Natural Empire: First Impressions of Indigenous Knowledge in Las Californias in the Eighteenth Century

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Spanish historical accounts of indigenous edible and medicinal plants from the viewpoints and perspectives within the Indigenous Archive were misrepresented; this is intentional. In analyzing the Indigenous Archive, I want to reassess the Spanish sources in their true form—both problematic and essential. The Indigenous Archive is a byproduct of indigenous knowledge that was recorded, copied, published, distorted, and destroyed by Spanish officials and Jesuit priests on behalf of the Spanish Crown. To uncover the biases of the indigenous populations described in the archive, this paper seeks to redirect, recenter, and revitalize the indigenous voices through plants, bulbs, trees, and seeds that were crucial to the indigenous food diet and health.

I will reassess the complex relationship between the indigenous people, Spanish colonists, and Jesuits. The indigenous people and indigenous knowledge are ultimately under the Indigenous Archive, and all these elements are affected and connected. New ideas were being introduced such as ethnobotany, colonialism, innovations in the sciences, bioprospecting, the commodification of plants through the Indigenous Archive, and the ambiguities of writing in the imagery of the indigenous populations in Las Californias in the eighteenth century. I was recently reminded by an indigenous member of how his community continues to live with the profound effects of colonization in the twenty-first century.[1] I will be referring to the region as Las Californias due to how Spanish writers wrote in their letters, travelogues, and published works about the strategic colonial project.[2] Spanish revisionists measured the landscape and recorded the quality of land to understand how profitable

[1] Anonymous, Interview by Esmeralda Del Rio and Christopher Gurrola, August 1, 2022. Online forum.

[2] Rose Marie Beebe, and Robert M. Senkewicz. *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846*. (Santa Clara, CA: Santa Clara University, 2001), 72.

California could be to the Spanish empire.[3] In approaching the paper through a mixture of micro/macro-histories of California history and Mexico's colonial history, acknowledging the transnational component of California and Baja California is crucial to assessing the Indigenous Archive. In 1769-1770, the Portola Expedition was granted a charter to explore the territory known by the Spanish as Las California, today Southern California.[4] Uncharacteristically, the Spanish revisionists were able to sustain their journey from San Diego to Monterey due to their interactions with the indigenous populations who provided navigation, food, and medical assistance.[5] However, the Spanish were also prone to violence as the indigenous sought to assert control over their sacred land.[6]

Our knowledge of indigenous practices is an accumulation of collections created and curated by Spanish writers, intellectuals, Jesuits, and government officials who interacted with the indigenous populations without their conscious participation.[7] It remains unclear to scholars whether the indigenous were aware of the Spanish recordings. Can we know whether the indigenous were aware of the Spanish recordings? The answer remains unclear. The relationship between the indigenous, Spanish officials, Jesuits, and later missionary priests remains ambiguous.[8] There is no written text produced by the indigenous to understand their observations and perceptions of the Spanish during the Portola expedition. In terms of the Jesuits in

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[3] Miguel Costanso. *The Discovery of San Francisco Bay: the Portolá expedition of 1769-1770 : the diary of Miguel Costansó, in Spanish and English = El descubrimiento de la Bahía de San Francisco: la expedición de Portolá de 1769*-1770. (Lafayette, Calif.: Great West Books, 1992), 5.
[4] Theodore E. Treutlein, "The Portolá Expedition of 1769-1770." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1968): 291–313, https://doi.org/10.2307/25154307.
[5] Miguel Costanso, *The Discovery of San Francisco Bay: the Portolá expedition of 1769-1770 : the diary of Miguel Costansó, 5-7.*
[6] George Butler Griffin and, Adolph Sutro, and Donald C. Cutter. *The California Coast; a Bilingual Edition of Documents from the Sutro Collection.* Edited by Donald C. Cutter. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), 69.
[7] Costanso, Miguel. *The Discovery of San Francisco Bay: the Portolá expedition of 1769-1770: the diary of Miguel Costansó, 9.*
[8] Costanso, 86.

Baja California, Jesuit revisionists made no effort to record indigenous oral histories despite having the possibility.[9] At times, I will mention the Cochimies who interacted with Spanish officials mentioned below. I will concentrate on Miguel Costanso, Miguel Del Barco, Miguel Venegas, Father Eusebio Kino, Juan Crespi, Francisco de Ortega, and Fernando Consag due to their association and occupations in association with the Spanish crown. Revisionists in Spanish texts continue to have a destructive within the Indigenous Archive on the environment, ecosystem, and indigenous communities. Jesuit revisionists contributed greatly to the Indigenous Archive's lack of substance and unconscious material produced.[10] Each writer mentioned above would significantly change the lives of the indigenous people forever.[11]

Location is a prominent component in my paper due to the massive landscape being plundered by the Spanish since the eighteenth century. The plants recorded in Baja California were sought after during the Portola Expedition which is evident in Crespi's diary that addresses various plants found in Las Californias. As a cartographer and engineer, Costanso was

[9] Homer Aschmann, "Learning about Baja California Indians: Sources and Problems." *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 8, no. 2 (1986): 238–45. https://www.jstor.org/stable/27825275.

[10] Bryan Green, "Apostles and Men of Learning': Miguel Venegas, Andrés Marcos Burriel, and the Jesuit Vocation for Natural History." *Journal of Jesuit studies* 4, no. 1 (2017): 28–55. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-00401002.

[11] Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*. (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2001), 4.

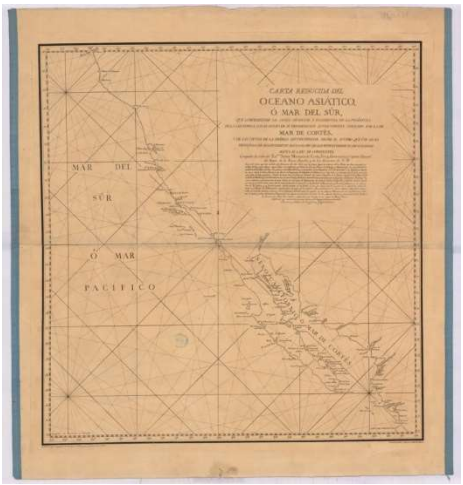


Figure 1, Miguel Costanso's map of California. CSUMB Digital Archives

commissioned to create a map of Las Californias (See Figure 1).[12] The purpose of the map was to understand the landscape and accessibility for the overall colonial project that was underway.[13]

The perceptions and imagery of the indigenous peoples loom large over the Indigenous Archive. I seek to cross-examine the cultural and historical plants' interconnectedness to the indigenous peoples; there-fore, the writings initiated by the Jesuit and Spanish travelers, writers, and government officials were refabricated as the Indigenous Archive.[14] In Daniela Bleichmar's work, she has drawn from the history of art, political aspirations, intellectual notoriety, and monetary goals that the Spanish crown sought to cultivate in New Spain. Additionally, in connection with the historical works that challenge and question the archives and have also drawn from systematically problematic and distorted sources that include the works of Marisa J. Fuentes and Jennifer Morgan in their discussion on black women's bodies.[15] The

[12] Noticias de California: first report of the occupation by the Portolá Expedition, 1770 with facsimiles of the original printings, a new translation, George Hammond, contemporary maps, and a narrative of how it all came to pass. (New Spain.; Croix, Carlos Francisco de Croix, marqués de, 1699-1786). The map can be found on pg. 27.

[13] Janet R. Fireman, and Manuel P. Servin, "Miguel Costansó: California's Forgotten Founder." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1970): 3–19. https://doi.org/10.2307/25154413

[14] Damon B. Akins, and William J. Bauer, *We Are the Land: A History of Native California*. (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2021), 65.

[15] Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 4.

production of silencing through Spanish sources has been thoroughly discussed and researched by Michel-Rolph Trouillot.[16] I draw upon Trouillot's approach to decipher the "semantic ambiguity" to sight my historical accounts within the Indigenous Archive. Alongside, the works of anthropologist and ethnobotanist, Janice Timbrook and, professor of anthropology, Lynn H. Gamble who has cataloged plants utilized by the indigenous populations—the Chumash tribe of present-day Santa Barbara illustrates the continued uses of edible and medicinal purposes in the local populations today.[17]

This paper seeks to answer questions regarding the Indigenous Archive that encompassed the edible and medicinal plants in Las Californias in the eighteenth century. In addressing these questions, my work will thematically clarify the interconnections between structures of power, colonization, and ethnobotany. I will be dividing the Indigenous Archive into three sections to further assess the power structures created and maintained by the Spanish and Jesuit revisionists.[18] The first section which features three plants: nopal, yerba del tabardillo, and jojoba. Each plant recorded and designated as a venture capitalist's plant is written with detail and precision to curate the Indigenous Archive to produce profits and influence within the Spanish empire. The wealth and prestige in power were crucial to the Spanish Crown through the advances in the natural sciences.[19] The second section will focus on the plants that were under threat by the Spanish revisionists in how they were recorded and described in racial undertones, and assumptions made between the indigenous peoples and the plants—which included amaranth and clover. The last section will focus on mischaracterized plants that

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[16] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Boston, Mass: Beacon Press, 1995, 3-4.
[17] Janice Timbrook., and Chris. Chapman, *Chumash Ethnobotany: Plant Knowledge Among the Chumash People of Southern California*. (Santa Barbara, Calif: Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, 2007), 11; Lynn H. Gamble, *The Chumash World At European Contact (Berkeley:* University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 2008), 1-2.
[18] Del Barco, Miguel, *The Natural History of Baja California*,13.
[19] Daniela Bleichmar, *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 125.

lack credible expertise and accurate descriptions and information of each plant which are nettle and agave. All seven plants mentioned above are considered misclassified plants. Furthermore, the damage done to the plants mentioned was not immediately felt by the indigenous; over time the mischaracterization of plants can have a lasting impact on the natural landscape, ecosystems, and local populations.

In 1756, Jesuit revisionist, Del Barco, helped with the construction of a mission.[20] He spent most of his time further understanding the natural landscape, and his writings on the plants were preserved within the numerous Spanish and European archives.[21] Del Barco's descriptions of the land and vegetation are assessed without any prior professional understanding of the study of ecology, ethnobotany, or climate.[22] Del Barco's recordings of plants are a focal contribution to bioprospecting in the gathering of information on plants native to Las Californias. Spanish writings in the Indigenous Archive about the native plants illustrate how each writer distorts indigenous knowledge for bioprospecting in Las Californias. Therefore, the recovery of each plant should be addressed in three sub-arguments including monetary plants, misclassified plants, and compromised plants to re-assess the damage and psychological violence embedded into the Indigenous Archive through the fabrication of the indigenous knowledge by Spanish and Jesuit revisionists in the eighteenth century. Bioprospecting is the extraction of plants from Las Californias to obtain natural resources that can bring capital and advances in medicine for the Spanish crown.[23] Seven plants illustrate how the Spanish and Jesuit revisionists sought to exploit and endanger the herbs being recorded.

The formulation of plants into the archive is structured into venture capital plants to illustrate the appeal of the Spanish and Jesuit revisionists to uphold their interpretation of the archive as profitable; the indigenous fingerprints on the plants, such as prickly pear, are reverberated within the Indigenous Archive. Del

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[20] Del Barco, Miguel, *The Natural History of Baja California*, 12.
[21] Del Barco, Miguel,12.
[22] Del Barco, Miguel, 32-33.
[23] Rose Marie Beebe, and Robert M. Senkewicz, *Lands of Promise and Despair: Chronicles of Early California, 1535-1846, 97*.

Barco vividly illustrates the physical descriptions of each plant mentioned below, its edible, medicinal uses, the time of year each herb can grow, and its proximity within the Spanish empire.

Spanish Investment Crops

1. Prickly Pear or Nopal



Prickly Pear/Nopal (photo by author at the Huntington Library)

Del Barco strategically recorded the prickly pear's origins in Baja California while keeping in mind his audience who might have come across the prickly pear in another region of the Spanish empire seeking to capitalize from the plant. The use of the word "Indian figs" has a negative connotation about the indigenous made by the Spanish revisionists.[24] The Cochimies' customs with the prickly pear can be visualized within the Indigenous Archive which goes unnoticed by the writer: "In California they clean them with plants, rubbing these against the tunas."[25] The detailed, consistent, and rapid work of the Cochimies described by Del Barco illustrates that his interest is due to monetary value rather than the cultural significance of the prickly pear to the Cochimies that he seeks to silence as argued by Trouillot and Fuentes's scholarship.

As described in the fifteenth century in the Badianus Manuscript, written by Juan Badiano and Martin De La Cruz, the "divine-cactus" known as *teonochtli* in Nahuatl was utilized as a pain relief for teeth that illustrates the contrasts from the written work of Del Barco.[26] In 1684, Father Kino, a Jesuit revisionist,

[24] Del Barco, 164.
[25] Del Barco, 170.
[26] Martín de La Cruz, and Juan Badiano, and Emily W. Emmart, Trueblood, and Martín de la. Cruz. *The Badianus Manuscript, Codex Barberini, Latin 241,*

mentions that tunas were a diet staple for the local populations.[27] In the early eighteenth century, Francisco Maria Piccolo, a Jesuit missionary, recorded the "red prickly pear" grows year-round. This aids Del Barco's research, and adds on to the Indigenous Archive.[28] Del Barco illustrates how the plant needed to be cleaned accordingly for consumption by Europeans seeking to invest in the plant. Significantly, Del Barco alluded to the indigenous practices as "they" to illustrate who is taking part in cleaning the prickly pears. In mentioning California, he asserts the legitimacy of the indigenous peoples' cleaning system as the plant is native to Las Californias. As opposed to the prickly pear being seen as a product to accumulate wealth, the indigenous fingerprints are visible through their daily habits of cleaning, preserving, and being cautious not to waste the prickly pear can be echoed within the archive.[29] Del Barco utilizes the Nahuatl word "*ahuates*" to describe the handling of care of the prickly pear and the tunas that also include pricks.[30] The Cahuilla traded with the Chumash for edible and medicinal plants such as nopal their southern business partners had an abundance of them in present-day Riverside.[31] The Chumash favored the prickly pear fresh for consumption.[32] Despite the Jesuit revisionism indigenous fingerprints remain visible during preparation.

Spanish and Jesuit revisionists, like Del Barco, Costanso, and Father Kino, understood how to commodify a plant; the prickly pear needs to be available to meet the demands of consumers on the other side of the world. The description aids in understanding how it can be consumed, yet the time of year the prickly pear grows was crucial. Del Barco further writes a

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Vatican Library: an Aztec Herbal of 1552. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 40. 19400.

[27] Michael W. Mathes, *First From The Gulf To The Pacific: The Diary of the Kino-Atondo Pennisular Expedition*.(Los Angeles, CA: Dawson's Book Shop, 1969), 67.

[28] Fransico Maria Piccolo, *Informe of the New Province of California 1702*. (Los Angeles, Dawson's Book Shop, 1967), 62.

[29] Del Barco, 170.

[30] Del Barco, 170.

[31] Lynn H. Gamble, *The Chumash World at European Contact* (Berkeley: University of California Press Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, 2008), 35.

[32] Janice Timbrook., and Chris. Chapman, *Chumash Ethnobotany: Plant Knowledge Among the Chumash People of Southern California*, 133.

description of the prickly pear characterized as drought-resistant that was not recognized at the time, yet he has described the indigenous plant in a particular term: "superior in endurance to all the other nopales."[33] The prickly pear is described as a resilient plant that can be profitable to the Spanish empire all year long. The Jesuit revisionist and the Spanish Crown sought to exploit the ecosystem and environment to exacerbate the natural resources of the Cochimies through colonization. However, the indigenous presence is steeped into the Indigenous Archive through the longevity of the prickly pear to be utilized as a liquid, solid, or dough for edible purposes to illustrate the indigenous capacity to survive despite the Spanish revisionist's presence.[34]

2. Yerba Del Tabardillo (Burning Fever Herb)

The commodification of the burning fever herb illustrates how science and capitalism merged at the forefront of the Spanish empire's monetary ambitions, yet the Cochimies' presence persists through the dedication of labor to the herb used for healing. Burning fever herb is part of the Indigenous Archive to consume and gain influence within the Spanish empire and the science world; the Cochimies remain present through the detail of the handling, texture, and size of an herb foreign to the Spanish revisionists. Del Barco illustrates the depth of how this vital flower is very delicate and quite profitable: "resembling loose silk threads or silk fabrics from which threads have been pulled."[35] The Spanish revisionist compares the herb to silk to demonstrate how it should be considered by European readers as silk was considered a luxury product from China. Del Barco's description of the flower to cure a sick person as described: "cooking vessel, boiling it" to provide a medicinal supplement.[36]

The indigenous presence reverberates through the indigenous practices of utilizing the "root" of the plant to serve medicinal purposes for the ill. The indigenous understood how it

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[33] Del Barco, 172.
[34] Bruce Finson, *Discovering California: a selection of articles and photographs from Pacific discovery magazine in facsimile reprint.* (California Academy of Sciences., San Francisco., 1983), 20-21.
[35] Del Barco, 190.
[36] Del Barco, 191.

can cure a fever despite the attempt to erase the indigenous by the Spanish revisionists did not denote their credibility, insight, and innovative endeavor. The Jesuit revisionist observes how the plants serve to alleviate the patient "the fever is gone."[37] In referring to "California," Del Barco is alluding to the indigenous who methodically utilized the flower for medicinal purposes which is entrenched within the archive.

3. JoJoba

Within the Indigenous Archive, jojoba is produced in Del Barco's writings to appease the Spanish Crown's capitalist endeavors; the plant proved to be valuable that it was sought after during the Portola expedition due to its unique curing methods as offered by the indigenous. Jojoba is within the Indigenous Archive to illustrate how Del Barco believed the plant should be invested in by the Spanish and be recognized by the Royal Tribune of Physicians; the indigenous authority remains prevalent throughout the archive as the process of transformation into a medical antidote was engineered by the indigenous innovators.



Jojoba (photo by author at the Cal State LA Garden)

Del Barco describes where jojoba is found and the time of year the plant is grown. In contrast to the prickly pear, jojoba is only mentioned to be found in California. Jojoba cannot grow all year long. Crespi also mentions coming across jojobas that were spotted in Southern California during the Portola expedition.[38] Del Barco's recordings were likely read by Crespi before 1769: "It grows on the dry slopes of

[37] Del Barco, 191.

[38] Juan Crespi, *A Description of Distant Roads: Original Journals of the First Expedition into California*, 1769-1779. (San Diego: San Diego State Univerity Pres, 2001), 185.

hills and mountains."[39] The above quotation is evident that Jesuit revisionists had done their research on previous accounts recorded. In addition, Father Kino has also come across jojobas in the seventeenth century during his time in Baja California with the knowledge that jojoba was used as a medicinal: "the fruit of the jojobas."[40]

In 1758, Jesuit revisionist, Venegas, published work discussing Father Kino's distinguished accomplishments in the sciences to assert his expertise within the Indigenous Archive and capacity to travel to California.[41] Indeed, Del Barco also cited Consag as having come across jojoba which was utilized as oil for cooking by the Jesuits in the mid-eighteenth century. Therefore, the growth of jojobas is addressed by Del Barco to illustrate the value of the plant, and he seeks to persuade his Spanish superiors to consider it as a medicinal prescription by the medical professionals of the period: "Its color is white inside and brown outside but brighter, tending perhaps to a dark blond color. I will write down its virtues here, copied word for word from a prescription, printed in Mexico, [the] year 1749, with permission of the Royal Tribunal of Physicians."[42] The Jesuit revisionist recommendation of jojoba as a medical marvel to royal physicians is crucial to underline within the Indigenous Archive. This is another form of silence in how the plant becomes Europeanized by the Spanish.

The indigenous medicinal purposes are being considered by colonial institutions to benefit Europeans to legitimize their economic endeavors, and the delegitimization of the Cochimies' practices is being distorted to fit the colonial narrative. Simultaneously, the indigenous medicinal uses are being reflected in the Indigenous Archive, yet the indigenous are not given the credit that has been manipulated as described below:

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[39] Del Barco, 180

[40] J. Ernest Burrus, Kino Reports To Headquarters: Correspondence of Eusebio F. Kino, S.J. From New Spain with Rome, Institutum Historicum. Societatis (Jesu: Rome, Italy, 1954), 119.

[41] Venegas, Miguel. *A Natural and Civil History of California*, 217-218.

[42] Del Barco, 180.

> Firstly, they are extraordinarily effective against urinary disorders and the retention of urine due to an abundance of phlegm. The manner of using them is to take five or six, diluted in wine, broth, or hot water. 2) Against flatulence, indigestion, and obstructions, taking them in the form prescribed above, or eating them by themselves. 3) Against any wound, apply plaster on the same wound, and repeat this until the wound closes.[43]

Del Barco's multiple descriptions of how jojoba is utilized depicts the nature of the plant's versatility to the indigenous people as water or medical cream for healing an injury.

In a departure from the previous plants mentioned, Del Barco outlines the medicinal benefits of jojoba in detail. The tone of his writing illustrates his astonishment at the various benefits of jojoba listed above despite seeking to take credit for the Spanish Crown. Del Barco mentions jojoba to be utilized for curing urinary disorders by processing the plant from a solid into a liquid. The Cochimies practices of curing the sick through the process of transforming plants such as prickly pears, acorns, and chia are consistently prevalent throughout the Indigenous Archive.[44] The medicinal practices by the indigenous allow for the conversion of jojoba from a plant to plaster to heal patients who have been wounded is an innovation for the period created by the Cochimies. Del Barco further elaborates on the vital importance of jojoba: effective in curing cancer and would utilize for childbirth by giving "wine broth" to indigenous women.[45] Del Barco is utilizing "they" to cite the indigenous within the Indigenous Archive to suggest the practice of treating cancer by the indigenous innovators.

The Jesuit revisionist mischaracterizes the part of jojoba to be described as almond and detracts from the process of healing. The distortion is evident as the Jesuit revisionist believes the ulcer or tumor will disappear by rubbing the plant which

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[43] Del Barco, 180-181.
[44] Costanso, 153.
[45] Del Barco, 181.

highlights Del Barco's lack of expertise; his recordings seem to illustrate the loss of vital information. The indigenous seemed to know the importance of providing medicine for women in childbirth that likely could benefit their female counterparts in Europe due to the poor education given to midwives of the period.[46]

Endangered Plants

4. Amaranth

Spanish revisionists sought to systematically harm the indigenous populations through the desolation of two plants: amaranth and clover that are fundamental to the Indigenous Archive; the plants were preserved through indigenous practices despite colonial efforts. Del Barco seeks to eliminate native plants to California that are sacrosanct. However, amaranth remains prevalent within the Indigenous Archive for gathering, cleaning methods, and dietary customs that have existed for centuries dating back to the fifteenth century in Mexico. Amaranth is a sacred plant that was utilized for 8,000 years.[47] Following the Aztec Empire's fall in 1521 and during the Spanish period, the Spanish wanted to undermine the Aztecs through the destruction of amaranth.[48] He writes the following: "The amaranth is immense and dry; the plant rubbed



Amaranth (photo by author at the Cal State LA Garden)

[46] Hilary Marland, *The Art of Midwifery: Early Modern Midwives in Europe*. (London; Routledge, 1993).

[47] "Amaranth was first cultivated around 8,000 years ago," *Cornell Botanical Gardens*. Accessed on November 18, 2022. http://cornellbotanicgardens.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/history.panels.pdf.

[48] *Cornell Botanical Gardens*, "Amaranth was first cultivated around 8,000 years ago."

with 'the spikes of the amaranth between their hands (without cutting off the spikes themselves) so that the seed' is long and laborious to work."[49] The Jesuit revisionist draws upon his Cochimies interactions and recordings to understand the practice of gathering amaranth that existed when the Spanish conquistadores were in Mexico during the sixteenth century as the Aztec empire began to decline.

He further expands on how the Cochimies cautiously pick off the sharp edges of the amaranth. Del Barco explicitly states that the indigenous were hardworking in gathering and cleaning the plants which is abrupt due to the lack of consistency in mentioning jojoba and nopal was also a laborious task for the indigenous: "[The] hands of those miserable people, including the women [,] (who are the ones generally responsible for doing this and other similar jobs), their hands"[50] Del Barco mentions the length of time needed to harvest and clean the amaranth; he understood the importance the plant was to the Cochimies.

The Jesuit revisionist demonstrates through his words how the process was done with attention to detail and patience that he witnessed first-hand. Del Barco acknowledges the harsh work the Cochimies are accustomed to in their daily lives. The Jesuit revisionist provides an extensive description of the cleaning, gathering, and consuming of the amaranth that seems out of scope with his colonial narrative—to a certain extent:

> They not only eat the seeds but also the amaranth itself, when it is still tender and has grown to less than a [feet] in height. They cut the highest part of this and they eat it raw. And sometimes they have the amusement of setting themselves to graze like beasts, nipping off the top of the amaranth and eating it, saving the work of taking it by the hand to their mouth.[51]

Del Barco considers amaranth a threat that he seeks to silence and distort in his Spanish writings.

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[49] Del Barco, 195.
[50] Del Barco, 19.
[51] Del Barco, 196.

Amaranth is a delicate herb that is treated by the indigenous with meticulous care and enjoyed as a delicacy. The amaranth's seeds can be transformed into flour as mentioned by M. Kat Anderson, a research associate.[52] Nevertheless, Del Barco's writings continue to be problematic because his racial undertone is a direct form of dehumanization of the indigenous populations. The Spanish revisionist's propaganda of racism finds its origins here. The animal-like imagery in his recordings continues to persist in the distortion of the relationship between nature and the Cochimies; the use of amaranth is not a coincidence but calculated to pervade the Indigenous Archive.

5. Clover



Clover (photo by author in Baldwin Park)

Del Barco further continues to disparage the plants and the indigenous through the purging of clover in designating the herb as an endangered plant by treating the indigenous as children, ignorant, and lacking the knowledge. The Jesuit revisionist misinforms with his limited understanding of the herb: "because the soil is too weak and sandy."[53] Del Barco creates an intentional silence to clover by lacking apparent knowledge on the subject matter. He concludes the plant is not native to California because the herb dries up the land. Del Barco severely believed that clover is not native to California, which is further addressed by the book's translator, Froylan Tiscareno.[54] Early on in Del Barco's analysis, he describes clover as suffocating the wheat needed to grow for the Spanish colonial project.[55] However, according to the American wilderness survivalist, Bradford Angier, indigenous peoples

[52] M. Kat Anderson, *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 308. SCRIBD.
[53] Del Barco, 199-200.
[54] Del Barco, 199.
[55]Del Barco, 199.

found the plant to be a vital resource for consumption.[56] The Chumash consumed raw clover as lettuce for their daily dietary intake.[57] He believes the soil is fragile resulting in his deplorable explanation for why clover is not able to grow as successfully without any further elaboration: "[In other words,] because in our case it could not have been anyone else but some [i]ndian who would have thrown such seed on the ground. Incredibly, some of them would sow a thing which, while being utterly useless to them, also brings them not a little toil in pulling it out."[58] Here Del Barco has created the negative connotations, as argued, articulated, and reinforced in Fuentes's research, of the Cochimies through his description of a child-like "Indian."

As previously mentioned by the Jesuit revisionist, the degree of laborious work the indigenous dedicated their energy to is recorded by Del Barco when explaining how amaranth is amassed. The irony is not lost in how he can fabricate an indigenous individual seeking to throw a seed into the soil. He contradicts his recordings by centering the indigenous as judiciously caring, conserving, congregating, and feeding their communities with medicinal and edible herbs that have been mentioned in the Indigenous Archive. The ignorance and hindrance by Del Barco illustrate how problematic his recordings contribute to the filtration of indigenous knowledge and archive.

Mischaracterized Plants

6. Nettle (Ortiga)

Nettle and Mezcal are intentionally displaced within the Indigenous Archive due to the lack of knowledge by the Spanish and Jesuit revisionists. Nettle is portrayed within the indigenous archive as comparable to a European plant without any substantial evidence; the original word bestowed by the indigenous is a focal point within the Indigenous Archive not to mention other plants in the archive. Del Barco introduces the plant: "they call *ortiga*, it

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[56] Angier Bradford, *Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants.* (Pennsylvania: Stack Poole Books, 2008), SCRIBD, 106.
[57] Janice Timbrook, and Chris. Chapman, *Chumash Ethnobotany: Plant Knowledge Among the Chumash People of Southern California*, 219.
[58] Del Barco, 200.

does not resemble the European variety."[59] The indigenous identify the plant as *tedegua*.[60]

In deciding to compare nettle with a European plant, the Jesuit revisionist draws attention to the audience he seeks to pander. He lacks the credibility to understand the actual concept of ethnobotany of the period. The following statement astonishingly reveals how it is described by the indigenous mentioned with a definition that is a departure from his previous recordings. The illustration of nettle having thorns or spikes is stated by Del Barco from the start: "seed some grains like almonds, although narrower."[61] He is describing the structural elements of nettle to explain how the plant grows in Las Californias. Ultimately, he compares all the plants mentioned within the Indigenous Archive with almonds which is a massive mistake and detracts from understanding the true significance of each plant's vital resources as medicinal and edible plants. The integral use of the plant as utilized by the indigenous can still be valued within the Indigenous Archive as described below: "[i]ndians there collect much more than in the rest of California."[62] Del Barco's presumptions were silencing the Cochimies to tailor to the colonial project that sought to dehumanize the indigenous history and identity through vague and problematic wording. Thus, problematic sources are born in the eighteenth century as argued by Fuentes.

From Del Barco's writings on the plants already mentioned thus far, it can be concluded he has keenly observed the indigenous when they were gathering most of the plants that make up the bulk of the Indigenous Archive. The Jesuit revisionist understands the importance of having knowledge when each plant grows throughout the year, yet his recordings most likely will be refutable due to his lack of expertise in the field. He also seeks to understand how the plant is handled by the indigenous whom he is disrespectful to. He validates seeing the indigenous eating nettle as a plant that makes up their daily diet. Bradford mentions nettle

[59] Del Barco, 198.
[60] Del Barco, 198.
[61] Del Barco, 198.
[62] Del Barco, 198.

can be used as a modern-day mouthwash and it can be utilized to clean a wound.[63]

7. Agave or Mezcal



Agave (photo by author in Baldwin Park)

Agave is a plant of unique interest to the Spanish and Jesuit revisionists. It has been repeatedly mentioned throughout the Indigenous Archive that the indigenous applied agave in every sector of their society. De Ortega, the indigenous California soldier, writes the following: "very large agaves and prickly pear cacti." [64] The agave provides nutrients for the indigenous as mentioned by Del Barco. De Ortega highlights the significance of agaves to the indigenous populations. He aptly situates the prickly pear and agave as a daily nourishment; the indigenous thoughts and murmurs are felt within the archive. In comparison with misplaced information, Del Barco alludes to two plants: "Mezcal is a type of aloe very similar to maguey, found in several parts of Europe and called pita in Spain. Some people have confused mezcal with maguey although they are two plants of different species though outwardly similar."[65] The Jesuit revisionist compared agave and maguey without clearly explaining the fundamental differences between the two plants. He continues to explain the origins of maguey with very little evidence to show that Sebastian Vizcaino had found "magueys in California."[66] Del Barco's descriptions of the previous six plants are problematic. No mention of structure for agave is further expanded upon due to his lack of expertise on the differentiation between mezcal and magueys.

The recordings by Del Barco are contradictory, blurry, and filled with loopholes that contributed to the systematic

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[63] Bradford Angier, Field *Guide to Medicinal Wild Plants*. (Pennsylvania: Stack Poole Books, 2008), 325. SCRIBD.
[64] Miguel Leon Portilla, *Voyages of Francisco De Ortega: California, 1632-1636.* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1973), 49.
[65] Del Barco, 224-225.
[66] Del Barco, 224-225.

damage done to the Indigenous Archive. In reasserting the indigenous narrative, Lowell John Bean, a professor, and Katherine Siva Saubel, a scholar, draw upon the knowledge of agave that illustrates the differentiation between where agave can be found throughout parts of Southern California and in the United States.[67] The correspondence and research in Del Barco citing Vizcaino are affirmed here and hint at the thread that binds together each recording, document, and note taken that contribute to the Indigenous Archive being formulated and exhibited— in a positive and negative lens. Costanso further mentions agave as utilized by the indigenous people as clothes "well-built, healthy, and active" that made their belts from "fine agave thread."[68] The Chumash used agave to cure boils that were applied as a poultice.[69]

Costanso attempts to describe how the plant is used for garments. The indigenous handworks are immersed within the Indigenous Archive to visualize their attention to detail, timely fashioned work, and needle structure utilized by the indigenous. Costanso also hints at the indigenous language to describe their nettle work which is butchered by his translation — "*lechuguilla*" — within the Indigenous Archive, yet his observations on the local populations have been considered unique in his perspective by some historians.[70]

The Indigenous Archive was vital to the identity, history, and culture of the indigenous in the natural landscape due to their laborious work. As indigenous archivists of the soil tended to their herbs with care and patience to store their crops in storage rooms to be called upon if necessary. Despite seeking to continue to manage the land and collect plants for their archive, the Spanish and Jesuit revisionists sought to control and reconstruct the Indigenous Archive for exploitation of plants, elimination of certain plants, and purposely misleading vital information about

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[67] Lowell John Bean and, Katherine Siva Saubel, Harry W. Lawton, and Lowell John. Bean. *Temalpakh (from the Earth): Cahuilla Indian Knowledge and Usage of Plants*. (Banning, California: Malki Museum Press, 1972), 31.
[68] Edith Buckland Webb, *Indian Life at the Old Missions.* (Los Angeles: W.F. Lewis, 1952), 9.
[69] Timbrook, 25-26.
[70] Ray Brandes, *The Costanso Narrative of Portola Expedition.* (Newhall, California: Hograth Press, 1970).

the plants to upend the Indigenous Archive.[71] The jojoba was branded, by the "Royal Tribunal of Physicians," as an asset for the Spanish crown to be utilized as a medicinal herb.[72] In contrast, clover was considered a threatening plant for the Spanish colonial project that Spanish revisionists sought to eliminate, yet the plant continues to be grown throughout parts of California.[73] Inadvertently, the agave was miscategorized through the lack of diligent research, and Del Barco might not have understood the interpretation of the Cochimies descriptions and usages.[74] As indigenous archivists, the conservation of their plants was crucial to uphold within their community and Indigenous Archive to pass from one generation to the next. The Indigenous Archive still exists and persists in the homes of indigenous and ordinary people today.

[71] Fermin Fransico de Lasuen, 1736-1803. *Writings. (*Washington, Academy of American Franciscan History,1965) xviii-xix.
[72] Del Barco, 180.
[73] Del Barco, 199-200.
[74] Del Barco, 224-225.