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Chapter 15

Death, Mourning, and Accommodation in the Missions of Alta California

Lee M. Panich

Spanish missions are seen by many indigenous people and scholars alike as sites of profound loss. Across the Borderlands of North America, the native individuals and families who entered mission establishments faced terrible and often lethal challenges posed by introduced diseases, strict labor demands, corporal punishment, and unsanitary conditions. In California, as elsewhere, death was part and parcel of the mission experience for many indigenous neophytes as well as the resident Franciscan missionaries. This chapter explores how native people and Franciscans in Alta California negotiated their divergent but deeply held views about what constituted proper death, burial, and mourning practices. These issues are examined using evidence drawn from pre-Contact archaeological sites, ethnographic information collected by early anthropologists, mission-era archaeological deposits, and from the writings of the Franciscans and other contemporary observers. I argue that native neophytes in Alta California persisted in honoring their dead in culturally appropriate ways while the Franciscans varied in their attitudes toward indigenous mortuary practices.

Mortuary Practices in Native California

California was one of the most densely populated and diverse regions of North America prior to European colonization, with hundreds of independent polities speaking dozens of different languages.¹ Although such a wide spectrum of indigenous societies makes generalization difficult, the following summary presents key aspects of Native Californian mortuary practices in the missionized area between San Diego and the San Francisco Bay.

1. Kent G. Lightfoot and Otis Parrish, *California Indians and Their Environment: An Introduction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

Pre-Contact archaeological evidence offers a wealth of information concerning the diversity of indigenous mortuary practices prior to the onset of European colonialism. Archaeologically, it appears that most Native Californian groups maintained formal cemeteries, often on the margins of village settlements. A variety of methods were used to dispose of the bodies of the deceased, although most groups favored either burial or cremation; some employed both methods, reserving one or the other for particular purposes. Secondary burials and secondary cremations are occasionally noted in the archaeological record. Among those groups who buried their dead, flexed burials were most common in pre-Contact times, but burials in the extended position were not unknown. Throughout the state, large proportions of the population were interred or cremated with grave goods, which likely served as markers of the deceased's social or political status. Important categories of grave goods included *Olivella* shell beads or clamshell beads (depending on the region), bone tools, chipped stone tools, and ground-stone implements.² One notable regional pattern is the occurrence of banjo-shaped *Haliotis* (abalone) pendants interred with certain individuals in the greater San Francisco Bay area. These distinctive pendants appear to be associated with the spread of the Kuksu ceremonial cult.³ Archaeologists have additionally noted the material correlates of annual mourning ceremonies, which are particularly well documented in the archaeological record of the Los Angeles Basin.⁴

Ethnographic information collected by early anthropologists also reveals important information about mortuary practices before and after colonization. Mourning ceremonies are one of the most well-known practices documented in Native California. These rituals typically commemorated all of the previous year's dead and could attract dozens or even hundreds of individuals who brought with them offerings such as baskets, beads, and ornaments. With some local differences, the annual mourning ceremony seems to have been practiced throughout nearly all of the coastal strip and inland valleys affected

2. Regionally specific archaeological overviews can be found in Jon M. Erlandson and Terry L. Jones, eds. *Catalysts to Complexity: Late Holocene Societies on the California Coast* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2002); and Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar, eds. *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007).

3. Mark G. Hylkema, "Tidal Marsh, Oak Woodlands, and Cultural Florescence in the Southern San Francisco Bay Region," in *Catalysts to Complexity: Late Holocene Societies of the California Coast*, eds. Jon M. Erlandson and Terry L. Jones (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2002), 233–262.

4. Kathleen L. Hull, John G. Douglass, and Andrew L. York, "Recognizing Ritual Action and Intent in Communal Mourning Features on the Southern California Coast," *American Antiquity* 78 (2013): 24–47.

by Franciscan missionization in Alta California.⁵ Ethnographic information additionally illuminates how Native Californians honored the deceased at the time of death. As supported by archaeological data, native informants interviewed by anthropologists reported wide variation across the state in the use of burial, cremation, or both. Though the details differed throughout the region, native mourners often participated in ritual wailing, hair cutting, body painting in particular colors, and the burning of the property of the deceased.⁶

Death and Mourning in Colonial California

With the onset of missionization in Alta California in 1769, many indigenous groups were forced to negotiate the social world of the Franciscan missions. The development of the mission system and the implications for native people is an important topic of current scholarly research.⁷ Of primary consideration is how native groups and individuals continued, reinterpreted, or modified their traditional practices within the twenty-one colonial missions of Alta California where Franciscan padres instituted a program of enculturation intended to convert Native Californians to Catholicism and Euroamerican life-ways. One aspect of this intercultural negotiation that has received only slight attention is the manner in which native people accommodated or resisted Franciscan teachings about proper ways to dispose of and honor the deceased. In the following sections, I offer a synthesis of the archaeological and documentary evidence for how native people and Franciscan missionaries negotiated this aspect of missionization in Alta California.

Documentary Evidence

Due largely to the meticulous record keeping of the Franciscans, documentary evidence from colonial California contains a wealth of information regarding indigenous life at the missions, including insight into how native people buried and mourned their dead. The most comprehensive overview of indige-

5. Alfred L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin, no. 78 (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1925), Stephen Powers, *Tribes of California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

6. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*; Richard A. Gould, *Aboriginal California Burial and Cremation Practices*, University of California Archaeological Survey Reports, no. 60 (Berkeley, 1963), 149–168.

7. Lisbeth Haas, *Saints and Citizens: Indigenous Histories of Colonial Missions and Mexican California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis: Indian Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769–1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Kent G. Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries, and Merchants: The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

nous burial and mourning practices, as well as Franciscan attitudes toward them, are found in the answers to the Interrogatorio of 1813–1815.⁸ This document queried the Franciscans on several aspects of indigenous life. Question 21 explicitly asks, “Do they use any strange ceremonial at the time of burial or mourning?” Responses to other questions also contain relevant information, including prompts regarding superstitions (question 10) as well as human sacrifice,⁹ idolatry, and other ceremonies (questions 28 and 29). The Franciscans’ responses fall into four general categories: those that reference Catholic doctrine, those that describe indigenous practices outside of the missions, those that describe native practices in mission settings, and those that describe native practices without geographic context (Table 1). For example, the response to question 21 regarding burial and mourning customs from missionaries at Mission San Carlos includes statements relating to the first three categories:

As pagans, their method of burial was to dig a large hole in which they placed the corpse. . . . All the relatives throw beads and seeds upon the dead in token of their love for the deceased. As Christians they are buried according to the ritual of the Church. Nevertheless, in secret they cling to their pagan practice. As a sign of mourning the father, mother, child, husband or wife or brother or sister cut off their hair. . . . Moreover they throw ashes over their entire bodies, weep bitterly, abstain from food, and the old women smear their faces with pitch. . . .¹⁰

As Table 1 suggests, there is no strong patterning in the responses given to the questions about burial and mourning, and some variation may result from how individual missionaries interpreted the question. However, when supplementary information from other questions is included, Franciscans at a minimum of ten missions noted the continuity of native practices at their establishments, with another three describing native practices with little contextual information. Franciscans at all missions, moreover, described indigenous practices in some form, whether they were carried out in their “pagan state” or at the mission itself. Missionaries in Alta California were thus very familiar with native burial and mourning practices. The attitudes captured by their answers include some that are particularly unfavorable—for example, the missionaries at San Juan Capistrano referred to indigenous mourning practices as “superstitious and savage customs”¹¹—while others appear to have simply stated what they knew of local traditions.

8. Maynard J. Geiger and Clement W. Meighan, *As the Padres Saw Them: California Indian Life and Customs as Reported by the Franciscan Missionaries, 1813–1815* (Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library, 1976).

9. Human sacrifice was not practiced in Native California.

10. Geiger and Meighan, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 99.

11. *Ibid.*, 97.

TABLE 1. Summary of Franciscan Responses to Questions about Native Californian Burial and Mourning Practices from Interrogatorio of 1813–1815

Mission	Catholic Practices	Native Practices in "Pagan" State	Native Practices in Mission	Native Practices (No Location)
San Diego		(X)	X	
San Luís Rey			(X)	X
San Juan Capistrano				X
San Gabriel		X	X	
San Fernando		X	(X)	
San Buenaventura	X	X		
Santa Barbara	X	(X)	X	
Santa Inés	X		X	
San Luís Obispo		X		
San Miguel		X		
San Antonio		X	(X)	
Soledad		X	X	
San Carlos	X	X	X	
San Juan Bautista	X	X		
Santa Cruz		X	X	
Santa Clara				X
San José		X		
San Francisco		(X)		X

Notes: X = information present in response to Question 21. (X) = supplemental information from responses to other questions.

It is not clear whether indigenous mortuary practices were explicitly forbidden or simply discouraged,¹² and responses to the questionnaires of 1813–1815 suggest that some Franciscans accommodated native mortuary practices that did not directly contradict Church doctrine regarding the sacraments and proper burial. These may have included hair cutting, painting of the face or body, and crying, all of which correspond to ethnographically known mourning rituals. Yet many responses mention the offering of grave goods, a practice not in keeping with contemporary Catholic doctrine, and it may be that individual missionaries strategically ignored native mortuary traditions that they could not eliminate. The padres at Mission San Diego, for example, remarked that native practices continued when the missionaries were “careless,” and missionaries at San Luis Rey stated that neophytes there placed “seeds, beads,

12. Quincy D. Newell, *Constructing Lives at Mission San Francisco: Native Californians and Hispanic Colonists, 1776–1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 154–155.

and other trifles” during “burials in the mission cemetery when the missionary fathers are not looking.”¹³

Beyond the Interrogatorio of 1813–1815, some additional accounts indicate that the Franciscans may have reluctantly allowed native people to mourn their dead in ways consistent with pre-Contact cultural traditions. Comte de La Pérouse, who visited the Monterey region in 1786, stated that missionaries compromised with native people and allowed modified versions of traditional bodily decoration associated with mourning.¹⁴ Farther south, Father Gerónimo Boscana related that neophytes at Mission San Juan Capistrano disposed of “bead money” and other items belonging to deceased individuals by placing them in the grave.¹⁵ Not all missionaries, however, tolerated native mourning practices—an account from Mission San Francisco suggests that two neophytes were whipped for loudly mourning their deceased relatives.¹⁶

The documentary record for Alta California also contains information indicating both accommodation and resistance on the part of native people. In her research on the experiences of Native Americans at Mission San Francisco, Quincy Newell (2009) demonstrates that neophytes there held a range of attitudes toward Catholicism. While many outwardly embraced the new religion, a significant number appear to have timed important life events such as birth and death to occur away from the mission proper. For example, more than six hundred neophytes died outside of Mission San Francisco, and roughly half of those (or approximately three hundred individuals) died in the indigenous hinterlands. Of those, Newell argues that some two hundred neophytes “elected to die among family and friends” in their natal villages.¹⁷ Newell provides detailed descriptions of native people from Mission San Francisco who actively manipulated the policy of *paseo* (approved leaves from missions) to die on their own terms, although she notes that some individuals also made confession or received sacraments prior to departing the mission. Lastly, Newell describes several instances in which parents removed children who had fallen ill from the mission so that they could die and be mourned in culturally appropriate ways.

As part of my ongoing research at Mission Santa Clara, I examined neophyte death records available through the Huntington Library’s Early Cali-

13. Geiger and Meighan, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 97, 119.

14. Russell K. Skowronek, “Sifting the Evidence: Perceptions of Life at the Ohlone (Costanoan) Missions of Alta California,” *Ethnohistory* 45 (1998): 685.

15. John R. Johnson, “The Various Chinigchinich Manuscripts of Father Gerónimo Boscana,” in *San Diego, Alta California, and the Borderlands: Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Conference of the California Mission Studies Association*, eds. R. M. Beebe and R. M. Senkewicz (Santa Clara: California Mission Studies Association, 2006), 1–19.

16. Newell, *Constructing Lives at Mission San Francisco*, 155.

17. *Ibid.*, 152–167.

ifornia Population Project (ECP) database for similar patterns that might shed light on how native people and Spanish missionaries negotiated death and its attendant rituals.¹⁸ Out of roughly 7,700 native neophytes recorded in the mission's death records, my analysis revealed 668 individuals who died away from Santa Clara. Seventy-eight individuals died and were buried at other missions, while 157 died outside of the mission but were eventually buried in the *campo santo* at Mission Santa Clara. The other 433 individuals appear to have died and been buried away from the mission, including many who were buried in their natal villages. Combined, these three groups represent 8.7 percent of the indigenous deaths recorded for Santa Clara. The Franciscans were likely troubled by the many neophyte deaths that occurred outside of the mission, particularly if the death occurred among unmissionized native people. In such instances, the padres often noted the possibility that the individuals in question had been cremated by their kin, a violation of Catholic doctrine.¹⁹

Of course, some of the neophytes who perished outside of the California missions did so accidentally. Hackel examines data on the causes of death among neophytes across Alta California, including information regarding Indians who died away from the missions.²⁰ He lists dozens of individuals who died of exposure, drowned, or were killed by wild animals while outside of their home missions. Violence also claimed the lives of 146 neophytes during conflicts with unbaptized Indians and 26 more at the hands of colonial soldiers.²¹ He notes that these unusual and noteworthy incidents may be over-represented in the death records, which typically do not include cause of death. It is therefore likely that many of the other deaths recorded as occurring in the hinterlands represent the intentions of certain neophytes to die in their ancestral homelands, either as fugitives or through the manipulation of mission policies like *paseo*.

The documentary record also provides details regarding the treatment of native individuals who died in residence at Alta California missions. In the case of adult neophytes, the death records typically indicate whether the deceased had received the last rites (penance, extreme unction, and/or

18. Huntington Library, *Early California Population Project Database* (2006), <http://www.huntington.org/information/ECPmain.htm>.

19. Lee M. Panich, "Sometimes They Bury the Deceased's Clothes and Trinkets": Indigenous Mortuary Practices at Mission Santa Clara de Asis," *Historical Archaeology* 49(4) (2015): 110–129.

20. Steven W. Hackel, "From *Abogado* to *Zorrillo*: External Causes of Mortality in the California Missions," in *From La Florida to La California: Franciscan Evangelization in the Spanish Borderlands*, eds. Timothy J. Johnson and Gert Melville (Berkeley: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2013), 353–388.

21. *Ibid.*, 369.

viaticum). Hackel states that 30 percent of adult neophytes died without having received penance or extreme unction, and 92 percent died without having received viaticum, or final communion.²² Yet there appears to have been some variation among the Alta California missions regarding the administration of viaticum to adult neophytes. The records that Mariano Payeras kept during his years as the president of the Alta California missions (1816–1819) reveal that most missions administered at least some viaticums to dying neophytes, and certain missions, such as San Gabriel, performed several dozen per year. Other missions, however, reported very few; Santa Clara, for example, reported no viaticums administered to dying adult neophytes in those years.²³ My analysis of the Santa Clara death records, spanning from 1777 into the late 1840s, reveals that only about 130 neophytes received final communion during the entirety of the mission period.

These patterns may represent an area of negotiation by both the Franciscans and Native Californians. As detailed by Hackel, missionaries in Alta California initially believed the conversion of native people too precarious to warrant the last rites in general and final communion in particular. This notion is evidenced in the increasing rate of viaticums performed over time, particularly after the 1790s.²⁴ Yet, the uneven distribution of viaticums noted in the records of Payeras as late as the 1810s, as well as in the investigation of death records at particular missions like Santa Clara, suggests that the Franciscans likely adopted localized practices regarding the administration of the last rites to adult neophytes. Practical concerns, such as the availability of unleavened bread and wine, may also have been an issue at some missions. For their part, indigenous neophytes probably exercised some agency regarding whether they would receive the final sacraments. The uneven administration of the last rites and universally low rate of viaticums to neophytes suggests that certain individuals avoided the sacraments once death was imminent.

Archaeological Evidence

Given the long history of archaeological research at California mission sites, surprisingly little information has been published on mission cemeteries. Although variation exists, the general pattern appears to be that the mission cemetery, or *campo santo*, was adjacent to the church. Most neophytes were buried in shrouds, often with their arms folded over their torsos.²⁵ In the mid-twentieth century, a woman who illicitly disturbed more than two dozen

22. Ibid., 361.

23. Donald Cutter, ed. and trans., *Writings of Mariano Payeras* (Santa Barbara, CA: Bellerophon Books, 1995).

24. Hackel, *Children of Coyote*, 170–181.

25. Skowronek, “Sifting the Evidence,” 686.

Native American graves in a cemetery possibly associated with Mission Sonoma noted that the burials were in the extended position and contained numerous glass beads and other imported objects.²⁶ Archaeological testing was conducted at one of the cemeteries at Mission Soledad in 1969, and information was also collected at that time regarding the numerous graves disturbed during agricultural grading of the cemetery in 1940. Glass and shell beads were both present, as were redwood coffins, although the results were difficult to interpret given the amount of disturbance to the cemetery and the possibility of post-mission interments.²⁷ At Mission San José, earth-moving activities associated with the reconstruction of the mission church in the early 1980s revealed some beads and mission tiles associated with neophyte burials, and both shell and glass beads are occasionally brought to the surface through rodent activity in the post-1811 mission cemetery about a mile west of the mission.²⁸

Missions Santa Clara, San Diego, and La Purísima offer the best evidence for neophyte burial practices. At Santa Clara, two cemeteries have been investigated archaeologically. In the earlier cemetery, adjacent to the third mission compound (ca. 1781–1818), two archaeological mitigation projects documented the remains of a minimum of twenty-four individuals. Although many of the burials had been previously disturbed, the cemetery contained large quantities of grave goods, including shell and glass beads and abalone pendants, as well as mission tiles.²⁹ The second cemetery is associated with the fifth mission church (ca. 1825–1851), and was the site of a small archaeological mitigation project after several clusters of human bone, grave goods, and possible redwood coffin fragments were discovered in construction activities.³⁰

26. Treganza, Adan E., "Sonoma Mission: An Archaeological Reconstruction of the Mission San Francisco de Solano Quadrangle," *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* 14 (1956): 13.

27. Donald M. Howard, "Archaeological Investigation at Misión Nuestra Señora de La Soledad, MNT-233, Monterey County, California," *Monterey County Archaeological Society Quarterly* 1(3) (1972): 1–10.

28. Andy Galvan, personal communication.

29. Mark G. Hylkema, *Archaeological Investigations at the Third Location of Mission Santa Clara de Asís: The Murguía Mission, 1781–1818 (CA-SCL-30/H)* (Oakland: California Department of Transportation, 1995); Alan Leventhal, Diane DiGiuseppe, Melynda Atwood, David Grant, Rosemary Cambra, Charlene Nijmeh, Monica V. Arellano, Sheila Guzman-Schmidt, Gloria E. Gomez, and Norma Sanchez, *Final Report on the Burial and Archaeological Data Recovery Program Conducted on a Portion of the Mission Santa Clara Indian Neophyte Cemetery (1781–1818): Clareño Muwékma Ya Túnnešte Nómmo [Where the Clareño Indians Are Buried] Site (CA-SCL-30/H), Located in the City of Santa Clara, Santa Clara County, California (Report to Pacific Gas and Electric Company, 2011)*. The earlier cemetery may have been in use as late as 1825.

30. Russel K. Skowronek and Julie C. Wizorek, "Archaeology at Santa Clara de Asís: The Slow Rediscovery of a Moveable Mission," *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 33(3), (1997): 54–92.

Together, more than 5,000 shell and glass beads, as well as 18 abalone pendants and pendant fragments, were recovered from the two cemeteries.

Excavations at Mission San Diego have also revealed significant numbers of indigenous burials dating to the mission period. Archaeological work in 1989, for example, resulted in the discovery of between eighteen and forty burials in one of the mission cemeteries. Out of respect for the descendant communities, the remains were only minimally studied, but investigators noted the presence of modest quantities of grave goods, including glass and shell beads, phoenix buttons, and incised clay tiles.³¹ Archaeologists have also investigated the cemetery associated with the second site of Mission La Purísima (ca. 1813–1849), home to a large Chumash population. There, over fifty individuals were noted during excavations, although this total is far less than the number of neophytes recorded in the mission's burial records during the period in question.³² Nevertheless, the La Purísima interments stand in contrast to the patterns seen at Santa Clara, San Diego, and other missions in that they were almost devoid of grave goods.³³ One individual at La Purísima was associated with 120 glass beads, but the excavators believed the burial to post-date the primary use of the mission cemetery.

The La Purísima cemetery can also be compared to the historic-era Chumash cemetery at Humaliwo (present-day Malibu), a village that sent more than one hundred individuals to nearby missions during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Archaeological investigations of the cemetery revealed thousands of glass beads and other historic-era grave goods, items conspicuously lacking at La Purísima. The Humaliwo cemetery, moreover, departed from native burials at mission sites in that they were primarily in the flexed position with the head oriented to the west, both important components of Chumash mortuary practices.³⁴ For comparison, the La Purísima burials were all extended and oriented to the northeast.³⁵ Although Gamble suggests Humaliwo residents were more

31. Richard L. Carrico, Remnants Pulled from the Fire: Report on the 1989 Spring–Summer Mission San Diego de Alcalá Archaeological Excavations (manuscript on file with Richard Carrico, 2014).

32. Richard Humphrey, “The La Purísima Mission Cemetery,” *Annual Reports of the University of California Archaeological Survey* 7 (Los Angeles, 1965), 179–192; Philip L. Walker, John R. Johnson, and Patricia M. Lambert, “Age and Sex Biases in the Preservation of Human Skeletal Remains,” *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 76 (1988): 183–188.

33. The available responses to the Interrogatorio of 1813–1815, which may shed light on this issue, do not include Mission La Purísima.

34. Terisa M. Green, “Archaeological Evidence for Post-Contact Native Religion: The Chumash Land of the Dead,” *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 23 (2001): 319–327.

35. Humphrey, “The La Purísima Mission Cemetery.”

closely aligned with secular ranching operations than they were the missions,³⁶ the cemetery data nonetheless demonstrate that native people there ignored Catholic burial customs while simultaneously incorporating Euroamerican objects such as glass beads into dynamic indigenous mortuary traditions.

The archaeologically documented burials of so-called *gente de razón* who were interred at Alta California missions and presidios provide an additional angle of comparison with indigenous burials from mission cemeteries. At Mission Soledad, for example, several individuals were buried within the mission church, including José Joaquín de Arrillaga. Howard excavated two burials there, which he interpreted as possibly being the remains of a mission mayor-domo and his wife.³⁷ Both were interred in redwood coffins, and the male individual was buried with a copper crucifix. Indeed, coffins may have been more commonly used for *gente de razón* throughout Alta California. In San Diego, a higher percentage of individuals were interred in coffins at the presidio than at the mission where neophyte burials included mass graves.³⁸ Coffins were also used for burials in the chapel of the Santa Barbara Presidio.³⁹ At Mission Santa Clara, redwood coffins were apparently not used for neophyte burials until the final years of the mission's occupation.⁴⁰ Although no systematic review has yet been completed, information on mortuary practices for Spanish officials and other colonial settlers indicates significant differences between *gente de razón* and mission neophytes.⁴¹

Archaeological research also has the potential to illuminate indigenous mourning practices that took place outside of the mission cemeteries. Recent archaeological excavations within the neophyte *ranchería* at Mission Santa Clara, for example, raise the intriguing possibility that native people continued to practice some form of mourning ceremony at the mission. Archaeologists have noted several pit features each containing hundreds of burned shell beads, as well as other items that would have been highly valued such as shell

36. Lynn H. Gamble, *The Chumash World at European Contact: Power, Trade, and Feasting among Complex Hunter-Gatherers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

37. Howard, "Archaeological Investigation at Misión Nuestra Señora de La Soledad."

38. Carrico, Remnants Pulled from the Fire; Patricia Mitchell, Summary of Findings for a Portion of the Human Remains Recovered from ERCE's 1989 Excavation at San Diego Mission de Acalá, San Diego, California (Report to the Kumeyaay Cultural and Historical Committee, 1993), 48.

39. Julia G. Costello and Phillip L. Walker, "Burials from the Santa Barbara Presidio Chapel," *Historical Archaeology* 21 (1987): 3–17.

40. Skowronek and Wizorek, "Archaeology at Santa Clara de Asís."

41. See also Richard L. Carrico, "The Identification of Two Burials at the San Diego Presidio," *Journal of San Diego History* 19 (1973): 51–55; and Paul Ezell, "The Excavation Program at the San Diego Presidio," *Journal of San Diego History* 22 (1976): 1–19.

ornaments.⁴² One feature, discovered adjacent to an adobe neophyte barracks, included over 1,800 shell beads, nearly all of which appear to have been burned *in situ*. The feature, which was only partially excavated, also contained 30 glass beads, an iron spur rowel, large portions of two ceramic vessels, a ceramic gaming disk, a brass finger ring, a raptorial talon, a small bird bone tube, two abalone pendant blanks, and over 2,500 native tobacco seeds, among other materials. I interpret this feature, and others like it, to represent either the remains of annual mourning ceremonies and/or evidence of the ritual destruction of property belonging to recently deceased individuals.⁴³ The location of these features within the neophyte *rancheria* suggests that native people maintained or modified traditional mourning practices within their own neighborhood even as most individuals were buried in accordance with Church doctrine in the *campo santo*.⁴⁴

Conclusion

The combination of ethnographic, documentary, and archaeological data offer evidence of accommodation and negotiation regarding indigenous mortuary practices in the Franciscan missions of Alta California. Native people accepted, perhaps reluctantly, some of the Franciscans' teachings, but nonetheless succeeded in maintaining and rearticulating other aspects of their pre-Contact mortuary practices under the constraints of colonialism. The Franciscans, for their part, intended to alter Native Californian beliefs and customs, but also appear to have accommodated certain indigenous practices regarding death and mourning. Across the province, the evidence suggests both local variation as well as general trends in the conditions under which native deaths occurred, the location

42. Rebecca Allen, R. Scott Baxter, Linda Hylkema, Clinton Blount, and Stella D'Oro, *Uncovering and Interpreting History and Archaeology at Mission Santa Clara* (Report to Santa Clara University, 2010); Lee M. Panich, Helga Afaghani, and Nicole Mathwich, "Assessing the Diversity of Mission Populations through the Comparison of Native American Residences at Mission Santa Clara de Asís," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 18 (2014): 467–488; Panich, "Sometimes They Bury the Deceased's Clothes and Trinkets"

43. The latter practice was referenced by Franciscans at Mission San Francisco in the Interrogatorio of 1813–1815. They wrote, "The effects belonging to the deceased are, as a rule, burned or are placed with him in such a way that no one will make use of anything which had come into contact with the dead person." Geiger and Meighan, *As the Padres Saw Them*, 120.

44. Archaeologists recently documented a feature related to indigenous mourning ceremonies at Mission San Gabriel. John Dietler, Heather Gibson, and Benjamin Vargas, "A Mourning Dirge was Sung: Community and Remembrance at Mission San Gabriel" (Paper presented at the 80th Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology, San Francisco, CA, 15–19 April 2015).

and method of burial, the presence of grave goods, as well as associated mourning traditions.

As the documentary record from Missions Santa Clara and San Francisco demonstrate, some native people may have avoided the last rites while others actively sought to die outside the mission walls where culturally appropriate burial and mourning could take place. Within the missions of Alta California, however, most neophytes were buried in the extended position in the *campo santo* adjacent to the mission church. While this practice conformed to the missionaries' expectations, indigenous neophytes also would have considered appropriate the placement of formal cemeteries within or on the margins of village communities. The use of extended burials was not unknown to Native Californians, although it was only occasionally employed outside of the missions. As important aspects of most indigenous mortuary practices, grave goods were likely a more significant arena of negotiation and accommodation. Neophytes throughout Alta California clearly continued to offer goods such as beads and seeds during burials at many missions, and some individual Franciscans appear to have either tolerated the practice or at least turned a blind eye to its persistence. Native people continued other important mourning practices, such as wailing, bodily adornment, and dietary restrictions, with variable reactions from the Franciscans. Native neophytes may also have continued to celebrate annual mourning ceremonies and/or the ritual destruction of the deceased's property, as evidenced by archaeological features discovered at Mission Santa Clara.

The evidence presented here offers multiple perspectives on how Franciscan missionaries and diverse groups of Native Californians negotiated each other's tightly held cultural beliefs about death and mourning. Similar patterns of accommodation can be seen in other regions of the Spanish Borderlands, such as La Florida.⁴⁵ There, archaeologists have also noted that many indigenous people buried in colonial-era cemeteries associated with Franciscan missions were accompanied by large quantities of grave goods. At Mission Santa Catalina de Guale, in Georgia, nearly seventy thousand glass beads were found associated with the graves of more than four hundred native individuals, likely representing Franciscan accommodation of persistent indigenous traditions. As in California, these goods may have marked individual or group status

45. Elliot H. Blair, "The Role of Beads on St. Catherines Island," in *The Beads of St. Catherines Island*, edited by Elliot H. Blair, Lorann S.A. Pendleton, and Peter Francis Jr., 167–178, American Museum of Natural History Anthropological Papers, no. 89 (New York: American Museum of Natural History, 2009); Bonnie G. McEwan, "The Spiritual Conquest of La Florida," *American Anthropologist* 103 (2001): 633–644; David Hurst Thomas, "Saints and Soldiers at Santa Catalina: Hispanic Designs for Colonial California," in *The Recovery of Meaning: Historical Archaeology in the Eastern United States*, edited by Mark P. Leone and Parker B. Potter (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 73–140.

within the mission's native population. The spatial structure of mission cemeteries in La Florida also appears to be related to group membership and/or status, a topic not well studied in Alta California. Together, the mission cemeteries of La Florida and Alta California provide similar stories of negotiation that span the North American Borderlands.

Mission cemeteries also remain important places within the modern cultural landscape. In Alta California, many cemetery sites have been lost to agricultural activities or modern development, but they have not been forgotten by the descendants of the indigenous people who lived, worked, and too often died in the California missions. Active lobbying by local native people successfully saved the Ohlone Indian Cemetery, associated with Mission San José, from being destroyed during highway construction in the 1960s.⁴⁶ In the 1980s, widespread protest by an alliance of indigenous groups helped preserve a cemetery associated with Mission San Diego.⁴⁷ And in the 2000s, the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe succeeded in gaining control of archaeological mitigation in the largest of multiple cemeteries associated with Mission Santa Clara, eventually renaming the site in their own language as the Clareño Muwékma Ya Túnnešte Nómmo [Where the Clareño Indians Are Buried] Site.⁴⁸ Yet the public interpretive programs at most California mission sites downplay or ignore the presence of large colonial-era cemeteries,⁴⁹ leaving invisible not just the tragic toll that the missions exacted on indigenous peoples in colonial California, but also the complex processes of resistance, negotiation, and accommodation that unfolded there.

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46. Vincent Medina, "Our Cemetery, Our Elder: Hope and Continuity at the Ohlone Cemetery," *News from Native California*, 29 (1) (2015): 16-19; Randall Milliken, Laurence H. Shoup, and Beverly R. Ortiz, Ohlone/Costanoan Indians of the San Francisco Peninsula and Their Neighbors, Yesterday and Today (Report to National Park Service, 2009), 224-225.

47. Clifford Trafzer, "Serra's Legacy: The Desecration of American Indian Burials at Mission San Diego," *American Indian Cultural and Research Journal* 16 (1992): 57-75.

48. Leventhal, et al., Final Report on the Burial and Archaeological Data Recovery Program.

49. Deana Dartt-Newton, "California's Sites of Conscience: An Analysis of the State's Historic Mission Museums," *Museum Anthropology* 34 (2011): 97-108.