Conventional wisdom has it that, in the eighteenth century, California’s mission Indians labored without recompense to support the Spanish military and other costs of imperial administration. This article challenges this conventional wisdom, arguing that it was not until the Spanish empire unraveled in the nineteenth century that Indians labored at missions with little compensation. Spain stopped subsidizing California in 1810, at which point the systematic non-payment of Christian Indians for goods supplied to the California military was implemented as an emergency measure. In 1825, independent Mexico finally sent a new governor to California, but military payroll was never reinstated in its entirety. Not surprisingly, most accounts of military confrontation between California Indians and combined mission/military forces date from the 1810 to 1824 period. By investigating an underutilized source—account books of exports and imports for four missions—the article explores two issues: first, the processes of cooptation inside missions up to 1809, and secondly, the way that Spain’s cessation of financing in 1810 affected the relationship with Indians.

Key words: California, Missions, Indians, economic history, memoria account books

A chasm has emerged between the public conviction that coercion held Indians in California missions and indications in the archives that social pressure and cooptation played major roles. Indians “were not marched to the baptismal font by soldiers with guns and lances,” wrote Randall Milliken.¹ Yet Kent Lightfoot was relying on contemporary eye-witness accounts when he wrote, “The missions resembled penal institutions with the practice of locking up some neophytes at night and restricting movements outside the mission grounds.”² What explains the discrepancy in their accounts? The

prevailing explanation is to attribute the discrepancy to the distinct cultural lens of the sources these scholars used. Milliken analyzed Spanish documents, while Lightfoot used Russian ones. An alternative explanation will be posited here: the differing interpretations are not the result of disparate cultural lens, but rather result from the distinct ways imperialism was financed before and after 1810.

California lost its government financing in 1810, a structural change that caused the relationship between missionaries and Indians to become increasingly conflictive between 1810 and 1824. Milliken ended his analysis in 1810, so his descriptions refer to Indian-Spanish relations when California had a budget. Lightfoot’s Russian sources, by contrast, generally described California after 1812, the year Fort Ross was founded. By the time of Lightfoot’s sources, the Spanish colony had lost its imperial financing. The more violent relationship between missionaries and Indians after 1810 was not the basic modus operandi of Spanish imperialism. Rather, the violence was a sign of the unraveling of the imperial structure in California.

Account books from San Diego, La Purísima, Santa Clara, and San José substantiate this thesis. The first part of this article analyzes spending patterns to explore the processes inside missions that missionaries prioritized before 1810. The emphasis on religious ceremony raises the possibility that missions influenced the interior life of Indians more than is currently understood. The second part of the article considers how the loss of financing for such processes altered the relationship between missionaries and Indians.

The four account books used as the basis for this article were selected from the twelve available in Mexico’s Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) to represent the different regions of California, and also to represent the three waves of mission foundings prior to 1810: the 1770s (San Diego and Santa Clara), the 1780s (La Purísima), and the 1790s (San José). Each book includes forty to seventy pages

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3. Documentos para la historia de Mexico, AGN, Mexico City. Similar account books exist in the AGN for the following missions: San Luis Rey, San Juan Capistrano, San Gabriel, San Miguel, La Soledad, San Carlos, Santa Cruz, and San Juan Bautista. All the account books are missing five years of data 1796 to 1800. The La Purísima accounts have been previously analyzed by Marie Duggan in “How the Budget of the Missions Contributed to Relationships with Indian Communities” in Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz,
of itemized annual imports with an explanation of the sources of funds to pay for them. The books list price and quantity for each item along with distinguishing features such as color or quality. Goods were purchased in Mexico City by the Franciscan Padre Procurador at the Colegio de San Fernando and then transported by pack train to the Naval Department of San Blas. A few additional purchases were made by a syndic based in Tepic (an administrative center a short distance from San Blas), with the whole shipment then delivered to California by the navy. Although the account books were technically maintained until 1828, goods were only sporadically shipped to California after 1809, and regular deposits of government funds ceased after 1813. By 1812, the Viceregal treasury no longer honored checks written by the California military. Occasionally goods got through (1817), or funds were deposited into the accounts in Mexico City (1823), but these positive developments happened so rarely that the institutions of mission and presidio had to come up with entirely different means of self-financing. Contraband trade was not listed in these account books, which do include government-sanctioned exports. Elsewhere, I have estimated that two-thirds of California’s income in the 1801–1809 decade came from the transfer of government revenues from New Spain, with the remaining one-third coming from Pacific Rim trade.

The context for the break in the supply line from Mexico City was the imprisonment of the King of Spain by the French in 1808. By 1810, the system of inter-imperial fiscal transfers broke down, and political chaos was spreading from Buenos Aires to Lima, Mexico City, and San Blas. While the Viceroyalty of New Spain may have been relieved that it no longer had to transfer tax revenues to Spain, California had been a net recipient of funds from that viceroyalty, and so the cessation of the system caused a fiscal crisis.

This article refers to the period from 1769 to 1809 as “Spanish California,” and the period after 1825 as “Mexican California.”

5. See Marie Christine Duggan, “Fiscal Transfers and Contraband Trade in Alta California, 1769 to 1809.” Presented to the Asociacion Mexicana de Historia Economica (AMHE) at Colegio de Mexico in February 2015.
Although Mexico became independent in 1821, the government did not assert authority over Alta California until it sent José María de Echeandía as governor in 1825. Thus, 1810 to 1824 was a period when imperialists in California were stranded without an empire.

**Missionization prior to 1810**

The patterns of spending in account books suggest that missions were designed to co-opt the interior allegiance of Indians. In contrast, the scholarly literature suggests that Indians entered mission life because of external force, including military violence, disease, or ecological change. Sherburne Cook believed early missionaries such as Junípero Serra, Fermín Lasuén, and Francisco Palóu used only voluntary methods.\(^6\) He dates the turn to involuntary conversions to the 1790s, rather than the date posited here of 1810.\(^7\) The baptism of 467 Indians at San Francisco between October of 1794 and May of 1795 weighed heavily on Cook’s periodization.\(^8\) He assumed that such a large inflow of people was the result of military force. However, Randall Milliken found that the San Francisco missionaries were caught off guard by the arrival of hundreds of Huchiun and Saclan from the East Bay, and he concluded that the East Bay peoples had themselves decided to convert as a political response to changed socio-economic conditions caused by the permanent Spanish presence. Between October 1794 and May 1795, Mission San Francisco’s population nearly doubled and the preceding year’s agricultural harvest was inadequate for the larger population. Furthermore, January and February are cold and damp months in San Francisco. By March of 1795, a deadly epidemic broke out, which Milliken believes was typhus. By August hundreds of East Bay Ohlone left the mission and later killed the mission Indians sent to negotiate their return. The Spanish ultimately founded Mission San José in the East Bay by means of pitched battle in order to control the disaffected Huchiun and Saclan. Milliken ended his analysis in 1810, and he concluded that

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7. Ibid., 73–74.
8. Ibid., 59, 70. Of 2,642 cases of “fugitivism,” 710 were from San Francisco between 1790 and 1800. Of thirty reasons given by Indians for fleeing missions, twenty-four were for leaving San Francisco in 1795.
while force was not used to get Indians into missions, “native people who decided they had made a mistake in joining a mission community . . . were forcibly returned.”

Even Milliken’s more nuanced conclusion may overstate the case for force during the pre-1810 time. For example, at San Buenaventura in 1800, the military accused the missionaries of failing to retrieve baptized Chumash who left the mission. José Señan denied the accusation but in terms that suggested a certain porosity. “No way do we permit Indians to go wandering around the mountains at will and without permission, although it is true that some are absent for a good long time,” he wrote, adding that “the number absent with permission . . . is typically quite a few.” At neighboring Mission Santa Barbara, missionaries wrote that “one quarter of the [Christian Indians] are typically absent.” At San Diego, even fourteen years after the mission was founded, more than half the Christian Indians lived in their original Indian villages with the acquiescence of the missionaries.

One gap in the argument from physical coercion is that missions were not walled compounds. Rather, missions were landed institutions that increased over time to the size of modern counties. As cattle and sheep herds grew, some Christian Indians lived away from the main village for two weeks at a time, coming in for Sunday mass. Furthermore, although the military—cognizant that its main advantage over Indians was the horse—attempted to prevent Christian Indians from riding, missionaries actually encouraged Indians to become vaqueros. Officially, the missionaries justified this policy by the need for managing livestock. Unofficially, the mission vaqueros were a protective force more loyal to the missionary than was the military. Prior to 1810, Christian Indians were typically—though not exclusively—sent alone to retrieve baptized people who rejected the mission way of life.

10. José Señan to Felipe de Goicoechea, 21 October 1800, Santa Barbara Mission Archive Library (SBMAL).
11. Estevan Tapis and Juan Cortés to Fermín Lasuén, 30 October 1800, transcript SBMAL.
12. Mission San Diego annual report, 1788, AGN.
13. Fermín Francisco de Lasuén to Pedro Fages, 21 August 1787, SBMAL. “[Given] the livestock . . . that each mission possesses, men on horseback are required to take care of them, and these have to be Indians because there is nobody else.” Finbar Kenneally, ed., Writings of Fermín Francisco de Lasuén (2 vols., Washington D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1965).
Recent literature suggests that alternative external forces—disease and ecological destruction—made Indians too weak to resist Spanish pressure. Steven W. Hackel writes that without the germs and the environmental destruction caused by Spanish cattle, the Spanish would not have been able to control California.14 Daniel Larson, John Johnson, and Joel Michaelsen have shown that elevated drought levels occurred during the late eighteenth century.15 Further, Jan Timbrook, Johnson, and David Earle explained that the Spanish banned burning of grasslands by Indians and so eroded the productivity of traditional Indian subsistence methods.16

Viewing the mission system for 1769 to 1809 as a whole, exterior physical force such as violence, disease, and environmental disaster existed, but such forces do not seem sufficient by themselves to explain the daily decisions of the majority of Indians to cooperate with mission life by 1800. For example, disease could just as easily serve to weaken mission control of Indians rather than strengthening it—as evidenced by the departure of Huchiun and Saclan peoples after San Francisco’s 1795 typhus epidemic. To be effective, social control must involve some cooptation of interior life. As the sociologist Mary Jackman writes perceptively, “The surest method of social control is to induce subordinates to regulate themselves.”17

We do know that the Spanish relied on the policy of congregación—pulling disparate small Indian communities into one larger mission village—because it was essential to behavior modification. Community had a centrifugal social aspect that leveraged two missionaries’ social power over hundreds—and later thousands—of Indian people at each mission. The pain of corporal punishment for deviations from Spanish expectations was multiplied because it involved humiliation before the eyes of the community. Congregación increased the power of missionaries to control socially. That is, social control succeeded


not because of disease, but despite the increased mortality that resulted from concentrated populations and also despite the difficulties missions experienced raising food by means of agriculture.

Indeed, Latin Americanists have found the enigma of colonial New Spain to lie in the fact that a highly unequal society with little social mobility endured for hundreds of years without a standing army. In eighteenth-century New Spain, personal connections were the key to economic success and social peace. Indians in particular adhered to the new society through their personal relationship with a Spanish priest and through the grafting of family networks to those at higher ranks in the hierarchy by means of godparenthood.

Processes within missions, 1769 to 1809

Analysis of spending patterns reveals how Franciscans spent money in order to glue Indians to the new communities. Once the processes at missions of the early period are delineated, it becomes clear how the loss of financing in 1810 could have contributed to fear and brutality between 1810 and 1824. Forty years of intense cultural, economic, and political change will be divided into an early phase (the first ten years of each mission) and the last decade of the Spanish period, 1801–1811. By 1810, California missions had achieved peak economic success, and nearly every Indian on the coast of California had converted to Christianity. The first ten years after a mission was founded were, in contrast, austere. At Mission San Diego (1774) crops failed, only a minority of Indians had been baptized, and even they kept one foot in the pre-contact society and organized revolt. Mission Santa Clara (1777) was more successful


20. Note that deliveries were uncertain after 1810, but orders were placed until 1813. By utilizing the data for 1810 and 1811, I am implicitly assuming that the permanence of the economic change of 1810 had not yet been absorbed when orders for 1811 were placed.

21. Mission San Diego was originally founded close to the Presidio overlooking the port in 1769. No purchases were made for this mission until 1771. The location near the Presidio was set aside to re-establish the mission as an independent community in Mission Valley (Nipanguay) in 1774. The “first” decade presented here is then the 1774–1783 period of the second mission.
agriculturally than San Diego. Mission La Purísima was not founded until 1787, so its first ten years may have been less risky.

Given the Kumeyaay uprising at San Diego in 1775, there can be no doubt that there was considerable violent conflict in the early years of that mission. Nonetheless, account books demonstrate that the money side of management at the mission was used to bring funds into the Christian Indian community. As Figure 1 shows, Kumeyaay labor was rarely the source of Mission San Diego’s income in the early years. Instead, the government-run Fondo Pio provided the stipend to the missionaries. Although the Viceroyalty of New Spain used tax revenues to fund the military in Spanish California, the viceroy had used harvest revenues from estates in central Mexico to fund the Baja California and Alta California missionaries. These estates were known as the Fondo Pio. Wealthy philanthropists had initially donated them to the Jesuits with the idea that revenues from the harvest would fund the evangelical project in Baja California. When the government expelled the Jesuits in 1767, it expropriated the estates and began to reduce their capital value by funding military ventures. Living heirs of the elite donors protested, arguing that annual revenues from the ex-Jesuit estates should continue to fund evangelism in California. The government used the revenues to fund Baja California and Alta California missionaries after 1769.

Although the government provided the bulk of financing, Figure 1 reveals three other sources. In 1778, Commander Fernando Rivera y Moncada of Presidio San Diego donated 100 pesos to the mission. The next source of financing involved the labor of Christian Indians: exports back to San Blas on the annual government supply ship in 1781. Though the San Diego account book does not state the product, tallow is a possibility, as the mission had three hundred head of cattle and eight hundred sheep at this time. By 1784, Christian Indians were producing goods for sale to the local military, which paid for them as the figure shows. The mission’s exports and products locally sold were produced by Indians in this decade, and payment was made for both.

Figure 1. Sources of Funds, Mission San Diego Memoria, 1771–1785. Source: Account book for Mission San Diego, AGN.
Early on the mission provided sixteen fanegas of wheat and two bulls worth forty-eight pesos to the Presidio for which the Presidio did not pay.\textsuperscript{25} By the early 1780s, Mission San Diego had also provided 400 to 500 pesos of items to individual soldiers, for which Lasuén had expected the Presidio Commander to compensate the mission out of the soldiers’ pay.\textsuperscript{26} Lasuén insisted. By 1784, the military was paying hundreds of pesos per year; it is not clear if this payment included the debt previously incurred.

To explore whether financing at San Diego was part of a pattern, early years at two other missions will be presented: Mission Santa Clara, founded in 1777, and Mission La Purísima, founded in 1787. Figure 2 demonstrates that at Santa Clara, as at San Diego, government funding was the primary source of operating funds in the first decade, while goods produced by Indian labor were sold after 1783 and payment was received. Santa Clara received a charitable donation of over 200 pesos to assist with the founding funds. By 1783, the Tamien Ohlone were producing goods sold as exports or sold to the military. Such sales were for money—in other words, the military did not take Tamien-Ohlone–produced goods for free. As at San Diego, this payment by the military came at the cost of a bitter battle with missionary Tomás de la Peña, who incurred the enmity of the local military commander. But the military did pay.\textsuperscript{27}

Government financing was also the primary source of funds for La Purísima (see Figure 3), whose first decade started ten years later than the other two. It is also clear that goods produced by the Chumash were sold for money, particularly in 1791. The 1791 payment shown in Figure 3 was for the export of otter hides on the San Blas supply ship, and it seems large because it was actually delayed compensation for otter hides delivered during the previous four years. As at San Diego, sales of Chumash goods to the military appear as a second compensated item by 1794. The La Purísima Chumash congregation supplied the military with twenty-two fanegas of beans,

\footnotesize

\textsuperscript{25} Corn sold for one-and-a-half pesos per fanega. Whether the Presidio could pay back forty pesos of corn with thirteen fanegas of wheat was disputed, since wheat cost double corn. Prices from Presidio-Mission Santa Barbara account book, 1793–1805, SBMAL.


Figure 2. Sources of Funds, Santa Clara Memoria 1777–1787. Source: Account book for Mission Santa Clara, AGN.
Figure 3. Sources of Funds, La Purisima Memoria, 1787–1796. Source: Account book for Mission La Purisima, AGN.
twenty-eight arrobas of flour, five fanegas of salt, three head of sheep, and two religious services (provided by the friars). In addition, four Christian Chumash worked for the Presidio for twenty days between February and March. On June 10, 11, and 12 twenty Christian Chumash worked at the Presidio, in July ten Chumash from the mission worked for three days, and then twenty Chumash for a day or two. The labor service and the products were compensated.

The conclusion is that government funds financed early activities at all three missions, and Indian labor and Indian-produced goods earned extra income for the congregation. Looking at the documentary record, there were disputes in early years at both San Diego and Santa Clara about the military compensating Indians at missions for the goods that the soldiers wanted. Missionaries argued that the military should pay for—rather than simply take—Indian-produced goods, and by the end of the first decade at both missions, military payments were regular.

The next question is how the money that came from exports and from sales to the military was used at the missions. In other words, did the income from such sales go to Indians, to Franciscans, or to the military? Figure 4 illustrates that around 400 pesos of Mission San Diego’s income was typically spent on personal needs of the two friars in the first ten years, with an unusual increase toward 600 pesos in 1784 and 1785. If we recall that the missionary stipend was 800 pesos (two missionaries at 400 pesos each), then it emerges that far from exploiting Indians, in these early years missionaries actually transferred from one-quarter to one-half of their stipend to the native congregación. Indeed, missionaries tended to hold their own standard of living down to the level of a soldier in the military, 240 pesos per year per man.

The methodology used here is deliberately conservative and may inflate the estimates of expenditures by missionaries for 1784 and 1786. Most of the items shipped to missions came from Mexico City. They were transported by pack train to Tepic, a town close to the Pacific port of San Blas. At Tepic, thirty or forty pesos of goods were added, itemized as spices, dried shrimp, sugar, and rice in 1779.

28. Rains in January tended to cause damage to adobe, necessitating repair in February. Harvests took place in July.
29. Presidio–Mission Santa Barbara account book, 1793 to 1805, SBMAL.
Figure 4. Spending, Mission San Diego Memoria, 1774–1785. Source: Account book for Mission San Diego, AGN.
Assuming all “efectos de Tepic” were the tastes of home for Spaniards, they were included with Franciscan consumption. However, over time, imports from Tepic began to number in the hundreds of pesos and were no longer itemized. It is possible that the roughly 200 pesos of “efectos de Tepic” purchased in 1784 and 1786 were not for Franciscan consumption.

Otherwise, the definition of “personal needs of the friars” comes from a letter by Lasuén in which he includes clothing (habit, sandals, underwear, sombrero, and cord of a friar), along with medicines, candlewax, chocolate, and wine for mass. I have also included with missionary needs such items as snuff, the barrel of aguardiente, spices such as cinnamon and cumin, bed linens, and chinaware.

Freight charges were significant, which stands to reason given that the goods were shipped by mule from Mexico City to San Blas and then from San Blas by ship to California.

The same pattern of low missionary consumption, freight charges, with the bulk of income going to the “welfare of the Indians” emerges in Figure 5 from Santa Clara and Figure 6 from La Purísima. Typically, two friars consumed 400 pesos per year in the first decade, allocating the other half of their stipend to the mission Indian congregación, and holding down their personal consumption to about the level of a presidio soldier. Of course, the obvious next question is how the missionaries defined the well-being of Indians, and whether the Kumeyaay of San Diego, the Chumash of La Purísima, and the Tamien Ohlone of Santa Clara would have agreed. Figure 5 indicates that cloth for Indians, tools, beads, and religious objects were the goods imported for Indians. The tools were primarily for agriculture and cooking in the first decade. The clothing was often striped sayal (sackcloth). Sayal was ordered by the


32. Clothing for Franciscans is defined as coat, boots, underwear, woolen slippers, bed blankets, habits and rope belt, a blouse, a manto listed specifically as for Tomas Peña, handkerchiefs, sandals, sombreros (de ternico), bellybands, tunics of sayalete (specifically for Peña and Murguía), shawls, shoes. It is possible that some of these goods were for a female personal servant (the blouse and rebozos, for example). They were unlikely to be for Indians, however, due to the cost and to the small quantity (1 huespil, for example). The purpose was to subtract out anything that was not for the use of the Indian congregation, so it seemed best to err on the side of allocating too much to Franciscans.

33. In 1780, there was no shipment from Mexico City, only a small shipment from Tepic.
Figure 5. Spending, Mission Santa Clara Memoria, 1776-1785. Source: Account book for Mission Santa Clara, AGN.
Figure 6. Spending, Mission La Purísima Memoria, 1787–1796. Source: Account book for Mission La Purísima, AGN.
bolt, along with an annual bolt of bayeta azul mexicana, hundreds of blankets, bolts of manta de 2/3, bolts of manta de 7/8, and bolts of paño azul de la tierra. Wearing clothes was the symbol that a native person was a Christian, a more important symbol even than wearing a cross. Lasuén wrote that “[The Kumeyaay] look on [clothing] as the mark that distinguishes them from the pagans.” A soldier commenting on the Kumeyaay uprising in 1775 at San Diego mentions that he knew during the battle whether Indians were Christian or not, by the clothing they wore.

An early mission aimed to get agriculture working to sustain a sedentary community. Tools ordered in the first decade include hoes, shovels, plow shares, plow points, machetes, and axes. These tools were used for clearing land, for pulling up roots, and for digging shallow irrigation ditches between rows. Surprisingly, beads were not a large part of the order after the first year. Perhaps beads were a concession to the indigenous system of value, so that once Indian society became more Hispanic, beads lost value. Whether Indians valued agricultural tools is not clear. Certainly many Indians disliked agriculture intensely early on, but their opinion may have changed after irrigation infrastructure produced more fruitful harvests.

Types of goods imported for the congregation’s use during the first decades of Mission San Diego and Mission Santa Clara are shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8 below. There is a surprising amount of contrast between the two missions, in terms of the large quantities of agricultural tools ordered by Santa Clara in the first two years. Possibly the larger shipments of agricultural tools to Santa Clara reflect the greater fertility of its soil; Santa Clara would prove to be a breadbasket, while San Diego struggled for self-sufficiency in grain. Otherwise, the pattern between the two is similar: beads in first year, emphasis on cloth, and a few large religious shipments to outfit the church. After a burst of spending in the first years, imports were lower, and no shipment was recorded from Mexico City in 1780 to either San Diego or Santa Clara.

34. Lasuén, annual report San Diego, Dec. 31, 1779 in Kenneally, Lasuén, 346.
36. The highest amount spent on tools was 277 pesos, 1770.
Figure 7. Breakdown of “Welfare,” San Diego Memoria 1774–1785. Source: Account book for Mission San Diego, AGN.
If we turn now to Mission La Purísima’s first decade (Figure 9), a pattern similar to that at Santa Clara emerges: an initial large shipment leaning toward agricultural implements, followed by emphasis on cloth, and smaller shipments. A one-time large purchase for the church initially was followed by smaller religious purchases to free up funds for cloth. The import of beads in 1791 stands out, given that bead purchases had tapered over time at Missions Santa Clara and San Diego. The 1791 beads were to be used as a sort of currency to obtain otter hides from the unconverted Chumash, as part of the government project to initiate the otter trade around 1790.

Another question is whether native people appreciated the religious objects of devotion. Initially such objects included a lace-trimmed surplice and other vestments, cloth covers for crosses, and one or two baptismal fonts. Five years into the founding of a mission, images were ordered for the church; these were initially inexpensive paintings on canvas which could be rolled up during shipment; a picture of Saint John baptizing Christ was typical. In the first decade there was usually only one large shipment for the church, following the year in which it was constructed. There were two large shipments at San Diego because the church was razed to the ground in the Kumeyaay uprising of 1775 and then rebuilt and re-outfitted a second time.

The uprising at San Diego did lead to some limited record of Kumeyaay sentiment toward the images and vestments. Although the rebels broke the crucifix, they took care not to break the other images, which they carried to their homes. This suggests that they viewed the images as benevolent and perhaps powerful. Some Kumeyaay rebels wore the vestments in the days following the attack, suggesting that they held them to be emblems of some worth.37

The decade of peak economic success for the pre-1810 institutional structure was 1800–1809. Mission San José was founded in 1797, and the decade 1801–1809 was both its early years and also the mission-wide decade of economic success.

Even at Mission San José, which was brand new and born in conflict, sales to the local military plus exports of Indian-produced goods rapidly rivaled funds from the government as the source of mission monies (see Figure 10). Though the government otter venture had failed, missions had begun to export otter hides through

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Figure 10. Sources of Funds, Mission San José Memoria, 1801–1812. Source: Account book for Mission San José, AGN.
informal channels on the San Blas supply ship, perhaps one hundred per year at six to eight pesos per hide.

The multiple sources of funds for this mission in its first decade already suggest that the last decade of Spanish dominion in California witnessed an economic boom. This suggestion is confirmed by data from Mission Santa Clara (1800–1809), shown in Figure 11. There, sales of Tamien-Ohlone–produced output had by 1801 eclipsed government financing as the source of funds for the mission. Indeed, by 1806, sales of Tamien-produced output would be about six times as large as the government stipend. Perhaps the mission thought it was largely self-financing, and yet that was not true, because the sales were nearly all to the local military or exported on the government supply ship. Without government financing for the colony, Santa Clara would have had nothing but charity like that of Fr. Magín Catala who made a 1,000 peso donation to his own mission in 1803.

We now turn to La Purísima’s financing in the decade of economic growth, as shown in Figure 12. Though ten years younger than Santa Clara, La Purísima, too, relied less on government subsidy and more on sales of Indian-produced output to the local military or to San Blas by 1801. Where Mission Santa Clara had peak income of nearly 6,000 pesos in 1806, La Purísima’s income peaked in 1808 at 4,000 pesos.

When the government of Spain sought “donations” to keep afloat after the King’s imprisonment by the French in 1808, La Purísima was in a position to donate the annual mission stipend of 800 pesos. Doing so did not seriously reduce La Purísima’s income, as Figure 12 indicates. Perhaps that is why La Purísima made the donation, while San Jose did not. What grounds Santa Clara had for exemption are not evident.

Turning to the spending patterns in the 1801–1811 period, missions ordered increasing amounts of the unidentified goods from Tepic. If, as in the early years, these remained spices, rice, and sugar, were they still for the Franciscans? More likely, the goods imported from Tepic were no longer limited to such food items. By 1796, Guadalaxara (near Tepic) was cutting in on the traditional monopoly of Mexico City merchants on the resale of global imports to Mexicans. 38 Furthermore, the port of San Blas had been opened.

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Figure 11. Sources of Funds, Mission Santa Clara Memoria 1800–1809. Source: Account book for Mission Santa Clara, AGN.
Figure 12. Sources of Funds, Mission La Purísima Memoria, 1801–1811. Source: Account book for Mission La Purísima, AGN.
to buy from and sell goods to ships from Callao and Panama. For both reasons, it is quite possible then that merchants in Tepic were after 1796 selling a greater range of goods. This subject is one for further research, and for now “efectos de Tepic” are listed in the post-1800 graph as a separate type of spending.

It is difficult to determine whether or not missionary consumption had expanded beyond the typical 400 pesos (per two people) without knowing for whom these large purchases of items from Tepic were intended. Figure 13 from Mission Santa Clara and Figure 14 from Mission La Purísima indicate this challenge. If items from Tepic were largely food items for missionaries, then Franciscan consumption was on the rise and in three separate years may have exceeded the stipend. If we assume items from Tepic are not for missionaries, missionaries held down their own consumption to about 500 for two people until around 1808, and they never exceeded the 800 peso stipend. Even so, there is a pronounced uptick in missionary consumption in 1809. In 1809, the uptick in Franciscan consumption at Santa Clara was due to the purchase of lampshades and an extra barrel of wine. At La Purísima, the uptick reflects the purchase of a gold watch for 200 pesos. Both missions also purchased medicines. Medicinal orders were on the rise by 1809, and at Santa Clara in 1811 sixty types of medicine cost 143 pesos (see Figure 15). While Lasuén had stated in 1777 that medicines were for friars, there were only thirty Indians living at San Diego that year. Given that the Spanish staffing level of a mission remained two friars in 1810, and that the Chumash congregation at La Purísima included 978 people, it seems likely that the sixty kinds of medicine ordered there in 1811 were for the entire congregación. However, to err on the side of caution, medicines are included with Franciscan personal needs, even in 1811. It seems odd that a decade of economic success coincided with rising illness—yet recent scholarship suggests freer trade in the Pacific may have been the source of disease.

A brief look at San José’s spending patterns in Figure 16 shows a very different picture at this young mission, which was founded in

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40. Mission La Purisima annual report, Dec. 31, 1810, SBMAL.

Figure 13. Spending, Mission Santa Clara Memoria, 1801–1810. “Net personal needs of friars” is “personal needs of friars” less “efectos de Tepic.” Source: Account book for Mission Santa Clara, AGN.
Figure 14. Spending, Mission La Purísima Memoria, 1801–1811. “Net personal needs of friars” is “personal needs of friars” less “efectos de Tepic.” Source: Account book for Mission La Purísima, AGN.
Figure 15. Medicines for La Purísima Memoria, 1787–1811 (no data 1797–1800). Source: Account book for Mission La Purísima, AGN.
Figure 16. Spending, Mission San José Memoria, 1801–1811. “Net personal needs of friars” is “personal needs of friars” less “efectos de Tepic.” Source: Account book for Mission San José, AGN.
1797. Franciscan consumption remained around 400 pesos or less for two missionaries. Even if one assumes the items from Tepic were for missionaries, Franciscan consumption exceeded 500 pesos only once. Yet even the new mission experienced some of the general wave of economic growth after 1806. If we compare Mission San José’s first recorded decade 1801–1811 with that of San Diego 1774–1785, San José had about three times as much funding during its early years. Total spending never approached more than 3,000 pesos, about half of what neighboring older Mission Santa Clara experienced.

Because a good bit of mission income was generated by the labor of Indians after 1801, the question of how the congregación’s income was spent takes on more importance in assessing the issue of exploitation. The spending patterns at missions reveal how Franciscans defined well-being of Indians in the last decade of the Spanish period of California missions. The analysis will begin with the long-established Mission Santa Clara, proceed to Chumash La Purísima, and then return to Mission San José, which was newly operating in contested terrain.

What stands out at Mission Santa Clara, shown in Figure 17, is the large quantity of religious goods imported after 1800. Indeed, every time mission income exceeded 1,500 pesos, the extra revenue was channeled into objects for outfitting the church or for religious devotion. The emphasis in the early decade on cloth (recall Figure 8 above) had been switched by the final decade to religious expenditures. What were these religious expenditures?

In 1802, six large silver candleholders used up 531 pesos. Recall that in 1803 Catalá had made a 1,000 peso donation to his own mission (refer to Figure 11). His charity was meant to finance the import of a retablo collateral—a floor-to-ceiling gilt framework for holding statues and paintings in niches behind the altar. Indeed statues of the Virgin, Saint Joseph, and the archangel Michael were ordered at the same time for about 50 pesos each, plus another 45 for a crown of silver for the statue of Mary. In 1805, a slew of comrades joined them: Saint Anthony, Saint Anne, Saint Francis of Solano, San Joaquín, and Santa Coleta, along with a metal Christ for the altar (40–60 pesos per statue). By 1809, two metal Christs for the altar (137 pesos each) had been imported. In general, architectural decorations for the church cost more than images. In addition to the retablo, there was a sotabanco dorado (a kind of arch) for 369 pesos in 1801. Elaborate metal candleholders were ordered repeatedly in this decade, with expenditures in the hundreds of pesos each year.
Figure 17. Breakdown of “Welfare,” Mission Santa Clara Memoria, 1801–1809. Source: Account book for Mission Santa Clara, AGN.
La Purísima, too, spent extra income on decorating the church or religious ceremony, as Figure 18 shows. La Purísima, however, seems to have defined “extra” as income over 2,000 pesos rather than 1,500. La Purísima likewise ordered a retablo collateral, for eleven hundred pesos in 1811.

Compared to objects for decorating the church, clothing for individual Indians in the first decade was easier for this secular American scholar to understand as compensation to the congregation for its labor and loyalty. One might assume that the items for the church were not valued by the congregation—if that is the case, then the decade 1801–1811 witnessed a tremendous increase in exploitation. However, this interpretation lost its power for this author after she traveled throughout Mexico in the course of locating the archival documents analyzed. The attachment of descendants of Indians in small rural towns to religious ceremony stood out. And indeed the ceremonies involve parades of dressed images carried on biers, local music bands, and fireworks—just the items imported in the last Spanish decade of California missions. There is nothing scientific about late twentieth-century observations in rural Mexico to draw conclusions about eighteenth-century California. Further efforts to explore the issue led to William B. Taylor’s analysis of the impact of Bourbon reforms on the relationship of priests and parishioners. Taylor found that government attempts to reduce expenditures on religious fiestas were fiercely resisted by Indian parishioners.42

Perhaps pre-1810 Spanish mission society viewed prestige primarily as an attribute of the community, rather than the individual. Clothing was an important marker for one’s membership in a mission congregación in 1780, but by 1800 the congregación manifested its success relative to other communities through the construction of a church and through the splendor of its fiestas, which were religious but also popular. The near simultaneous purchase of the expensive retablos colaterales at La Purísima and Santa Clara suggests a certain rivalry, and Catalá’s use of personal funds suggests the intensity with which such décor was appreciated—whether by Catalá alone or by the congregation as a whole? That is the unresolved question.

The interpretation that Indians did value religious ceremony is lent support by the consistent imports after 1801 of fireworks, and of

42. Taylor, Magistrates of the Sacred.
Figure 18. Breakdown of "Welfare," Mission La Purísima, 1801–1810. Source: Account book for Mission La Purísima, AGN.
the impressive quantity of religious instruments imported by all three missions analyzed here in the 1800–1811 period. Santa Clara imported two bass *bandolóns*, two clarinets, two flutes, four violins, two cymbals, two trumpets, one bugle, two triangles, two violas, one drum, one expensive choir book (132 pesos), and four “masses for instruments.” Three musicians at Santa Clara stood out as leaders of the orchestra, in which each member both played and sang. La Purísima and San José ordered quite similar instruments on a smaller scale in the same decade, and Narciso Durán (missionary at Santa Clara) was inspired to raise the standards at Santa Clara after he heard the quality of the San José orchestra. In 1808, missionary Payeras at La Purísima specified that the colors of his chasuble should be red and white, perhaps tapping into Chumash color preferences. Juan Pacifico, an Indian artist, decorated the interior of Mission San Buenaventura; Teófilo painted the interior of San Juan Capistrano prior to 1812.

For the issue of exploitation, the question of how native Christians felt about the church building and the religious ceremonies is crucial. Lisbeth Haas discusses the incorporation of a traditional whale image into the Chumash painting of San Rafael from Mission Santa Ynes, and she wonders if the face of the powerful and somber archangel in the painting may have represented a particular Chumash leader. The abalone shell altar at Mission Santa Barbara also suggests that the Chumash had amalgamated some of their ancient objects of veneration into the icons of the Spanish religion. This syncretism does not prove, but does suggest, that the religious ceremonies in which these objects were used held some interior meaning to those who created the objects. Clearly, it is easier to infer some Indian appreciation of an image made by Indian hands. The reason

43. Account books from La Purísima indicate the following imports: one trumpet in 1801, two drums and two guitars and one *bandolón* in 1803, two violins and one cello in 1804, two guitars in 1805, three triangles in 1806, one French horn in 1808, two flutes in 1809. The account book from San José lists: one triangle, two trumpets, two violins and one viola in 1808, two violins, one guitar, one flute and one item called a *manucordio* (which may or may not have been a musical instrument) in 1809, two flutes, four violins, and one viola in 1811. James A. Sandos discusses music at Santa Clara after 1806 in *Converting California: Indians and Franciscans in the Missions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 136–38.


these images were made in California was probably the inability to get religious imports from New Spain after 1810. Understanding what Indians thought of imported paintings is one step harder.

The allocation of such a high percentage of the mission budgets to religious items between 1800 and 1810 suggests that the images and ceremony were useful to winning over Indian people. Although Hackel argues that California missionaries were ineffective at inculcating Catholic beliefs, the spending pattern suggests that between 1801 and 1810 Franciscans involved Indians in the creation of music and art for religious ceremonies that would have held powerful appeal.\(^{46}\) A comparison of expenditures on capital (tools for production) relative to religion is illuminating. Mission Santa Clara invested 1,000 pesos in tools in 1809, and Mission La Purísima 1,000 pesos in 1806. Initially agricultural tools such as hoes were purchased, along with large cauldrons for cooking communal meals. After more than fifteen years, Mission La Purísima invested in metal-working equipment (\textit{instrumentos para la fragua}). By 1800, the mission had considerably more capacity for cloth production. Imports included twenty-four wool cards and scissors for shearing sheep, as well as heddles, spindles, and a comb for making \textit{bayeta} that was two yards long. Only two looms were ordered, back in 1794. Either missions made the looms and imported only the complicated parts, or else the looms came up in the years for which data is missing (1796–1800).

What is shocking is how much capital accumulation the mission sacrificed in order to improve religious ceremony. In 1809, Santa Clara could have imported five times more productive equipment, if it had foregone religious investment. Instead, the community sacrificed productivity for improved ceremony. Indeed, corn and wheat flour were typically ground by hand even in 1806 when over 10,000 Indians lived on missions.\(^{47}\) There were only six mills built for nineteen missions prior to 1809.\(^{48}\)


\(^{48}\) Edith Webb, \textit{Indian Life at the Old Missions} (Los Angeles: W.F. Lewis, 1952), 153–54 puts mills at Santa Cruz (1796), San Luis Obispo (one in 1798, another in 1805), and San Antonio (1806). Mardith Schuetz-Miller, \textit{Building and Builders in Hispanic California 1769–1850}, (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994), 171, 179 adds Santa Clara (1792), and San Francisco (1793).
Taylor uses the term “spiritual capital” to describe the tendency of colonial Spanish society to invest into religious objects. He argues that “within [church] walls, there was an intimacy between priests and parishioners and a converging experience of the sacred that were rarely achieved elsewhere…the parish is to be found not so much in the church itself as in the succession of people who built, paid for, maintained, used, and rebuilt it; who prayed, rejoiced, wept, witnessed, confessed, learned, delivered sacraments, instructed, punished, and had words there.” If we transpose these ideas to California, Taylor’s insights suggest that mortality data alone is not enough to understand the Spanish-Indian relationship. Rather, the personal connection between missionaries and Indian congregants at times of baptism, confession, and burial mediated more than we understand.

La Purísima experienced a similar pattern of spiritual rather than physical capital accumulation. Though this Chumash mission was still predominantly agricultural in 1809, the economy was diversifying into craft goods. Metal-working equipment was purchased by 1805, around the same time as increasing purchases of inputs to making cloth. La Purísima had more leatherworking equipment than Santa Clara in the final decade and was also purchasing more tools for woodworking and masonry. After 1800, there must have been Chumash blacksmiths, shoemakers, weavers, and masons—in addition to the field hands and cowboys typically associated with mission life. By 1803, Chumash men at neighboring Mission Santa Barbara were working as masons, shoemakers, and blacksmiths. The tools purchased suggest that each mission aimed for self-sufficiency, and each produced much the same as the next. In 1806, religious expenditures were eight times as high as productive investment, confirming that the sacrifice of productivity in favor of religious ceremony was no aberration at Santa Clara.

To conclude the discussion of the Spanish period, the accounts did provide some insight into social control. The high percentage of mission income spent on clothing for Indians in the early years, coupled with the battles to get the military to compensate Indian

50. For example, Tiburcio Jecha; see Duggan, *The Chumash and the Presidio: Evolution of a Relationship, 1782–1823* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Trust for Historical Preservation, 2004), 43–44.
labor, suggests that missionaries were trying to make mission life of some use for Indians who lived there. The high spending on religion after 1800 suggests that improved religious ceremony had a more positive impact on Indian adherence to mission life than would have resulted from the equivalent amount of spending on tools to raise productivity. At least, this conclusion is warranted if missionaries were rational. Some will argue that missionaries were not rational when it came to religion. I tend to conclude from the data that religious ceremony had a powerful effect consolidating community with the Indian congregation, and I wonder if arguments that Indians had little attachment to the Spanish religion were too hasty.\footnote{Hackel, \textit{Children of Coyote}, for example, makes this argument.}

Regarding exploitation, it is difficult to reach solid conclusions without knowing whether the native congregations at Santa Clara, La Purísima, and San José considered the mission churches their own. It is clear, however, that in the early decade, the Franciscans transferred roughly half their stipend to the congregation. Even when Franciscan consumption rose in the boom years of 1806–1810, it was typically lower than the 800 peso stipend allocated to two missionaries. Finally, payments from the military for Indian labor and Indian-produced goods largely made the expanded religious ceremony and other economic benefits possible after 1800.

\textbf{Imperialists without an empire, 1810 to 1824}

If personal ties and intense peer pressure seem the keys to understanding social control in Spanish America, descriptions of extreme physical coercion in California have contributed to a sense that California was an exception. One vivid description came from a Russian in 1822 who witnessed Spanish soldiers using gunfire to terrify an unsuspecting village in the middle of the night. The soldiers then lassoed the panicked Indians and dragged them bound behind their horses to a mission. The Russian described mission Indians as assisting the soldiers and wrote that the captives were turned over to a mission, not to Presidio San Francisco.\footnote{Achille Schabelski in Glenn Farris, eds., \textit{So Far From Home: Russians in Early California} (Berkeley: Heyday, 2012), 106–7; see also James R. Gibson, ed. and trans., \textit{California through Russian Eyes, 1806–1848} (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2013), 213.}

This account is unique only in that it purports to be from an eyewitness. The numerous Russian assertions that the Spanish forced
Indians into missions by violence may have been based on stories heard at Presidio San Francisco from soldiers—however, if the soldiers were perpetrators, then the source was reliable. The accounts of extreme violence come from the San Francisco Bay area where the Russian ships docked for months at a time to load wheat for Fort Ross and Sitka, Alaska between 1815 and 1822.\textsuperscript{53} Founding Fort Ross in 1812, the Russians appear to have witnessed the particular decade in which California’s imperialist institutions were in crisis because Spain was no longer able to support its colony. Taking their descriptions as typical might be similar to using an eye-witness account of the U.S. government internment of Japanese-Californians in the 1940s. These camps were sanctioned by the government and most of the population went along with them, and yet they would not be representative of social control practiced by the American state in twentieth-century California. They are, nonetheless, deeply disturbing because their existence indicates what the society was capable of when under pressure.

A Russian visitor to Mission San Francisco in 1806 recorded a far rosier picture than the Russian description of the same mission in 1815. In 1806, Nikolay Rezanov wrote: “Their buildings are fairly good, the cleanliness is unparalleled, the care of the neophytes is extraordinary, the food of the Indians is exceptional, and their clothing is warm; in short, every foreigner [upon] seeing their settlements and ours, will say that there is charity there [in Alta California] and inhuman oppression here [in Russian America].” The Russians were acutely aware of food intake, due to their own shortages, and Rezanov was impressed, “I asked the missionaries [of San Francisco] to afford me the pleasure of watching [the mission Indians] eat…Very clean tureens were brought with a tasty and nutritious soup of beef with peas and greens…In addition, they are given wheat, from which they themselves [i.e., the Indians] make flour that they eat lightly grilled.”\textsuperscript{54} Nine years later in 1815, another Russian visitor recorded a more disturbing scene: “The friars themselves told us that the Californians are very weak, and that very few of them are able to live five years in such a disciplined state…Passing through the barracks, we saw only the sad faces of these pitiful savages,

\textsuperscript{53} Examples from Gibson, \textit{California through Russian Eyes} 81 (1815), 97 (1818), 135 (1821).
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 64, 66–67.
emaciated in the extreme, and several of them were sick and lying on their beds.”

Where in 1806, Russians noted cleanliness, by 1815, they applied the epithet “dirty” to missions and the Presidio over and over again.

There is solid logic to support the idea that that cessation of imperial financing in 1810 would have caused the Indian standard of living at Spanish colonial institutions to decline while the workday increased. As evidenced in Figures 10, 11, and 12 above, the primary source of funding for missions in the 1801–1809 years was not the direct government support of the stipend but rather the indirect government support that came from military payroll used to buy surplus produce or hire Indian labor from missions. After 1810, the military continued to take food and labor, but no longer compensated missions for them. In addition, the stipend disappeared, and all government-sanctioned exports came to an end. We can conclude then that traditional imports also disappeared—no more clothing for Indians, no additional musical instruments or statues, and no more tools. The failure of mission communities to receive such items after 1810 might have caused disaffection but does not explain the “disciplined state” and ill health of Indians. However, two other aspects of the change do.

First, the Russians were removing wheat and fresh vegetables from the missions in the San Francisco Bay. Back in 1806, Presidio San Francisco had traded mission products to the Russians but for compensation and to only one ship. By 1815, only half the compensation was reaching the mission community (the other half was diverted to the military commander to purchase Russian imports for the troops), and the number of ships supplied had trebled. By the winter of 1820–21, five Russian ships were loading at San Francisco. By the winter of 1821–22, the San Francisco Bay missions simply refused to meet the Russian demands. Missions further south insisted on a higher rate of compensation, which reduced the Russian demands. In addition to parting with their harvests without adequate indemnification, mission Indians after 1810 may also have had fewer sources of subsistence. There are indications that Indians prior to 1810 supplemented mission agricultural foodstuffs with foods harvested from the pre-contact hunting and gathering way of life.

55. Ibid., 81.
56. Farris discusses the harvest of native resources by mission Chumash of La Purísima in “Depriving God of the Means of Charity” in Indigenous Landscapes and Spanish
sheer intensity of the workday at the missions after 1810 suggests that labor time for the pre-contact traditions would have been harder to come by.

The second change is that, after 1810, mission Indians were providing soldiers with a far wider range of products than ever before. Shoes, clothing, leather armor, saddles, gun parts, spears, soap, and wine were some of the items that mission Indians were asked to produce—either for the first time or in far greater quantities than ever before. This demand for new products came in a particular context. On the one hand, metal was in short supply and over time tools (such as cards for wool) fell into disrepair. By 1821, a Russian wrote that “[missions] have no metals whatever, and are greatly in need of iron, copper . . . especially tools for blacksmithing, locksmithing, and joinering . . . they do not have wire for making brushes for combing wool, and they comb with some difficulty.”

Even in 1809, the productivity of mission Indian labor was well below the technical standard of the early nineteenth century. This idiosyncrasy is critical to understanding the impact that the cessation of Spain’s financing for the colony in 1810 had on the lives of mission Indians. As noted in Figures 17 and 18 above, there were years between 1801 and 1809 in which Franciscans could have spent many times more on productive equipment than they actually did. As a result of their spending bias toward “spiritual capital,” output per Indian in every labor process was low. This predilection may not have been at odds with community satisfaction before 1810, when mission Indians sustained primarily themselves and two missionaries; after all, Indian women had been used to grinding acorns for their families with stones, so a transition to grinding corn or wheat in that manner would not have been onerous. However, after 1810 mission Indians in the San Francisco Bay Area were sustaining in addition the troops, military families, the Russians at Fort Ross, and the Russian colony at Sitka. No wonder five mule-powered mills were built between 1810 and 1816, and eight water- or wind-powered mills between 1818 and 1824. This total of twelve new mills in fourteen years between 1801 and 1809 in which Franciscans could have spent many times more on productive equipment than they actually did.

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58. Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions*, 155–66. Schuetz-Miller, *Building and Builders in Hispanic California*, 157, 171, 173, 180, 186, 197, 199. Mills distributed as follows: San Antonio 1810 (grist, by mule); San Gabriel 1815 (by mule); Santa Cruz 1816 (by mule);
years was more than twice the number built in the preceding forty years. Interest in raising productivity was markedly higher after the financing regime changed.

Russians, who sought after 1815 to improve productivity of the wheat flour they desired, noted the labor-intensive nature of production. In November of 1820, a Russian wrote, “Although [missionaries at Santa Clara] have a gristmill, it had been broken before our arrival, and for that reason the priests were forcing several hundred girls to grind on a stone slab.”59 By 1820, Mission San José had a grist mill, but even there the water that powered it was only available to operate it four months of the year.60

In addition to these indications that labor became more intense and Indian food intake declined, there are several signs that any social cohesion created at mission communities by 1809 was coming apart. For example, in 1811 at Mission San Diego, missionary Pedro Panto whipped the Indian cook Nazario one-hundred times within a twenty-four hour period. In retaliation, Nazario tried to kill Panto by poisoning his food.61 In 1812, missionary Andres Quintana used extraordinary brutality, and Indians at Mission Santa Cruz killed him in retaliation.62 In 1814, there are hints that José Viader of Santa Clara was attacked by Indians Marcelo and Inígo.63 In 1821, Russians mention another attack by Indians on a missionary in the jurisdiction of Presidio San Francisco.64 In personal relationships within a hierarchy of dominance, the threat of violence increases the power of the dominant group. However, use of violence unleashes problems for the dominant group; on the one hand, if the force proves ineffective, the dominators have little else

San Francisco 1816 (two mills, by mule); San Juan Bautista 1818 (fulling, by water); San José 1820 (grist, water); Santa Inés 1820 (two mills, both water, one grist, the other fulling); San Gabriel 1820 (grist, water; and also second oil press); La Purísima 1822 (windmill); San Antonio 1823 (grist, water).

60. Ibid., 131, 182.
64. Gibson, *California through Russian Eyes*, 135.
to maintain their position, while on the other hand, the use of force
may solidify and unite resistance. As Jackman writes, “An explicit
power relationship, with force as its clumsy adjutant, represents the
end of the line for the dominant group, leaving it with uncomfort-
ably reduced degrees of freedom as it must cope with hardened
resistance.”65 Panto and Quintana do sound like missionaries who
had lost control and were inspiring hardened resistance.

By 1810, fugitives from Mission San José had taken the unusual
step of living in exile in the Central Valley among the Cholvones,
who spoke a different language. The first record of a missionary
traveling inland with an expedition composed of mounted Indian
vaqueros and a party of soldiers from the presidio (rather than one
or two) may be Viader’s journey in 1810 to retrieve them.66 By 1813,
when a missionary from San José went to preach inland in the San
Ramon Valley with the customary escort of two soldiers, Indians
aimed for the missionary, but they killed one of the soldiers.67 In
1814, a similar story emerges of Fr. Juan Cabot of Mission San
Miguel going beyond the missions’ thirty-mile radius accompanied
by a military expedition to retrieve fugitives hiding among people of
a different language. In 1815, Governor Sola considered communi-
ties of the disaffected in the interior to be enough of a threat that he
sent military expeditions from both northern and southern presi-
dios with the goal of sweeping up fugitives from the Central Valley.
One might note that where originally Spain had stationed Presidios
at the three great Pacific ports to keep European rivals out, the
Russians were docking multiple warships in the San Francisco Bay,
and the Presidio troops were armed primarily with lassos and leather
armor for attacking Indians, while their canons lacked gunpowder
and were beginning to disintegrate.68

In pre-1810 times, the Spanish might have reacted to the
spread of Indian discontent by founding new missions in the vicinity
of disaffection; such foundations would have increased pressure to
cooperate by creating a presence that could not be dislodged, and
also demonstrated the benefits of mission life (clothing, agricultural
harvests, religious ceremony, political protection from the rest of the

65. Jackman, The Velvet Glove, 61, 63.
66. Gibson, California through Russian Eyes, 55.
68. On cannons unserviceable in 1821, see Gibson, California through Russian Eyes, 151.
imperialist group). As early as 1804, missionary Cabot had wanted to found a new mission one hundred miles from San Miguel in the interior valley near Bubal (Wowol) and Sumtache (Chunut), and that might have been the typical course of events around 1810 if funding from the empire had continued. But without a transfer from New Spain, the missions did not have the funds to supply new missions with the means for any largesse. By 1814, armed conflict between the Yokuts of Sumtache broke out with Cabot’s expedition. Two years later, a third account of a militarized expedition led by a priest emerged: Luis Martínez of San Luis Obispo went to locations near Bubal and Sumtache, with battle between Indians and soldiers as the predictable outcome. By 1818, Christian Indians were fleeing missions San Miguel, La Purísima, and San Luis Obispo for Bubal, where they had allies among the Yokuts. Indeed, Christian loyalists sent from La Purísima to persuade runaways to return, decided instead to stay in the Tulares. By 1819, Lieutenant José María Estudillo concluded that a presidio founded near Bubal could not succeed without at least 115 men. At that time, Presidio San Francisco had 25 men, so the large number alone indicates that Estudillo did not think it practical to put down the resistance.

The purpose of this detour into disaffection was to substantiate the claim that both Russian descriptions and documents in Spanish suggest that violence between soldiers and unconverted Indians was taking place between 1810 and 1824, that missionaries were complicit, and that Christian Indians were allied with the Spanish soldiers. Yet where the Russians depict Indians as powerless, the history that Spanish documents revealed to Hubert Howe Bancroft and Sherburne Cook was of a community of Hispanicized outlaws with considerable numbers and allies. They rode horseback as well as the soldiers. The soldiers and their horses were covered in leather armor to withstand arrows. The Indian rebels dug deep holes into the ground from which they fired arrows into the belly of the horses.

72. Payeras to José de la Guerra y Noriega, May 4, 1818 in Cutter, Payeras, 149.
73. Bancroft, History of California, 2: 344.
With their Yokuts allies, they retreated to islands inside the marshes to which horses could not follow. These are battle tactics undertaken by people who knew how to ride; in short, the imperialists had lost their main competitive advantage in battle, the horse.\textsuperscript{74}

Indeed, gunfire was the only aspect to ring possibly unrealistic in the 1822 Russian description of Presidio soldiers rounding up Indians by surprise attack at night. Powder was in short supply by 1820, when the Presidio had to borrow some from the Russians to fire the cannon. One Russian wrote in late 1820, “[The Presidio soldier’s] chief weapon is the lasso, which the natives fear more than a gun.” Shortage of powder was mentioned again in 1821 as the reason why the soldiers hunted bear and deer by lasso: “The jaguar [mountain lion] is almost the only beast against which the Spaniards use the gun, and against all others they use the lasso . . . because of the shortage of gunpowder and lead, which are conveyed from Mexico.”\textsuperscript{75}

One might be tempted to attribute the outsized descriptions of violence in the San Francisco Bay Area to the fact that the Russians spent more time there and were the most prolific observers of California’s period of undesired independence. Yet when Russians did travel south, they noted a difference. For example, one Russian wrote of Santa Barbara in 1820, “The Indians here have more liberties and many of them are free.”\textsuperscript{76} Although the community of ex-mission Indian outlaws one hundred miles behind Santa Barbara suggests that disaffection existed there, too, the comment points to regional divergence that deserves further study.

The San Francisco Bay was the de facto border between the Russian and Spanish spheres of influence, and this may have raised the stakes for Commander Luis Arguello. He commanded men who were not paid in goods of the normal quality or quantity after 1810. Perhaps it is not surprising then that the Russians reported troops who drank openly, got into knife fights, danced with his daughters and treated him as a friend rather than a commander. Furthermore, the possibility exists that he may not have negotiated well with the

\textsuperscript{75} Gibson, \textit{California through Russian Eyes}, 111, 152–53, 166.
Russians. Wheat in San Francisco was selling for two-and-a-half pesos per fanega, while missions further south demanded three pesos.77

Central California was the jurisdiction of Commander José de la Guerra y Noriega of Santa Barbara, and under the watchful eye of Governor Pablo de Sola (who arrived in 1815). De la Guerra and Sola were businessmen who had previously traveled in the highest circles of New Spain’s mercantile elite in Mexico City.78 They demanded a higher price for wheat from the southern districts, so the Russians left more of their own products as compensation and curtailed their demand for mission grain. It is possible that presidio soldiers in the south as well as mission Indians were able to obtain a higher standard of living from such trade than their peers in the San Francisco Bay, even with half the proceeds siphoned off by the authorities.

Furthermore, missionaries who had access to a port a good distance from a military presidio discovered methods of exporting without providing the typical cut to the authorities. Missionary Antonio Peyri of Mission San Luis Rey traded from such a port. From Pablo Tac’s descriptions of life there in the early 1820s, and given that mission’s high Indian population, it appears that Peyri obtained good compensation for the products of Indian labor at the mission and invested the proceeds in the community.79 The relationship between commerce and the mission Indian standard of living in the period of 1810–1824 deserves further scrutiny.

Peyri’s evasions suggest that there was dissent among missionaries as to whether or not to pressure Indians at missions to supply the troops with goods and half the export revenue. Elsewhere, I have argued that by agreeing to provide uncompensated labor output to commanders, missionaries were hoping to prevent dismemberment of mission lands.80 The logic is that if missionaries had not agreed to transfer output from missions to the troops, then the unpaid troops would have taken the land of baptized Indians for ranchos. There may have been a vain hope that the King of Spain would reassert his

77. Khlebnikov, The Khlebnikov Archive, 78.
78. Guillermina Del Valle Pavon, Finanzas piadosas y redes de negocios: Los mercaderes de la ciudad de México ante la crisis de Nueva España, 1804–1808 (Mexico City: Instituto de Investigaciones Dr. José María Luis Mora, 2012), 53, 58, 85, 182.
79. Pablo Tac is the only Indian to have left a written description of mission life. He did so as a teenager in Rome, where Fr. Antonio Peyri had sent him to be trained as his Franciscan successor at San Luis Rey. See Haas, ed., Pablo Tac.
authority and reinstate the old system. At any rate, between 1810 and 1821, 400,000 pesos worth of goods were provided without compensation to the military by native Christians at nineteen missions. That is about 1,900 pesos of goods provided for free by Indians at each mission per year. The data from the account books for the pre-1810 period provide some context for assessing the impact of that exploitation. Figures 10, 11, and 12 above illustrate that missions had by 1810, the capacity to produce beyond subsistence needs of about 2,000 pesos worth of goods at San José, about 3,000 at La Purísima, and about 5,000 at Santa Clara. However, prior to 1810 Christian Indians had produced the extra in order to attain the goal of improved religious ceremony and status symbols of imported clothing and useful tools. After 1810, the Indians were to receive very little for their efforts.

Furthermore, the demands from the military increased over time. In 1811, the unpaid military should have received 89,000 pesos per year. By 1821, hundreds more soldiers had been sent to California, so that missing payroll was 148,320 pesos to support 618 people, assuming the 1787 pay rate of 240 pesos per man. Mexico, however, provided only 36,000 pesos in 1821. This discrepancy suggests that during the 1820s, Christian Indians provided over 100,000 pesos of goods to the military annually, or about 5,000 pesos per mission. Indeed, an 1833 document lists goods provided by Mission San José to Presidio San Francisco, and they do add up to about 5,000 pesos.

Data from account books for four missions for the pre-1810 period substantiates two arguments: that missions undertook processes designed to win over the interior allegiance of Indians prior to 1810, and that the economic basis of “Spanish” California was completely transformed in 1810 when the missions and military lost their imperial financing. The patterns of expenditure reveal that gifts to Indians of clothing dominated expenditures in the early years of missions and that after 1800 an increasing share of funding went to investment in religious ceremony such as musical instruments, fireworks, and statues. These patterns suggest that missionaries were

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82. Ibid., 2: 422.
83. José Figueroa to Agustín Zamorano, Dec. 21, 1833, Bancroft Library C-A 40, Archives of California, Departmental State Papers, Benicia. Value of goods estimated by author using prices from the San Francisco Mission–Presidio account book for 1805–1822 (Huntington Library), the Santa Barbara Mission–Presidio account book for 1793 to 1808 (SBMAL), or the Santa Clara account book from the AGN.
applying powerful ingredients toward winning Indian hearts and minds. Such an interior pull on Indians toward mission life is not incompatible with evidence of violence and other external forces of coercion such as disease and ecology. The expenditure patterns do, however, suggest that Spanish methods of imperialism were cognizant that dominance is easiest when the subordinated can be persuaded to control themselves.

Expenditures on such magnetic elements of mission life ceased in 1810, and that date correlates with evidence in both the Spanish and Russian archives that physical coercion increased as the means by which imperialists retrieved increasing numbers of disaffected Indians and impressed new recruits. Missionaries participated in such military expeditions of retrieval or impressment accompanied by mission Indian vaqueros and by soldiers. While many have taken this physical coercion as a sign of total control by the imperialists, the violence is better understood as an indication of the unraveling of Spanish imperialism in California. Bancroft and Cook’s descriptions of increasing numbers of Hispanicized Indian outlaws in the interior support this interpretation, as do indications that the Spanish did not feel confident to defeat them. The logic of the economic situation suggests that the disaffection may have been due to less compensation going to mission communities and also to demands for both increased quantities and new types of goods by other sectors of society. The stress on mission Indians may have been particularly acute because, as the account books illustrated, missionaries had prioritized prior to 1810 accumulation of spiritual rather than productive capital, leading to far lower levels of productivity than were standard in contemporary regions at the time.

In 1810, whatever a Spanish mission had been in California disappeared, and in its place was a different institution. The California military was never paid much from Mexico even after 1821, and a de facto tax on Indian labor became the lifeblood of the colony until Mexico legitimated ranchos for soldiers after 1825. By 1826, Indians were emancipated from missions, on the condition that they could prove themselves skilled. Such Indians were then free in Marx’s double sense: free to sell their labor power anywhere in California, but also free of possessions or land. With little bargaining power, it is not clear a priori whether those emancipated experienced increased or diminished exploitation in private markets. That history remains to be explored.