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Images of Order

Descriptions of Domestic Architecture in Mission Era California

THE PROJECT OF CATECHIZING the native population of New Spain was not simply a religious endeavor; Christianization implied acculturation and of course, civilization, in the sense of its roots in the *civitas*, the city. From the sixteenth century onwards, the conversion of America's native population went hand in hand with the creation of new settlement patterns, culminating in the establishment of the missions and villages on the northern fringes of New Spain. Vast territories were given a new spatial structure in accordance with the contemporary Spanish desire to establish an urban culture.

The process of evangelization and catechization of the native populations of America must be understood in terms of cultural transference; Christianization of the native population implied a profound transformation of the autochthonous cultures. The conversion of the "barbarian" into a good subject of the king required Europeanization in many aspects, including the organization and use of space. From the sixteenth century onwards, the friars and the Spanish crown worked on modifying spatial structures on different scales. A distinct order was imposed on the territory through the restructuring of settlements and the modification of architectural space. The superimposition of new structures on pre-Hispanic settlements and the modification of existing hierarchies on a territorial level were among the strategies employed. In the sphere of architecture the implementation of elements such as the atrium or open chapel in sacred architecture is well documented. The recognition of the role of space in the exercise of power and the implementation of social change

was constant during the colonial period and was manifested in different ways throughout the vast territory colonized.

The missionary enterprise in central and southern New Spain imposed a new order on a landscape that was, in most areas, relatively densely populated. During their work converting a largely sedentary population in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the friars of the regular orders marked existing settlements with the construction of monasteries, in some cases reinforcing existing hierarchies, in others creating new central places. In the process, new settlements appeared and existing settlements were reorganized. The congregations or reductions of the indigenous population to form more densely populated settlements counteracted the drastic drop in population during the late sixteenth and seventeenth century, a phenomenon which represented a threat to the Spanish vision of urban life in America.

As the process of evangelization moved into the northern territories, for example among the Chichimecas, the rhetoric of the Franciscan friars with regards to the importance of creating towns as part of the project of Christianization increased. Archival documents are testimony to the importance given to the establishment of villages both in the Custodia de Río Verde and in the Sierra Gorda as well as the inseparability of the project of evangelization and that of urbanization. With reference to Alta California, from the earliest mission period documents there is constant allusion to the reduction of the native population to mission settlements as a priority in the process of catechization, this in spite of the fact that in most of Alta California there existed permanent settlements structured around open spaces, community houses or *temascales*.

In the overall spatial configuration of the missions in northern New Spain, domestic space played an important role. Whereas in South and Central New Spain the indigenous house form probably did not undergo radical changes immediately upon contact, in the North, acting upon house form was a priority among the Franciscan missionaries in order to attain the acculturation of the native population.

Implicit in this project of restructuring the built environment are a series of prejudices with regards to native house forms and settlement patterns vis-à-vis the European architectural and urban tradition. A comparison of the images provided by the missionaries of Alta California with reference to native housing and the new structure imposed on the neophyte population in the mission communities clearly illustrates the friars' attitude toward the local settlement pattern in its dispersed character, the proximity of interior and exterior space

and the widespread use of outdoor spaces for both daily and ceremonial activities. In all likelihood, the underlying order of native villages was not easily apprehended by the European and was perceived as a lack thereof.

In this paper I will examine specifically the images provided by the missionaries of the housing areas in the mission in comparison with their views on the native settlements. I will confront these images with those provided by other actors, such as government officials and visitors to the region, to illustrate the specific preoccupation of the Franciscan friars with an orderly built environment as concomitant to the Christianization of the population and the way in which the discourse of urbanization permeated the missionary project. Early explorers, Franciscan friars, officials and military commanders as well as visitors to the missions left a documental legacy that contributes to an understanding of their awareness of built space and its role in effectuating cultural change. The revision of these documents gives us a glimpse into the perception of order and disorder among these different actors, perceptions that generated discussion on the mission project of providing housing for the neophytes.

Alta California before the arrival of the missionaries

The present-day state of California was, upon the arrival of the Franciscan friars, populated by culturally and linguistically diverse groups. Alfred L. Kroeber identified six linguistic families, divided into twenty subgroups, differentiated, in turn, into dialects, presenting us with a complex ethnic mosaic; Sandos has suggested that there were between sixty-four and eighty “mutually unintelligible languages”.¹ The Spanish naturalist José Longinos, who visited California during the mission period (between 1791 and 1792) remarked on the difficulties of communication in the missions, the use of interpreters and the variations in dialects within small areas; it is notable that at the same time he recognized a series of similar cultural traits shared by the different groups.²

1. Alfred L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California*, New York, Dover Publications, 1976; Cf. James Sandos, *Converting California, Indians and Franciscans in the Missions*, New Haven/London, University of California Press, 2004, p. 15.

2. Salvador Bernabéu, *Diario de las expediciones a las Californias de José Longinos*, Madrid, Doce Calles, 1994, pp. 212 and 227, “No obstante que en este distrito de cuarenta o cincuenta leguas apenas varían en sus costumbres, por seguir la confusión en sus idiomas, en éstos sí varían, pues en este corto terreno he observado hasta cinco. Algunos de éstos suelen diferenciar poco y

It is important to recall that California was, with the exception of Mesoamerica, one of the most densely inhabited areas in North America, with a population that was sedentary in spite of not relying on agriculture for sustenance.³ The environment provided resources that, in conjunction with techniques developed for its exploitation, allowed for the development of a mostly sedentary population with a diet based on acorns, supplemented by fish, meat and diverse plants. Both Crespi and Serra commented in their diaries on the “cultivated” aspect of the valleys they traversed in their first trip up the coast; this was due to the manipulation of the environment on the part of the Native Californian ethnic groups in order to improve food supply. One common practice was to burn fields periodically in order to provide the population with fresh sprouts.⁴ Recently the ecological importance of this has been recognized; the manipulation of the environment in prehispanic California increased the number of plants and altered the limits between different ecological communities, creating new landscapes.⁵ The way in which the native Californians exploited their resources implied a territorial division. Although distinct from the Western conception of private property, the right of certain groups to exploit the territories they inhabited was clearly recognized in native California.⁶ Kroeber described the social organization as based on tribelets which structured space into specific domains with boundaries that were permeable yet clearly identified by the distinct groups that exploited their natural resources. These territories in turn were structured by central villages, where the headman

ellos, unos a otros, se entienden algo, pero los más son enteramente diversos. Esta confusión de ser tantos y en tan corta distancia, hacen de poco utilidad para la Historia el diccionario de ellos, que no serviría más que de confusión”.

3. M. Kat Anderson et al., “A World of Balance and Plenty: Land, Plants, Animals and Humans in a Pre-European California”, in Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi, *Contested Eden; California before the Gold Rush*, University of California Press, 1998, p. 14.

4. Lowell John Bean, “The Rise of Cultural Complexity”, in Lowell J. Bean and Thomas C. Blackburn, *Native Californians; a Theoretical Retrospective*, Socorro, New Mexico, Ballena Press, 1976, p. 32.

5. Anderson et al., “A World of Balance”, p. 52.

6. Francisco Palou, in his *Informe que envió el padre propresidente fray Francisco Palou desde el real presidio de Monterrey al virrey Bucareli con noticias del estado de aquellas misiones* of 1773, refers to private property as well as to wealthy versus poor Indians, Biblioteca Nacional de México, Fondo Reservado, Colección Archivo Franciscano, 4/74.1, ff. 1-10v.

lived, with smaller villages as satellites, depending on the size of the tribelet.⁷ The total population of the coastal area subject to the project of Christianization was probably between 60,000 and 65,000 at contact in 1769.⁸

Literature on the nature of these villages is sparse, although the distinct house types extant have been described; it is again important with regards to the recognition of shared traits, a concomitant attention to the diversity present in the territory evangelized by the Franciscans.⁹ The architecture of California was based on circular forms in plan; the hemispherical buildings were grouped loosely around a larger central structure to form the settlement. Central in this layout would be elements such as a *temascal*, a council house and open *plazas*. An early description by Miguel de Costansó mentions the placement of small houses around a larger central structure;¹⁰ Friar Pedro Font described his reception in a Chumash village, specifically mentioning a flat area at the center “a modo de plazuela” where the people danced for him revealing the role of open space as central to settlement structure.¹¹

Characterizing the house form of the Native Californians is difficult due to the diversity in cultural areas and ecological niches, in conjunction with the paucity of ethnographic descriptions and of the archaeological record.¹²

7. William S. Simmons, “Indian Peoples of California”, in Ramón Gutiérrez and Richard J. Orsi (eds.), *Contested Eden*, pp. 56-59.

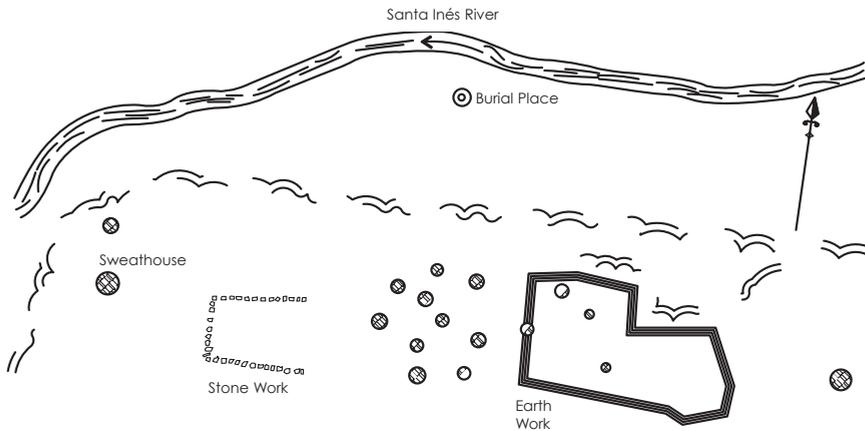
8. Sandos, *Converting California*, p. 1; Cf. Robert H. Jackson, *Indian Population Decline, the Missions of Northwestern New Spain, 1687- 1840*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1994, p. 59.

9. See Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians*; Bean and Blackburn, “Cultural Complexity”; R.F. Heizer and M.A. Whipple (eds.), *The California Indians; a Source Book*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1971.

10. Miguel Costansó, *Diario del Viage Hecho al Norte de la California de Orden del Excelentísimo Señor Marqués de Croix...*, Entry for October 23, 1769, consulted at <http://anza.uoregon.edu>: “Havía en medio de la rancheria un caseron de forma esferica, mui capáz, y las demas casitas de hechura piramidal, mui reducidas de rajas de pino: y por sobre salir a las demas la casa grande, quedó con este nombre la rancheria”.

11. Pedro Font, *Diario del Padre Pedro Font de la Expedición Colonizadora de don Juan Bautista de Anza*, inédito, Biblioteca Nacional de México, Fondo Reservado, Colección Archivo Franciscano, 4/80.1, ff. 1-29v, 2/04/1776, transcription taken from <http://anza.uoregon.edu>: “A poco andar llegamos á la Rancheria, que estava dentro una cañada á orillas de un arroyo pequeño, y nos recibieron los Indios con una algazara indecible: [...] y nos encaminaron al medio de la rancheria en donde havia un plano á modo de plazuela, y luego empezaron á baylar con otros Indios de alli con mucha bulla y algazara.”

12. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians*, p. 809.



1. Scheme of layout of Chumash village “Ranchería Prietos” based on Arlene Benson’s work. Drawn by the author.

Arlene Benson, following the work of Stephen Bowers, has published reconstructions of several Chumash villages that are an important contribution to the understanding of the structure of space in native California.¹³ The complete excavation of one seasonally occupied house revealed a circular structure with a diameter of 5.1 meters. The frame of the door, to the north of the structure, was built using whale bones closing at the top in the form of an arch. The roof was supported by a structure of poles along the perimeter with additional support of four or five posts near the center. The roof was covered with grasses in 5 to 7.6 cm (two to three inch) layers. Interior space was articulated by a central hearth surrounded by flat stones. The floor level increased slightly toward the perimeter and the surface was covered with beach sand.¹⁴ These houses were periodically burned and replaced with new dwellings as the need arose to control insects (fig. 1).

Although the details given refer specifically to the Chumash, the hemispherical house, with important variations in size and structure, appears to have been the most common form in the areas where missions were established. In the area of the Santa Barbara Channel the houses were larger than

13. Arlene Benson, *The Noontide Sun; the Field Journals of the Reverend Stephen Bowers*, Menlo Park, Ballena Press, 1997.

14. R. L. Olson, “Prehistory of the Santa Barbara Area”, in R. F. Heizer and M. A. Whipple (eds.), *California Indians*, p. 222.

in other parts of California, measuring up to 8 *varas* in diameter, with internal divisions. In the south, among the groups Christianized at the missions of San Diego and San Luis Rey, the hemispherical house was built as a partially subterranean structure. The roof structure was covered with branches consolidated with mud. Access to the dwelling was via a narrow tunnel.¹⁵

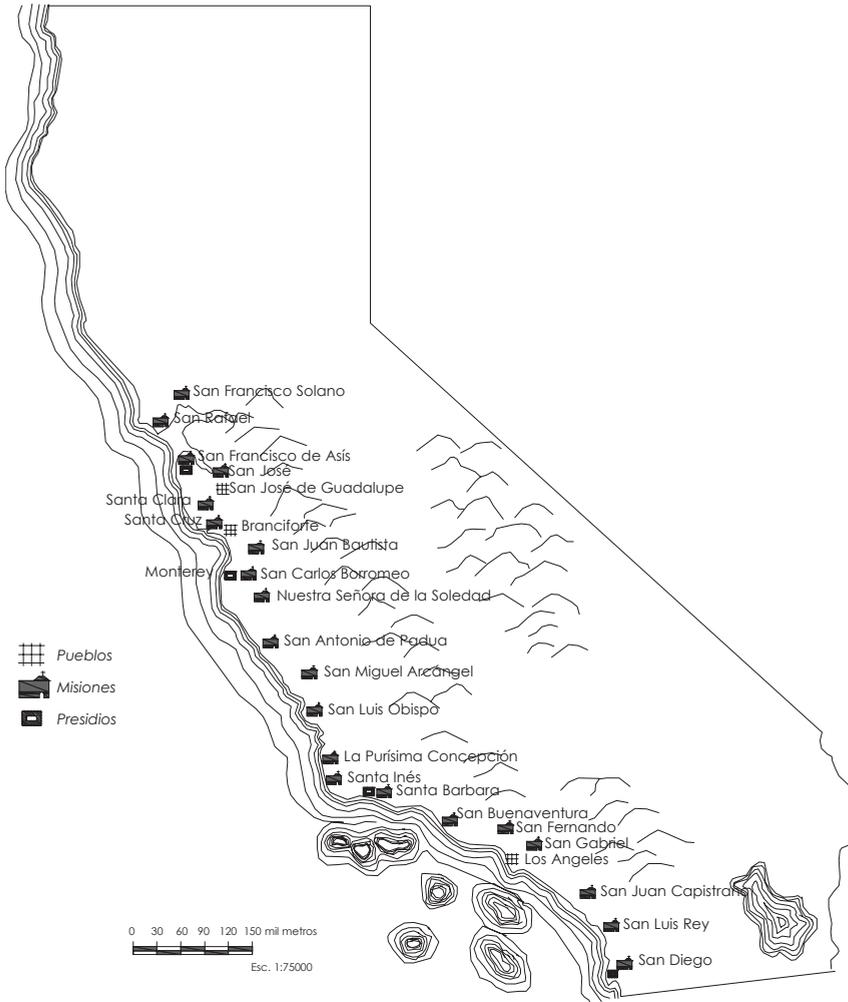
Both dwelling types contributed to the formation of settlements tied intimately to nature, completely integrated into the landscape. The reduced dimensions in domestic architecture in some areas meant that many daily activities such as the recollection and preparation of food would be carried out in the open. Spaces for social interaction outside of the nuclear family included again *temascales* and *plazas*. It is important to emphasize that the specific structuring of space that existed in Native California was completely foreign to the experience of the European evangelizers. Even in the eighteenth century, European cities maintained their medieval heritage with narrow streets and a comparatively high population density; many even retained the closed character of walled towns. The settlements of the native Californians provided a stark contrast to spaces experienced in Europe and, undoubtedly, the friars were severely challenged in perceiving order in these dispersed settlements. As such, the restructuring of the territory, of settlements and of house form became a priority in the process of Christianization of the local population.

The Missions

The missions of Alta California were founded by Franciscan friars, under the initial leadership of Junípero Serra, between 1769 and 1823 along the coast and inland hills of the present day state of California, at that time a northern governorship of New Spain. They formed part of the triad of *presidio*, *pueblo* and mission that gave structure to the territory being colonized (fig. 2).

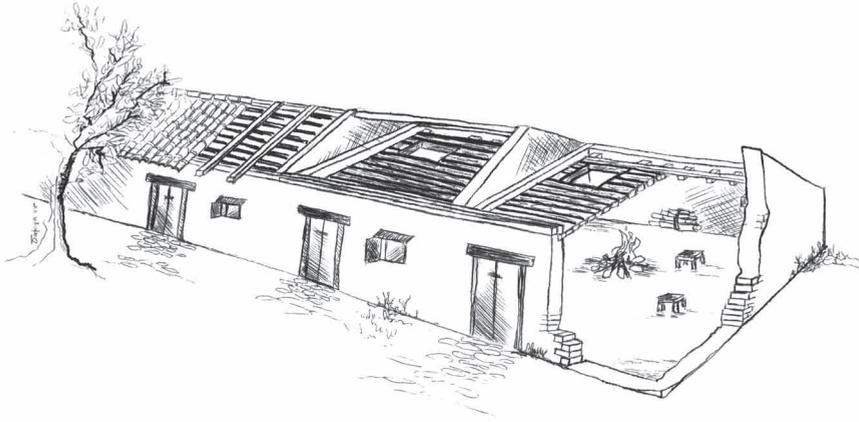
Although roughly contemporary with other mission enterprises in northern New Spain, the California missions adopted a form specific to the needs generated by the implementation of strategies and policies particular to this late missionary enterprise. For example, the complete separation of the mission from the civilian town and the forced residence of the neophyte population within the missions resulted in the mission becoming a complete settlement, a

15. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians*, pp. 654, 709, 620 and 794.



2. Map of California showing missions, *presidios* and *pueblos*. Drawn by the author.

complex architectural compound that included different kinds of buildings such as churches, chapels, baptisteries, workshops for making candles, soap and textiles, carpentry shops, forges, mills, wineries, offices, jails, housing for the military escort, the friars, and the neophytes, as well as cemeteries. Architecturally there are important similarities with the *haciendas* developed in central New Spain around agricultural production and animal husbandry (fig. 3).



3. Hypothetical reconstruction of neophyte housing in a California mission. The small *adobe* rooms housed nuclear families with small children. Illustration by Guadalupe Tafoya after Rebecca Allen and Larry Felton.

The organization of space within the mission centered on the “cuadro grande”, a large quadrangular space enclosed by long wings of rooms used as dormitories, storerooms, friars’ quarters and workshops. Often there was a smaller second square and other outbuildings including housing for the neophytes which was an important part of the mission project. The mission system in Alta California had a population of approximately 21,000 neophytes at its height in 1820 with an average of 1,053 neophytes at each of the 20 missions.¹⁶ Among the individual missions population varied enormously; for example San Luis Rey attended a population of 2,776 at its height whereas some missions, such as Santa Inés, Santa Cruz and Soledad never reached 800.¹⁷ The policy mentioned above of forced residence in the mission resulted in the need to provide housing for neophytes. At the beginning it would appear that natives gathered around the central nucleus of the mission reconstructing the traditional house form, probably within a distinct settlement structure. The examination of images such as that by José Cardero of Mission San Carlos Bor-

16. Robert C. Jackson, *Indian Population Decline, the Missions of Northwestern New Spain, 1687-1840*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1994, p. 59. Note that the twenty-first mission at Sonoma had not yet been founded.

17. *Ibidem*, p. 90.

romeo and a drawing by John Sykes of the same mission brings up the question of the structure of these *rancherías*. The illustrations in question point to the possibility of an orthogonal layout of the traditional house form in the new Christian settlement.

As the mission economy permitted, *adobe* rooms would be provided for neophyte families. The strategies employed in the process of Christianizing of the native population included splitting up the nuclear family, placing young girls and unmarried women in large rectangular rooms called *monjeríos* under lock and key;¹⁸ the young men slept in the *pozolera*, or communal kitchen, in the arcades around the central patio or, at some of the missions, in dormitories built for this purpose. Couples with young children would continue to use the traditional house form during the first years after a mission was founded but were provided with small *adobe* rooms once the mission economy permitted (fig. 4).¹⁹

Housing was undoubtedly an important component in most of the missions established in the northern borderlands, yet it has not figured prominently in the histories of mission architecture which tend to focus on the monumental buildings and those that have survived to the present. In many areas new housing was not provided as part of the mission enterprise; in the Jesuit missions of the Pimería Alta as in most of Baja California the neophytes gathered around the mission in traditional huts and often resided at the mission only on a seasonal basis. The Dominicans in Baja California provided institutionalized housing at some missions as did the Franciscans in Texas, yet nowhere in the North was the project of providing new housing, with a radically different spatial scheme, as ambitious as in Alta California; for example, at Santa Barbara this project resulted in the construction of 252 *adobe* rooms laid out in rows forming alleys.

Birds and Beasts: Early Descriptions of Native Houses and Settlements

Francisco Palou, friend and biographer of friar Junípero Serra, speaking of the work before the missionaries, as they set out for Alta California stated that:

18. Edith Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, Los Angeles, Warren F. Lewis Publishers, 1958, p. 116.

19. San Diego and San Luis Rey are exceptions due to the difficulty of providing food for a stable population. See Kent G. Lightfoot, *Indians, Missionaries and Merchants. The Legacy of Colonial Encounters on the California Frontiers*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, p. 65.

4. Mission San Juan Bautista. The long arched corridors were used in many missions as sleeping areas for the men. Photograph by the author.



[...] to attain such important designs [the colonization of California] it was necessary to bring many evangelizers, with all types of ornaments and sacred cups for the church, household utensils and tools for the fields, to impose on the newly baptized the working of the soil so that, by way of the fruits collected, they would be able to maintain themselves as people, not like birds the way they used to, collecting the wild seeds produced by the countryside, and attain at the same time their culture and advancement [...]²⁰

In this reference, culture, not surprisingly, is associated with sedentarism, a connection present in the word's etymology that developed a long tradition in

20. Francisco Palou, *Vida de fray Junípero Serra y las misiones de la California Septentrional*, Mexico City, Editorial Porrúa, 1990, p. 83, "y que para conseguir tan importantes designios era necesario que viniesen muchos operarios evangélicos, con todo avío de ornamentos y vasos sagrados para la iglesia, utensilios de casa y herramientas de campo, para imponer a los recién bautizados en el laborío de tierras, para que por este medio con los frutos que se cogiesen, pudieran mantenerse como gentes y no como pájaros, según lo hacían con las silvestres semillas que produce el campo, y lograr al propio tiempo su cultura y adelantamientos."

Western culture.²¹ The natives are compared to birds, a fortunate analogy in comparison with the many that would follow.

The diaries of explorers and friars in the early mission period are a rich source of descriptions of native dwellings and settlements. The diaries left by the Portola Expedition in search of the San Francisco Bay in 1769, the Anza Exploratory Expedition in 1774 and the second Anza Expedition to take colonists to Alta California in 1775-1776 allow us insight into the varied perceptions of naturalists, explorers and the missionaries with regards to native culture, house type and settlement. In particular the diaries of Font, Francisco Garcés, Costansó and Juan Bautista de Anza contribute to understanding native California. Other important sources include the *Noticias del Puerto de Monterrey* by Pedro Fages²² and the *Diario de Expediciones a las Californias* by the naturalist Longinos. The descriptions found refer mostly to two particular groups, the Yuma, inhabitants of the desert that straddles the current Mexican—United States border, and the Chumash of the Santa Barbara Channel, although there are also some references to the Yokuts of Northern California.

The vision of the native settlements and houses provided by Font in particular emphasizes the association of culture, or its perceived equivalent, civilization, with agriculture and sedentarism. In the references made to native settlements, dispersion tends to be perceived as disorderly, and associated with the way in which animals live.

In Font's diary there are several descriptions of the houses and *rancherías* of the Yuma; throughout the text these are compared to the lodgings of animals; on November 28, 1775 he described a group of Yumas and Opas around a fire "heaped up like pigs as is their custom". On the same night he took aside the local captain Salvador Palma and explained to him the advantages of Christianity:

I continued by telling him that for this it was necessary that he should learn the doctrine in order that they might be Christians; likewise that they would have also to learn masonry and carpentry, and to till the soil, etc., and that they must live together in a pueblo, which would have to be formed by the people, in order that

21. Terry Eagleton, *The Idea of Culture*, London, Blackwell Publishers, 2000, pp. 1-31.

22. Pedro Fages, *Extracto de Noticias del Puerto de Monterrey*, Biblioteca Nacional de México, Fondo Reservado, Colección Archivo Franciscano, 4/78.0.

they might live close together in their houses and not scattered out as now; and that they would have to make a house for the father and a church.²³

Captain Palma apparently took to heart Font's advice and a year later petitioned the Viceroy that missionaries be sent to baptize his people. As a result of this request a questionnaire was presented to Palma. The questionnaire and the responses registered give us insight into the qualities deemed desirable for the initiation of the process of catechization. The document consists of nineteen questions pertaining to Palma's past, to the customs of his people and to their reasons for wanting to become Christians. Question fifteen specifically asked whether the Yuma were sedentary or "vagabond" to which Palma replied: "The Yuma nation lives in several towns or *rancherías* where they have their crops with much order in one and the other."²⁴

On December 7th of the same year Font would once again compare the Indians to hogs and their homes to rabbit warrens: "Their houses are huts of rather long poles, covered with earth on the roofs and on the sides, and somewhat excavated in the ground like a rabbit burrow; and in each one twenty or more live like hogs. These are not close together in the form of towns, but are scattered about the bottom lands, forming *rancherías* of three or four, or more, or less."²⁵

This discourse with reference to native settlements supported the mission policy regarding residence in the mission. In Alta California, once baptized, the neophytes were forced to live at the mission and punished for unauthorized absences. Font wrote in reference to the mission of San Gabriel in 1776 that

[...] since these Indians are accustomed to live in the fields and the hills like beasts, the fathers require that if they wish to be Christians they shall no longer go to the forest,

23. Pedro Font, *Diario del Padre Pedro*. The reference to masonry and carpentry is also noteworthy.

24. *Representación que el Capitán Salvador Palma hace al virrey pidiéndole autorice el bautismo para él y los suyos*, 12/11/1776 and *Cuestionario presentado al capitán Palma que ha pedido el bautismo y respuestas dadas*, México, Biblioteca Nacional de México, Fondo Reservado, Colección Archivo Franciscano, 1776, 4/81.3, f. 6-10v and 4/81.4, f. 11-13. "La nación Yuma es fija en varios Pueblos o Rancherías, donde tienen sus siembras, con bastante orden uno y otro.", f. 12v.

25. Pedro Font, *Diario del Padre Pedro*, transcription and translation taken from <http://anza.uoregon.edu>, 7/12/1775, 24/12/1775, 5/01/1776.

but must live in the mission [...]. The Christians are distinguished from the heathen in that an effort is made to have them go somewhat clothed or covered [...]²⁶

It is clear in reading Font's diary that Yuman houses and settlements were considered unacceptable as home to a Christian community.

It is noteworthy that other early descriptions of these settlements such as those in the diary of Costansó (who accompanied Gaspar de Portolá in the fall and winter of 1769 in search of the Bay of Monterey) or Longinos, a Spanish naturalist who visited the region between 1791 and 1792, provide quite a different image of the same native settlements. Costansó wrote as a military engineer, carefully recording distances and keeping ethnographical description and subjective impressions to a minimum. He recorded, in his usual objective manner, on August 13th 1769 his observations of Chumash houses in the Santa Barbara Channel. "Near our camp there was a very small Indian village; the inhabitants lived in huts thatched with grass, of a spherical form like the half of an orange, each having a vent in its upper part through which the light entered and the smoke escaped."²⁷ The following day he remarked on another village with "thirty large and capacious houses, spherical in form, well built, and thatched with grass" and appreciated the "handiness and ability"²⁸ of the natives in crafting canoes.

Longinos gave the following description of the Santa Barbara Channel:

These Indians live in society and have a fixed domicile. The houses are close together and well built; they are round like ovens; light comes into the center from the top; they are spacious and quite comfortable; their beds are made on bedsteads with leather and covers to keep them warm with divisions such as in the cabins of a ship and although many sleep in one house, they do not see each other. In the center of the floor of this room they build a fire to cook their seeds, fish and other

26. Ibidem, 1/05/1776.

27. Miguel Costansó, *Diario del Viage de Tierra Hecho al Norte de la California*, transcription and translation taken from <http://anza.uoregon.edu>, "desde este sitio descubrimos un espacio llano que se estendia para el sur, y poniente hasta el mar cubierto de pastos, y con alguna arboleda: había cerca de nuestro campamento una ranchería mui corta de gentiles alojados en sus chozas cubiertas de zacate de forma esferica como una media naranja con su respiradero en lo alto por donde entraba la luz y tenía salida el humo".

28. Ibidem, "contamos hasta treinta casas grandes y capaces de forma esferica bien construidas y techadas de zacate [...]"

comestibles, all that they eat is cooked or roasted. Near this house that they live in, they have another where they store seeds, dried fish, sardines and other food for winter when the cold, rain and movements of the sea do not permit them to look for food.²⁹

A particularly interesting document in its contribution to the understanding of the way space was structured in native California is the *Noticias del Puerto de Monterrey* written by Fages in 1775.³⁰ Fages described settlements and house types, as well as the customs, of native California, with special attention given to the culture of the Chumash of the Santa Barbara Channel. The descriptions of the dwellings are given in terms similar to those employed by Longinos. Referring to a *ranchería* near San Luis Obispo Fages wrote:

There was then a formal town, the most numerous and coordinated of all those seen [...] The houses were thirty, capacious and well built of the same spherical figure mentioned; and the inhabitants, counting only those who came to give us gifts, were not fewer than four hundred.³¹

His report included a very detailed description of the Chumash house:

Their houses are in the shape of a half globe, they are built delicately and able each to shelter four or five families who usually live together being relatives. They leave one door to the east and another to the west and an opening in the center of the roof. The beds are formed above the ground on wooden platforms that here are called

29. Salvador Bernabéu, *Diario de las expediciones*, p. 214, "Estos indios viven en sociedad y tienen domicilio fijo. Las casas tienen juntas y muy bien construidas; son redondas como un horno; la luz les entra por el centro de arriba; son espaciosas y bastantes cómodas; sus camas hechas en tapeste con cueros y tápalos para arroparse, y con sus divisiones como camarotes de un barco y, aunque duerman muchos en la casa, no se ven unos a otros. En el centro del piso de esta habitación hace la lumbre para cocer sus semillas, pescados u otros de sus comestibles, que todo lo comen cocido o asado. Inmediato a esta casa que habitan, tiene otra más chica para guardar semillas, pescado seco, sardinas y otros comestibles para el invierno, que el frío, aguas y revoluciones de la mar no les deja buscar qué comer."

30. Fages, *Extracto de Noticias*.

31. *Ibidem*, f. 18, "Ocurre luego un Pueblo formal el mas numeroso, y coordinado de quantos hasta alli se habian visto [...] Las casas llegarían a treinta, Capaces, y mui bien construidas de la misma figura esferica que sehadicho: y los Vecinos, contandose solamente los que vinieron a obsequiarnos y regalarnos, no bajarían de quatrocientos."

“tapestles”, made of thick poles, serving as a mattress a mat made of reeds and as curtains another four that form a room. Underneath the platform is the bed of the little Indians [...]”³²

Fages reported that the men did not sleep in the house, but rather congregated in “caves”; this is probably a reference to the custom of sleeping in the *temascal*.³³

In Francisco Palou’s *Vida de fray Junípero Serra* there are few references to houses and settlements. A report sent by Palou to the viceroy in 1773 contains many notes on native settlements, most referred to as “formal towns” with “well built houses”.³⁴ Palou, in spite of his uncritical view of the houses of the natives, emphasizes the need to form “towns” in an European sense. A revealing passage of his report mentions the difficulty the missionaries would face in the area of San Luis Obispo. After describing the abundance of food he stated:

Due to this abundance it will not be easy to reduce them to life in the mission: since they are accustomed to living in the place where they have their seeds, and they easily move their towns carrying their houses that they shape out of petates and reeds: only the clothing that they desire may be attractive to them.³⁵

In the writings of the missionaries the formation of new towns and the replacement of the traditional house with *adobe* rooms is a recurring theme. In most of California, as mentioned, the population was sedentary; the missionaries in

32. Ibidem, f. 35, “Sus casas de figura de medios globos, estan construidas con primor y capas cada una de albergar quatro o cinco familias que acostumbran vivir juntos siendo de Parientes. Dejan una Puerta al Oriente, y otra al Poniente, y su Claraboya en la parte superior medio a medio. Las camas se forman en alto sobre tarimas que aca llaman tapestles, de gruesas barras, sirviendo de colchon una estera de tule, y de cortinas otras quatro, que forman una alcoba. Debajo de la Tarima queda la cama de los Yndizuelos, bien acomodada.”

33. Ibidem, “El Indio las mas veces no duerme por las noches en su casa sino llebando consigo sus armas, arco y carcaso, acostumbran estos Gentiles congregarse muchos engrandes cuebas subterráneas, y así pasan las noches [...]”. Cf. “The Chumash Indians of Santa Barbara” in R. F. Heizer y M. A. Whipple (eds.), *California Indians*, p. 255.

34. Francisco Palou, *Informe que envió el padre*, f. 1-10v.

35. Ibidem, f. 4v, “Por cuia abundancia no sera mui facil reducirlos a vivir en la mision; pues estan hechos a vivir en el paraje en donde tienen sus semillas y con facilidad mudan sus pueblos cargando sus casas que forma de petates y tule: solo podra ser atractiva la ropa que mucho apetenen.”

general recognized the existence of settlements and adequate houses. In spite of this, there was a perceived need to replace the settlements and houses in order to establish a new order. In 1796 Señán and Salazar reported the need to found a mission between Monterrey and Santa Clara giving as a reason “in order to keep the pagans from sleeping outdoors”.³⁶ Even in the case of the Santa Barbara Channel, already densely populated by Chumash in clearly structured settlements, the missionaries spoke of the “reduction” of the population and in fact, once the missions were founded in this area, the Christianized natives were moved from the nearby *rancherías* to live within the mission community.³⁷

A New Order: Housing in the Missions

Dwelling spaces for neophytes in the missions were of several types: traditional houses gathered around the mission nucleus, *adobe* rooms provided for neophyte families, dormitories for men and the *monjerío* or dormitory for women.

Palou described the process of formation of the *rancherías* composed of traditional tule houses: as the friars baptized children and took them into the mission, their parents would move to be near them, establishing a new home outside of the palisade that surrounded the compound in the early years.³⁸ Judging from descriptions and images from the mission period, these *rancherías* probably did not retain the native settlement structure, but rather consisted of houses laid out in rows. A new order was established while at the same time some traditional elements, such as the *temascal* and the *tule* huts, were maintained.

From the beginning, keeping girls and unmarried women inside the mission quadrangle in the *monjerío* was a priority. *Monjeríos* were almost always built in the first years after establishing a mission, often at the same time as the friars' quarters. Dormitories for boys were not built at all missions; as mentioned, the men often slept in the kitchen or in the arcaded corridors (fig. 5).

36. Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Mexico City, Californias, vol. 46, exp. 4, f. 198: “[...] y están en la medianía de Monterrey, y Sta. Clara, hay mucha gentilidad, y con el tiempo se fundará Misión, y se evitará el dormir en el campo[...].”

37. Palou, *Vida de fray Junípero Serra*, p. 153, “A vuelta de la dicha visita acordaron ambos lo importante que era la fundación de tres misiones en la canal de Santa Bárbara para la reducción de tanta gentilidad como la puebla, y para asegurar el giro de la comunicación de los establecimientos del Norte con las del Sur [...]”.

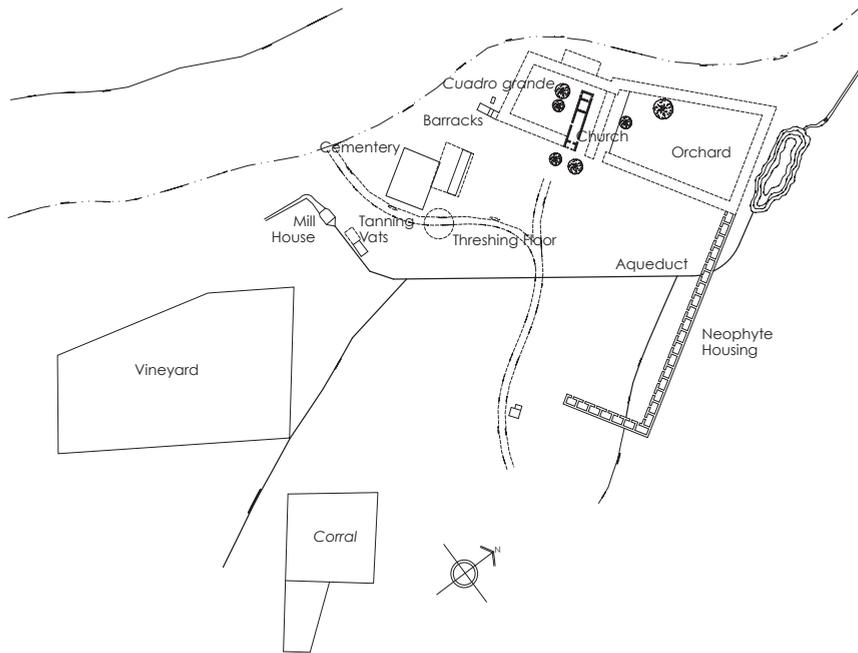
38. Palou, *Informe que envió el padre*, f. 8.

Once a mission was consolidated, work was undertaken to provide the neophytes with new *adobe* houses. A new pattern in the settlement as well as a new house type would contribute to the acculturation of the natives and their identification with European culture. There are a great number of descriptions of these neophyte villages. Various explorers and travelers describe them, as do the missionaries and presidial commanders as part of their reports and in response to inquiries on the part of the viceregal government. The descriptions reveal attitudes toward native houses as well as the importance placed on an “orderly” built environment in the missions.

One of the earliest descriptions of a neophyte village was written by Font upon his visit to the mission of San Gabriel in 1776, where the natives had been gathered around the mission. The house form was still the hemispherical hut, yet the placement of these would appear to relate to criteria of organization of the mission compound as a whole and to the location of the water canal or *acequia*. Font’s description of the neophyte village at San Gabriel contrasts with his writings about the Yuma villages farther south:

After dinner I went with Father Sanchez to see the creek from which they made the *acequia* for this mission of San Gabriel, and with which it has the best of conveniences. For, [...] the *acequia* is adequate, and passes in front of the little huts of the Christian Indians who compose this new mission [...] At present the buildings consist of a very long shed, all of one room with three divisions, which serves as a dwelling for the fathers and for a granary and everything. Somewhat apart from this building there is a rectangular shed which serves as a church, and near this, another which is the guardhouse, as they call it, or the quarters of the soldiers, eight in number, who serve the mission as guard; and finally, some little huts of tule which are the houses of the Indians, between which and the houses of the fathers, the *acequia* runs.³⁹

39. Pedro Font, *Diario del Padre Pedro*, “Despues de comer fui con el P. Sanchez á ver el ojo de agua, de donde sacaron la azequia para esta Mission de San Gabriel, con la qual queda con las mejores conveniencias; porque á mas de que la azequia es competente y passa por delante la casa de los Padres, y de los jacalitos de los Indios Christianos que componen esta nueva mission, [...] Al presente toda la fabrica se reduce, á un jacalon muy largo todo de una pieza con tres divisiones, y este sirve de habitacion de los Padres, de troxe, y de todo: algo apartado de este hay otro Jacal quadrado que sirve de Yglesia: y cerca de este otro, que es la guardia que llaman, ó quartel de los Soldados que estan en ella de escolta, que son ocho: y luego unos jacalitos de tule que son las casitas de los Indios, por entre los quales, y la casa de los Padres passa la azequia.”



5. Scheme of Mission San Antonio de Padua based on Hoover and Costello and drawn by the author. This general scheme of the mission complex shows the neophyte housing in an inverted “L” to the right. The *adobe* rooms opened onto the *plaza* in front of the mission allowing for visual control of the movements of the neophytes within the compound.

A series of documents that is particularly revealing with regards to house and settlement structure was generated in response to a series of accusations of mistreatment of neophytes by father Antonio de la Concepción Horra in 1798.⁴⁰ Following orders from the viceroy, Governor De Borica sent questionnaires to presidial commanders; the same document was sent to each of the missions. The information requested included aspects related to the administration of the missions as well as to daily life, methods used in catechization, diet, workloads, native practices and games as well as the treatment of the neophytes. One of the questions included refers specifically to housing: “What are the dwellings of the neophytes in general and those of the single women or nuns and if these are separate from the mens’ quarters”. The question is followed by the

40. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, ff. 8-10.

recommendation: “This point will be explained with clarity.”⁴¹ The responses of only three missions survive (San Buenaventura, La Purísima Concepción and Santa Barbara) but are eloquent testimony to the missionaries’ vision of the Christian community reflected in an orderly built environment. With these documents at hand, Fermín Lasuén wrote his “Refutation of Charges” in defense of the mission system. The different perspectives of friars and presidial officials as recorded in these documents illustrate the complexity of viewpoints regarding native versus neophyte housing, and specifically the practice of keeping the women under lock and key.

Friars Santa María and Señán of San Buenaventura in response to the questionnaire stated that:

The houses of the Indians of this mission are of sticks and grass, rather large, with curious workmanship, warm and very liable to catching fire. This is the real disadvantage that can be attributed to them; but they are not narrow huts as the Captain says. With time and the favor of God, they will have them of adobe and tile as they are beginning to have them at other missions. Not everything can be done at once [...] the girls and single women sleep together locked in a large room that has its patio for convenient drainage and cleanliness.⁴²

Father Gregorio Fernández of La Purísima Concepción apologized in his report that “the lodgings of the Indians are the same as those they used when pagans since up to now it has not been possible to provide them with others more comfortable”.⁴³ Fernández apparently viewed the native housing as in-

41. *Ibidem*, ff. 12-13.

42. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, f. 97, “Las casas de los Yndios de esta mision son de palos, y zacate, bastante grandes, curiosamente trabajadas, calientes; y mui expuestas a incendiarse. Esta es la verdadera tacha, que puede ponerseles; pero no son estrechas chozas, como dice el Señor Capitán. Con el tiempo, con el favor de Dios, las tendrán de adove, y teja, como ya en otras misiones empiezan a tenerlas. No todo puede hacerse de unavez [...] Las muchachas y solteras [...] duermen juntas, y encerradas en un quarto capaz, que tiene su patio para el conveniente deshago, y limpieza. De dia asisten a los trabajos delas misiones; y en las horas de descanso se entretienen por el patio grande delas misiones, o en el de su vivienda. Los solteros jamas han dormido juntos, ni encerrados.” The translation is mine.

43. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, f. 91v. “Los Alojamientos de los Yndios son los mismos que acostumbraban en la Gentilidad porque hasta ahora no se les han podido proporcionar otros más cómodos.”

ferior to the other buildings in the mission and considered it his responsibility to remedy the situation.

Fathers Tapis and Cortés of the mission at Santa Barbara wrote out the longest and most complete answers of the three, refuting at the same time many of the answers that had been provided by the presidial commander. For example, the latter, in response to the question about the lodgings of the Indians at the missions, had previously stated: "In nothing are the lodgings of the neophytes different from those of the pagans, since one and the other are of grasses and although they provide shelter from the weather they do not assure them against fire, being narrow huts of combustible material."⁴⁴

To this father Tapis responded:

The lodgings of most of the neophytes differ in nothing from those of the pagans of this entire channel, but both are very decent, very comfortable for defending against the cold, the heat and water and of a round figure. They are not such narrow huts; those that most of the Indians have measure 6 varas in diameters, and some 7 and even 8. They are liable to catch fire (in 7 and a half years none have burned) being of poles and reeds. To avoid this, houses of adobe are being built, roofed with tile. In the year of '98, 20 were built for as many families, they are $6 \frac{1}{3}$ varas long by $4 \frac{1}{2}$ varas wide, each with a door and window. It is not easy to make them bigger because of the difficulty of bringing wood with yoked oxen from over 14 leagues away over bad roads [...]. These houses are separated from others by a brick wall and built to form streets.⁴⁵

44. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, ff. 81-81v. "En nada se diferencian los alojamiento^{tos} de los Neof.^s de los Gentiles, pues unos y otros son de zacate, y aunq.^e los resguarden del intemperie no los aseguran del fuego, siendo unas estrechas chozas de materia tan combustible".

45. Ibidem, "Los alojamientos de los mas de los Neofitos en nada se diferencian de los Gentiles de toda esta canal, pero unos y otros son mui decentes, mui comodos para defenderse del frio, del calor, y de la agua, y de figura redonda. No son tan estrechas, chozas que no tengan las mas de las casas de los Indios 6 varas de diametro, y algunas 7, y tambien 8. Estan expuestas al incendio (en siete años, y medio ninguna se ha quemado) por ser de palos, y carrizo. Para precaver esto se estan fabricando casas de adobe techadas con teja. El año de 98 se fabricaron 20 para otras tantas familias. tienen de largo 6 varas, y una tercia cada una, y de ancho $4 \frac{1}{2}$ varas. Tiene cada una su puerta, y su ventana. No es facil hacerlas mas grandes por la dificultad de traer la madera con yuntas de mas de 14 leguas de distancia y casi todo mal camino. Este año se han techado 31 como las antecedentes pero aun no se habitan todavía, porque aun les falta puertas, y ventanas, y tambien revocarlas con mezcla. Estas casas se separan unas de otra por medio de un tabique, y estan en forma de calle."

Tapis and Cortés also emphasized the enthusiasm of the neophytes for the new housing. He reported that after building the first 20 houses of *adobe* in 1798, they “explored the inclinations” of the neophytes and found that the “experience of the 20 families who lived in them had raised desire in the rest”. They went on to describe the difficulties involved in getting wood for the roofing and how the neophytes enthusiastically built a road to reach the pine forests in order to ensure that the work on the *ranchería* could continue.⁴⁶

The friars’ assertion that the neophytes desired the new housing is interesting. Research done on the housing units and the baptismal records at la Purísima Concepción supports the idea that the new *adobe* rooms were reserved for the most acculturated part of the neophyte population.⁴⁷ George Vancouver, in his 1793 description of mission Santa Clara also spoke of a select group who were given the new dwellings as did Frederick Beechey with reference to San Carlos Borromeo.⁴⁸ This vision of neophyte acceptance of the new houses

46. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, f. 89v, “Pensaron los P.P el año de 98, hacer casas de adobes, y techarlas de teja. Se exploró su inclinación, los más mostraron deseo de que se hicieran aquel año se hicieron 20, y con la experiencia de las 20 familias que las habitaban se avivó el deseo de los demás. Se les propuso la dificultad que ocurría para continuar esta grande obra, y era de donde se traería la madera, y ellos mismos, dieron noticia de la madera, que se está trayendo a la Mision. Inmediatamente se enviaron Yndios a reconocerla, y vinieron con la noticia de que habia mucha madera de pino, pero lexos el parage, y que casi desde la Mision hasta el pinal era Serrania, llena de peñascos. No se desanimaron por eso, antes se ofrecieron componer de tal manera el camino que pudieran las yuntas arrastrar la madera necesaria para la Mision. Se les propuso pues, que se presentaran los que voluntariamente quisieran ir a esta obra, util si, pero trabajosa, y se presentaron muchos más de los que se podían enviar [...] para el año venidero se ha determinado entre los P. P. hacer 31 casas para los Yndios”.

47. Glenn J. Farris and John R. Johnson, *Prominent Indian Families at Mission La Purísima Concepción as Identified in Baptismal, Marriage and Burial Records*, Santa Clara, California Mission Studies Association, 2000, p. 21.

48. George Vancouver in Francis J. Weber, *Prominent Visitors to the California Missions*, Los Angeles, Dawson’s Book Shop, 1991, p. 30. “A certain number of the most intelligent, tractable, and industrious persons, were selected from the group, and were employed in a pleasant and well adapted spot of land facing the mission, under the direction of the fathers, in building for themselves a range of small, but comparatively speaking comfortable and convenient habitations. The walls, though not so thick, are constructed in the same manner with those described in the square at St. Francisco, and the houses are formed after the European fashion, each consisting of low commodious rooms below, with garrets over them. At the back of each house a space of ground is enclosed, sufficient for cultivating a large quantity of vegetables, for rearing poultry, and for other useful and domestic purposes. The buildings were in a state of forwardness and when finished, each house was designed to accommodate one distinct family only [...]”; Frederick

differs from observations of Duhaut-Cilly at San Luis Rey in 1826. There he noted that neophytes had rejected the housing provided by the missionaries, considering it unhealthy and had returned to their traditional huts.⁴⁹ Hugo Reid, a Scot married to an indigenous woman and an ardent defender of the native culture, wrote in 1852 of the dissatisfaction of the Gabrielinos with the new housing imposed on them and their joy when the mission was secularized and they were “permitted to enjoy once more the luxury of a tule dwelling”.⁵⁰

In addition to the responses quoted from the Santa Barbara *presidio* there are answers to the questionnaire from the presidial commanders of San Francisco and Monterey. The answers are short and to the point in the case of San Francisco where Arguello reported houses of *adobe* for the missions of Santa Clara and San Francisco and traditional housing for San José and Santa Cruz. Hermenegildo Sal in his answers for the *presidio* of Monterey described the use of traditional houses at several different missions:

The dwellings that the Indians have at San Carlos, Soledad and San Juan Bautista are huts that do not protect them from water, wind, sun and cold. This is due to the laziness of the Indians since they have good grasses to make rooms and they don't make them. Those of San Antonio, San Miguel and San Luis Obispo, even though they are huts, they are well built—they protect them from all they can, sun, water and wind.⁵¹

In a separate report Raymundo Carrillo of the *presidio* of Santa Barbara in 1802 described San Luis Obispo, where they were building *adobe* houses, “in very

William Beechey in Francis J. Weber, *Prominent Visitors*, p. 75. “The buildings are variously laid out, and adapted in size to the number of Indians which they contain; [...] It is only the married persons and the officers of the establishment who are allowed these huts, the bachelors and spinsters having large places of their own, where they are separately incarcerated every night.”

49. Auguste Bernard Duhaut-Cilly in Edith Webb, *Indian Life*, p. 32; Cf. Kent G. Lightfoot, *Missionaries and Merchants*, p. 65.

50. Robert F. Heizer (ed.), *The Indians of Los Angeles County: Hugo Reid's Letters of 1852*, Los Angeles, Southwest Museum, 1968, pp. 78 and 98.

51. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, f. 17v, “Los Alojamientos que tienen los Indios en la Misión de San Carlos, Soledad y San Juan Bautista son unas chozas que ni les liverta del agua, viento, sol ni frío, esto lo causa la misma desidia de los Indios pues tienen buenos sacates de que hazer habitaciones, y no las hazen, los de San Antonio, San Miguel, y San Luis Obispo, aunque son chozas estan vien echas—les livertan de todo quanto les puede, sol, agua y viento.”

good order, forming streets” and in Santa Clara where “the streets formed a rancheria in very good order where the families live comfortably”.⁵²

The information provided by the questionnaires with regards to the *rancherías* illustrates the importance of “order” and “cleanliness” in both the commanders’ and friars’ versions, although their general assessments of the missions might differ. The descriptions of the *monjeríos* show greater contrast and highlight another central issue: control of the native population.

The *monjerío* or dwelling space for the women was one of the most polemic aspects of the mission; women were locked into these rooms at night at most missions, and may have had restricted movement within the day. The responses to the questionnaire give conflicting views of this institution and of the dwelling spaces used to enforce the policy.

In 1798, the presidial commander Hermenegildo Sal of Monterey stated that both sexes were locked up at night “with no bed but the floor and the sad piece of cloth of their dress”;⁵³ the response from San Francisco, in similar terms, mentioned men and women alike being under lock and key after evening prayers.⁵⁴ The commander from Santa Barbara gave greater detail in his response:

52. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, ff. 109v-110. “En punto a Alojamientos delos Yndios, devo decir que en la Mision de San Francisco es un quadro grande, cerrado con solo una Puerta, construido de Adobe, y su techo de texa; y vive cada familia en su quarto separado: la de Santa Clara, forma la rancheria las Calles en mui buen orden, y havitan con comodidad las familias; cuya construccion es De los mismos Materiales que la de San Francisco asi lo vi en año de 97 que Salí de aquella parte. En la Mision de San Antonio aunque subsisten una u otra casa delas familias, construidas de Adobe, y techadas de Sacate, todas las Demas Havitaciones de estas son Pagisas ala usanza que quando eran Gentiles. Las de San Luis Obispo, y Santa Barbara se estan construyendo en el día todas las havitaciones delas familias en mui buen orden, formandolos sus calles y con sus Puertas de tablas cada casa, demodo que concludida la obra vivirán las familias de estas dos Misiones con sobrada comodidad, y con especialidad en San Luis, que pasa el Agua por medio delas Casas; y la de Santa Barbara tiene otra Circunstancia, que es estar Amurallada De Pared doble como de Tres varas de alta, las Demas Misiones todas sus rancherías de Casas Pagisas asi como las tenian los Yndios en su Gentilidad.”

53. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, ff. 16v-17, “El Alojamiento de las Solteras que (llaman Monjas) y el de los Solteros — son habitaciones de la misma misión dentro del Quadro que forman, separados unos de otros, y poco después de la oración por lista los llaman los padres y encierran bajo de llave auno y a otro sexo, sin mas tendido que el puro suelo [...]”

54. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, f. 13, “En las Misiones de San Francisco y Santa Clara tienen sus Alojamientos de casas de adobe techadas de teja la mayor parte de los casados, en los de Santa Cruz y San Jose son de sacate sus avitaciones mal formadas y en las quatro duermen las

The single women or nuns are subject to a room in the mission where they live continually; in some parts such as at San Buenaventura they have a contiguous patio with a good wall so that at night they can take care of their necessities. These nuns or single women, while they are so, cannot have license to leave the mission and only leave their cloister under the eye of their guardians in order to go to work with the rest of the people. Only in Santa Barbara do they have free time. The unmarried men sleep together in the quadrangle, in the kitchen or other working spaces after one of the fathers has locked up the nuns, in the same way he lets them out in the morning, to avoid any disorder.⁵⁵

Father Tapis of Santa Barbara described the *monjerío* at Santa Barbara as comfortable, measuring 17 by 7 *varas* with a tile floor, one large window and four small ones for light and ventilation. He mentions a *caño* or drain pipe, “for the necessities they may have during the night” and a wooden platform for the women to sleep on.⁵⁶

Governor De Borica’s description of these spaces differs greatly from Father Tapis’s. In 1797 he referred to “rooms so small and poorly ventilated and so pestilent that having wanted to observe them at hours when they were swept and without people, it was not possible for me to tolerate even a minute in any of them.”⁵⁷

In 1824 Otto von Kotzebue, a Russian visitor to California, described the *monjerío* at the mission of Santa Clara as a long building similar to a prison, adding

solteras en un quarto dentro del combento de la Misión donde las encierran de parte de noche los P. P. ejecutando lo mismo con los solteros en otra pieza que es regularmente la Pozolera que esta afuera del combento.”

55. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, ff. 19v-20, “Las solteras o monjas estan sugetas aun Quarto dentro la Mision donde viben continuamente; en alguna parte como en San Buenaventura tienen contiguo un corral de buena tapia para que de noche hagan en el sus nesecidades. Estas monjas o solteras mientras lo son no usan de licencia. Para salir fuera de la Mision y solo salen de su clausura a Vista de sus Guardianes a los trabajos con la demas gente solo en Santa Barbara tienen en sus ratos de descanso algun mas desago. Los solteros se hazen dormir juntos dentro del mismo quadro en las Pozoleras u otras oficinas después que alguno de los P. P. Ministros ensierra alas monjas a las que delimismo modo se les abre por la mañana para evitar todo desorden.”

56. *Ibidem*, f. 82.

57. *Ibidem*, ff. 39v-40, “piesas reducidas y poco ventiladas y tan pestilentes que habiendo querido yo reconocer algunas en tiempos que estaban barridas y sin gente, no me fue posible aguantar en ninguna de ellas ni un minuto.”

[...] these dungeons are opened two or three times a day, but only to allow the prisoners to pass to and from church. I have occasionally seen the poor girls rushing out eagerly to breathe the fresh air, and driven immediately into the church like a flock of sheep by an old ragged Spaniard armed with a stick. After mass, they are in the same manner hurried back to their prison.⁵⁸

Discussion

As president of the missions Father Fermín Lasuén answered the accusation of Concepción de la Horra. His refutation of charges of the California missions written in 1804, was based on his experience in California as well as on the documents remitted by the missionaries. In this text he admitted to the continued use of the traditional house form, but emphasized order and cleanliness in the mission communities:

Although the houses of the Neophytes are no different in materials or shape from those of the Gentiles, they are in cleanliness and good conditions, which the missionaries look after. The Christians are also improving the disposition of their houses and it will be rare to find one in a narrow hut like they had when they were pagans.⁵⁹

58. In Robert H. Jackson y Edward Castillo, *Indians, Franciscans and Spanish Colonization; the Impact of the Mission System on California Indians*, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1995, p. 81.

59. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, f. 69, "Aunque los alojamientos de los Neofitos no se diferencian en sus materiales y en su formación estos que usan los Gentiles, pero sí en la limpieza y buena condición, en que regularmente cuidan los misioneros. Van también los Cristianos mejorando la disposición de sus casas, y raro será el que se acomode ya a vivir en choza estrecha, como la que tenía en su gentilidad. En el canal de Sta Barbara nunca usaron sus Naturales de semejantes chozas estrechas, siempre tubieron a diferencia de lo restante de esta Conquista, viviendas suficientemente capaces. Sin con ahora como antes de palizada y zacates y por eso expuestos al incendio, es bien sabido que en muchos años ni en Misiones ni en Pueblos ni en Presidios hubo Yglesias, habitaciones ni oficinas de otra calidad, que ellas mismas se conservan todavía algunas piezas en muchas partes y en el del Presidio de San Francisco casi todas. Según se haya dios y se va pudiendo se hacen fabricarse de adobe, o siquiera techadas de teja. Así eran ya (no se como no lo ha dicho el Señor Governador o alguno de los Comandantes) las casas de los Yndios de San Francisco y de Santa Clara, surtidas muchas de ellos y se irán surtiendo las otras de metates, comales, ollas, cazuelas y haranles ornitos para cocer pan en San Luis Obispo se han hecho muchas, y mas en la Mision misma de Santa Barbara, con puertas, y ventanas y con comodidades que envidian los Presidiales y Pobladores. A lo mismo se aspira en las demas misiones."

He continued with a description of the comforts the new housing provided in some of the missions, mentioning that these awakened envy in presidial soldiers and townspeople. It is important to remember when reviewing this document the fact that Lasuén was writing a defense of the mission system in the midst of serious accusations of mistreatment of the neophytes and poor administration of the missions.

There had been disagreements between government officials and the missionaries on the management of the missions and specifically on the treatment of the native population from the start. James Sandos discusses the radically different viewpoints of Junípero Serra and the first military commander of San Diego and Monterey, Pedro Fages, the former, product of medieval thought, the latter of the Enlightenment.⁶⁰ The Franciscans established strict controls on the neophytes in Alta California considering that “only civilization could teach the Indian morality.”⁶¹ It should be mentioned that the control of the native population, besides facilitating the inculcation of a new moral code, also guaranteed complete control of the work force, a specific source of contention between *presidios* and missions.

Toward the end of the eighteenth century these basic differences in approach to the colonization of Alta California had come to a forefront. The drop in population of the native Californians had caught the attention of governor De Borica. In a document written in 1797 the then governor dealt with the problem concluding with four reasons for the decline in population in the missions which basically laid the blame on mission policy regarding forced residence in the mission and housing.

First, De Borica signaled the lack of liberty in contrast to the freedom the Indians were accustomed to before living in the mission. He also mentioned the heavy work load and lack of food, the lack of cleanliness in the *rancherías* and, finally, the custom of locking the women up in “small poorly ventilated rooms.”⁶² Analyzing the same problem, Joaquín de Arillaga in 1804 wrote to the Viceroy José Yturriagaray saying that he did not consider it “convenient to give comforts to the California Indians, but rather would leave them to their free will in their huts or outdoors and surely they would enjoy greater health.”⁶³ This proposal

60. Sandos, *Converting California*, pp. 48-54.

61. *Ibidem*, p. 50.

62. AGN, Provincias Internas, vol. 216, ff. 39v-40.

63. AGN, *ibidem*, ff. 119-119v, “En quanto a los Alojamientos de los Yndios se que hoy dia en algunas Misiones se les a proporcionado Havitaciones competentes, pero fui en otro tiempo al

reflects Enlightenment thought and specifically reminds us of the ideas of Jean Jacques Rousseau, in particular the idea of the “noble savage”.⁶⁴

The documentation reviewed is complex; not all missionaries held the viewpoint of Font in his comparisons of the Yuman to animals. Still, most held the view that it was of utmost importance to replace the native house and settlement with new structures, that is to say that “civilizing”, or making “urbane” was the way to creating a new Christian society.

The point being discussed throughout was, on the surface, order, specifically in the built environment. But underneath this level of discussion, the real point at hand was one of control of the native population. Michel Foucault, in an interview on his ideas about the relationship between space and social control emphasized the role of space as fundamental in exercising power.⁶⁵ In the missions of Alta California, space, in particular dwelling space, was paramount in control of the neophytes. Illustrative of this is the fact that the *rancherías* of *adobe* rooms were for the most part enclosed by walls or laid out around a central square with one entrance. The disposition, which adhered to European notions of order in the form of orthogonal space, also facilitated control of the new Christians and vigilance over their comings and goings. The location of the soldiers’ barracks facing this access to the neophyte housing reinforced this control.

During the seventeenth century ideas regarding the importance of urban space in modeling the behavior of citizens and the recognition of a link between social customs and house form had become prominent in urban design texts in Spain;⁶⁶ without suggesting a direct influence of these texts on the architectural layout of the missions, it would seem fair to assert that these ideas were a motivating factor in the imposition of a new built order. ❀

parecer contrario ya un abundo en el mismo, no tengo por conveniente presentarle comodidades al Indio californio antes bien le dejaria a su arbitrio en sus chozas o ala inclemencia, y seguramente gozaria de mas salud, probaria este aserto (extraño a muchos) con echos positivos, pero suspendo por no alargarme.”

64. Jean Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, New York, Dover Books, 2003.

65. Michel Foucault, “Space, Knowledge and Power; interview with Paul Rabinow”, in Neil Leach (ed.), *Rethinking Architecture; a Reader in Cultural Theory*, London, Routledge, 1997, pp. 369-370.

66. Pedro Fraile, *La otra ciudad del Rey; ciencia de policía y organización urbana en España*, Madrid, Celeste Ediciones, 1997, pp. 26, 57 and 117; Anthony Vidler, *The Writing of the Walls; Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1986, p. 31.