

Theoretical Perspectives on Labor and Colonialism: Reconsidering the California Missions

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Many recognize that labor was a central feature of colonialism, especially in the Americas, but few have considered the anthropological implications of labor for interpreting colonialism. A new theoretical perspective involves conceptualizing labor as practice and as a social, rather than simply an economic, phenomenon. Building on theories of practice, labor can be defined as a colonial imposition and attempt at social control and as a medium of agency and resistance for those laboring. Although historical documents provide solid information on the structure and implementation of labor from the top down, archaeological research is often required to access the native experience of labor from the bottom up. To develop the labor-as-practice approach, I present a case study of the 18th- and 19th-century California missions that integrates historical data on regional mission labor organization with archaeological data from the specific site of Mission San Antonio de Padua in southcentral California. The results provide new insights into the interpretation of Mission San Antonio's archaeological record, fresh perspectives on the complexity of material culture in colonial and pluralistic settings, and increased appreciation for the role of colonial labor in structuring the spatial and material aspects of culture contact, colonialism, and daily life in the past. © 2001 Academic Press

INTRODUCTION

The past 10 years testify that archaeologists studying culture contact and colonialism have made significant strides in archaeological theory. Sophisticated contributions have been offered in the areas of interethnic cohabitation and marriage (Deagan 1996; Lightfoot and Martinez 1997); identity formation, change, and maintenance (Cusick 1998; Deagan 1998; Farnsworth 1992); the uses and meanings of space and material culture (Donley-Reid 1990; Lightfoot 1995; Lightfoot et al. 1998; Marshall and Maas 1997; Rogers 1990; Scarry and McEwan 1995); social agency (Kelly 1997; Lightfoot et al. 1998; Schortman and Urban 1998); and frontiers, boundaries, and World Systems Theory (Crowell 1997; Hoover 1992; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Rice 1998). These works have clearly advanced the study of

culture contact, but one issue has not received the same intensity of attention as those listed above. That issue is labor, and I offer it here to expand the theoretical purview of colonial studies. Labor is significant because labor relations and regimes are components, albeit variable in importance, of almost every colonial situation.

The involvement of Native American groups in any of the standard colonial institutions in the Americas—missions, ranchos, trade outposts, presidios, forts, and secular towns—revolved around labor, even in contexts of frequent interethnic marriage. Sometimes colonial groups forced labor on native societies; other times, indigenous people found colonial labor opportunistic and capitalized on it. In either case, labor constituted one of the primary and most influential interpersonal and intercultural relations in pluralistic colonial communities (Silliman 1998). Although archaeologists and historians acknowledge the importance of labor in colonial institutions and its relationship to broader political and economic trends

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(Archibald 1978; Hackel 1998; Wallerstein 1974, 1980), there has been little detailed examination of the structure, impact, and negotiation of labor in the daily lives of those performing it (but see Milanich 1999:13–14, 149–153; Silliman 2000: 412–423).

To begin that process, this article elaborates theoretically and empirically on the role of labor in colonial settings. This is accomplished in four steps. First, I develop a theoretical model for interpreting labor in culture contact and colonial situations. The approach hinges on a two-tiered framework in which labor is conceived of as a colonial imposition and form of discipline *and* as a strategy and locus of social agency and practice. Second, I outline the archaeological implications of a labor-as-practice perspective. Although nonarchaeological sources such as historical documents can provide information on the structure and implementation of labor regimes, the central thesis is that archaeology is one of the best, if not often the only, method for interpreting the daily, lived experience of individuals in many labor regimes. Third, I turn the lens of labor to 18th- and 19th-century Alta California to isolate key features of Native American participation in the Franciscan mission system. Historical documents supply the primary data for these interpretations. Fourth, I use published archaeological data from Mission San Antonio de Padua in southcentral California as an archaeological case example. Applying the labor-as-practice approach to Mission San Antonio not only offers new insights on the particular case study but also reveals the material and interpretive ambiguity that often plagues the archaeological study of colonial contexts.

A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE ON LABOR AS PRACTICE

Defining labor is a necessary, yet difficult, task. At one level, anything that requires effort to do can be considered labor, but this definition renders labor equivalent

to practices or activities and makes it redundant with work. A more useful definition of labor places it in an economic framework that is encapsulated within social relations. “Marx . . . drew a distinction between work and labor. Work represents the activities of individuals, singly or in groups, expending energy to produce energy. But labor and the labor process was for him a social phenomenon, carried on by human beings bonded to one another in society” (Wolf 1982:74).

Along these lines, I define labor as the social and material relations surrounding any activities that are designed to produce, distribute, or manipulate material items for personal use or for anyone else or any activities whether material or not that are *required or appropriated* for use by someone else. The first component involves practices such as hunting, gathering, manufacturing items, herding, planting, cleaning, processing materials, and carrying objects; the second component incorporates the same manifold practices but also include typically nonlabor practices such as reading, dancing, praying, and having sex when individuals are forced to do these for other people. In this way, work and labor frequently entail the same activities—it is just that labor is work situated within a social nexus. Labor’s significance for an anthropology of power and social relations is its ability to be appropriated and enforced (see Arnold 1993, 1995). Appropriated labor is an important element in studies of culture contact and colonialism because of the altered and frequently forced relations and requirements of labor experienced by those being colonized. In many cases, indigenous people were conscripted or coerced to work for colonial settlements in the Americas, Africa, Australia, and other places. An obvious parallel case is the institution of plantation slavery in the Americas. These processes wrenched personal labor into a different political realm than it had existed before or at least turned its purposes to new

colonial ones. The theoretical discussion throughout the article relates primarily to this type of forced or appropriated labor.

The study of labor has surfaced in both prehistoric and historical archaeology. Topics in prehistoric and protohistoric contexts include political economy (Saitta 1997), elite control of labor and surplus (Ames 1995; Arnold 1993, 1995, 1996a, 1996b; Hayden 1995; Schortman and Urban 1998; Webster 1990), mobilization of architectural effort (Kolb 1997), and craft specialization (Arnold and Munns 1994; Costin and Hagstrum 1995). Labor has been approached in historical archaeology primarily through the lens of Wallerstein's (1974) World Systems Theory (Crowell 1997; Farnsworth 1989; Farnsworth and Jackson 1995), but others have turned to the topic through considerations of class, capitalism, and agency (Delle 1998; Shackel 2000; Wurst 1999) and the relationship between work schedule, material life, and social relations on plantations (Singleton 1985; Young 1997). Many of these studies have drawn inspiration from Marx, but independently they have devoted attention to labor from a variety of perspectives. A central feature of these works has been the role of labor in social inequality. They have cast labor as an important social activity that can be appropriated in strategies of domination at community and global scales.

However, there has been little development of theory to interpret labor at the microscale in colonial contexts, despite the fact that many studies of post-Columbian colonialism focus on those performing labor. To complement the existing perspectives on labor and colonialism, I submit an approach that takes into account not only the form and implementation of labor but also the small-scale daily activities of individuals negotiating, appropriating, living in, and suffering through particular labor regimes. That is, I conceive of labor as practice. McGuire fingered the issue when he stated: "[T]he study of the social world

should start, and end, with the real-life experiences of human beings" (McGuire 1992:14).

An Approach to Labor as Practice

Theories of practice offer a rich arena for developing a theoretical approach to labor. Despite their variable emphases, these theoretical formulations tend to concentrate on individuals, daily practices, and the interplay of structure and social agency. Pierre Bourdieu (1977, 1990), Anthony Giddens (1979, 1984), and Marshall Sahlins (1981, 1985) brought practice to the forefront of anthropology with the theoretical foundations of practice strengthened through critique and reconsideration (e.g., de Certeau 1984; Moore 1986, 1994; Ortner 1984). In the last decade, these ideas have entered archaeology in a variety of forms. Some investigations have involved the social agency of elite individuals (Blanton et al. 1996; Joyce and Winter 1996), but most have emphasized the multiple experiences of individuals (Hodder 1991; Johnson 1989), the use and meanings of space (Donley-Reid 1990; Gilchrist 1994; Thomas 1993; Tilley 1995), and the analytical centerpieces of daily (Lightfoot et al. 1998), technological (Dobres 2000; Dobres and Hoffman 1994), and ritual (Thomas 1991) practice.

Drawing on practice theories, I seek to craft a new theoretical approach to labor in colonial contexts. The foundation is that labor must be seen as a practice. That is, more than a simply economic or material activity, labor must be conceptualized as social action and as a mechanism, outcome, or medium of social control and domination. In truth, it can be all of these at once. Highlighting labor as practice considers how labor regimes are implemented and then carried out on a daily basis, how labor can be a highly routinized set of practices, and how labor tasks and scheduling are experienced bodily and socially. These three facets—daily praxis, routine, and experi-

ence—encapsulate essential aspects of practice theory and constitute the reasons that practice theory is well suited to the study of labor. Focusing on practices means seeking (1) how the mundane and habitual actions of everyday life can serve as the locus for strategies of domination because this type of action often “*goes without saying because it comes without saying*” (Bourdieu 1977:167, emphasis in original) and (2) how these same practices can serve as sites of resistance, autonomy, and self-expression, in both conscious and unconscious ways, for those performing them.

Because of the multivariate nature of labor, the labor-as-practice approach examines labor and colonialism in many directions and dimensions. Interpretation must be from the top down and from the bottom up; that is, colonial labor must be seen as an attempt by administrators to control and bodily discipline indigenous or other workers *and* as a venue for native laborers to commodify identity, assert autonomy, and resist colonial subjugation. These two mechanisms are simultaneously present in laboring situations, and they can be fluid, rigid, or context-dependent. Whether an individual labors in colonial situations due to coercion, confinement, indebtedness, economic self-assertion, or simple willingness to participate does not negate the importance of analyzing the impact of labor as a practice, as a social phenomenon, on those involved. Yet to focus solely on laborers or the working class and their cultural achievements can result in a rhetorical negation of the colonial power structure and oppression that established some of the very parameters of action (Orser 1996:173–174). Therefore, care must be exercised to examine the entire system of labor.

The perspectives of top-down and bottom-up do not constitute opposite poles but instead refer to different levels of social power, ones that articulate with gender, status, age, identity, and personal strategies to produce a complex mosaic. The intersec-

tions of these power vectors are the sites of daily negotiation and on-the-ground social life. In digested form, there exists a “power over” and a “power to” (Miller and Tilley 1984:6). The colonial structure of labor involves a “power over” indigenous peoples emplaced in labor regimes through coercion or persuasion, while native laborers retain a “power to” enact social agency in their ability, albeit circumscribed, to control and orient their lives. As Giddens expressed: “*All social actors, no matter how lowly, have some degree of penetration of the social forms which oppress them*” (Giddens 1979:72, emphasis in original). Stated differently, native workers do not passively accept their lot as dictated by colonial administrators and do strive to make or remake their cultural and social frameworks, but they may be constrained in their avenues of action by larger configurations of tactical and structural power. Tactical power refers to “power that controls the settings in which people may show forth their potentialities and interact with others,” and structural power denotes “power that not only operates within settings or domains but that also organizes and orchestrates the settings themselves” (Wolf 1990:586). In essence, the stage for individual action in a colonial situation may have sturdy, but not immutable, backdrops on which day-to-day life is carried out.

Rather than following the standard method of studying labor as colonial administrators and enforcers designed and implemented it, the practice approach directs considerable attention to the experience of that labor in daily life. It also focuses on the social relations between labor administrators and labor performers and on the materiality of labor in daily experience. Labor must be studied as a practice, as something “people do” (Ortner 1984:149), and not just as an institutional form or economic arrangement. Colonial labor does not exist outside of people performing it; therefore, its meaning can be

contested within and between those who perform and those who oversee. Extrapolating de Certeau's (1984) suggestion regarding practices, one must study more than the production of labor and its intended purpose; one must also scrutinize its consumption, or better, its experience. Anthropologists must examine not just how colonial labor existed in form or function but how individuals used and experienced it, whether forced or voluntary. The variable reaction to labor, especially in its subversive forms, can be likened to the "heterogeneity of resistance" proposed by Paynter and McGuire (1991:12). Although these experiences of labor may not change or undermine its colonial form or organization, they are still worthy of attention as the tactics (*sensu* de Certeau 1984) of everyday life.

Daily practices thus have multiple meanings and complexities. At the same time that individuals redefine their lives *vis-à-vis* labor, the labor regime itself may be at work on the people experiencing it. Labor may be seen as a practice that engenders bodily experiences and thus particular outlooks on the world, an argument related to the proposed relationship between gender and the division of labor (Moore 1991:408, 1994:101). In other words, the organization of daily labor has a notable influence on one's identity. More profoundly, the regimentation of time and space via labor in colonial contexts may serve as bodily discipline (Foucault 1979; see also Paynter and McGuire 1991:9). Depending on its implementation, imposed labor may serve as a technology for making, or remaking, individuals by channeling perceptions, experiences, and temporalities. However, it is important to note that using a theory of practice diverges from a Foucauldian scheme once the disciplinary structures are revealed. A theory of practice strives "to bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already

caught in the nets of 'discipline'" (de Certeau 1984:xiv-xv).

In a similar vein, labor regimentation can be considered in terms of routinization. Both Giddens (1979, 1984) and Bourdieu (1977, 1990) stress the significance of routinization, and the daily enactment of labor is a prime example of routine behavior. Routines foster the practices necessary for social and personal stability, but they frequently do so as part of the unquestioned realm of "practical consciousness" (Giddens 1979, 1984) or "habitus" (Bourdieu 1977, 1990). Giddens (1979:218-219) and Bourdieu (1990:54) attribute the strongest solidification of routine social practices to early childhood, but the conceptual tool can be much broader. The implication is that as the daily practice of labor trends toward habitual action, one that requires little acknowledged motivation to complete, the political, social, and economic implications of its structure may drop out of the discursive realm. "The most successful ideological effects are those that do not have to be spoken, those embodied in symbols or materials that encourage complicity through the silence of the 'discourse' around them" (Bourdieu 1977:188).

Although colonial labor schedules and burdens may require particular activities or may prevent individuals from enacting desired or precontact cultural practices, the labor regime and its implements also provide opportunities for native individuals to maintain social continuity or to build and express new practices or identities. Labor is an outcome of colonial oppression, but it is also a medium of resistance and circumscribed autonomy. "Power relations are always two-way; that is to say, however subordinate an actor may be in a social relationship, the very fact of involvement in that relationship gives him or her a certain amount of power over the other" (Giddens 1979:6). This power is often one that is neglected in anthropological and historical studies that focus solely

on the imposition and economic form of colonial labor. Those constrained by colonialism are often seen as pawns in colonial games or faceless automatons in a controlling system. Yet, these social actors possess agency. "Although [tactics, or actions] are composed with the vocabularies of established languages . . . and although they remain subordinated to the prescribed syntactical forms, the trajectories trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop" (de Certeau 1984: xviii).

In summary, the theoretical model employed here interprets native labor in colonial situations as lived experience. To do so requires understanding both sides of the labor coin. It is necessary to analyze the top-down perspective—the view of labor as production and form, the imposition of labor on native workers, and the disciplines (*sensu* Foucault 1979) of labor regimentation—and the bottom-up perspective—the recognition of labor as something experienced and used, the acceptance or rejection of labor's form and organization by workers, and the politics of subversion, acceptance, and redefinition.

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACH TO LABOR-AS-PRACTICE

The theoretical framework developed above is well suited to the archaeological study of colonialism, and it may prove useful in prehistoric contexts as well. The labor-as-practice framework can be operationalized in archaeology for two reasons: (1) the focus is daily practices and (2) labor is a highly material and spatial practice in colonial and other settings.

First, the focus on daily practices renders archaeology the prime method for recovering relevant data. Daily practices often include activities such as refuse disposal, subsistence pursuits, food preparation and consumption, organization of household

and community space, material acquisition, and object manufacturing. As anyone working with historical documents can attest, because such practices are regarded as mundane, these are often the aspects of life excluded from the written record. Yet, as the above discussion has outlined, these practices are the ones that require scrutiny when trying to interpret the negotiation of labor and colonialism at the microscale level. They are the daily sites for contestation or acquiescence, for resistance or domination. Fortunately, these are exactly the aspects of life that archaeology is equipped to address (Lightfoot and Martinez 1997; Lightfoot et al. 1998).

Adding labor to the suite of daily practices opens further venues for archaeology's role in the investigation of colonialism. Generally, the top-down perspective on labor—that is, the labor parameters and attendant duties—can be sketched via historical documents, ethnohistorical observations, and oral accounts, but archaeological research is usually required to see its manifestation in daily social life or from the bottom up. Because labor is a ubiquitous feature of native participation in many colonial communities, it is an ever-present factor in the formation of the archaeological record in the same way that it is a main component of native daily experiences. Native roles in colonial communities were often defined by their laborer duties, and their identities, as least as perceived by the elite, were presumed to follow. In some cases, labor duties had powerful implications for identity maintenance or ethnogenesis; in others, it may have been inconsequential.

Second, studying labor as practice resonates with archaeological data because labor is entrenched in materiality. Labor involves objects of production and production of objects; consequently, material culture plays a significant role in labor practices and their negotiation. Emphasizing labor means focusing on the physical

and spatial tasks and tools of everyday life and tracking the impact of these tasks into domestic contexts. This requires conducting archaeological investigations in various spatial contexts to study multiple daily tasks. The key is to understand the practice of labor in colonial regimes and its transmission into nonlaboring contexts. In other words, were native households the site for self-expression when colonial-enforced labor duties were completed (see Beaudry et al. 1991:154)? Were the practical and material aspects of required labor duties introduced into the household? Were tools of colonial labor regimes—that is, those items used by native people to work for colonists—found archaeologically in native domestic contexts because colonial administrators required native workers to store them in their residences or because native laborers chose to introduce these items into their household? The answers have serious implications for archaeological interpretations of material culture. As recently argued, “[s]ubordinates act in a compliant manner in those social spaces where they encounter dominators, but quickly become more defiant and critical when in their own social arena” (Paynter and McGuire 1991:11). Therefore, the impact of labor tasks will manifest in the spaces of their daily performance and in the spaces that provide respite from them. Although some practices in the household are not labor per se, their character may be entirely related to the broader context of colonial labor.

Attention to the labor regime and its impact on daily practice implicates issues of power in colonial contexts. The labor-as-practice approach problematizes acculturation models of social and cultural change in archaeology because it frames material culture in relation to the deployment of power (see Howson 1990). Artifacts and their patterns are not passive mirrors that reflect the cultural identity of their users and makers, which means that objects of nonindigenous and indigenous manufacture cannot be eas-

ily compiled into an index of acculturation without consideration of the social context of labor. Instead, the range of material variability in a colonial context, whether deriving from traditional native or novel European sources, served as a source for commodification of identity or ethnicity (Jones 1997; Upton 1996). Items were selectively chosen or excluded in conscious and nonconscious (i.e., routinized, nondiscursive) ways to participate in social relations. In many cases, these were relations of labor. Some individuals undoubtedly acquiesced to labor regimes, while others resisted it in their everyday activities. Many probably enacted both of these options, depending on the circumstances or the particular day.

In addition to guiding methodological choices in excavating a colonial site, the theoretical approach to labor and practice is useful in reinterpreting existing assemblages. The perspective is as much about viewing artifacts and cultural space from different angles as it is about recovering new items or contexts. By reanalyzing material culture recovered from native contexts with the labor perspective in the forefront, complementary interpretations of the archaeological record can be offered. In many cases, these novel interpretations will not undermine and only enhance those put forward by other archaeologists. If nothing else, the labor-as-practice perspective is poised to reveal the interpretive ambiguity of many contact-period assemblages.

NATIVE LABOR IN COLONIAL CALIFORNIA: THE MISSION EXAMPLE

A theory of labor as social practice opens the missions of 18th- and 19th-century California for new consideration. The analytical anchor is the argument that labor was a, if not the, primary experiential base of Native American participation in the missions. As suggested above, historical sources can sketch the top-down perspective by reveal-

ing the laboring parameters for the colonial context. These same sources can also begin to illuminate the bottom-up viewpoint: negotiation of labor relations, daily practices of labor, and social agency of those engulfed in the colonial labor regime. The purpose of this section is twofold: (1) to provide a new perspective on California's Spanish mission system with regard to labor and practice and (2) to elucidate broad patterns that can be brought to bear on the archaeological case study of Mission San Antonio de Padua. The latter will crystallize labor as a microscale phenomenon with potentially significant effects on material culture.

The Spanish established 20 missions along California's coast from 1769 to 1817 (Fig. 1). Two years after Mexican independence from Spain, the final and 21st mission was founded north of San Francisco Bay in 1823. The missions were part of a triad of institutions, including pueblos and presidios, that served the Spanish colonial effort. The missions' goals involved converting the indigenous population to Catholicism, training them to be loyal citizens of the Spanish/Mexican government,



FIG. 1. Map of the 21 Franciscan missions established and maintained by Spain and then Mexico between 1769 and 1834.

and using the products of their labor to supply secular settlements and trading ships (Costello and Hornbeck 1989). The mission reign in California ended circa 1834 when the government issued secularization orders, effectively turning the missions into parish churches, opening their lands for secular use, and freeing the majority of resident Native Americans from mission control.

Each mission in California had a unique set of circumstances with regard to resident native groups, demographic profiles, geographical locales, padre personalities, and other factors, but I can discuss the organization of mission labor on a regional level. Numerous archaeologists and historians have provided excellent studies and syntheses of missions in Hispanic California (Allen 1998; Cook 1976; Costello 1989a, 1989b, 1990, 1992; Costello and Hornbeck 1989; Deetz 1963; Farnsworth 1989, 1992; Hoover 1989, 1992; Hoover and Costello 1985; Hornbeck 1989; Jackson and Castillo 1995; Johnson 1989; Larson et al. 1994; Milliken 1995; Skowronek 1998). In recent years, many have turned timely attention to questions of native resistance and social agency (e.g., Allen 1992, 1998:90–94; Jackson and Castillo 1995; Milliken 1995) and now sexuality (Voss 2000). However, despite the fact that labor relations structured many of the native-colonial interactions in colonial California, there has been little scholarly treatment of them (e.g., Cook 1943a, 1943c; Hackel 1998; Hornbeck 1989). As Hornbeck queried regarding the missions: "What was the daily work regime and how was it established and enforced? Was there an extensive division of labor, and, if so, how did it work?" (Hornbeck 1989:432). To these I add the question: What did labor mean for native identity, social relations, and those individuals performing it?

The labor system of the Franciscan missions involved a complex suite of factors that related in part to broader economic

patterns and recruitment procedures (e.g., Jackson and Castillo 1995:50–51). It served the needs of community sustenance, the physical duties of conversion, and punishment for misconduct. As both willing and forced converts to the Catholic faith who were expected to become productive Spanish citizens, Native American individuals were required to labor in the mission trades to produce materials that would be used for mission supplies and for extramission trade and distribution. The labor system of the Franciscan missions has been described as communal (Cook 1943c: 47), tempered by control of the patriarchal mission padre (González 1998:157). The system has also been likened to tribute, as natives exchanged labor to the “state” for food, clothing, and housing administered by the missionaries (Jackson 1994:130). In a communal system, individuals contribute labor to a common pool of resources from which they receive support in the form of food, shelter, clothing, and other necessities. “In theory the component units, the natives, worked for their own benefit, since all products and all income were to accrue to them and ultimately they were to inherit jointly the capital structure which they had built up” (Cook 1943c:47; see Geiger and Meighan 1976:131). The ideal participation in such a community was voluntary, but Cook argues that “[d]espite innumerable lamentations, apologies, and justifications, there can be no serious denial that the mission system, in its economics, was built upon forced labor” (Cook 1943a:95–96; see also Jackson and Castillo 1995:44; Jackson 1994:135; *contra* Guest 1979).

In addition, mission padres used labor as a punishment for a variety of infractions (Cook 1943a:116–121). Crimes of stock stealing and fugitivism often received punishment by “hard labor” at missions such as San Francisco, San Juan Bautista, La Soledad, Santa Cruz, San Buenaventura, and Santa Clara. Robbery brought hard labor punishment at San Miguel, San

Diego, San Carlos, and Monterey. Less common offenses punishable by hard labor included homicide (San Diego and San Gabriel), assault (San Diego), conspiracy and armed resistance (Santa Barbara and La Purisima), incest (San Francisco), and performance of medicine dances (San Diego). Punishment by hard labor occurred only in conjunction with imprisonment, and it increased over the years until 1831.

The mission labor schedule involved 6 to 8 h of work per day for 5 to 6 days per week (Cook 1943a:91–94; Heizer 1978:127). Generally, no one worked on Sundays or religious holidays, which could number over 90 days a year (Hackel 1998:122), meaning that a full one-third of the year may have been labor-free. At other times, the work was intense and of long duration. At some missions, the workday began just after sunrise and continued until almost sunset, with an approximate 2-h break from noon to early afternoon (Geiger and Meighan 1976). Missions San Gabriel and San Juan Capistrano had all-day working schedules in a 1799 report, and San Diego was reported to have had excess hours (Cook 1943a:91–92).

Missionaries imposed a division of labor that cleaved along gender and age lines, although variability was common depending on the particular mission and the tasks to be completed (Hackel 1998:122–123). Native men and women often coparticipated in mission farming, ranching, construction and maintenance of structures, and artisan crafts (Hackel 1998:123; Jackson and Castillo 1995:12,50). When communal projects were not necessary, men and women commonly performed different tasks. Native men participated frequently in mission labor as cowboys, shepherds, blacksmiths, tanners, shoemakers, gardeners, teamsters, weavers, and stone masons (Geiger and Meighan 1976:131–132). Native women tended to grind and process grain, manufacture and wash cloth goods, and pick weeds (Geiger and Meighan 1976:131; Hackel 1998:123),

but they would also haul adobes, rocks, and bricks for construction (Cook 1943a:92–94). Jean François de la Pérouse, a French visitor to Monterey in 1786, stated that “[t]he women have no other employment than their household affairs, the care of their children, and the roasting and grinding of corn” (Margolin 1989:86). In 1798–1800, presidial commanders claimed that pregnant and nursing women continued to labor for the padres, although their burdens were much reduced in cases of advanced pregnancies (Cook 1943a:91–94). In response, two padres at Mission Santa Barbara argued that pregnant Indian women did only physically nondemanding tasks such as pulling weeds or cleaning wheat from the threshing floor and that they remained at home after parturition until they felt inclined to work (Cook 1943a:93–94).

Neophyte children were not exempt from daily labor, as the young were often the focus of much of the missionary effort at conversion (Hackel 1998:123). As recorded in the same padre–commander exchange referenced above, the children safeguarded gardens and orchards from birds, cleared gardens, protected adobe bricks and tiles, combed wool for the loom, and performed other “light tasks” (Cook 1943a:91–92). Young Indian boys often assisted padres with church functions or the administration of sacraments (Geiger and Meighan 1976:130). Often, children’s tasks overlapped with those for pregnant and nursing women and for the elderly. Exemption from work appears to have been only for those women registered as pregnant and for elderly persons too weak for any task (Cook 1943a:92).

In 1797, Governor Diego de Borica believed that labor performed by native individuals was one factor in the negative conditions of mission neophyte life (Jackson 1994:127). In contrast, Cook stated that “[i]t is very significant that even the bitterest opponents of the missions never accused the clergy of giving the Indians work which

might cause either excessive fatigue through extremely long hours or physical injury through intense exertion and occupational hazard” (Cook 1943a:94). He also asserted that “of all the complaints and grievances of the neophytes, relatively few were directed against the work itself” (Cook 1943a:95). Yet, this interpretation cannot be taken at face value. The paucity of documentary evidence detailing native complaints and concerns about mission labor undoubtedly relates to the scarcity of native statements compared to nonnative written accounts. For example, Cook’s conclusion weakens when juxtaposed with the statement by former Santa Cruz neophyte Lorenzo Asisara,¹ that “[t]he Spanish Padres were very cruel toward the Indians . . . and they made them work like slaves” (Castillo 1989a:124). It might even be that the frequent hernia-related deaths in mission children as reported by de la Pérouse related to heavy labor loads (see Margolin 1989).

On the contrary, other scholars of California’s missions have suggested that labor was modest by European standards (Heizer 1978:128) and that women’s labor in the mission may have been less per day than in the traditional gathering economy (Milliken 1995:89). If so, the hypothesized incompatibility of mission life with California Indian hunter-gatherer cultural practices may have resulted from the “oppressively inflexible” structure of labor (Costello and

¹I use this account cautiously here and once more later in the article. Lorenzo Asisara did not personally witness the event mentioned here nor did he recall his version of the event until several decades later in 1877. Nonetheless, his statements are worth considering at some level. My first reference to this account is designed to pose a counterpoint to Cook’s statements and not to be the final word on native treatment in the missions. My second reference to Asisara’s account later in this article is to illustrate the role that labor could play in subversive strategies within the mission as related *in a native voice*, despite the potential problems with its historical reliability.

Hornbeck 1989:313) rather than from the labor tasks themselves. Chief culprits were a disruption of traditional hunting and gathering schedules (Allen 1998:68; Hoover 1989:401) and an enforced and altered sexual division of labor (Jackson 1994:135–136; Jackson and Castillo 1995:50). At the same time, mission padres imposed unfamiliar agricultural practices on a subsistence system focused entirely on a gathering, hunting, and fishing regime. In addition, unlike most of Spanish *La Florida*, where missionary labor and tribute systems mapped onto preexisting ones of large-scale chiefdoms (Milanich 1999:13–14), many California native groups impacted by Spanish colonization, with the Chumash being a notable exception, did not exhibit this type of social ranking.² Therefore, co-opted and enforced labor were often new phenomena, at least in degree, if not also in form.

MISSION LABOR AS SOCIAL PRACTICE

In light of the summarized mission labor regimes, I can turn to issues surrounding labor as a social practice under negotiation, as a site of superordinate attempts at control and subordinate efforts at resistance. Cook's (1943a, 1943b) description of communal labor has merit as a general typology of mission labor, but the outward *form* of mission labor as a communal enterprise must not be conflated with the *practice* of mission labor as a mechanism of social control and a locus for daily negotiation.

²This does not imply that ranking did not exist in some form, as leaders described as "chiefs" are noted for most indigenous groups in California, especially in the Chumash. It is worth noting that Gibson (1985) described a system of chiefly tribute for the Northern Salinan, the primary linguistic group that occupied Mission San Antonio de Padua. Although definitions of "chief" and "tribute" for these groups differed significantly from the actual chiefdoms of the southeastern United States, there may have been some precedent for labor appropriation.

Rather than disrupted traditional schedules being labor's only impact, the disciplinary nature of mission labor, for both punishment and for practices of conversion, may have been a highly significant factor in the subjugation and remaking of native personhood. Based on the use of labor for disciplinary purposes, Cook suggested that "mission neophytes came to confuse economically valuable labor with duress and punishment . . . (Cook 1943c:47). Although mission labor undoubtedly took on a negative valence, native laborers experienced labor as it was thrust upon them and as they performed it. Whether it related to a communal labor system is an altogether different, if not distanced, question.

Given that many neophytes did not speak Spanish fluently nor seek the intricacies of the Catholic faith, the experiential basis of mission labor had a profound impact on native social and cultural life. As stated by Hackel (1998:122): "For the Franciscans, Indian labor amounted to more than the production of food and material goods: it was a morally enriching disciplinary activity that figured prominently in the Indians' conversion from savagery to civilization." As such, the labor of native people must be seen as more than economic support for the mission. To work was to produce for the mission and for God; to not labor was to betray the sacred commitment to Catholicism made with baptism, an agreement often recognized only by the padres. The lack of consensus about this labor between missionaries and native people is evident in the large number of cases of native fugitivism from the missions, although the reasons for fleeing often stretched beyond labor concerns (Castillo 1989b; Cook 1943a, 1943b; Jackson and Castillo 1995; Milliken 1995). Interestingly, regardless of an individual's reason for leaving the mission, padres frequently characterized mission fugitives by their ability to work (Jackson and Castillo 1995:13).

Routines that revolved around labor, catechism, and food distribution were enforced on a daily basis, and the routinization of practice served as key element in bodily discipline. The enforcement of labor discipline took the form of constant surveillance (Phillips 1974:294). Surveillance was direct when it involved *padres* and often harsh native *alcaldes*, or supervisors, monitoring neophyte labor (e.g., as told by Pablo Tac in Hewes and Hewes 1952:99) and indirect when task systems were employed for gauging labor adequacy by productivity. Some have argued that the very presence of a labor overseer ushered in a form of personal authority previously unknown in many California native groups (Milliken 1995:89). The 19th-century California resident Hugo Reid further revealed the labor complexity when he claimed that missionaries appointed *alcaldes* "from among the very laziest of the community . . . [for] they took more pleasure in making the others work, than would industrious ones" (Heizer 1968:85).

A prime example of the negotiation of labor and social control was the missionary concern with laziness. Like many others, *padres* at Missions San Luis Obispo and San Carlos associated idleness with increased susceptibility to vice (Geiger and Meighan 1976:105–106). According to missionary logic, the *padres* could control the "vices" of lust, incontinence, drunkenness, and vengeance when they could control "laziness," a process involving the implementation of strict labor regimes. To the *padres*, working in a regimented Christian environment assisted in the transformation of "pagans" not only through discipline but also through occupying their time and minds with mission activities (Hackel 1998:122).

At the same time that mission labor was disciplinary, labor regimentation created a space for social negotiation, resistance, and innovation. The unwavering colonial characterization of neophytes as

idle by missionary fathers did not relate to a presumed inherent tendency of California hunter-gatherers to not perform labor, although it undoubtedly involved a potential incongruity of mission labor schedules with other nonmission activities such as gathering, hunting, trading, and performing rituals. Instead, the perceived idleness involved acts of everyday resistance on the part of native laborers, what Jackson and Castillo (1995:74) have termed "passive resistance." For instance, there are numerous accounts of *padres* suspecting neophytes of feigning illness to avoid mission labors (Hackel 1998:124). The creation and fostering of a negative stereotype of "lazy Indians" in the minds of the *padres* may have provided a space for native individuals to dodge their labor burden. Their intransigence was expected. In fact, Farnsworth (1997) has argued that labor was one of the most important loci for native negotiation of power relations because labor was the one thing that neophytes could withhold to destabilize the colonial system (see also Orser 1990:116).

On the other hand, certain individuals accepted the mantle of mission labor for self-advancement through the mission system. That is to say, at least some neophytes intentionally excelled at the labors that they were trained to do, providing them access to material goods and preferred living space (Allen 1998:94). In some cases, neophytes subverted the mission system by taking their mission-learned craft skills to presidios and pueblos (Hackel 1998:123), meaning that native people diverted missionaries' efforts at artisan training to personal uses. This strategy appears to have been to supplement diet, obtain trade goods, or strive for independence (Hackel 1998:127). In other cases, native people avoided secular labor opportunities because of the often-harsh treatment in comparison to the missions.

Complementing outright defiance of work duties or the acceptance of them, native neophytes could have adhered to the labor routine enforced by missionary padres and *alcaldes* as a strategy of subversion. Missionaries expected adherence to the labor schedule and considered themselves successful when everyone worked at their assigned tasks. The lull of satisfaction for padres gave native residents the opportunity to enact often revolutionary moves against the mission establishment. For example, Lorenzo Asisara stated in his 1877 narrative³ recounting the assassination of the resident padre at Mission Santa Cruz in 1812 that “[a]ll of the servants were busy at their jobs as always, in order not to cause any suspicion” (Castillo 1989a:123). Here, acquiescence to labor provided a diversionary tactic designed explicitly to facilitate overt resistance.

The negative reaction of native neophytes to mission labor cannot be attributed to an inability to see the benefits of plowing fields as part of future economic planning (Cook 1943a:99–100) or to “the idea that labor in any form was alien to their disposition, their social heritage, and their biological environment” (Cook 1943a:95). It was an act of resistance to the forced routines of daily labor. Sometimes, resistance remained subtle; other times, it arose explicit and outright. At mission secularization, California’s indigenous people did not abandon the mission because the work regime was foreign and misunderstood; they now had the legal right to refuse their labor for mission projects (Jackson and Castillo 1995:91–92). The refusal may have been to seek work elsewhere or to resist colonial work altogether. These individuals were social agents with agendas rather than simply mere victims of colonial reorganization (Haas 1996:42–43; Phillips 1974).

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF LABOR AT MISSION SAN ANTONIO DE PADUA

This article has sketched thus far the labor relations of Franciscan missions in enough detail to apply new theoretical lenses to the colonial institution. In doing so, preliminary glimpses into on-the-ground social relations of labor have been possible. These glimpses have accented the points of articulation between the implementation of colonial labor regimes and the appropriation and resistance of that regimentation by its participants. The discussion relied primarily on historical rather than archaeological sources because the documentary record allowed me to outline the parameters of labor from the top down and because historians have been the only ones considering labor in detail. However, one strength of the labor perspective in relation to cultural and social change is its applicability to archaeological data, to the experience of labor from the bottom up.

Mission San Antonio de Padua (Hoover and Costello 1985) serves as a case study to illustrate the potential for a theory of labor as practice. Excavations at Mission San Antonio have focused on native residential quarters and debris within the mission complex, offering the opportunity to track labor into the domestic realm of daily practices. Other mission sites in California may prove useful in this regard, such as the recent publication of data from Mission Santa Cruz (Allen 1998), but many do not have the spatial or contextual data to address these issues in full. For instance, the landmark study of Mission La Purísima concerning native “acculturation” (Deetz 1963) has been reevaluated by Costello (1990), who found that at least two of the excavated rooms were, in fact, *not* simply neophyte residential quarters.

Interpretations offered in this article for Mission San Antonio de Padua are only a first step in applying this theoretical approach to an archaeological assemblage. I

³Please refer to Footnote 1 for details.

forward these interpretations to complement and expand those offered by other archaeologists to include issues of labor, social practice, and identity. In addition, I use the case study to isolate broader issues in archaeological interpretation at colonial sites. The goal is to demonstrate that new ways of interpreting colonial contexts are possible by simply shifting the theoretical framework to one of labor and practice. As with most applications of social theory, this shift is actually far from simple, as it reveals the complexity and ambiguity of material culture.

Background

The Mission San Antonio de Padua case study is one of the most well known in California because it provides substantial spatial, architectural, and artifactual data (Fig. 1; Hoover and Costello 1985). Founded in 1771, Mission San Antonio is located in southcentral California along the San Antonio River (Fig. 2). It was the third mission established in Spanish California by the famous Fr. Junipero Serra, and it drew native people primarily from the large Salinan ethnolinguistic group (Gibson 1985; Hoover 1977). For a quarter of a century, Robert Hoover has conducted archaeological research at the mission complex, but I focus solely on excavation data published in 1985 from sections of the east wing of the "Indian dormitory," a complex of rooms designed to house neophyte families (Hoover and Costello 1985). They located the dormitory through earlier excavation efforts, historical photographs and maps, and some surface visibility. Forming part of the mission quadrangle, this adobe-brick residential complex was under construction or repair from 1776 to 1829 (Hoover and Costello 1985:Table 1).

Excavation results published in the 1985 monograph detailed data recovered from three contiguous dormitory rooms (Rooms 2, 3, and 4), part of a fourth (Room 1), and extramural spaces in front of and behind

them (Fig. 3). Archaeologists excavated entire room interiors (approximately 18.5–22 m², depending on the figure or text consulted), but only a 2-m strip in front of each residential unit (approximately 12 m²). Excavation in each room began as a "strata test pit" with arbitrary levels, followed by removal of identified stratigraphic layers across the room in a quadrant system (Sawyer 1985:13). Identified layers inside the rooms included Stratum I, wall detritus and melted adobe; Stratum II, collapsed *tejas* or roof tile fragments; Stratum III, floor deposits; and Stratum IV, sterile deposits below the dormitory context (Sawyer 1985:15). Front-yard spaces were excavated in arbitrary levels to 50 cm below datum.

The contiguous rooms were essentially cubicles, averaging 3.88 m east–west and 4.78 m north–south in internal dimensions (Hoover and Costello 1985:17). Walls were made of adobe brick and placed on cobble footings, which were set within shallow trenches. Each room had a single entry door, an adobe mud floor, and an amorphous hearth in the center (Hoover and Costello 1985:17). Archaeologists documented residential activities within the room, as well as in front of and behind it. The majority of faunal remains were found behind the dormitory, and they included predominantly cattle and sheep, but also deer, pig, horse, dog, and birds (Langenwaller and McKee 1985). Native residents primarily disposed of domestic refuse behind the dormitory, but they discarded some cooking and other debris into front-yard space (Hoover and Costello 1985:121). Artifacts of Spanish and Native American origin were discovered in all three rooms, including lithics, metal, ceramics, glass, groundstones, beads, and charmstones. The excavators found few boiling stones, leading the authors to conclude that ceramics rather than baskets were the predominant cooking vessels (Hoover and Costello 1985:121). The only significant architectural difference between the three main rooms

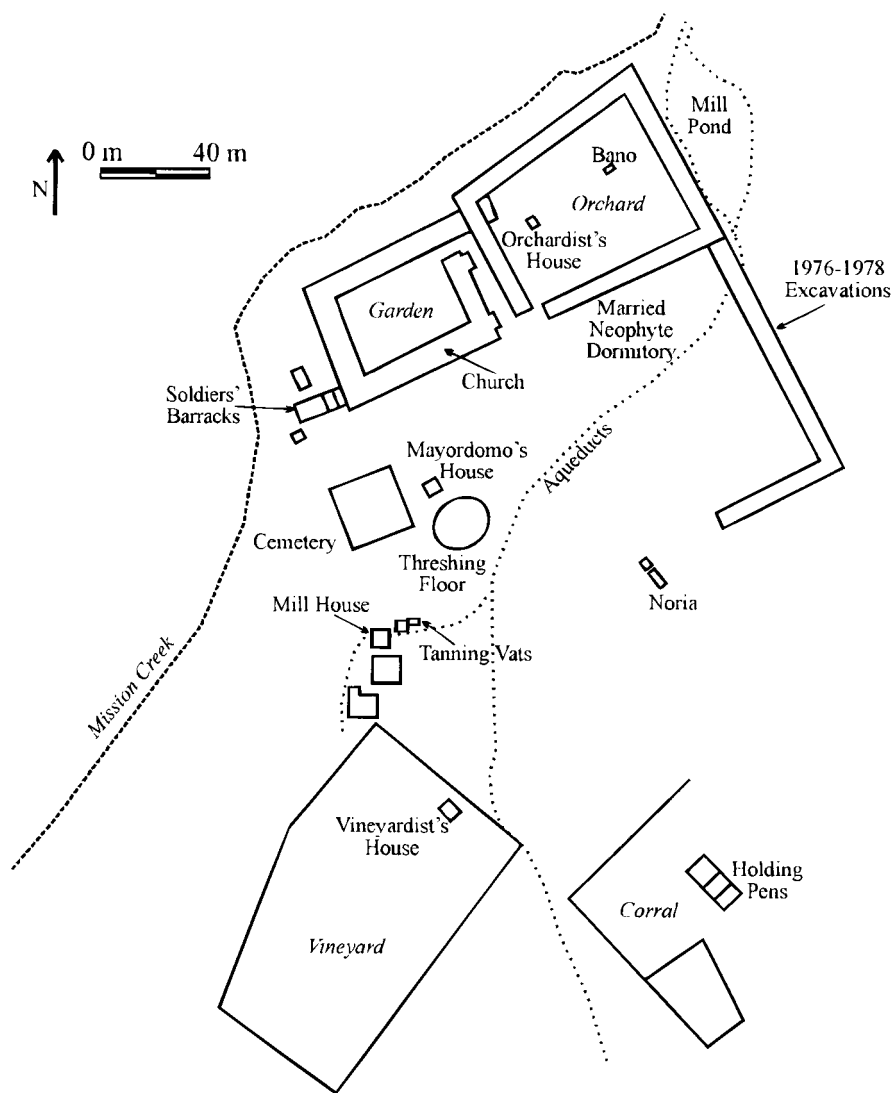


FIG. 2. Map of Mission San Antonio de Padua (redrawn from Hoover and Costello 1985:Fig. 3).

was the presence of a *ladrillo*, or fired-clay floor tile, surface in the southwest corner of Room 4. These tiles were decorated with "circles, crosses, and crossed diagonal lines" (Hoover and Costello 1985:20).

To complement these architectural and spatial interpretations, Costello identified patterns of ceramic type, frequency, and use across Rooms 2, 3, and 4 (Costello 1985b). Room 2 contained 44% of the total ceramic

sherds ($n = 169$) by count, mostly mission-produced wares in its subassemblage and predominantly cooking vessels. Room 4 contained only 24% of the pottery sherds, mostly European import ceramics in its subassemblage, and mainly vessels designed for food consumption (Costello 1985b:32-41). This difference, coupled with the presence of decorated *ladrillo* floor tiles in part of Room 4, seemed to indicate that

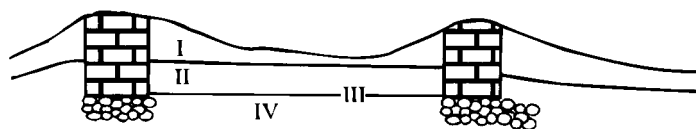
TABLE 1
Counts and Percentages of Selected Mission San Antonio Artifacts Recovered from Stratum II (Collapsed Roof Tile), Stratum III (Floor), and Level S3 of Strata Test Pits in Rooms 2, 3, and 4 and from Excavations in front of Rooms 2, 3, and 4

	Room 2				Room 3				Room 4				Total	
	In	%	Out	%	In	%	Out	%	In	%	Out	%	In	Out
Glass	7	33	2	100	10	48	0	0	4	19	0	0	21	2
Knives	1	20	1	100	3	60	0	0	1	20	0	0	5	1
Scissors	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Needle	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Hooks	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	2	100	0	—	2	0
Hinges	1	50	0	—	1	50	0	—	0	0	0	—	2	0
Nails	2	20	1	33	3	30	0	0	5	50	2	67	10	3
Buttons	1	25	0	0	2	50	7	100	1	25	0	0	4	7
Spur rowel	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	1	0
Axe blade	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	1	0
Saw	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	1	0
Hafted chisel	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Metal cross	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Shell beads	1	9	0	0	7	64	1	100	3	27	0	0	11	1
Stone bead	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Stearite bowl	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Pestle	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Manos	2	40	3	50	2	40	1	17	1	20	2	33	5	6
Metate	0	0	2	50	0	0	2	50	1	100	0	0	1	4
Mortar	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	1	0
Bone whistle	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Charmstones	0	0	0	—	0	0	0	—	2	100	0	—	2	0
Bone beads	1	50	0	—	1	50	0	—	0	0	0	—	2	0
Arrow	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
straightener														
Gaming stone	0	0	0	—	1	100	0	—	0	0	0	—	1	0
Hammerstones	2	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	2	1
Boiling stones	1	25	0	0	1	25	1	100	2	50	0	0	4	1
Fired clay	1	33	0	—	2	66	0	—	0	0	0	—	3	0
effigies														
Projectile	2	40	0	—	2	40	—	0	1	20	0	—	5	0
points														
End scrapers	6	67	0	—	2	22	—	0	1	11	0	—	9	0
Unmodified	14	36	9	41	13	33	7	32	12	31	6	27	39	22
flakes														
Unmodified	11	31	9	50	13	37	4	22	11	31	5	28	35	18
cores														
Total	57		27		68		23		51		16		176	66

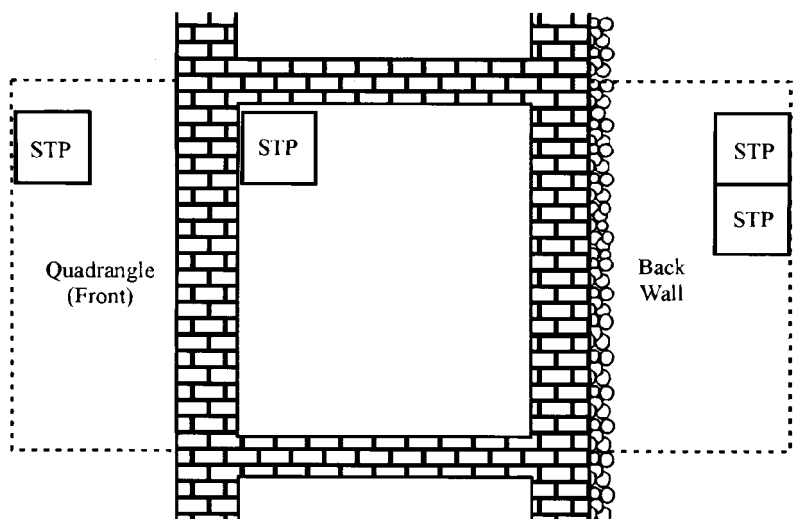
Note. “In” refers to inside the room, and “Out” refers to outside (i.e., in front of) the room. Percentages are the proportion of the rows’ “inside” and “outside” totals that each room contained.

higher status individuals occupied Room 4 (Hoover and Costello 1985:20), although the possibility of these rooms being differentiated by function rather than status is not yet fully disproven (Costello 1985b:38, 41). Room 3, which was between Rooms 2 and 4, had 32% of the total sherds and an amount of cooking and serving vessels and import and local ceramics midway between Room 2 and 4.


Generalized Profile of Excavated Dormitory Room




Generalized Plan View of Excavated Dormitory Room



----- Limit of "Room Excavation"

 Cobble Foundation

 Adobe Brick Wall

STP Strata Test Pit

II Stratum Label



0 m 4 m

FIG. 3. Generalized profile and plan views of an excavated room in neophyte dormitory (redrawn from Hoover and Costello 1985:Fig. 8).

Other than these interpretations and the "differential acculturation" proposed for the broad material patterns (Hoover 1977; Hoover and Costello 1985:120–121), most excavated artifacts have not been considered in detail. It is partly for this reason that I chose this case to apply the framework of labor and practice. I also selected Mission San Antonio because it offers the most robust, relevant excavated data currently available from California's missions to begin addressing issues of labor and practice. However, ambiguity surrounds the temporal and behavioral context of artifacts from Mission San Antonio, and it is necessary to make these concerns explicit before proceeding.

To control for provenience among a variety of mission and postmission strata, I included only artifacts from the three fully excavated rooms (Rooms 2, 3, and 4) and the front-yard space immediately outside the entryway. I did not consider the items from behind the dormitory complex because of their questionable association with specific rooms. In addition, faunal and glass bead data were excluded because the original monograph did not report them on a room-by-room basis and because the faunal remains may have represented primarily abandonment refuse in the rooms (Langenwaller and McKee 1985:97). I partially circumvented problems with postdepositional disturbance by ground squirrels and other rodents (Hoover and Costello 1985:64) and any deposits postdating the mission occupation by selecting only artifacts from Stratum II, the collapsed roof and underlying matrix, and Stratum III, the actual floor deposits of the rooms. I also include artifacts recovered from Level 3 of the test unit excavated in each room. Although such a restriction decreased artifact numbers, the method segregated sealed room deposits that were capped by roof fall from other successive depositional events.

Despite my attempts to isolate the appropriate archaeological context for consider-

ing the labor-as-practice approach in a *mission-period* case, there is a possibility that some artifacts recovered in the dormitory rooms resulted from either mission abandonment or postsecularization (post-1834) occupation. These issues cannot be fully resolved here, but they could affect my interpretations offered here. Regarding the former, zooarchaeologists who analyzed the Mission San Antonio faunal subassemblage believed that many of the faunal remains from room interiors reflected abandonment rather than residential debris (Langenwaller and McKee 1985:95–97,101). If the abandonment scenario is true, the dormitory room faunal and perhaps other debris may represent the final snapshot of Native American life at the end of the mission period at this locality. Therefore, these deposits may have a different composition or structure than that usually produced during day-to-day living.

The possibility of postsecularization occupation is a more serious charge because the nature of native life in mission settings changed drastically at this juncture. Some sections of the 1985 monograph suggest that the dormitory floor deposits beneath the roof fall dated between 1810 to 1848, which would include the mission and postsecularization periods (Costello 1985b:21; Langenwaller and McKee 1985:Fig. 21). In addition, later excavators have revealed similar features and artifacts in other units of the dormitory complex that may post-date the 1834 secularization of Mission San Antonio (Bertrando 1997:66–76). Although excavated items appear to have been beneath tile roof fall in these later excavations, it is unclear whether artifacts were truly associated with any particular strata given the small areas exposed within the rooms.

However, other evidence indicates that the particular dormitory assemblage under consideration here dates between 1810 and 1835 (Costello 1990:284–286). Other than the materials potentially deposited in 1834 or 1835, the temporal span is solidly mission-

period. Yet, three lines of evidence restrict the likelihood that native individuals occupied this particular section of the dormitory after secularization (Costello 1985b:20–21; 1990:284–286; Hoover and Costello 1985:1): (1) the recorded rapid abandonment of Mission San Antonio following secularization probably resulted in outlying dormitories, such as the one investigated for the 1985 monograph, being abandoned first; (2) no immediately postsecularization “Rancho Period” existed at the mission site because the *ranchero* who obtained the Mission San Antonio land relocated a mile up the San Antonio River; and (3) artifacts from the room interiors did not differ significantly in composition from those outside the rooms, suggesting little to no temporal discrepancy. In addition, the Mission San Antonio dormitory artifacts were remarkably similar to those found in mission-period deposits at Mission Santa Cruz, less than 150 km to the north (Allen 1998).

With these ambiguities in mind, the following is offered as a possible interpretive scenario to demonstrate the applicability of a labor-as-practice approach to culture contact and colonialism. Because of the relatively small quantity of artifacts and the remaining questions about assemblage dating, the interpretations forwarded here will need to be reevaluated when additional data have been published or other contexts investigated at Mission San Antonio. Although the context of the case study is not perfect, the purpose of this application is as much to engage the new theoretical perspective as it is to offer novel insights on Mission San Antonio. In so doing, it reveals central problems in archaeological studies of colonialism.

A Complementary Perspective on Labor

Labor tasks and affiliations are apparent in several material classes and their spatial associations (Table 1). The array of metal tools recovered from the Indian residential

compound included six knife blades, a pair of scissors, a heavy-duty needle, an iron axe blade, an iron saw, and one possible blade of a hafted chisel (Hoover and Costello 1985:66–74). These implements are important because they were major components of mission labor duties. That is, they were items introduced and instituted by *padres* to complete required mission tasks. Archaeologists traditionally view the acquisition of metal by native individuals as a mark of acculturation or a choice based on the “superiority” of metal tools. At Mission San Antonio, there is also the assumption that lithic technology continued because metal items were scarce or expensive (Hoover and Costello 1985:121). In addition to having concerns about the appropriateness of these assumptions for this and other archaeological cases, I argue that halting interpretation at either one of these points undermines the importance of the social context in which these material items and people existed. Because these metal items were the material anchor of *required colonial duties*, they took on a political tenor for those individuals using and keeping them. The labor and social contexts retained importance even when neophytes acquired these metal items through trade, pilfering, or scavenging.

The types and spatial array of metal artifacts at Mission San Antonio illuminate some of these issues. The scissors, potential chisel blade, and three knife blades occurred in Room 3, while the iron spur rowel, one knife, the iron axe head, and the iron saw derived from Room 4. Room 2 contained fewer metal artifacts than either of the other two rooms with only one knife blade inside the room and one just in front of the residential unit. Although there is no guarantee of household use instead of storage required by the missionaries (see Mission San Miguel, Geiger and Meighan 1976:82), it can be conjectured that these items were used in the residential space. Even if these artifacts were simply stored in

the household, their mere presence is evidence of their use in strategies of social practice. At times, individuals may have conscripted these items as part of identity; at others, these items may have been material reminders of daily mission oppression.

The needle and scissors from Rooms 2 and 3, respectively, may have related to labor tasks of working leather or cloth and may have been used in the domestic sphere for similar purposes. In fact, the needle may have been associated with fabric since it occurred with the fired-clay perforated disk that has been tentatively assigned a function in spinning (see Hoover and Costello 1985:55). It is unclear whether individuals used these items in the household space for off-work pursuits or whether they simply stored these items in the home when not using them for mission tasks. Either way, native and European leather- and fabric-working implements were merged into the material repertoire of the household. As such, they were *not* socially neutral material items.

The spur rowel in Room 4 may signify the presence of a neophyte male *vaquero* (cowboy), a labor position normally considered high-status by mission administrators.⁴ The association of the rowel with an iron cross and the higher quantities and percentages of European export ceramics further corroborate this possibility. Whether the household as a whole latched onto the *vaquero* task as a social marker or whether the male participating in the task vied alone for that material symbol in the household is currently unknown. The latter is feasible given that this room contained the only two

charmstones excavated in the dormitory sample, a trend that lends credence to some individuals upholding traditional native practices in the face of mission labor requirements. On the other hand, these items may have been part of a syncretism of material items to forge a new neophyte identity.

The fact that Room 4 had more heavy-duty labor tools (i.e., saw blade, axe head) suggests further affiliation with mission labors or heightened access to or interest in metal commodities. The higher status mission labor task of tending cattle may have offered the household of Room 4 better access to European goods, but occupants of Rooms 2 and perhaps 3 may have had no desire to obtain these goods, which would similarly account for their lower occurrence. Considering labor task as the venue for material acquisition highlights the fact that access to material resources in a colonial context involves more than simply "acculturation" or interest in obtaining goods. In many cases, it relates directly to the performance of colonial labor.

When considered in conjunction with metal artifacts, the imported historical ceramics reveal aspects of daily practice surrounding food use in Room 4. The lower quantity of cooking wares in Room 4 may indicate food preparation and distribution from a common kitchen (Costello 1985b:38). If true, the mission food distribution system might have fostered more regimentation as it replaced some traditional subsistence or cooking pursuits. This may have further accentuated the potential affiliations of Room 4's residents with mission-based identities. Yet, the only fired-clay saddle effigy, an item that may have represented and reinforced a connection with mission *vaquero*-ness, was recovered in Room 3 (Hoover and Costello 1985:Fig. 13b). If associated with children (see Hoover and Costello 1985:55), the artifact may have signaled the work of missionaries to inculcate children into mission practices. Why this was in Room 3

⁴Bertrando (1997:71) also reported a spur rowel in nearby dormitory excavations, but he claimed that this find was probably postsecularization, given the low probability that Native Americans were allowed the full accoutrements of a *vaquero* until the mission had been dismantled. As long as the particular dormitory section reported in the 1985 monograph is truly presecularization, I consider the spur rowel in this article as mission period.

rather than Room 4 is unclear. Perhaps Rooms 3 and 4 were part of the same household or family unit, or the residential complex may have housed several families with *vaquero* residents.

In addition to revealing aspects of native cooking practices at the mission, ceramics offer insights into mission labor because they were the material objects used and cleaned by neophytes involved in food preparation and serving for the mission community. Similarly, the sherds of locally made "mission pottery" found at Mission San Antonio, much like those found at other central and southern California missions, appear more complex when viewed through a labor perspective. At minimum, mission-made ceramics found at Mission San Antonio represent native labor in the mission context because native individuals manufactured them on-site. Manufacture of these ceramic vessels may have also provided the opportunity to produce the fired clay effigies. Although ceramic technology was introduced to native people as part of their "acculturation" (Costello 1985b:31) and ceramic vessels may have replaced traditional stone or basket containers for cooking (Hoover and Costello 1985:121), the products themselves were the result of daily labor by native people. Missionary *padres* enforced this daily labor, but as products of labor, these material items may have been integral to the reworking of native identity in the colonial setting. The presence of mission-made ceramics in neophyte households does not indicate simply that Native Americans had become more Spanish.

As detailed above and in the original monograph for Mission San Antonio, the mission-made ceramics may have had much to do with status, but native individuals or even households might have also used these local ceramics to actively affiliate with mission labor tasks. That is, these materials could have been readily incorporated into daily cooking practices at the do-

mestic level by families of those who were involved in ceramic production. Colonial administrators viewed these practices as markers of cultural assimilation, but they could have just as easily been new practices that made these ceramics function in a subordinate register. If so, mission ceramics were as much a mark of native individuals commodifying new identities or materializing previous ones with the products of their own labor as they were indications of presumed "acculturation" to ceramic-based ways of life. The strong correlation between mission ceramics and lithic manufacturing and use at Mission San Antonio and at other missions suggests such a possibility.

The lithic subassemblage both clarifies and complicates the interpretation of labor and social relations in the mission dormitory (Table 1; see complete data in Hoover and Costello 1985:77–92). Just as the ceramics cannot be considered straightforward evidence of acculturation, lithic tools and debitage cannot be simply considered unequivocal marks of traditional native identities. Lithic tools have been found in conjunction with mission labor tasks, such as the association of chert flakes and tanning vats at Mission La Purisima (Deetz 1963:172), meaning that lithic tools may have been integrally related to the performance of mission labor. In other words, although lithics denote native lifeways within the Franciscan mission system, they do not offer straightforward clues of native resistance or maintenance of indigenous practices. The role of lithics in materializing identity should not be considered static and immutable.

The pattern at Mission San Antonio suggests that native individuals maintained some control over material aspects of their laboring lives in the mission. Room 1 and Room 2 each had 40% of the projectile points ($n = 5$) found at Mission San Antonio within the three rooms and their associated front spaces. One of the two projectile points found in Room 2 was made of bottle

glass. Room 2 also contained 67% of the total end scrapers ($n = 9$), while Rooms 3 and 4 had 22 and 11%, respectively. Regarding unmodified flakes and unmodified cores, a minor but significant pattern was visible across the three rooms. The trend was of diminishing numbers of flakes and cores from Room 2 to Room 4. Percentages of total flakes ($n = 61$) from Rooms 2, 3, and 4 were 38, 33, and 30%, respectively, and percentages of total unmodified cores ($n = 53$) for Rooms 2, 3 and 4 showed a similar pattern with 38, 32, and 30%, respectively. Although Rooms 3 and 4 were similar, they were statistically different than Room 2. The same general pattern obtained when considering the total unmodified flakes ($n = 39$) from intramural contexts for Rooms 2 (36%), 3 (33%), and 4 (31%) and the total unmodified flakes ($n = 22$) from extramural locations for Rooms 2 (41%), 3 (32%), and 4 (27%). The latter pattern is the more significant. Room 2 also contained the only two hammerstones from intramural contexts, and Room 4 had the only one outside.

At a minimal level, the ubiquity of lithic artifacts in the residential compound denotes the persistence of traditional lithic crafts in the face of mission life and labor (see Allen 1998 regarding Mission Santa Cruz). This may be due, in part, to the possibility that "native utensils for the gathering, storing, and preparation of articles of food, fitted very well into the industrial life of the missions" (Webb 1952:152). Yet, finding these items in household contexts indicates the use of lithics in frequent off-work, or domestic, practices. In addition, the lithic distribution suggests that individuals using or occupying Room 2 may have been more focused on "traditional" native lithic practices than those living in Rooms 3 or 4. With some lithic classes, the pattern is only of minor consequence, but the weight of all variables provides support to this conclusion. Rooms 3 and 4 had slightly less lithic manufacturing debris than Room 2, but the spatial pattern of cores was particularly in-

teresting. Rooms 2 and 3 each had 45% of their unmodified cores outside the room, but Room 4 had only 24% of its cores in extramural contexts. Actual numbers were low, but they suggested that a difference in public and private identity might have been asserted.

Negotiated identities were more than "Indian" or "Spanish"—they were novel forms that integrated a variety of material traditions. The *vaquero*-based identity of Room 4 may have been a public one, visible on the boot heels of a man and in the hands of a woman as she obtained food from the mission kitchen. Part of identity negotiation may have involved little public display of lithic tool manufacture in the form of cores scattered in front of their residence, perhaps to convince padres of their nonnative practices. However, despite the inhabitants of Rooms 3 and 4 having had slightly fewer lithic tools and debitage in and around their residences, they tended to have similar, if not more, lithic materials in intramural spaces. This greater quantity suggests that core use and reduction may have been restricted from public view. Furthermore, the relatively small amount of lithic manufacturing debris might indicate that knapping occurred away from the household space, such as in the kiln area behind the dormitory (e.g., Costello 1985a:137), or that individuals periodically swept chipping debris away from their immediate living area.

In addition to chipped stone, groundstones in the form of manos, metates, pestles, and mortars were present (Table 1), but their numbers were fairly small. Rooms 2, 3, and 4 had 45, 27, 27%, respectively, of the total manos ($n = 11$) and 40, 40, 20%, respectively, of the total metates ($n = 5$). Room 2 contained the only pestle, and Room 3 had the only mortar fragment. Numbers of groundstones were quite small for all three rooms, precluding detailed discussion. The only noticeable trend for these items was the lower number of manos and metates recovered and the complete ab-

sence of mortar and pestle fragments in Room 4. In many ways, this mimics the lithic pattern noted above and suggests less traditional native material culture in use by Room 4's occupants. Because these groundstones were the type used only in domestic contexts, they do not speak directly to labor for mission food production. If mission-style manos and metates had been discovered, then their presence might have indicated that native women conducted their required mission duties of grinding plant foods at their residence.

In sum, my efforts to focus on the material culture of native mission residents through the filter of labor revealed two things. First, the dormitory deposits of Mission San Antonio divulge a more complex social arena than previously assumed. Native residents of the mission had access to numerous metal tools, ones that they perhaps discarded broken into abandoned rooms. Implements for butchering and processing cattle such as knives and saws and sewing items such as scissors and a needle made their way into the mission native household. These were undoubtedly material signs manipulated as part of individual, gender, or household identities. In addition, I could muster strong evidence for creolized identities having been negotiated in the spaces of Rooms 2, 3, and 4. Residents of Room 4 struggled with different material histories, merging the traditional (charmstones and lithics) with the introduced Spanish (spur rowel, European ceramics, saw, and axe). Inhabitants of Room 2 focused on the use of mission-produced rather than imported ceramics, perhaps co-opting this "introduced" and required technology as a component of a new, "mission" identity. These creative mergers hinged on labor, not only as an activity that occupied many waking hours inside and outside the mission compound, but also as a source for the materialization of new and old identities.

Second, the labor-as-practice perspective pinpointed new twists in the models of acculturation and identity frequently dis-

cussed for mission and other colonial settings. When set within a context of social practice and labor, artifacts lose their presumed straightforward expressions of "native" versus "Spanish." They were items of material culture with a history and a context of production and use, but a mutable one. For example, the same items may have meant one thing to Catholic missionaries, another to native men, and something different still to native women. As noted for artifact in plantation contexts, "the ambiguity is real" (Howson 1990:85). The ambiguity heightens when the issue of labor is added to the mix, but so does the potential clarity of interpretations regarding social practices of identity, gender, and household life. Labor structured, influenced, and occupied much of daily life for indigenous people swept up in colonial communities, and this case study demonstrates how archaeologists might begin taking account of that fact in their interpretations.

CONCLUSION

This article developed a theoretical approach to labor, integrated it with archaeological data, and demonstrated its usefulness in studying colonial contact at California's 18th- and 19th-century missions. The usefulness arose from the broad anthropological relevance of the theoretical approach for both ethnohistorical and archaeological contexts. That is, the approach not only revealed novel aspects of Native American experiences at the California mission through historical sources, but it also illustrated the potential for articulating material remains, social relations, and labor regimes using archaeological data. In addition to refining archaeological interpretations of the Mission San Antonio case study, the labor-as-practice perspective highlighted the complexity of meanings embedded in material culture in colonial settings. These meanings are often the ones overlooked in traditional "acculturation" models.

Since labor was the significant force, practice, and activity engulfing Native American experience in the missions and numerous other colonial institutions, labor must be given priority in interpretation and theoretical development. Missions can be investigated from the labor angle, but the theoretical conceptualization of labor may find its real home in the investigation of secular colonial regimes, as these contexts were explicitly organized around exploiting Native American laborers (Silliman 2000). Such contexts were widespread in the Americas and elsewhere, and these venues—ranchos, presidios, forts, trading posts, mines, and pueblos—were founded on the backs of indigenous workers without the mantle of proselytization. Of paramount importance is the fact that many, but by no means all, of the native laborers at these nonmission colonial establishments in California derived from mission contexts. This fact offers the opportunity to track potential long-term effects of mission labor regimentation into postmission laboring contexts.

A focus on identity and social negotiation promotes fresh thinking about the variability of indigenous responses to colonialism. The reevaluation should help short-circuit the polarization of groups into those who "acculturated" and those who resisted by concentrating on the lived experience of individuals within labor regimes. The variability of the labor experience and tactics used as part of practicing daily labors must be given attention. For instance, in the Spanish mission case, we must be careful not to grant social agency to Native American individuals who resisted the labor and material parameters of mission life or suffered psychological dislocation and then deny it to those who acquiesced or incorporated those items and practices into their daily lives (Hackel 1998:124).

Although designed for colonial cases, the labor-as-practice approach has broad applicability to other contexts that feature labor as a prominent social relation. In all cases, labor

must be seen as more than an economic function or a currency of the elite; it must be seen in its social context. The latter actually complements, rather than undermines, macroscale economic approaches. The labor perspective generates more refined interpretations of material culture, power and social relations, gendered division of labor, and social and bodily discipline. Framing archaeological and historical interpretation with labor engenders a multidirectional view of social relations such that labor regimes are interpreted simultaneously as imposition and as social strategy, as elite attempts at social control, and as nonelite efforts at self-assertion and resistance.

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