9-10.

Branching Out

The interdisciplinary nature of this project presents several possibilities for future inquiries. An interest in the creation of sacred space in the period of Enlightenment and beyond may seem retrograde, but the definition of what makes a place sacred has simply been expanded beyond formal religion. The ongoing debates about structures that should be torn down and those that need to be protected are evidence of the myriad and evolving meanings people attach to them. Additionally, the exercise in recovering what is unseen or marginalized in visual culture offers a way to revisit familiar subjects to generate alternative discourses. This is not necessarily to disprove or disenfranchise traditional perspectives; such binaries are seldom satisfying. Instead, like the multivalent meanings of architecture and ritual together, it allows us to consider that alternative narratives co-exist in the same time and space. Finally, the potential of digital technology to dynamically present information about places could lead to interesting ways of deploying the power of spatial representations.

FIGURES**Figure I.1**

Mission San Carlos del Carmelo. View looking west, with glimpse of Carmel Bay.

Carmel, California

Albumen silver print, Carleton Watkins

ca. 1876-1882

UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library



Figure I.2
Mission San Francisco de Asís
San Francisco, California
Albumen silver print, Carleton Watkins
negative before 1861; print possibly 1880s
J. Paul Getty Museum



Figure I.3
Mission Santa Barbara. View looking west.
Santa Barbara, California
Albumen silver print, Carleton Watkins
ca. 1876-1882
UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library



Figure I.4
Mission San Louis Rey de Francia
Oceanside, California
Albumen silver print, Carleton Watkins
ca. 1876-1882
UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library



Figure I.5

Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California

Drawing, Henry Chapman Ford
ca. 1884

California Historical Society, USC Libraries

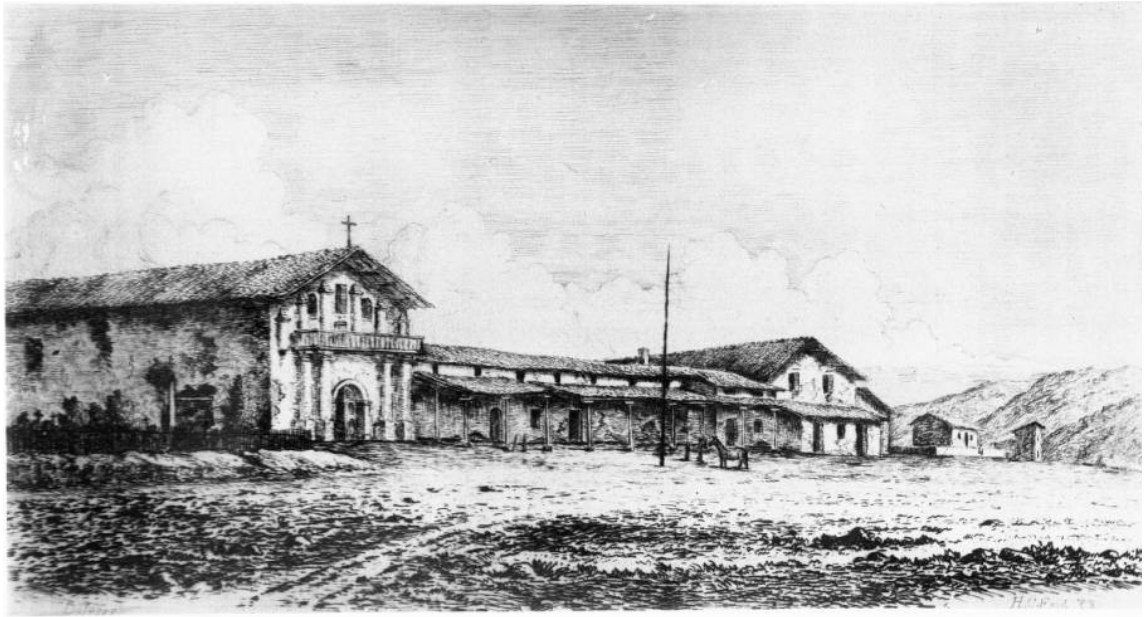


Figure I.6

Mission San Francisco de Asís (Dolores)

San Francisco, California

Drawing, Henry Chapman Ford

ca. 1883

California Historical Society, USC Libraries

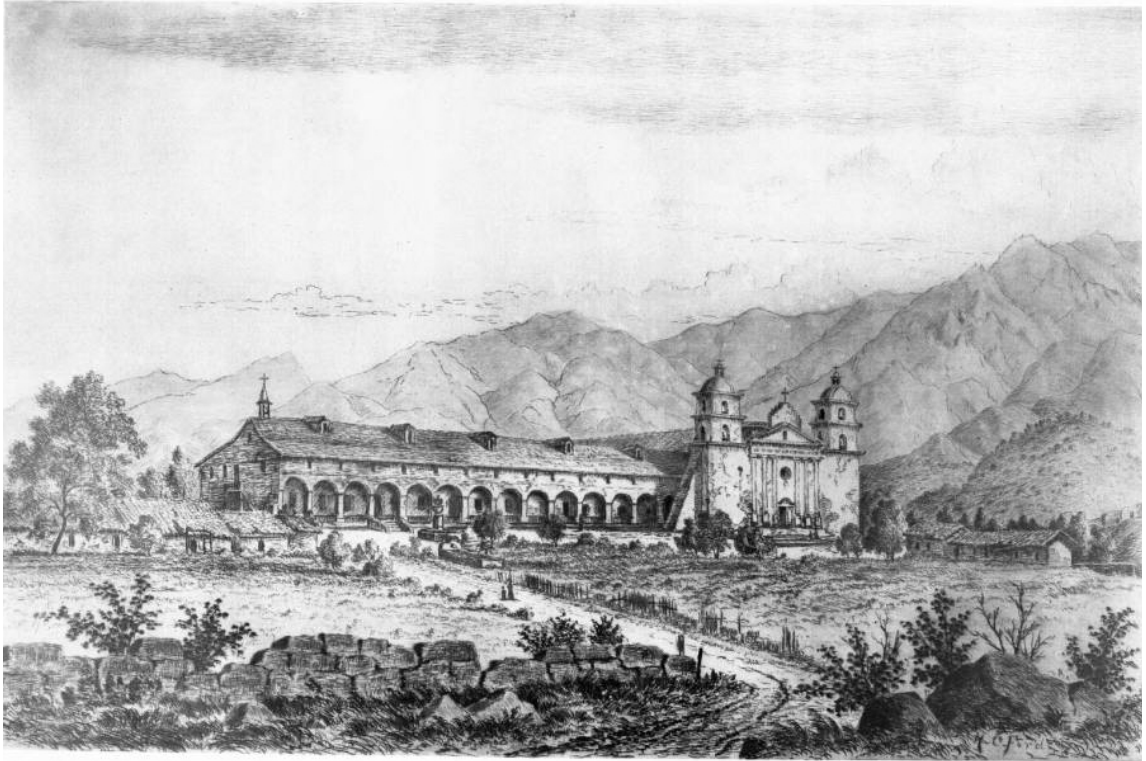


Figure I.7
Mission Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California
Drawing, Henry Chapman Ford
ca. 1883
California Historical Society, USC Libraries

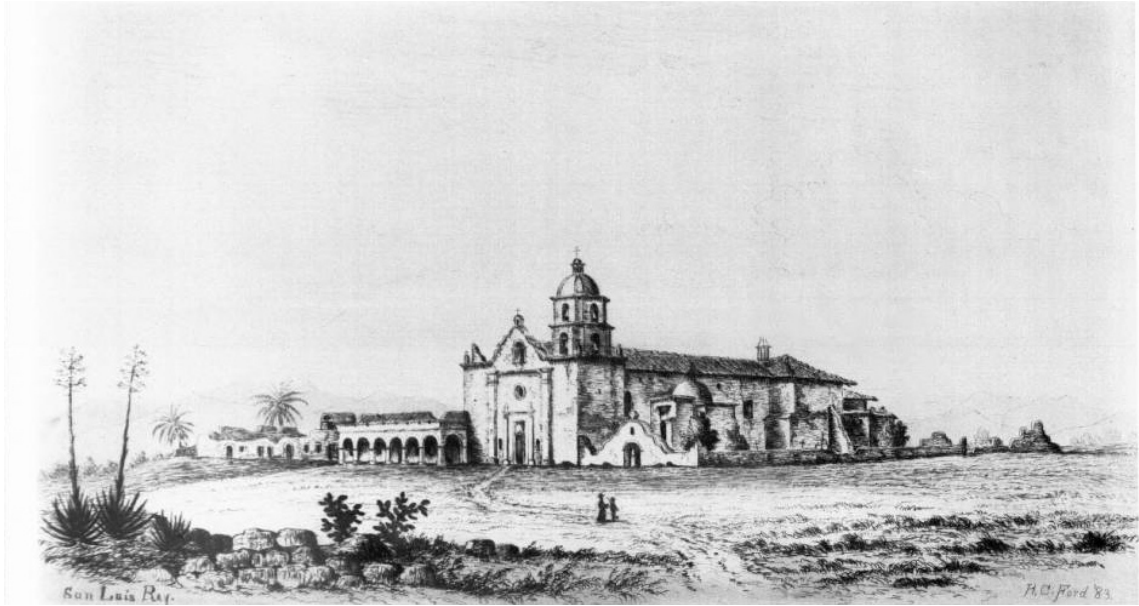


Figure I.8
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Drawing, Henry Chapman Ford
ca. 1883
California Historical Society, USC Libraries



Figure I.9
Mission San Gabriel
San Gabriel, California
Author photo



Figure I.10
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California
Author photo



Figure I.11
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo, star window
Carmel, California
Author photo



Figure I.12
Mission Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California
Author photo



Figure I.13
Mission San Miguel Arcángel
San Miguel, California
Author photo

View of altar



Figure I.14
Mission San Miguel Arcángel
San Miguel, California
Author photo

Sunburst detail over altar



Figure I.15
Mission San Miguel Arcángel
San Miguel, California
Author photo

Wall pulpit



Figure I.16

Asistencia de Pala

Pala, California

ca. 1898

California Historical Society, USC Libraries

Altar showing wooden statue made by Indians



Figure I.17

Asistencia de Pala

Pala, California

ca. 1898

Pierce (C.C.) Photographic Collection, UCLA Library

Interior of chapel



Figure I.18
Asistencia de Pala
Pala, California
c. 1900
California Historical Society, USC Libraries
Baptismal font

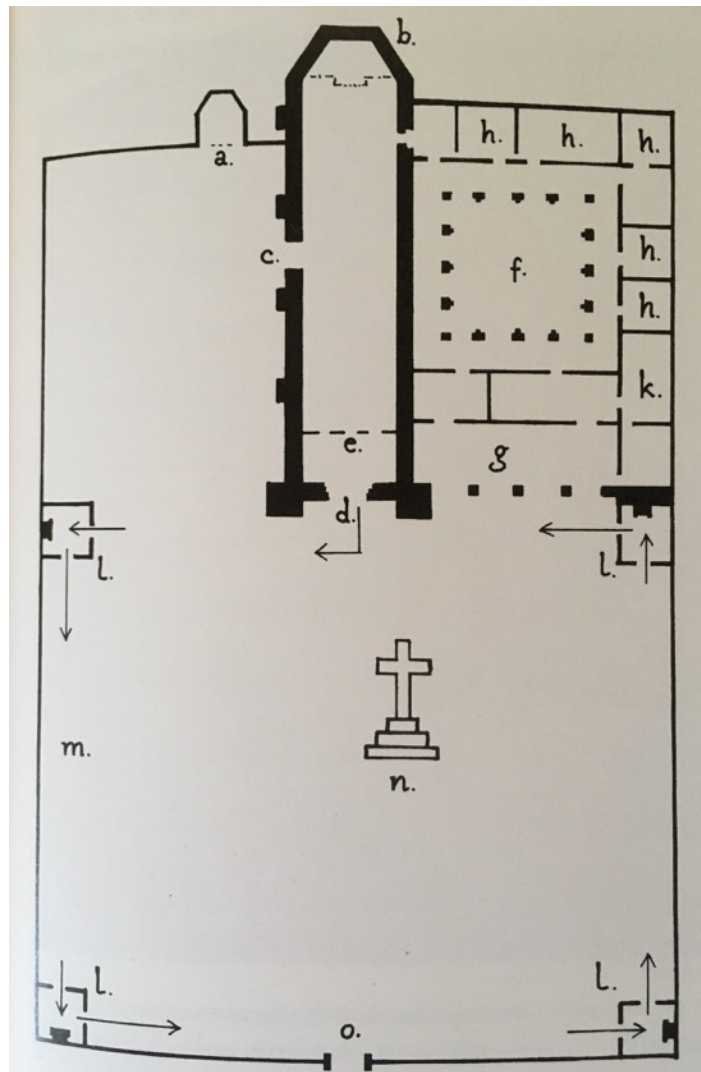


Figure 1.1

Typical plan of a sixteenth-century Mexican *convento*
from Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion*

(a) open chapel; (b) church apse at east end; (c) north portal; (d) west entrance; (e) choir loft; (f) cloister; (g) portico; (h) friars' cells; (k) refectory; (l) posas; (m) walled atrio/patio; (n) atrial cross; (o) entrance to atrio/patio

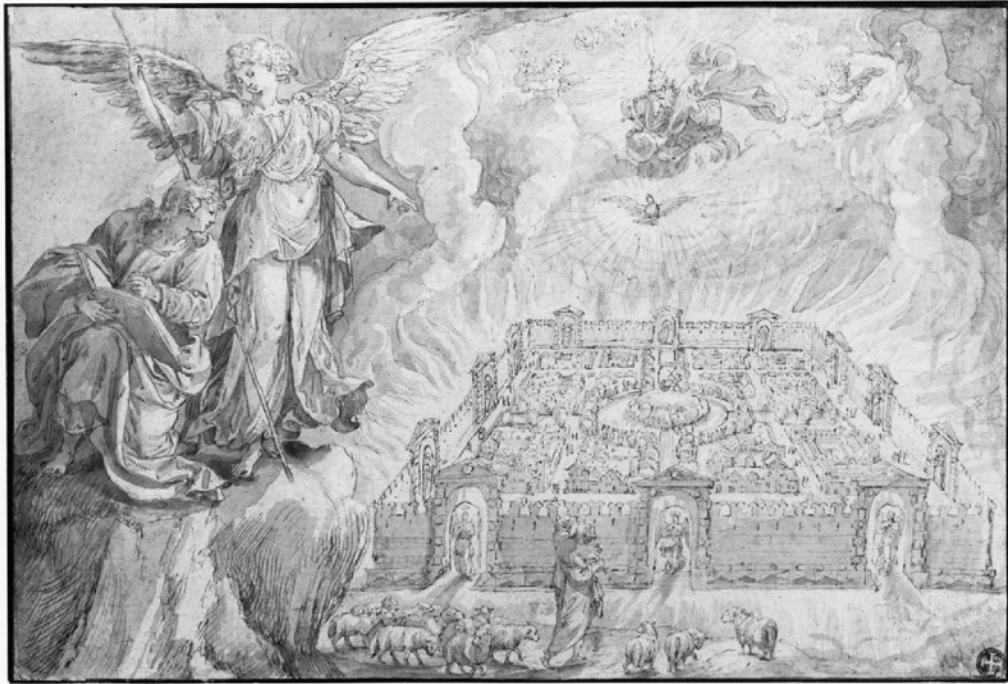


Figure 1.2

The Angel Showing St. John the Heavenly City of Jerusalem (Revelations 21:10–23)

Design for an engraving

Marten de Vos (Netherlandish, 1532–1603)

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Figure 1.3

Convento de San Miguel Arcángel en Huejotzingo

Puebla, Mexico

Built in 1570

Photo by Alejandro Linares Garcia - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0

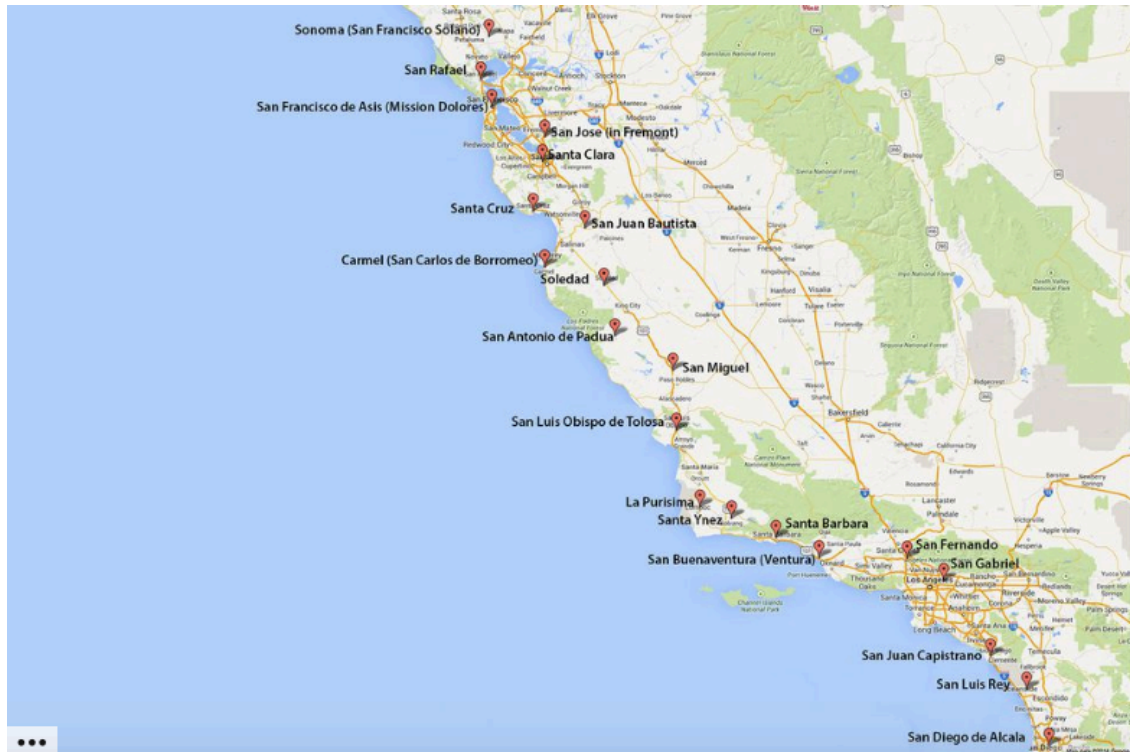


Figure 1.4

Google map of the Alta California mission locations
Screenshot by author

<https://www.tripsavvy.com/interactive-map-of-california-sights-1478372>



Figure 1.5

Mission Santiago de Jalpan

Querétaro, Mexico

Built ca.1758

Photo by Alejandro Linares Garcia - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0



Figure 1.6

Mission San Francisco del Valle de Tilaco

Querétaro, Mexico

Built ca.1754

Photo by Alejandro Linares Garcia - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0



Figure 1.7

Mission San Miguel Conca

Querétaro, Mexico

Built ca.1754

Photo by Alejandro Linares Garcia - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0



Figure 1.8
Mission Nuestra Señora de la Luz de Tancoyol
Built ca.1760
Alejandro Linares Garcia - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0



Figure 1.9

Santa María del Agua de Landa

Querétaro, Mexico

Built ca.1760

Photo by Alejandro Linares Garcia - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0



Figure 2.1
 T-O map
 from *Etymologiae* by Isidore of Seville (b. 530, d. 636 CE)
 first printed in 1472
 Public domain



Figure 2.2

World map

From *Universalis Cosmographia Secundum Ptholomaei Traditionem
et Americi Vespucii Alioru[m]que Lustrationes*

Martin Waldseemüller, 1507

Library of Congress



Figure 2.3
World map
From *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*
Abraham Ortelius, 1570
Library of Congress



Figure 2.4

A Byzantine Greek world map according to Ptolemy's first (conic) projection
 From *Codex Vaticanus Urbinas Graecus* 82, Constantinople c. 1300.
 Probably assembled by Maximus Planudes; later in possession of
 Palla Strozzi (1372-1462), then with Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino.
 Public domain

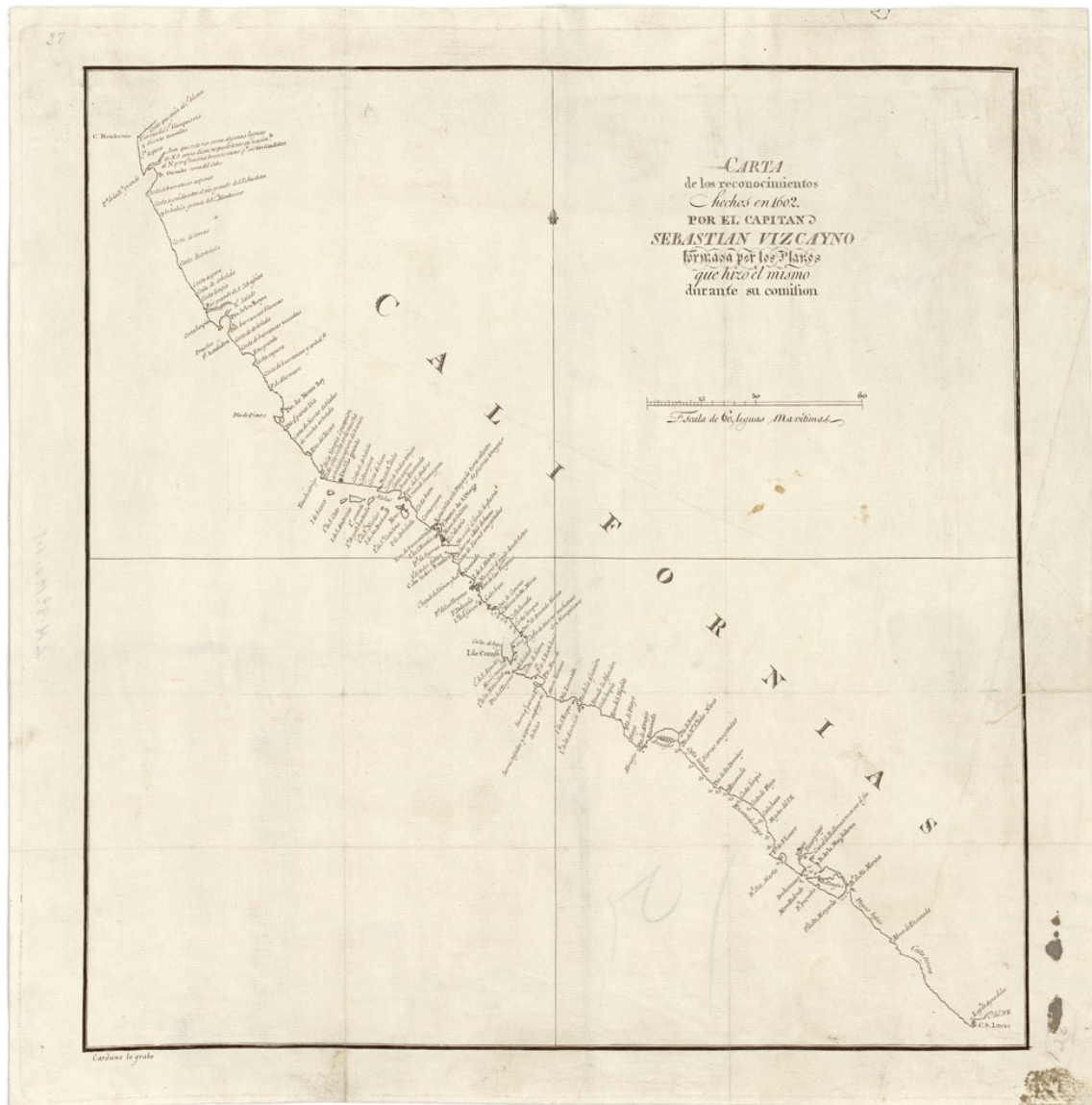


Figure 2.5

Sebastian Vizcaíno's Map of California

From *Atlas para el viage de las goletas Sutil y Mexicana al reconocimiento del estrecho de Juan de Fuca en 1792*

<https://www.raremaps.com/gallery/detail/38937/carta-de-los-reconocimientos-hechos-en-1602-por-el-capitan-espinosa-y-tello>

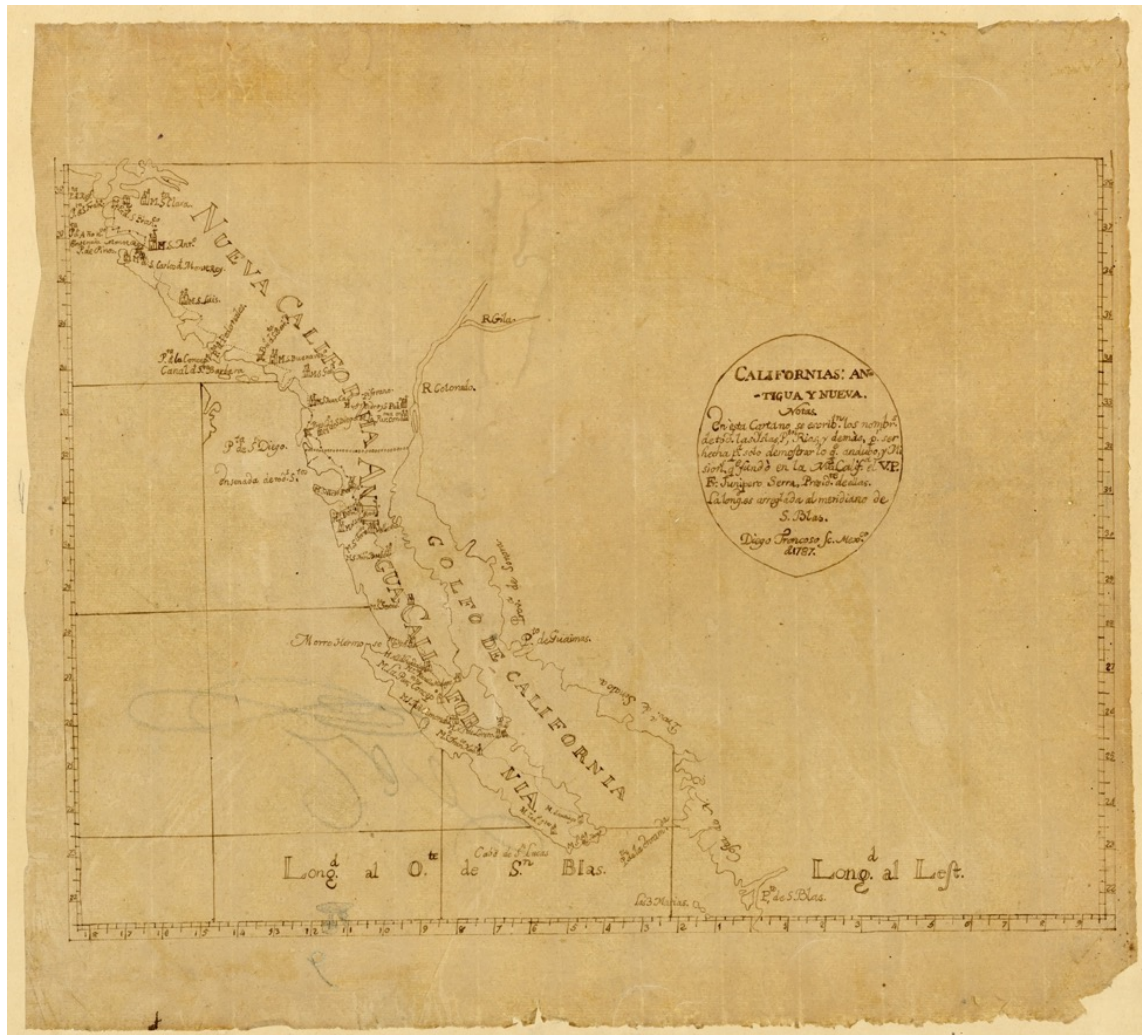


Figure 2.6
 Early Mexican map locating missions in Alta California.
 1787
 Archivo Cartográfico y de Estudios Geográficos
 Madrid, Spain



Figure 3.1

The reception of Jean-François de la Pérouse at Mission Carmel in 1786, California

José Cardero, after Duche de Vancy

UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library

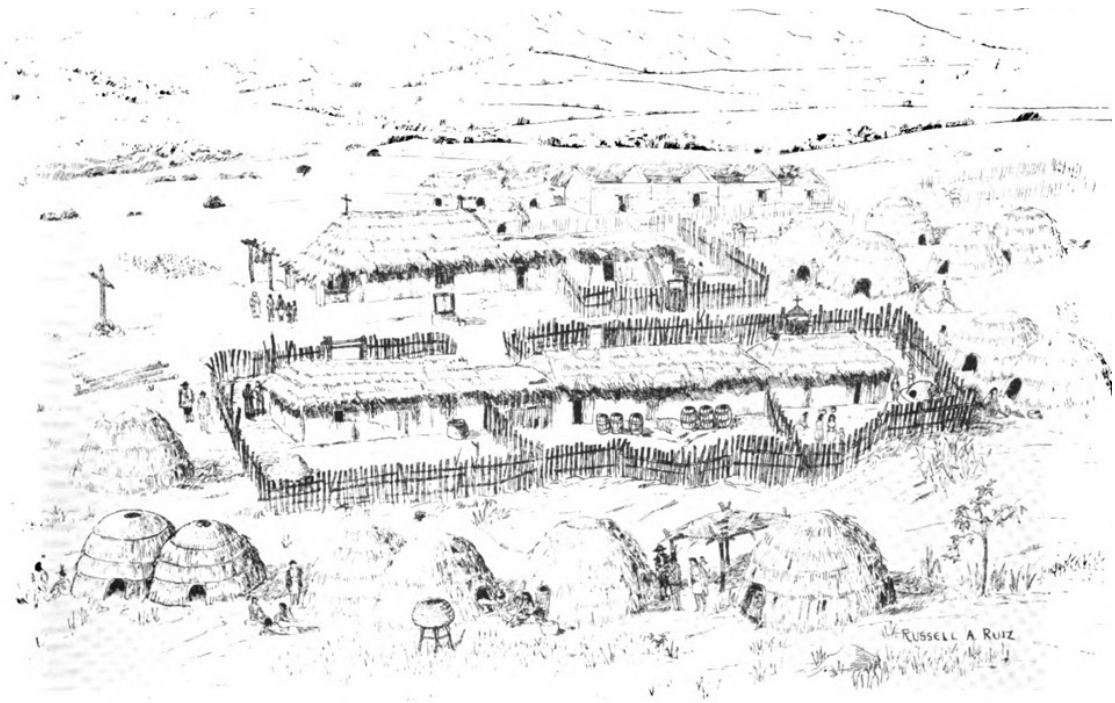


Figure 3.2
Mission Santa Barbara in 1787
Santa Barbara, California
From Maynard Geiger, *A Pictorial History of the Physical Development of
Mission Santa Barbara*

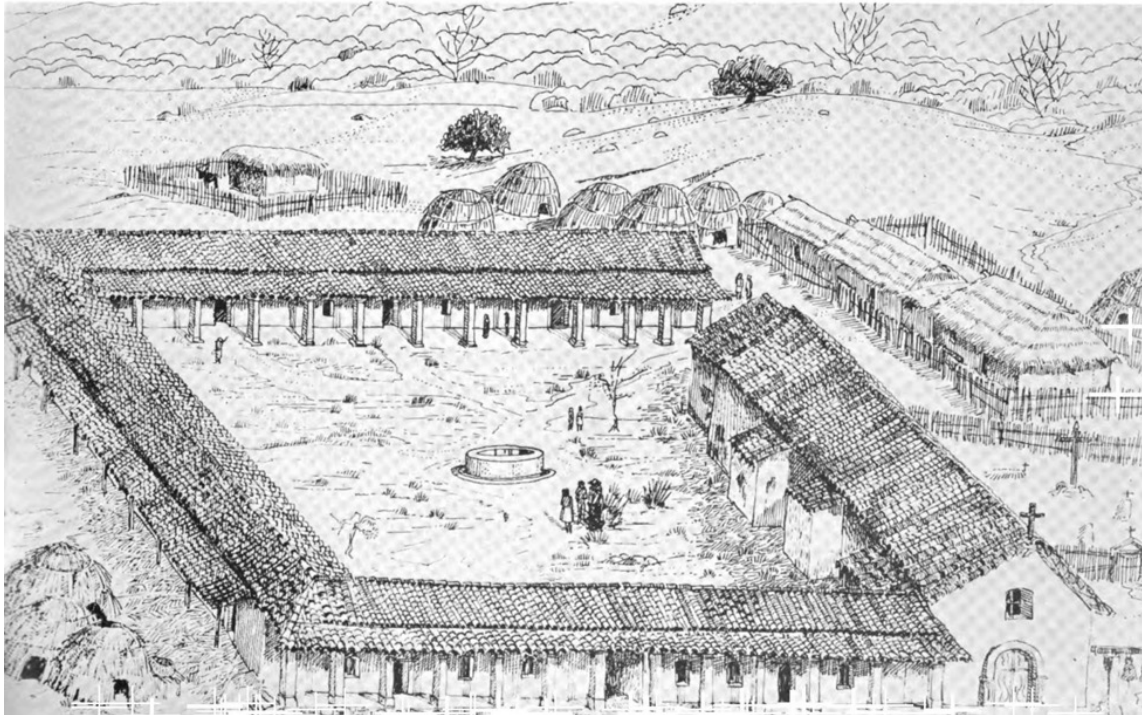


Figure 3.3

Mission Santa Barbara in 1800

Santa Barbara, California

From Maynard Geiger, *A Pictorial History of the Physical Development of Mission Santa Barbara*

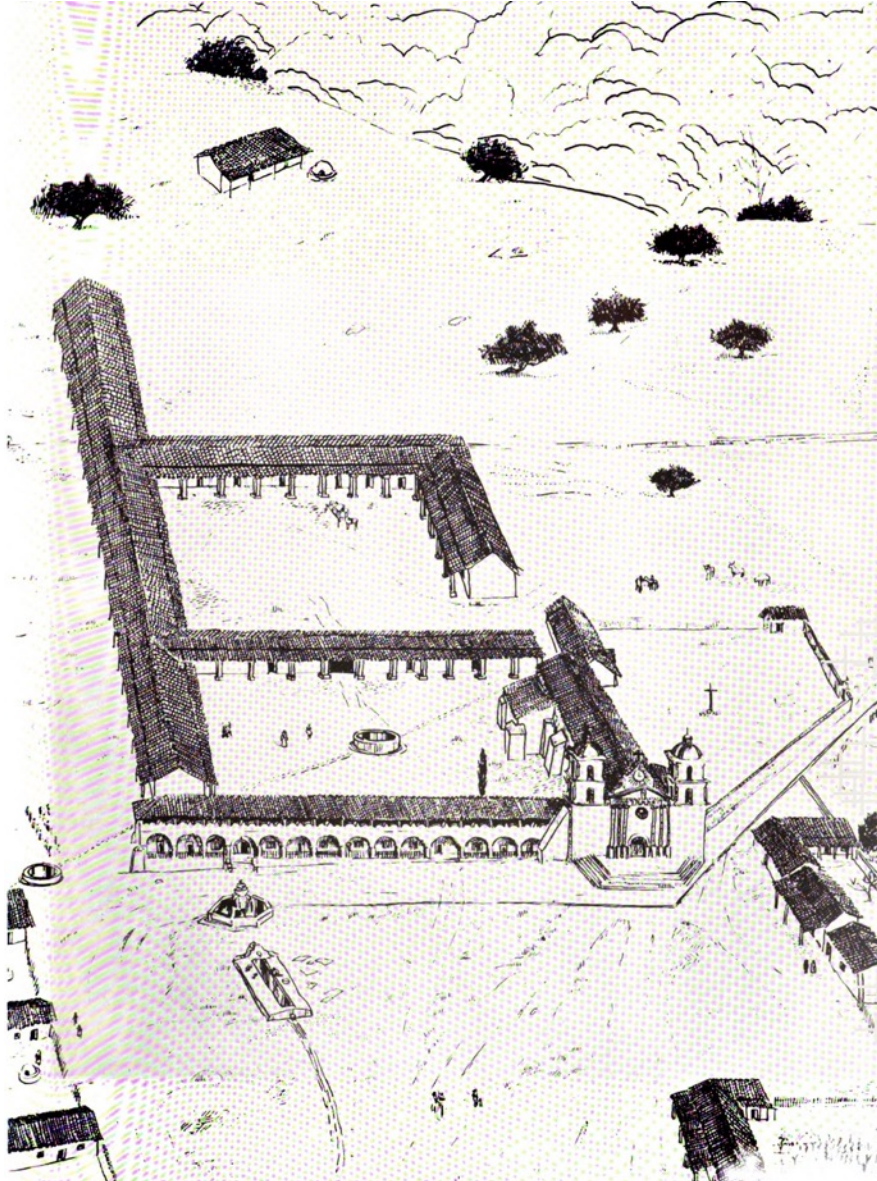


Figure 3.4
Mission Santa Barbara in 1833
Santa Barbara, California
From Maynard Geiger, *A Pictorial History of the Physical Development of
Mission Santa Barbara*



Figure 3.5

A View of the Mission Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara, California

1829

From Alfred Robinson, *Life in California*



Figure 3.6

Ruins of the church and buildings of the Mission of San Luis Rey

Edward Vischer

1865

UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library



Figure 3.7
San Ignacio de Caborica Mission
Sonora, Mexico
1894
Special Collections, University of Arizona Libraries



Figure 3.8
Mission San Ignacio de Caborica
Sonora, Mexico
Author photo

K. Gloria - Credo - Índice. Sanctus - y Agnus.

P. 1.	Misa Virginal. Kirie Pag. 1. Gloria Pag. 2. Credo Pag. 4. Sanctus y Agnus.
P. 2.	Misa de la Soledad. Kirie y Gloria Pag. 9. Credo Pag. 12. Sanctus. Bened. y Agnus.
P. 18.	Misa de S. Ant. 6.º Tono. Kirie Pag. 18. Gloria Pag. 19. Credo Recoleto a duo 3.º Tono Pag. 20. Sanctus y Benedictus Pag. 28. Agnus Pag. 29.
P. 20.	Misa a 4 voces 4.º Tono. Kirie Pag. 30. Gloria Pag. 31. Credo Pag. 34. Sanctus y Agnus Pag. 41.
P. 42.	Misa 3.º Tono a 4 voces. Comp. A. Kirie Pag. 42. Gloria 42. Credo 46. Sanctus y Agnus Pag. 52. Respuestas para esta Misa Pag. 52. Resp. para la Misa de 4.º Tono a 4 voces Pag. 41.

Introitos. Alleluys. Tractus. y Comunión.

P. 8.	Día primero de Año nuevo, y la Circuncisión del Señor	Pag. 98
P. 9.	Día seis de Enero, día de Reyes	Pag. 100.
P. 10.	Día 19 de Marzo, día del S.º S.º José.	Pag. 103
P. 14.	Día Anunciación, o Encarnación del S.º	Pag. 104
P. 15.	Día de Pascua. Hoy empieza: Vidi Aquam.	Pag. 107.
P. 16.	Trinicia de St. Saguardia 3.º Tono	Pag. 108.
P. 17.	Día de Ascension	Pag. 110
P. 18.	Día de Pentecostes	Pag. 113
	Veni Sancte Spiritus	Pag. 116

Figure 3.9

Page from the Duran choir book
 Santa Barbara Mission Archive and Library

P. 118 - Día de la S ^{ma} Trinidad 1. tomo - - - - -	Pag. 118
P. 120 - Día de Corpus. Introito 1. tomo - - - - -	Pag. 120
P. 124 - Día de 13 de Junio, día de S. Antonio de Padua. 4 ^{to} 1. tomo - - - - -	Pag. 124
P. 125 - Día 24 de Junio. S. Juan Bautista - - - - -	Pag. 126
P. 129 - Día de S. Pedro 29 de Junio - - - - -	Pag. 129
P. 131 - Día de S. Buenaventura 14 de Julio - - - - -	Pag. 131
P. 133 - Día de Santiago 25 de Julio - - - - -	Pag. 133
P. 136 - Día de la Porciuncula 2 de Agosto - - - - -	Pag. 136
P. 138 - Día de S. Clara 12 de Agosto - - - - -	Pag. 138
P. 141 - Día de la Asunción de la S ^{ta} Virgen 15 de Agosto - - - - -	Pag. 141
P. 144 - Día 30 de Agosto S. Rosa - - - - -	Pag. 144
P. 146 - Día de la Natividad de la S ^{ta} Virgen 8 de Septiembre - - - - -	Pag. 146
P. 148 - Día de S. Miguel 29 de Septiembre - - - - -	Pag. 148
P. 150 - Día de N. S. P. S. Fran ^{co} (Introito Pag. 141) - - - - -	(Introito Pag. 141)
P. 152 - Día de todos Santos (Introito Pag. 141) - - - - -	(Introito Pag. 141)
P. 154 - Día de San Guadalupe - - - - -	
P. 98. Día de la Natividad de N. S. P. C. 25 de Dic. La teacasa etc.	

Figure 3.10

Page from the Duran choir book
Santa Barbara Mission Archive and Library

Desde Septuagesima a Parva Tractus en la Misa Egerimini	Pag. 161.
Dia de S. Estevan	Pag. 156
Misa Votiva pro vitanda mortalitate	Pag. 158
Misa de Confesor no Pontifice, que puede servir para S. E. Plano	Pag. 174
Misa de Requiem a 4. voces	Pag. 53
Al abas, o antes, o despues. <u>Placare Criste</u>	Pag. 65
Vigilia de Difuntos	Pag. 68
Misa de Requiem a Canto Llano	Pag. 69
Entierro de Adultos. <u>Ne Recorderis</u> , y <u>Subvenite</u> estan en seguida	Pag. 80.
<u>Jueves Santo a May times</u>	Pag. 82
<u>Asperges</u>	Pag. 95
<u>Vidi Aquam</u>	Pag. 96.
Para la Procecion del Jueves Santo <u>Pange lingua</u>	Pag. 162
Tracto despues de la Profecia del Viernes Santo	Pag. 164
Otro Tracto despues de la 2. ^a Profecia <u>Ecce lignum Crucis</u>	Pag. 165.
Para la Procecion del Viernes Sto despues del monumento	Pag. 167
Para alzar la <u>Stortia</u>	Pag. 168
Himno para la Procecion del Corpus	Pag. 169
Salve a 4. voces	Pag. 171
Trisagio Compas de 2	Pag. 173
Padre Nuestro para las Novenas	Pag. 177.
Dios te Salve Maria para las mismas	Pag. 178

Figure 3.11

Page from the Duran choir book
 Santa Barbara Mission Archive and Library



Figure 3.12
Chalice, late 18th century
Mission San Buenaventura
Ventura, California
Author photo

The chalice is the cup that held the wine, which was consecrated during the Mass. The Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation held that the ritual transformed the wine into the Blood of Jesus Christ.



Figure 3.13
Monstrance, 18th century
(believed to have been used by Junípero Serra at the first mass)
Mission San Buenaventura
Ventura, California
Author photo

Catholics believed that the consecrated host was transformed into the Body of Christ. The monstrance was used to display the Blessed Sacrament, as it was also called, for veneration by the faithful. The monstrance figured prominently during the Feast of the Corpus Christi, when it was held aloft by the priest during the procession.



Figure 3.14
Monstrance, 18th century
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Author photo



Figure 3.15

Thurible (incense burner), late 18th century

Mission San Buenaventura

Ventura, California

Author photo

Incense was burned during key moments at several rituals, including the celebration of the Eucharist (Mass), blessing or consecration of buildings and objects, veneration of images, and funerals. The aromatic smoke evoked the omnipresence and ineffability of God.



Figure 3.16
Incense boat
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Author photo

Incense boats held the incense which would be burned in the thurible.



Figure 3.17
 Chumash tabernacle, late 18th century
 Mission Santa Barbara
 Santa Barbara, California
 Author photo

Consecrated hosts were kept in the tabernacle, which could take on the form of a simple box, or a more elaborately crafted “dwelling” for the Body of Christ. It was in effect, the most sacred space in the church, and usually had a lock to further signify its precious contents. This object was crafted by Chumash artisans and featured abalone inlays and mirrors.



Figure 3.18
Communion host iron
Mission San Buenaventura
Ventura, California
Author photo

Host irons were used to make the communion wafers. A mixture of flour and water would be pressed between the two plates and baked over an open fire, or in a fire oven. Christian symbols were often carved into the plates so that the resulting hosts would be embossed with the design.



Figure 3.19
 Priestly vestments
 Mission San Luis Rey
 Oceanside, California
 Author photo

Most priestly vestments came from China. The Mass celebrant donned different-colored garb as prescribed by the liturgical calendar. Red was worn on Palm Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, and the feast days of martyrs. This set of vestments was worn by Father Antonio Peyri, who headed the mission from 1798 to 1832.



Figure 3.20
 Baptistry with baptismal font
 Mission San Gabriel
 San Gabriel, California
 Author photo

Baptismal fonts ranged from a simple basin set on a platform (such as this) to decoratively carved bowls raised on architectonic pillars. Baptisms were performed in the baptistry, which was often in a separate room or alcove in the church.



Figure 4.1
 Mission San Miguel Arcángel
 San Miguel, California
 View of the church entrance from the altar
 Author photo

The balustrade of the choir loft is repeated in paint on the upper part of the side walls.
 The painted architecture continues in the columns (in blue), which line the walls
 of the nave and appear to support the balustrades.



Figure 4.2
 Mission San Miguel Arcángel
 San Miguel, California
 Detail of wall painting (temple)
 Author photo

A classical temple “houses” a statue of Saint Joseph on one side of the nave. A corresponding wall painting frames a statue of the Blessed Virgin on the opposite side.



Figure 4.3
 Mission San Miguel Arcángel
 San Miguel, California
 Detail of marbled wall painting effect
 Author photo

A marbled painting effect outlines the dado. It is surmounted by a Greek meander pattern interrupted by an actual wall niche.

**Figure 4.4**

Mission Carmel of Monterey, California

José Cardero

After Duche de Vancy's drawing of 1791

UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library

José Cardero was the artist traveling with the Malaspina expedition. He drew this view of Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo in Carmel, CA.



Figure 4.5

The Mission of St. Carlos near Monterrey, 1792
Western Libraries, Western Washington University.

This engraving of Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo in Carmel, CA was from a sketch taken on the spot by John Sykes, who traveled on the Vancouver expedition.



Figure 4.6

San Carlos Mission near Monterey, California

William Smyth

1827

Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University

William Smyth was the artist traveling with the Beechey expedition. He drew this view of Mission San Carlos Borromeo in Carmel, California

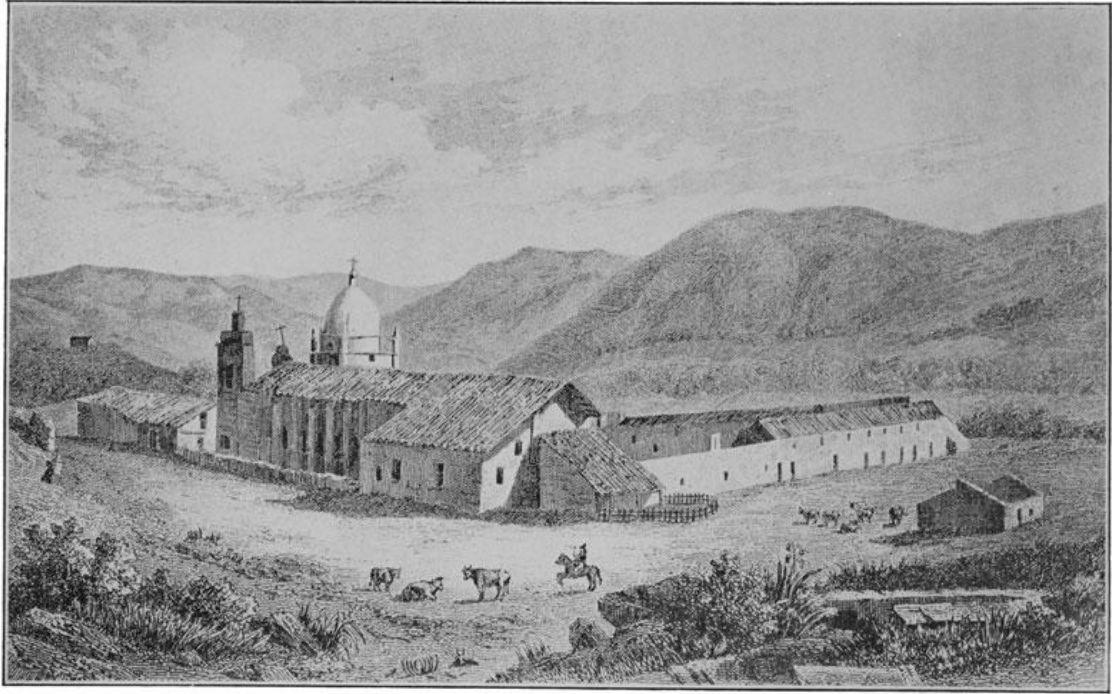


Figure 4.7

Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo

Carmel, California

Cyrille Pierre Théodore Laplace

1839

Historic American Buildings Survey Drawing, Library of Congress

View from hill to rear of mission grounds



Figure 4.8
Pocito Chapel
Mexico City, Mexico
1777-1791
Architect: Francisco de Guerrero y Torre
Artstor

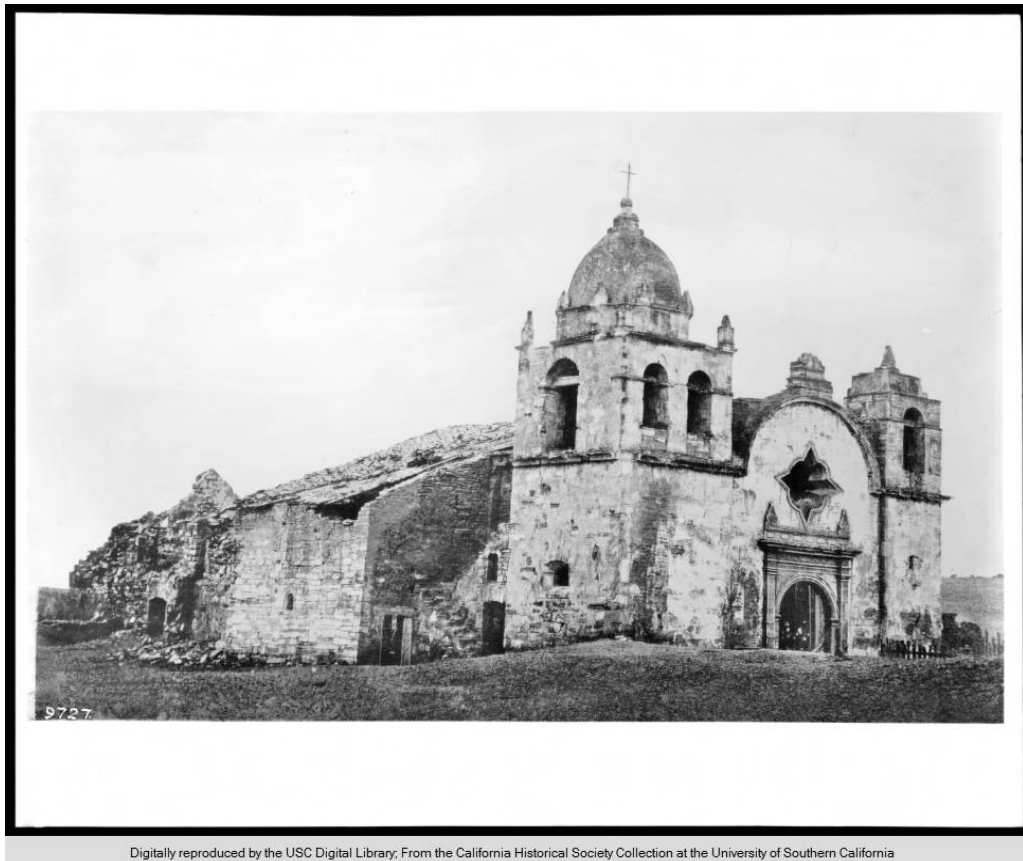


Figure 4.9
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California
Edward Vischer
ca. 1865
California Historical Society, USC Libraries



Figure 4.10
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California
L. S. Levin
1903
Monterey County Free Libraries

View of the mission church exterior after the 1884 renovation. The new roof obscured the graceful curved pediment over the entrance.



Figure 4.11
 Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
 Carmel, California
 L. S. Levin
 1903
 Monterey County Free Libraries

View of the mission church interior after the 1884 renovation. The parabolic arch of the original ceiling was flattened.

L



Figure 4.12
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California
Author photo

Harry Downie restored the original pitch of the roof, which was raised in the 1884 renovation. The church was rededicated in 1936.



Figure 4.13
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California
Author photo

Harry Downie restored the parabolic vault of the ceiling, which was flattened in the 1884 renovation. The church was rededicated in 1936.



Figure 4.14
Our Lady of Bethlehem statue
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California
Author photo



Figure 4.15
Saint Joseph statue
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California
Author photo



Figure 4.16
Reredos
Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
Carmel, California
Author photo

Harry Downie crafted the reredos and installed them in 1956. He based the design on historical descriptions of the original, which was destroyed in 1849.



Figure 4.17
 Museum objects display
 Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo
 Carmel, California
 Author photo

Candlesticks (on shelf), 1770
 On table:
 Wood and Gilded Tabernacle (center), 1770
 True Cross Reliquary (on top of tabernacle), 1774
 Front row:
 Altar/Prayer Card, 1770
 Missal Stand, 1770
 Two chalices, 1792-1805
 Bucareli monstrance (to the right of tabernacle), 1777
 Altar/Prayer Card, 1770
 Aspergillum and Bucket (far right), 1770



Figure 4.18

Mission San Francisco de Asís

San Francisco, California

Current view of mission church facade

LesyaCA / CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>)

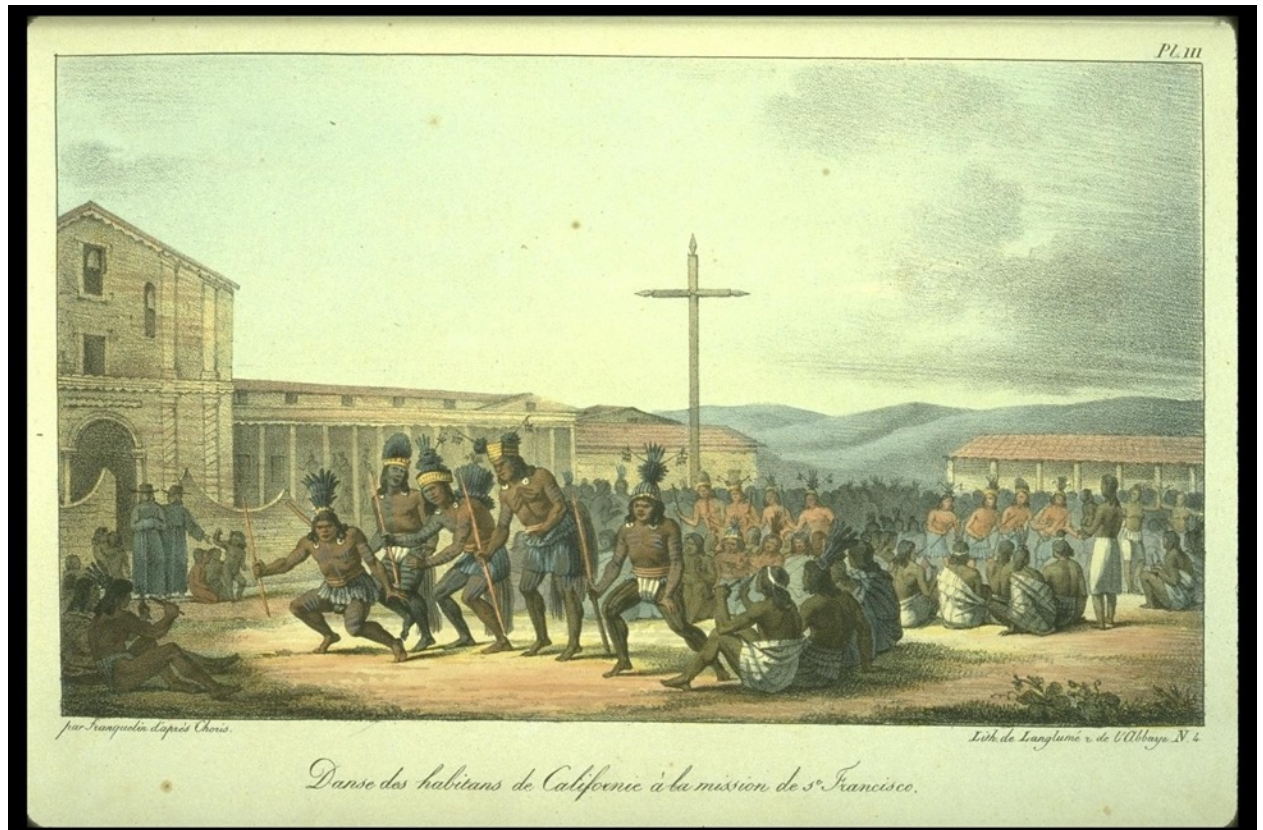


Figure 4.19
Dans de habitants de Californie a la mission de San Francisco
 San Francisco, California
 Ludwig Choris, 1816
 UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library

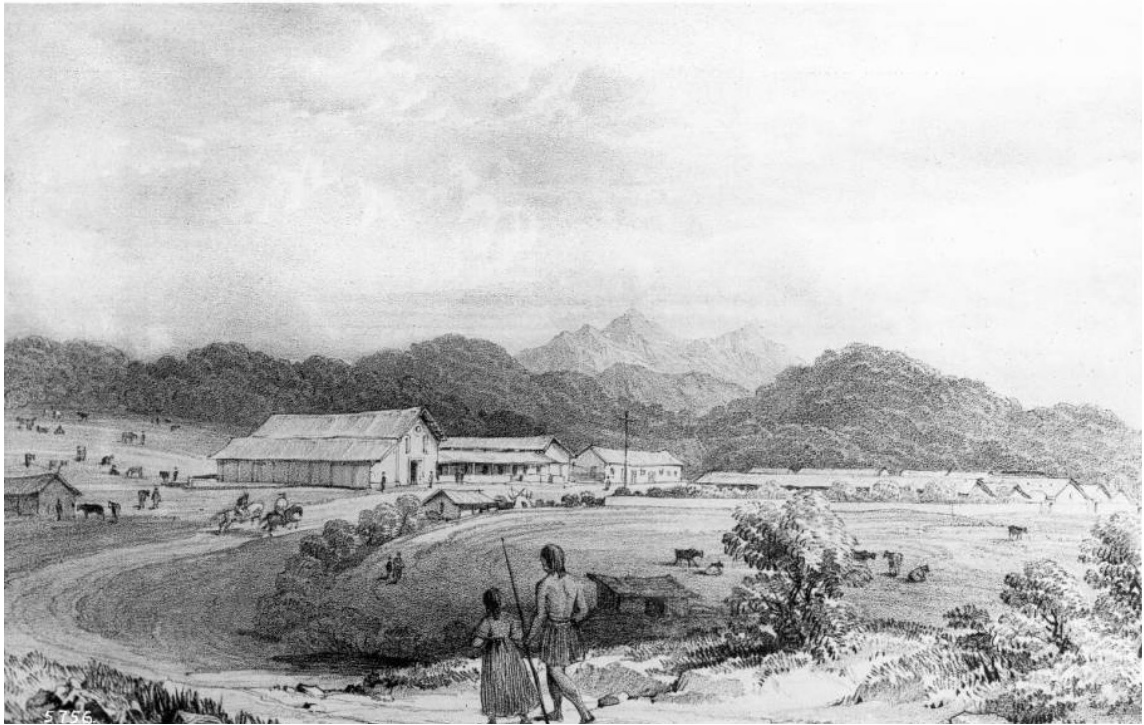


Figure 4.20

Mission San Francisco de Asís (Dolores)

San Francisco, California

Drawing by William Smyth who accompanied Frederick Beechey in 1826
California Historical Society, USC Libraries



Digitally reproduced by the USC Digital Library; From the California Historical Society Collection at the University of Southern California

Figure 4.21

Exterior View of Mission San Francisco de Asís (left) after the 1906 Earthquake
San Francisco, California

C.C. Pierce

California Historical Society, USC Libraries



Figure 4.22
Wall niche water font
Mission San Francisco de Asís
San Francisco, California
Author photo

Blue and white porcelain is mission period.
Glass dish is modern.



Figure 4.23
Detail of wall niche water font
Mission San Francisco de Asís
San Francisco, California
Author photo

Blue and white porcelain is mission period.
Glass dish is modern.



Figure 4.24

Reredos

Mission San Francisco de Asís

San Francisco, CA

Crafted in Mexico

Installed in 1794

Author photo



Figure 4.25
Mural behind reredos
Mission San Francisco de Asís
San Francisco, California
Painted 1790-1791
Photo by Ben Wood

Pieced together composite of 300+ photographs showing the top 22 by 5 feet



Figure 4.26

Sacred Heart, detail of mural behind reredos

Mission San Francisco de Asís

San Francisco, California

Painted 1790-1791

Photo by Ben Wood and Eric Blind



Figure 4.27

Heart of Mary, detail of mural behind reredos

Mission San Francisco de Asís

San Francisco, California

Painted 1790-1791

Photo by Ben Wood and Eric Blind



Figure 4.28
Monumento (canvas wall hanging)
Mission San Francisco de Asís
San Francisco, California
1807
Author photo

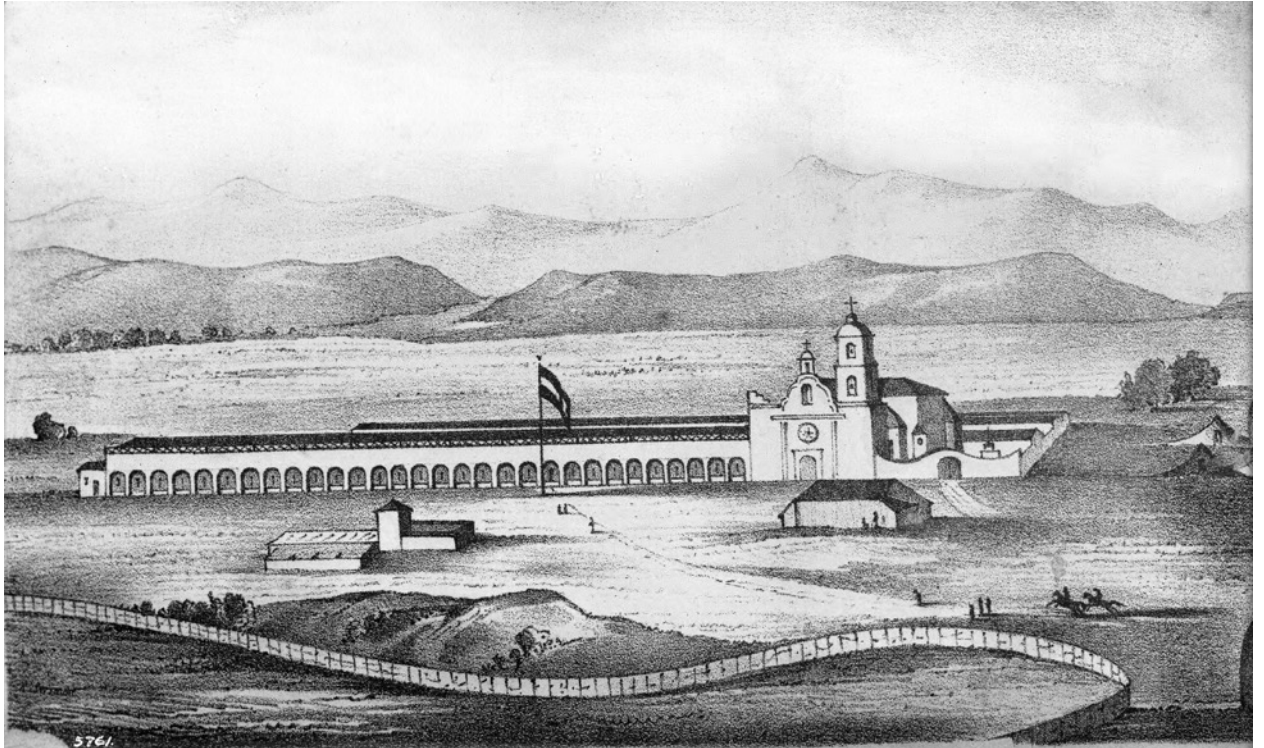


Figure 4.29

View of the Mission San Luis Rey

From Alfred Robinson, *Life in California*

1829

C.C. Pierce collection of Photographs

Huntington Digital Library



Figure 4.30
Sanctuary of Mission San Luis Rey before restoration
Alexander Harmer
before 1892
From Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey Mission*



Figure 4.31
Father Joseph Jeremiah O'Keefe
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
c 1900
Library of Congress



Figure 4.32
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Author photo

Nave



Figure 4.33
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Author photo

View of altar and reredos



Figure 4.34
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Author photo

View of Dome



Figure 4.35
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Author photo

Original arch in the rebuilt quadrangle



Figure 4.36
Reredos
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
c. 1815
Author photo



Figure 4.37
Altar stone, early 19th century
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Author photo



Figure 4.38
Quadrangle bells (2 small), 1814 and 1815
Mission San Luis Rey
Oceanside, California
Author photo



Figure 5.1

Mission Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California

Henry Miller

1856

UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library

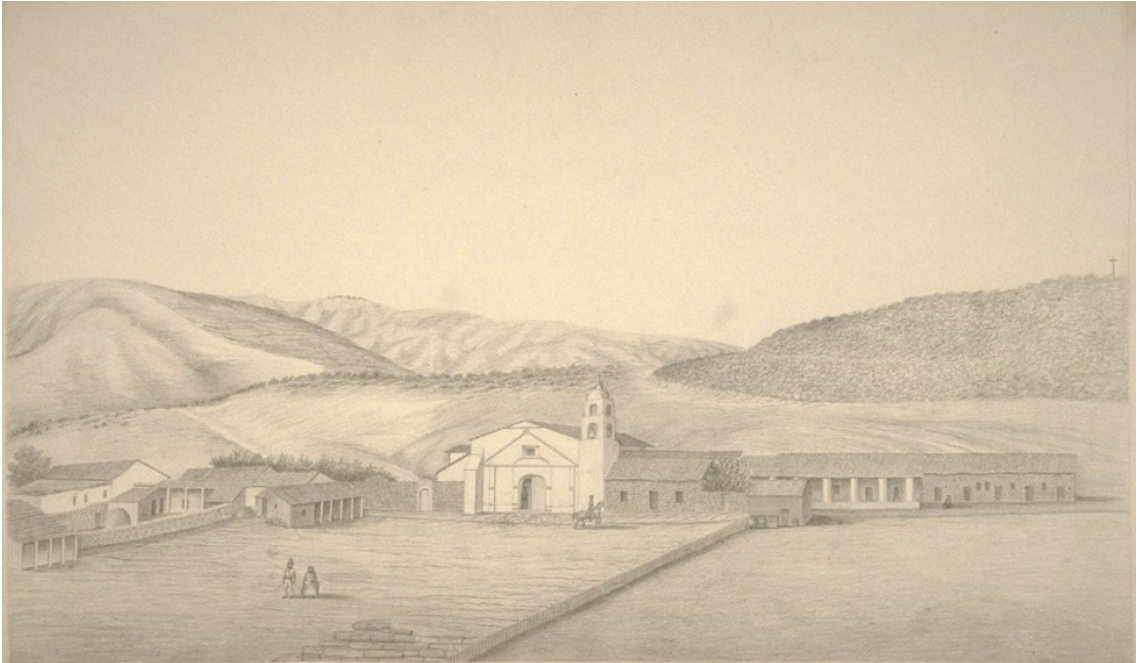


Figure 5.2

Mission San Buenaventura

Ventura, California

Henry Miller

1856

UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library



Figure 5.3
Mission Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California
William Rich Hutton
1848
Huntington Library



Figure 5.4
Mission Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, California
H.M.T. Powell
1850
Santa Barbara Mission Archive and Library



Figure 5.5
Vue de la mission de san-Luis-Rey en Californie, 1828
Oceanside, California
Auguste Duhaut-Cilly
Public domain



Figure 5.6
Mission San Gabriel
San Gabriel, California
Ferdinand Deppe
1828

Santa Barbara Mission Archive and Library

APPENDIX

The data presented in each table are not meant to be comprehensive, but rather to highlight the constant flow of church goods into the missions. Ceremonial objects are an index of ritual, and their acquisition and accumulation paralleled architectural development.

Mission San Carlos Borromeo del Carmelo

Legend for columns:

Construction milestones are from Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Mission San Carlos Borromeo* (Ramona, Calif.: Ballena, 1973).

Church goods are listed under BAER or ENGELHARDT, indicating the source of the information. Details for each source are:

- Baer - Notes on Mission San Carlos Borromeo de Carmelo, Kurt Baer Papers, Series 3: Alta CA Missions by Name, Box 13, Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library, Santa Barbara, California, United States
- Engelhardt - Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Mission San Carlos Borromeo* (Ramona, Calif.: Ballena, 1973).
- There are cases where items are found in both the Kurt Baer papers and in Engelhardt. To avoid double listing, the item as described in Baer is included once.

Indian Baptisms are from Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Mission San Carlos Borromeo* (Ramona, Calif.: Ballena, 1973).

Year	Construction milestones	Church goods (SOURCE)	Indian Baptisms (cumulative)
1770	Improvisational chapel in Monterey of wood poles, twigs, and mud	(BAER) Silver plated monstrance on stand 2 silver chalices with paten and spoon	3

		<p>Silver censer with boat and spoon</p> <p>1 silver hostiary (for non-consecrated hosts)</p> <p>Various other altar utensils (e.g. set of glass cruets, silver oil stocks, tin altar bread box, altar bread iron)</p> <p>Silver missal stand</p> <p>Gospel of St John</p> <p>Silver shell for baptizing</p> <p>Several priest vestments</p> <p>Altar linens (e.g. purificators, corporals, finger towels, frontal)</p> <p>Statue of St. Joseph with silver crown, holding the Child Jesus</p> <p>Canvas with image of St. Charles Borromeo</p> <p>Canvas with image of Our Lady of Sorrows</p> <p>Print of Purisima (Our Lady of Immaculate Conception)</p> <p>Print of Our Lady of Guadalupe</p> <p>Small wood tabernacle, gilt and decorated</p> <p>2 silver ciboria with covers</p> <p>Wooden altar crucifix with metal figure of Christ</p> <p>Candlesticks</p>	
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		<p>Copper (or pewter) baptismal font with cover</p> <p>3 tower bells (large, medium, small)</p> <p>Small altar bell</p> <p>(ENGELHARDT)</p> <p>Missal</p>	
1771	First church in Carmel (wood poles with roof of mud)	<p>(BAER)</p> <p>Image of St. Francis</p> <p>Image of St. Anthony of Padua</p>	23
1773	Second church construction begun	<p>(BAER)</p> <p>2 crystal cruets (for water and wine)</p> <p>Canvas with image of St. Charles Borromeo</p> <p>Canvas with image of St. Bonaventure</p> <p>Cross sleeve (for processional crosses)</p>	165
1774		<p>(BAER)</p> <p>Large canvas depicting Glory/Heaven</p> <p>Large canvas depicting Hell</p> <p>Oil painting of San Luis Obispo</p> <p>Image of Death of St Joseph</p> <p>Copper plate of Lady of Sorrows, with frame, rays and silver sword</p>	267

		<p>Copper plate depicting Calvary, with frame and gauze curtains</p> <p>Copper plate of the Tree of the Seraphic Order (Franciscan brotherhood)</p> <p>Print of Franciscan saints</p> <p>Print of Franciscan Popes and Cardinals</p> <p>Print of Franciscan Fathers General</p> <p>(ENGELHARDT)</p> <p>Chasuble of black damask trimmed with silver tape; frontal and cope of same material</p> <p>New missal with the saints of the Order</p> <p>Silver crucifix containing in its crystal reliquary an authenticated relic of the True Cross</p> <p>Framed painting of St. Francis</p> <p>Framed painting of St. Joseph</p> <p>Confessional of redwood with seat of same material</p> <p>2 altar tables</p> <p>Baldaquin with chintz canopy</p> <p>2 stocks (pedestals) for the processional candlesticks</p> <p>Brass crucifix</p>	
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		<p>2 sets of covers for the cross and candlesticks</p> <p>Holy water pot, of tin-plated copper, and its sprinkler</p> <p>4 cassocks of red cloth and surplices for the servers</p> <p>Large bell</p>	
1776	(nth?) Church of wood and <i>tule</i>	<p>(BAER)</p> <p>Painting of St John Baptizing Christ</p>	439
1778		<p>(BAER)</p> <p>Painting of Our Lady of Sorrows at the foot of the Cross</p> <p>Painting of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel</p> <p>Figure of baby Jesus for a manger</p> <p>Monstrance – gift from the Viceroy Bucareli</p> <p>Crosses, medals, rosaries</p>	575
1784	“Serra adobe” is the fifth church (may have been built earlier); adobe with a <i>tule</i> roof	<p>(BAER)</p> <p>Painting of San Bernardino</p>	1040
1791		<p>(BAER)</p> <p>Head and hands for a Purisima/Immaculate Conception figure</p> <p>Figure of St. Charles Borromeo</p> <p>3 Santo Cristos</p>	1693
1792	Vancouver sees beginning of stone church construction	<p>(BAER)</p> <p>Crucifix for altar</p>	1819
1795		<p>(ENGELHARDT)</p> <p>4 albs</p> <p>6 altar cloths</p>	2097

		3 sets of corporals 2 surplices 18 purificators 3 finger towels 6 amices (vestments)	
1796	Stone church has been roofed with tiles		2135
1797	Stone church is dedicated	(BAER) Rosaries, crosses, relic of St Lawrence	2192
1798		(BAER) Purísima figure/image (ENGELHARDT) Black chasuble	2252
1801		(BAER) Small chest with a silver crown (probably for statue of Mary)	2383
1802		(BAER) Santo Cristo for sacristy (ENGELHARDT) 3 strings of pearls and fine necklaces for the Statue of Mary Most Pure Silk canopy Satin tabernacle veil	2418

		2 girdles (vestments) for use on the feast days of greater solemnity	
1803		(BAER) Book on three rules for architecture	2452
1805		(BAER) Prints of the Way of the Cross (ENGELHARDT) 2 silver chalices (1 of them gold plated) 2 silver cruets for vestry	2539
1806	52 adobe and tile dwellings were raised for neophyte families. A new pulpit was built for the church.		2624
1808		(BAER) Paintings of Stations of the Cross (ENGELHARDT) Silver processional cross A dozen candlesticks	2728
1809		(BAER) Wood statue of St. Anthony Wood statue of St. Michael Wood statue of St. Raphael Print of St. Joseph	2760

		Print of the Holy Mother Musical instruments	
1810		(BAER) Sculpture of St. Francis Sculpture of St. Bonaventure Sculpture of St. Dominic Sculpture of St. Claire (ENGELHARDT) 2 tower bells	2795
1811		(BAER) 1 Santo Cristo 1 Canvas depicting condemned souls	2831
1814	Mission quadrangle completed		2934
1817	Addition of a chapel adjoining church, with a carved wooden altar	(ENGELHARDT) New chasuble Altar frontal and mantels	3064
1818		(ENGELHARDT) Alb (vestment) Wooden carved altar for new chapel	3101
1822		(ENGELHARDT) 2 albs 2 amices	3267

		4 cassocks 8 surplices	
1823		(ENGELHARDT) White damask chasuble 4 red altar frontals	3317
1825		(ENGELHARDT) Black cope (vestment) 2 altar frontals	3411
1829		(ENGELHARDT) Stone tablet with carved image of St. Francis	3468

Mission San Francisco de Asís

Legend for columns:

Construction milestones are from:

- Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Francisco or Mission Dolores* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1924)
- Maynard Geiger, "New Data on the Buildings of Mission San Francisco," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (Sep. 1967): 195-205.

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- Baer - Notes on Mission San Francisco de Asís Dolores, Kurt Baer Papers, Series 3: Alta CA Missions by Name, Box 9, Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library, Santa Barbara, California, United States
- Engelhardt - Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Francisco or Mission Dolores* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1924).
- There are cases where items are found in both the Kurt Baer papers and in Engelhardt. To avoid double listing, the item as described in Baer is included once.

Indian Baptisms are from Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Francisco or Mission Dolores* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1924).

Year	Construction milestones	Church goods (SOURCE)	Indian Baptisms (cumulative)
1776	First church (wood poles, plastered with clay, <i>tule</i> roof)	(BAER) Silver chalice with paten and small spoon 2 silver ciboria (1 gilded) Altar cross with metal figure of Christ	

		<p>3 large silver candlesticks</p> <p>Silver censer with boat and spoon</p> <p>Silver baptismal shell</p> <p>2 tower bells, one medium and one small</p>	
1777			36
1779		<p>(ENGELHARDT)</p> <p>Bronze engraving of Nuestra Señora de los Remedios donated by the captain of the ship La Favorita</p>	
1782	Second church (wood poles, plastered with clay, <i>tule</i> roof)	<p>(BAER)</p> <p>Gilded tabernacle</p> <p>Statue of St. Francis</p> <p>Statue of Our Lady of Sorrows</p> <p>Painting of St. Michael in a cedar niche</p> <p>Print of Our Lady of Remedios in a glass case with silver frame in a cedar niche</p> <p>Painted canvas of Our Lady of Sorrows</p> <p>Painted canvas of St. Joseph</p> <p>Painted canvas of St. Francis receiving the Stigmata</p> <p>Prints of the Stations of the Cross</p> <p>Baptismal font</p> <p>Figure of Crucified Christ</p> <p>Silver-plated monstrance (likely from Mission San Carlos since</p>	288

		Bucareli gifted Serra with a monstrance for his mission)	
1783	Foundation for present day (adobe) church laid Provisional (third) church built next to foundations (wood poles, plastered with clay, <i>tule</i> roof, adobe facade)	(BAER) 2 carved figures of Christ 2 small altar crucifixes Cedar niche with ivory image of the Virgin Cedar niche with ivory image of St. Francis	366
1784		(BAER) Carved image of St. Francis holding a crucifix, wearing a gilded halo Framed canvas of the Baptism of Christ	408
1788		(BAER) Statue of St. Joseph Several fine linen corporals Pewter baptismal font Pewter holy water font Canvas painting of St. Peter and St. Paul Painting of St. John Nepomucene 6 Jerusalem crowns One gross (144) of rosaries Canvas painting of Calvary Painting of Our Lady of Guadalupe 2 silver reliquaries	724

1790		(BAER) Carved image of St. Peter	904
1791	Adobe church (present day) finished, <i>tule</i> roof	(BAER) Tabernacle 2 angels 6 gilded candlesticks Carved figure of Moses Statue of St. Joseph	1029
1792		(BAER) 2 Purisimas 4 altar candlesticks Brass censer with boat and spoon	1162
1793		(BAER) Small hand bell 5 canvases, unspecified subject	1360
1794	Church roofed with tile	(BAER) Carved and gilded reredos Vestments	1693
1795		(BAER) Carved image of Our Lady of Sorrows	1861
1796	20 adobe dwellings for neophyte families were built	(BAER) Figure of St. Anthony Figure of St. Isidore 6 small candlesticks	1889

1798	Construction continues to close up the quadrangle	(BAER) Paintings of the Stations of the Cross Tabernacle 2 chalices	1975
1800	8 new adobe dwellings for neophytes	(BAER) Large silver Cross Vestments Candlesticks Silver censer with boat and spoon	2117
1801	12 new adobe dwellings for neophytes	(BAER) Wooden Nativity scene	2336
1802	17 new adobe dwellings for neophytes		2540
1807		(BAER) Painted monumento (large canvas used hide the main altar during Holy Week)	3459
1808		(BAER) Image of Our Lady of Guadalupe	3651
1809		(BAER) Image of St. Roche	3882
1810		(BAER) Framed canvas of St. Raphael (ENGELHARDT) Various silver vessels Holy oil stocks	4095

		Reliquary Pyxis for sick calls	
1811	8 new adobe dwellings for neophytes		4427
1812		(BAER) Figure of Our Lady of Candelaria Figures of shepherd and shepherdess 3 sconces 2 silver Santo Cristos	4632
1823		(ENGELHARDT) End of year report included: (some items may have been from previous years) 12 chasubles 2 dalmatics 4 copes 11 albs 8 corporals 14 amices 3 surplices 3 surplices for altar boys 2 chalices Ciborium Silver censer and boat	6475

		<p>2 missals</p> <p>Gloria wheel with 12 noisy little bells</p> <p>Silver crown with diadem and 12 stars for the statue of the Blessed Virgin</p> <p>1 silver and 3 bronze altar bells</p> <p>2 large tower bells</p>	
1827		<p>(ENGELHARDT)</p> <p>8 albs</p> <p>4 framed pictures</p>	6505
1829		<p>(ENGELHARDT)</p> <p>Dust cover for altar</p>	6523
1831		<p>(ENGELHARDT)</p> <p>12 purificators</p> <p>6 corporals</p>	6533

Mission San Luis Rey

Legend for columns:

Construction milestones are from:

- Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey Mission* (San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1921)
- Fermín Lasuén, *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, vol. 2, trans. Finbar Kenneally (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965), 85-91.
- Auguste Duhaut-Cilly, translated by Charles Franklin Carter, "Duhaut-Cilly's Account of California in the Years 1827-28," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (September, 1929): 214-250.

Church goods are listed under BAER or ENGELHARDT or LASUÉN, indicating the source of the information. Details for each source are:

- Baer - Notes on Mission San Luis Rey de Francia, Kurt Baer Papers, Series 3: Alta CA Missions by Name, Box 14, Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library, Santa Barbara, California, United States
- Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey Mission* (San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1921)
- Fermín Lasuén, *Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén*, vol. 2, trans. Finbar Kenneally (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965), 118.
- There are cases where items are found in both the Kurt Baer papers and in Engelhardt. To avoid double listing, the item as described in Baer is included once.

Indian Baptisms are from Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey Mission* (San Francisco: James H. Barry, 1921).

Year	Construction milestones	Church goods	Indian Baptisms (cumulative)
1798	First church (adobe with thatch roof)		210
1799		(BAER) 2 candlesticks	284

		(LASUÉN) 2 consecrated chalices 2 altar stones	
1800		(BAER) Silver hostiario – a box for unconsecrated hosts	371
1801	Half of all mission buildings had tile roofs; this likely included the church	(BAER) Image of a saint	477
1802	Second church (adobe with tile roof)		568
1803		(BAER) Missal with stand	670
1804		(BAER) Custodia – vessel for Blessed Sacrament host Lienzo – canvas, perhaps painted with a religious image	744
1806		(BAER) Santo Cristo for sacristy Tabernacle Altar frontal	1157
1807		(BAER) Painting of St. John the Baptist	1235
1808		(BAER) Crucifix for the sacristy Silver censer with boat Statue of San Luis Rey Painting of the Baptism of Christ	1347

1809		(BAER) 2 Santo Cristos Jerusalem crown	1393
1810		(BAER) Crucifix 2 Santo Cristos de Pecho 4 Jerusalem crowns Painting of St. Francis Painting of St. Dominic Painting of St. Anthony Painting of St. Joseph (ENGELHARDT) Silk chasuble 4 albs	1831
1811	Foundations for new mission church laid	(BAER) Chalice with paten and spoon Processional cross 2 Santo Cristos with silver cross Baptismal shell Processional Cross, with brass candlesticks set on poles Silver vial for holy oil	1966

1812		(BAER) Painted monumento (canvas with figures in architectural perspective used for Holy Week)	2158
1814		(BAER) Quadrangle bell	2402
1815	Third church dedicated (adobe, ladrillo, tile roof)	(BAER) Canvas reredos	2482
1816		(BAER) Frontal Silver hostiario 2 silver candlesticks Image of Purisima Image of St. Joseph Image of St. Anthony Image of St. Francis Image of St. Dominic Image of St. Bonaventure Image of St. Thomas Image of the Archangel Michael Image of St. Francis and the Stigmata	2537
1818		(BAER) Quadrangle bell	3086
1827	Church dome with cupola is built		4816
1830	Main and side altars gilded		5188

1832		(ENGELHARDT) Crucifix Missal Silver ciborium with gold-plated cup	5397
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Ascension, Antonio de la and Henry R. Wagner. "Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast in the Sixteenth Century. Chapter XI: Father Antonio de la Ascension's Account of the Voyage of Sebastian Vizcaino (Continued)." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 8, No. 1 (Mar 1929): 26-70.

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