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THE *HUAMALGÜEÑOS* OF ISLA CEDROS, BAJA CALIFORNIA, AS DESCRIBED IN FATHER MIGUEL VENEGAS' 1739 MANUSCRIPT *OBRAS CALIFORNIANAS*

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Father Miguel Venegas' 1739 Obras Californianas is the most extensive and detailed document covering the first forty years of the Jesuit period in Baja California. In addition to providing discussions of historical events, Venegas wrote extensively on the natural world and on indigenous cosmology, social networks, and lifeways. The section translated and annotated here includes the bulk of Venegas' writing on Isla Cedros and its native people. The island, located on the Pacific Coast of central Baja California, was home to a large, maritime-adapted indigenous society. The period of time (1728-1732) covered in this section of the much larger Venegas manuscript details the tragic end of Cedros Island's indigenous society, but preserves an account of their culture that is of inestimable value. The annotations included provide not only clarifications of meaning, but critical evaluations of the text and of the significance of particular passages within the larger context of Baja California indigenous and colonial history.

THE JESUIT-AUTHORED DOCUMENTS touching upon the history, indigenous cultures, and environments of Baja California are well known for their detail and quality. Some of these have been translated into English (e.g., Baegert 1952 [1772]; Clavigero 1937 [1789]); however, some of the most detailed and in-depth discussions of events and native cultures are included in an original, unedited manuscript, *Obras Californianas* (Venegas 1979 [1739]), which has never been translated into English, and therefore (unfortunately) has been seldom utilized by American scholars. Important information relevant to Alta California history is included in this document, whose passages contain possibly the earliest descriptions of Chumash plank canoe construction. It is hoped that this translation and the accompanying annotations will draw attention to this incredible source of information, and lead to additional insights into the indigenous and colonial history of both the Baja California peninsula and Alta California, and to a better integration of the two.

Father Miguel Venegas (1680–1764) spent 64 years of his life as a Jesuit, although due to poor health, he was never able to pursue missionary activities in the remote regions of northwest New Spain. He became a great compiler of Jesuit history, penning several histories of important individuals and even authoring the *Parochial Manual for the Administration of the Holy Sacraments and Exercise of Other Ecclesiastical Functions Conforming to the Roman Ritual*, which was officially adopted in 1758 by the Church in New Spain as the standard text on the matter (Mathes 1978:5–6). Venegas began compiling the *Obras Californianas* in the course of his research for other works on specific individuals, and it includes information drawn from a variety of sources. These include official reports, personal correspondence, and data drawn from both royal and ecclesiastical archives. One of the more remarkable methods applied by Venegas was the mailing of a formal questionnaire to those who had first-hand experience in the Jesuit mission system in Baja California (Mathes 1978:8). We

may assume that, for its day, the document from which the following section was drawn was among the finest examples of contemporary historical scholarship.

Venegas died before the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Spanish domains (Crosby 1994), and thus his writings do not cover the final years of Jesuit activity on the peninsula. However, del Barco (1988) picked up the history where Venegas left off, so together the two authors provide a more chronologically complete history of the Jesuit period in Baja California. The history of the southern portion of the peninsula is discussed in great detail by Crosby (1994) in his excellent synthesis *Antigua California*, while the most interdisciplinary approach of all is Aschmann's (1959) *The Central Desert of Baja California: Demography and Ecology*, a masterwork of geography in the tradition of Carl Sauer. For a much more detailed "Historical-Biographical Introduction" to the *Obras Californianas*, we refer the reader to Mathes (1978), who should also be given credit for being the editor of record for the 1979 publication of the facsimile of this document, which was among the principal sources consulted for the present work of translation.

For this translation, an effort has been made to preserve meaning rather than to produce a direct translation. Very little has been omitted or excised. Where words or phrases have been omitted or altered, we include ellipses to indicate the former and contain our glosses within brackets for the latter. Our principal intentions were to maintain clarity wherever possible and to maintain the tone and quality of the text, but the informational content was given priority over prose. Wherever possible, it is recommended that the reader refer to the original source, since translation is inherently interpretive. For this reason, the original paragraph numbers have been preserved in this version of the text. Annotations have been included to improve clarity and provide context within the larger document and within the overall history of Baja California, as well as to indicate where decisions have been made regarding the usage of particular polysemic words or phrases.

Isla Cedros is located on the Pacific Coast of the Baja California peninsula, 426 air miles south of San Diego, California (Figs. 1 and 2). At contact, it was home to a relatively large, maritime-adapted society that is at least partially described in the following pages. Between 1540 and 1732, the population on the island collapsed,

largely due to introduced diseases (see Preston 1996). The richness of these documents cannot compensate for the loss of native cultures that occurred in Baja California, and their absence from our world is a deeply-felt tragedy. A rich archaeological record exists on Isla Cedros, and although it has only recently begun to be systematically explored (Des Lauriers 2005a, 2005b, 2006a, 2006b), it will certainly provide insight into the indigenous occupation of the island, which extends back 12,000 calendar years (Des Lauriers 2006b), and the end of which is described in the following pages. It was the present document, among others, that led Des Lauriers to initiate the *Proyecto Arqueologico Isla Cedros* in December of 2000. It is hoped that others will find this document equally engaging and significant.

BOOK 7¹

Of the Discovery of the Islands of the Sorrows,² and Other Foundations and Successes in the Californias.

Chapter I

Some islanders come to the Mission San Ignacio to request baptism, and tell of their islands.

1170 Despite its importance and advantageousness, the mission of Our Holy Father Ignacio was founded by Father Juan Bautista Luyando at his own personal expense, through his careful work, and even at the cost of his health, in the most remote regions of the north, for the numerous Christians, who increased in the new Church of the *Californias*. Its foundation is made even more significant for having left the door open for the reduction of the gentile islanders that inhabit the new "Islands of the Sorrows," situated in the Southern Sea, and corresponding with the furthest regions that have been discovered by land in California.³ The account of their discovery was as follows: In the first year that the Father⁴ founded that mission,⁵ among the many gentiles that came there to request baptism were those from the rancheria of the Holy Trinity, named in their language *Walime æ*,⁶ whose reduction has already been mentioned in the previous book (Chapter 18). With these came those of another nearby rancheria, named *AnaWa*,⁷ who inhabit the

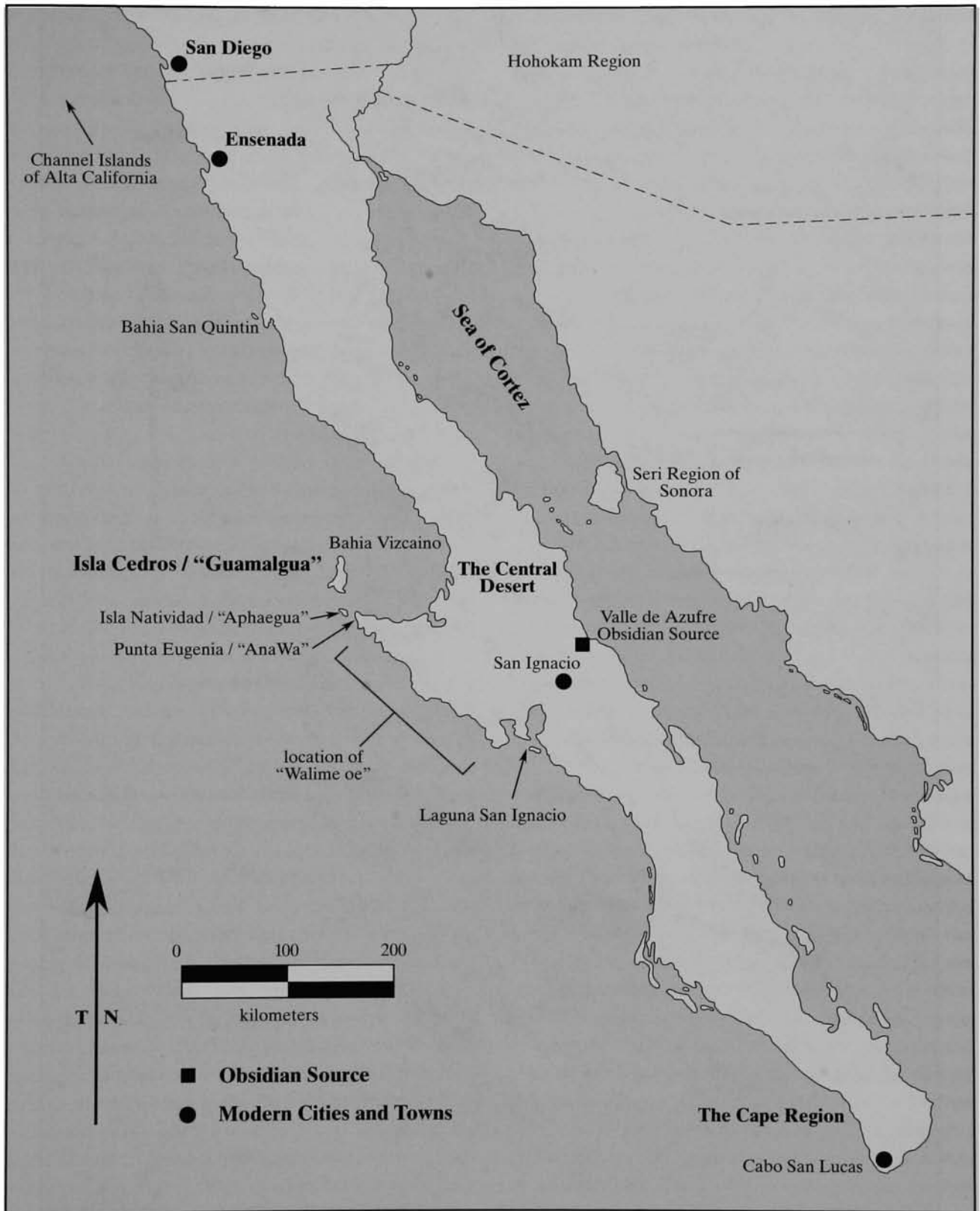


Figure 1. Map of the Baja California Peninsula, showing locations mentioned in the text.

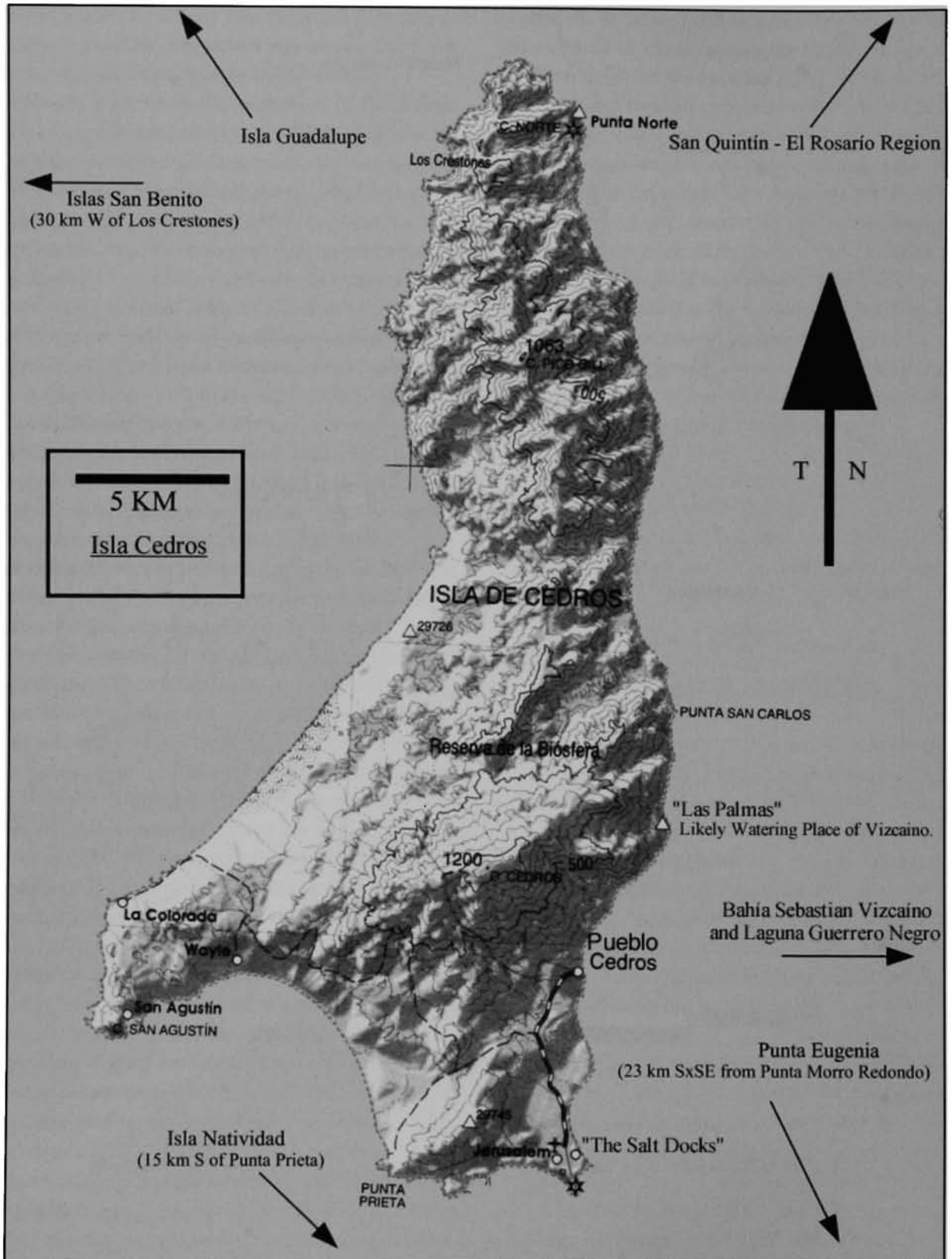


Figure 2. Map of Isla Cedros.

coast of the South Sea about six days travel from the mission. These of *AnaWa* had commerce and kinship with the islanders of an island close to the mainland, which is the second of those that have now been discovered. And since some families of these islanders found themselves at *AnaWa* when their hosts came to request baptism, the islanders, moved by their example, wanted to accompany them to the mission.

1171 Having arrived at Mission San Ignacio,⁸ it came to pass that while there were a few preparing themselves for baptism by practicing the Christian doctrine, the people of *AnaWa* were frightened by the epidemic that was raging at the time. [Particularly] by the death of the little daughter of the capitán of *Walime æ*, who died four days after her baptism, [after which] all fled back to their homeland,⁹ leaving behind those of *Walime æ*, who remained constant until receiving baptism. These neophytes,¹⁰ returning to their homeland, served to attract and encourage the *AnaWa* fugitives to return and seek baptism. However, they did not come back all together, but in a dispersed fashion, a few here and there in different seasons until the last year, and even on the last day when the Father left his mission, he had not finished baptizing all the rest of that *rancheria*.

1172 Among these gentiles of the coast, the islanders that had come with them were also baptized, and these people, from the very beginning, began to give news of their islands. They said: that their land was not like that of the *Californias*:¹¹ that there were other kinds of foods: and that even the fruits that were similar to those found here¹² were of a different species: and finally, that in their land there were large trees of different sizes.¹³ This was the best evidence they could give to show that their homeland was very different from that of California, where such woods are not found. Moved by this story, the Father desired that these islanders describe those places, as it might aid the extension of our holy faith; he wished to open that door in order to introduce [the holy faith] to those other islands, of which they gave notice. However, his poor health, and the great deal of work that occupied him at his threadbare mission, especially with the three epidemics that

occurred in those years [1728–1732], did not permit him to fulfill this desire.

1173 In addition, His divine will which had brought them from those islands to save them by means of holy baptism also took them from this world, all of them dying, both those of the island as well as those of the mainland with whom they had come. His Providence preserved as a memoriam two or three boys who were integrated into the pueblo and mission of San Ignacio. These boys repeated many times the same testimony as their deceased relatives, emphasizing that their land was very different from that of California. They added that it was not only one island,¹⁴ but that beyond that one, there were others populated by many people, which were known from the many fires and lights that they made which were visible at night from their island. Even during the day, from the point of their island, they could make out other [islands] so close that even the trees could be counted.¹⁵

1174 By this time Father Juan Baptizta Luyando had come to the Province.¹⁶ Father Sebastian de Sistiaga, previously stationed at Santa Rosalía Mulejé, succeeded him in the post. He left his mission in the hands of Father Everardo Helen, who had been at Guadalupe and was the closest to San Ignacio. Even so, to divide the work, they distributed the rancherías of Mulejé among three missionaries; some were entrusted to Guadalupe, others to La Purissima, and the two closest to San Ignacio [were given] to Father Sistiaga himself. Finding himself settled in as Father of that mission and having also the duties of *Visitador* of the California missions, it seemed to him that he was obligated, under both his titles, to make an effort to clearly verify the truth concerning the reports of the islander boys regarding their islands and of the testimony given by their deceased parents and relatives, when they came to request baptism. To this end, he sent some Indians and competent soldiers to the opposite coast¹⁷ to clarify the reports and cross, if they could, to the first island. However, this expedition did not achieve the desired results, since the epidemic continued, and those that went began to get sick along the way. Thus, it was best for

them to abandon the effort, saving this discovery for a better time and occasion.

Chapter II

Setting forth upon the discovery of the Islands of the Sorrows, and reference to the successes of the voyage until arriving at the first island.

1175 Father Sebastian did not desist in the attempt to discover those islands, nor did his desires cool with the duties of the post of *Visitador* of the missions, in which he found himself. While this impeded him from personally achieving this discovery, the authority of the post allowed him to send someone with dedication and energy to complete the effort. In May of the thirtieth year, Father Sigismundo Taraval arrived in California. Having been held up at Loreto for a time, he was named by Father Visitador General Joseph de Echeverria to go and administer the Mission of La Purissima, in the absence of Father Nicolas Tamaral,¹⁸ who had gone to found Mission San Joseph of Cabo San Lucas, located at the point of California. Father Sigismundo was at Mission La Purissima about two years, give or take, until in the thirty-second year, when Father Visitador Sebastian de Sistiaga called him in order to place in his hands the administration of his Mission of San Ignacio. Since [Father Sistiaga] had to go as part of his official obligations to visit the other missions of California, ...he also charged Taraval with verifying and further clarifying the reports that the islanders had given.

1176 Finding himself entrusted with the request to pursue the discovery of the islands, Father Sigismundo, having [in his possession a] letter from the Provincial Father Juan Antonio de Oviedo, was ordered to procure and collect all the news and reports on the conquest of California..., so that Father Oviedo could write its history. Thus, it seemed to [Father Sigismundo] that his obligation was to discover those islands with all haste, as much for the Glory of God and salvation of their inhabitants, as well as for the inclusion in the history of the story of [the islands'] discovery. A prompt execution of the effort seemed encouraged, since by the divine blessing, all of the sickness had

ceased as well as the final epidemic, which had been a bloody flux so cruel and universal that it had carried off almost half of that nation.¹⁹ Father Sigismundo truly wanted to go on the expedition himself, but the administration of that mission was so laborious that he could not abandon it for such a long span of time. He decided to send [in his stead] trustworthy persons on this expedition, giving them the necessary instructions to successfully complete the journey.

1177 Towards this end, he asked the most reliable people he could find, sending with them the surviving islander boys, adding a few to provide an escort. They were very few [in number] in order to save on costs, as well as to avoid much opposition. Furthermore, the people between San Ignacio and the coast of the South Sea were few in number due to a lack of water sources, and were already Christians living close to the mission.²⁰ They were even curious enough to leave their lands to become Christians, making it less work for the Father to attend to them.²¹ The expedition left the mission on the day of San Francisco Xavier²² of the thirty-second year, hoping that with such a good patron, so zealous in the salvation of souls, that the endeavor be facilitated, and open the door for the conversion of the gentile islanders. After six days of travel, they arrived at the point or cape at the place of *AnaWa*, having had a prosperous trip. This was where they had to cross to the first island, which was uninhabited.

1178 This first island is called, in the language of those natives, *Aphaegua*,²³ which translates as *Island of Birds*. The next island they named *Guamalgua*,²⁴ which means *Island of Fogs*.²⁵ [The islander boys] did not know the name of the third island beyond this one because they had not gone to it, nor communicated with its inhabitants.²⁶ After the conclusion of the expedition, they consecrated the places they had discovered with names and the patronage of saints. The point of the mainland, that is at the place of *AnaWa*, they named the Cape of San Xavier, for having departed the mission on his feast day. The first uninhabited island they gave the appellation of Island of the Martyrs, for on the day of the Holy Martyrs of Japan in the thirty-third

year,²⁷ the news of its discovery arrived at Mission San Ignacio. The second island, for its triangular form, and other particular circumstances that we will later see, they called Island of the Holy Trinity. Finally, they consecrated all of the islands in that region, continuing from those already discovered, with the name and patronage of Our Lady of the Sorrows. I here note that almost at the same time, the Missionary Fathers of the Philippines discovered some new islands, which they also gave to the patronage of Our Lady of the Sorrows. The reason for having honored them here in [Baja California] with this title was to ease the frustration of the founder of Mission San Ignacio. He had wanted to name the mission after Our Lady of the Sorrows, but could not, since there was already one with the same name in California founded by the Illustrious Congregation of Our Lady of the Sorrows of the College of San Pedro and San Pablo of Mexico.

1179 Our explorers having arrived at the Cape of San Xavier,²⁸ discovered from there the first two islands, that of the Martyrs,²⁹ and that of the Trinity.³⁰ Although they went to some effort, climbing to high places trying to see some lights at night, they saw none. Later, they went down to the beach in search of boards and wood with which to build *balzas* to travel to the island, and there found no sign of such, nor trace which would furnish an explanation of their absence. They became very discouraged since the guides³¹ said that this was the place where, in the past, the *canoas* or *balzas*³² of the islanders arrived.³³ They therefore feared that [the islanders] had all died, or that they had retired to other more remote islands, to which they did not have orders to go. Thus they saw all their effort as fruitless and in vain. Their not having any wood with which to make *balzas* augmented their despair, since they had been sure of finding driftwood³⁴ of all sizes. Of these, as will be seen later, some were fragments of ships destroyed in some shipwreck; while others were new lumber of the kind that is carried as a reserve by such vessels. But on this occasion they found nothing, since the tides either transported the driftwood to some other place, or else buried it in the sand so deeply that it could not be discovered.

1180 Finding themselves without *balzas* or wood with which to make them, they decided to return to the Mission, with more than a little sorrow in having failed in their assigned task. But remembering that they had skipped a stretch of beach in order to follow a shortcut, they decided to turn back and make one last effort....Upon arriving, they found on that beach so much wood that it seemed that all of the wood of those beaches had collected itself there. Having such a surplus of wood...[they selected] the best proportioned pieces, and moving it by sea³⁵ to Cabo San Xavier, ...formed a secure vessel³⁶ for the passage. Everything was already prepared, and they were at the point of embarking, when such a contrary and continuous spell of weather came over them that for many days they could not attempt the passage. They would have waited more time if their skill at swimming had not made them less fearful. When the storm had barely ended, ...[leaving behind] rough seas, ...they [impatiently] embarked, and with God favoring their good intentions, they arrived with a fortunate voyage after half a day of navigation³⁷ at the first island, that of the Martyrs.

1181 This island is half of a quarter of a league long, which is [the equivalent of] six hundred and twenty-five *varas*. In width, it is one-third of its longitude, ...[representing] two hundred and eight *varas*.³⁸ It is exceedingly sterile, without soil, without trees, without fruits, without water, except that which rains from the sky. Because of this, it is uninhabited, and only necessity leads anyone to land there, either in travelling to the mainland or in passing to the other island, or to take shelter from some storm. Despite this, divine providence placed on this island a species of *mezcal*³⁹ so juicy that...it serves as food and drink. The hearts are eaten, and with a little work [the islanders] get from the leaves so much juice that they can pass many days without water. The explorers experimented on their return voyage to the mainland during [a period when] they were stopped by rough seas, ...[by consuming] only the juice of the *mezcal*s; [they were able to sustain themselves with no] other drink for three weeks.⁴⁰

1182 But this is little, since in years past, ...according to the islanders, some of their people, having come

to the mainland, ...left a woman on the Island of the Martyrs, with the intention of returning for her later.⁴¹ Upon attempting to do so, a squall overcame them, in which they all almost perished, and...they became so afraid that none had the courage to go and aid that poor abandoned woman. Moreover, three years passed before a new opportunity to go to the island presented itself. Despite this, they found the Indian woman alive. [She] had been able to keep herself alive all this time through using the *mezcales*. The truth is, that she was so exhausted that they hardly recognized her, but this was due, not so much from a lack of sustenance and drink, as from having had no firewood with which to roast the mezcal, nor with which to mitigate the intemperance of that island, which is ordinarily covered by mists.⁴²

1183 That island only has one thing in abundance, and that is birds, and because of this they call it "Island of the Birds." There are various species of them that are already known, in addition to which there are two other species that merit particular mention for their very strange attributes. One type is very small, slightly larger than sparrows, but all black. These spend all day at sea, returning to their nests at night.⁴³ [The nests] are formed, not like other birds, but like hares and rabbits, though not [as] deep, [about] a *vara* and a half, or two *varas* in length, and in these they go to sleep every night, [making them] very easy to catch. The other species is of the size of the *anades*, or ducks. These have black backs and wings, white breasts, and the claws and beak of a raptorial bird.⁴⁴ These [ducks] make their nests in the same manner as the others, but deeper, some extending up to 3 or 4 *varas* in length. They do not go to their nests every night, but only when there are fair seas and weather. In such a way that when there is a storm, and the seas are rough, there they are, and there they live. It is when fair weather and calm returns that they rejoin at their nests.

1184 *Cardones*⁴⁵ are also to be found on this island,⁴⁶ but there are no *tunas*,⁴⁷ nor *pitahayas*,⁴⁸ nor *bledos*,⁴⁹ which are the fruits and grains of California. Even the *cardones* are very few, and seem to be the last, since on the Island of the Trinity they are not to be found. The nature of things is also distinct,

and it is readily visible, not only in the difference of its fruits,⁵⁰ but also in the quality of its vipers and rattlesnakes. [The snakes] of California⁵¹ are of such an active venom that they may take the life of even the most robust man, if not promptly treated with some antidote; those of this island not only have no venom, but do not even bite. This is what the explorers related about this first island, from what they could observe upon their return trip, being stopped there for three weeks. Let us continue with the recounting of their voyage.

Chapter III

The explorers cross to the Island of the Trinity, and relate what they knew, and learned of it, and its inhabitants.

1185 Our explorers did not stop on the Island of the Martyrs more than an afternoon and a night, since there was no obstacle that stood in their way. Upon arriving, they moved the *balza*⁵² to the beach from which they would have to embark to cross to the Trinity. That afternoon, everyone climbed onto the island, planning on spending the night at the aforementioned beach, where they would have to embark, ...[more specifically, it is] the beach that faces on the Island of the Trinity. Given this forethought, there was no delay the next day. At dawn, with the rising sun, they embarked following their course.⁵³ The sea was calm, and thus they could achieve the full impulse of the oars.⁵⁴ There was no sail, nor was the aforementioned *balza* or *canoa* capable of accommodating one; it had the appearance of both [*balza* and *canoa*], since it had the bottom of a boat, and two *tablas*⁵⁵ of freeboard.⁵⁶ Since they were all skilled in rowing, they almost did not miss the sail, and by midday they realized that they were already halfway there. By the afternoon, the desire to arrive, and the fear that night would overtake them, forced such frantic rowing that before the sun began to set, they arrived at the Island of the Trinity with the joy that corresponds to the remarkable effort that it had cost them.

1186 This Island of the Trinity is about 8 days travel from the Mission of San Ignacio, seven by land

and another by sea. Although they spent a day and a half in the two crossings, people with a launch could pass in a single day.⁵⁷ The island is found at thirty-one degrees of north latitude,⁵⁸ which is the same as the first islands of Japan. Its form is triangular, since three points protrude out: one to the east, another to the west, and another to the north. The one facing east is small, the one to the west is moderate in size, and the northern point is the largest and forms the principal body of the island.⁵⁹ Its width at the narrowest part is about one day's travel,⁶⁰ and two days from...the western point to the northern one. In the center it has a large mountain, similar to that of California, that because of its altitude the geographers call *La Giganta*. To the side it has two smaller peaks, and these three points are those which can be described from afar. The rest of the island is alluvial fans, chasms, and crags, and thus far it seems to resemble California, ...save in its stones. These are of various colors; what is more, those that cause the most admiration are the flints.⁶¹ Among the few that the explorers brought, there were those of four colors: white, red, blue, and yellow. They also discovered a milling stone quarry,⁶² though they neither tested it there nor brought to the Mission any sample of [this material].

1187 Even much more than that was discovered: one example is how different that land is from California in its abundance of waters. In that small space of the island, there are up to four or five *arroyos*, in addition to other springs and water sources.⁶³ Moreover, [in order] to find that many water sources in California, one must walk many leagues. The waters of these *arroyos*, and those of the springs are all of excellent quality.⁶⁴ Aside from these, there are various wells,⁶⁵ which are so well distributed that there were three landings for the *balzas*, each with its own fresh-water well. These landings only serve for the *balzas*, and I suppose they could serve for *canoas*, since they have very little protection to defend them from the force with which the seas beat upon all the beaches of this coast.⁶⁶

1188 The diversity of this land is also apparent in the range of wood available. What little is available

in California is to be found in the confines of the *arroyos*, and in general there are three species: willows, mesquites, and *palo blanco*.⁶⁷ Of these species, none is found on the island. What is more, while *carrizo*⁶⁸ is the most abundant plant in California, not a single cane is to be found on the entire island. On the contrary, many species of plants abound on the island whose names were not known by our explorers.... Although they gave some descriptions of them, these were insufficient to determine the species of the trees. The largest that they found...had leaves like cypresses.⁶⁹ The thickness [?] of some [of the trees] reached six *varas*. Their bark is reddish, and very strong.⁷⁰ Other trees were seen that had even stronger and lighter wood, which the islanders used to make their bows. The tree is spiny and gives a kind of white seed that were deemed edible by the islanders.⁷¹ Among different *varas* of trees that they brought to the Mission as samples, there was one that was five *varas* in length, and they affirmed that all of the trees of that species have the same straightness. They also found some species of trees that are seen in one or another part of California, but even in these they found some difference.

1189 The [explorers] recognized a greater difference in the animals of the island, revealing how different it is from California. In the latter, the bucks are so big, that larger ones are not to be seen anywhere, while on the island, they are so small that they barely reach the size of a sheep. They also distinguish themselves in the hair, which is thick and long, and of the color of the mountain sheep. [These deer] would be taken for such if not for the fact that their antlers leave no doubt that they are deer. Of these, there are many all over the island, making up for their small size with their multitude. If the deer are small, then the rabbits are large, as large as hares. The explorers first...[thought them to be hares], but hunting some, they observed that if they were somewhat different from rabbits, they were even more distinct from hares. There is also another very small species of rabbit, all black, whose skins were brought as a specimen to the mission, and they have a great deal of very soft and delicate fur that surpasses the beaver's.⁷²

1190 With regard to amphibians, many beavers are also found around the island. Since these sleep in the sea close to the beach with their feet skyward, to hunt them, the Indians trap them while they sleep. They go into the water, knock them on the head with a stick, and with a line of cordage drag them to the beach already dead. Other times, they kill them with their arrows, when the beavers come to shore, or get very close to it. Many sea lions, large and small, of various species arrive at the island as well. Of these, one of the expedition members said that they were very different from those found on the other coast, in the *Lauretano* Sea.⁷³ His testimony regarding the whales was the same; since there they are of various colors, and of smaller size,⁷⁴ although he said that he had also seen others like those seen in the *Lauretano* Sea. Among the species of sea lions, one drew notice for its color, that was all white, and very attractive. [The explorers] did not have the means to kill some and so could not give more specific details.

1191 [The explorers] had less to say about the insects and the birds, perhaps because the newness of the terrain captured their attention, or perhaps because they did not notice anything particularly noteworthy in species of these categories. They only said that they had seen a variety of birds, some familiar, as well as other species, without observing anything singular about them. Well, it is true that at least one rather handsome species of hawk⁷⁵ could be considered “singular,” since they were stippled with various colors; and though they have the claws of a raptor, they do not have curved beaks, but beaks like the gentle birds. Of the insects they only noted one particular thing, which is the existence of two species of rattlesnake, and each one in a determined part of the island. Of these, one species does not bite, and the other, although it bites, does not kill nor do harm. This is quite odd, and contrary to those that are found in California, where a wide range of species exist, and very pernicious too. There are only some in California that they call “tame,” and the Californians count these among their foods.

1192 Let us move on to what resources the islanders have and use. It goes without saying that they have

fish, and while the coast that they call *contra costa* does not have the multitude that the *Lauretano* Gulf does,⁷⁶ it [must] have plenty. In addition to fishing, they have the aid of the terrestrial animals⁷⁷ that they hunt in order to feed themselves with the meat. Among the plants, there are some edible seeds or berries with which they provision themselves. Their “daily bread” are the *mezcales*⁷⁸ that are only to be found in one territory of the island,⁷⁹ but in such abundance that they collect there [the amounts that in other parts would be] quite dispersed. They are not like those that are to be found in California, where they have up to five or six species, nor like those of the Island of the Martyrs. They closely resemble in their leaves and hearts those that in California they call tame *mezcales*.⁸⁰

1193 They also have many species of mollusks⁸¹ on their beaches, principally the blue ones, which they call thusly in contrast to the mother of pearl shells, because over the luster of the nacre they have a blue glaze, which makes them even more colorful.⁸² When they are smaller, in place of blue they have a wash of cochineal dye⁸³ that makes them even beautiful.⁸⁴ Of these blue shells there are none in the *Lauretano* Gulf, and they are only to be found on the coasts that face the Southern Sea.⁸⁵ Because they lack pearls, they are not sought by those who come to California for that purpose, but the Indians appreciate them more than the pearl oysters, since in each blue shell they find more to eat. And if these blue shells of the coast are indeed so brilliant, those of the island have colors even more lively. The islanders seek them, not so much to eat, since other supplies abound there, as much as to be able to include these among their few items of adornment.

1194 ...The islanders are different from the mainland Californians in that they have even fewer items of clothing,⁸⁶ which is as much as can be said of their rarity. The truth is that they lack this necessity more by their own fault than for a lack of materials to provide such, since they have, among other things, so many and such a variety of animal skins that they could, to a large degree, if not completely, remedy their nudity. The men’s personal possessions⁸⁷

are reduced to their bow and arrow, a net, and a shell that serves as a cup with which to drink. However, they do not notice their lack, as the other Philosopher might say, of the superfluous things.⁸⁸ The women's personal possessions include a great net and a basket or tray that they form, not from thin wooden wands as in California, but of the roots of their *mezcales*, that due to their material qualities are more flexible and durable. Among their items of clothing is a skirt, that is the sole...dress of the women. In size it is like that used in California, but it is not made of *carrizo* canes...but of whale tendons.⁸⁹ It should also be mentioned here that on the island the men go about totally naked, like the Californians, but the women there have less with which to cover themselves, because aside from the skirt that they have in front, they do not wear the back skirt of deerskin that the Californian women use. Its omission is to blame for everything,⁹⁰ and it is their error, since as the explorers noted, they had many skins piled up there which they did not make use of [for clothing].

Chapter IV

The explorers enter the interior of the island, and reference is made to what they saw there, and they confirmed the presence of the islands beyond.

1195 Up to this point, we have touched on the surface of the second island, telling of what was observed by the explorers in terms of the land, as well as its animals and plants, and in its native inhabitants. Included in this document, in its own place, is the discussion touching on the rites and customs of the islanders, according to the information that after the fact one could hear and collect from their conversations. This is because the information of sight always comes before that of the other senses. We will now follow the movements and observations of the explorers regarding the islands beyond,⁹¹ according to what they could observe from the Island of the Trinity. The day after their landing, they went out to see if they could find the people, since the previous afternoon they had seen signs [of them] on the beach. The guides that accompanied them said that in this season they

lived on the other side of the island,⁹² and so they decided to cross it. Soon a hill of red earth, not very high, appeared which they conquered with little difficulty, and having arrived by noon at its crest, they went on their way with less struggle in the afternoon, since they were on the down slope, and arrived at the beach by nightfall.⁹³

1196 Here they rested that night, and at dawn the next day they saw at a distance of a day's travel two small islands which seemed to amount to very little.⁹⁴ They then began to walk from beach to beach in search of the island people, without finding even one person during the whole morning,⁹⁵ despite seeing many signs of others having walked that same trail not long before. Following their footprints, they went into the interior of the island again,⁹⁶ where they were forced to go up a significant part of that great mountain that the island has in its center, and is similar to the *Giganta de California*.⁹⁷ They climbed upwards, and being on the heights, they saw from there the islands of which those of the Island of the Trinity had spoken so much, and those that went as guides again retold the stories. Some of these islands can be seen from the beach, but in addition to not being able to see them all, they cannot be seen with the distinction and individuality that would be desired. They were able to achieve this from the altitude of this mountain, and the following description is drawn from what they were able to see from there.

1197 To the east of the Cape of Saint Xavier a great bay is found, and in it various estuaries⁹⁸ and small islets. This has already been seen by...[many] of those who belong to the Mission San Ignacio. The last of those that came down to baptize themselves in the thirty-second year [1732] said that they went down to the bay to go fishing, since it was the most convenient place with the most abundant fish on the whole of that coast. Some of the explorers, when they went looking for wood with which to make their *balza* for crossing to the islands, went to this bay and found many large and small trees, not worked like those of the ships, but brute trunks without planing that had been brought from the islands beyond (which we will speak of later) by some inundation or flood.⁹⁹ The circumference

of the bay takes about five or six days travel, and to enter it by sea there is only one entrance, that is approximately two musket shots wide. In the middle of the channel at the entrance there is sufficient depth for a ship of deep draft and a great deal of shelter for its protection, since the whole bay is defended against all winds, making the sea always calm here. At one of its points there is a well or spring of sweet water, and there may be, according to discussion, ...one on the opposite side. Up to now, no such other water source has been registered, since not even those who go to this place have crossed to the other part of the embayment.¹⁰⁰

1198 In the middle of this embayment¹⁰¹ are three islands,¹⁰² and all three of these are unpopulated, not only of men but of terrestrial animals. However, many amphibians are attracted to them, principally the beavers,¹⁰³ which are said to have been abundant. There is, in addition to those already referred to, another medium-sized species between the beaver and sea lion that has a very attractive skin, as shown by the specimen that they brought to the Mission.¹⁰⁴ After the aforementioned bay, one follows the coast of California, that enters the sea at about half a day's travel;¹⁰⁵ luckily what is left of the coast is the same¹⁰⁶ as the Cape of Saint Xavier. Further on, various points can be seen that extend out to sea; [they are small] and do not interfere with what can be seen of the rest, up to the furthest extent of one's sight. The land is very high and very white,¹⁰⁷ and for this reason one can see for many leagues, and many more from the altitude of the mountain from which the explorers were viewing.

1199 At the distance of three day's travel, according to what could be conjectured under the circumstances, is the first island. It is separated from the mainland by a strait or channel. This first island is as wide as the Island of the Trinity is long. Its length cannot be conjectured, since it extends as far as one can see and its end is not visible. Like the other islands, the sea covers them in such a way that their full extent cannot be divined.¹⁰⁸ It has mountains and on them many copses of trees, as is manifested by the many trunks of all sizes that continually wash

ashore on the Island of the Trinity, as well as in the bay and along that whole coast.¹⁰⁹ They also saw many plains when the sea was calm, but when it is rough, it seems that they are channels that form many islands.¹¹⁰ To the explorers, from the heights where they found themselves, there remained some reason to doubt, but the islanders swear that from the peak of the mountain it is clearly visible that they are nothing else but plains.

1200 The next island is divided from the aforementioned island by a small strait, much smaller than the one that separates the other from the mainland. It is a little wider than the first, and in terms of its length, they said it was the same as for the other island, because it extends such that the sea does not let one see. Between the two of them they form a range of hills that, seen from the mountain of the Trinity, almost seems like another California that enters and extends along the sea. Next to this island is another with two great capes or points, of which one continues thrusting further and further into the sea until one loses sight of it, and the other faces towards the south. Of this one, neither the length nor the width can be determined since no end can be seen, even when seen from the peak of this great mountain that could be called another *Giganta* of the Californias or another San Miguel of the Canaries. Behind these islands, other peaks and ranges can be seen, of which nothing specific can be said, as much for the obstacle presented by the islands that they have in front of them as for the great distance. Since the explorers did not take with them a long-range spyglass, as one was not to be had at the Mission, those of this expedition could not give more complete reports regarding the most distant objects.

Chapter V

Conjectural discourses about the inhabitants of those islands

1201 It remains now to confirm if those islands have inhabitants. The islanders of the Trinity, who are those that have given the best and most specific news regarding the natives of those other islands, have given [information] with such rarity, that

it could be said that those reports are the least important. This can be blamed on their ancient priests or wizards, whom the demon had persuaded that one of the greatest sins that one could commit was to look towards those islands.¹¹¹ Maybe they feared that the Faith would arrive by way of those islands rather than from the other side of the peninsula where more obstacles have stood in the way. But this does not stop them from giving some news which, together with other lines of evidence, demonstrates two conclusions: the first is that the aforementioned islands are populated by many inhabitants; the other is that they are very politic people,¹¹² and more cultured than up to now has been identified in California.¹¹³

- 1202** As far as the first point, asserting that these islands are populated by many inhabitants, we have evidence of what was seen and experienced by General Sebastian Vizcaíno, who was the first to approach those islands. He recognized that they were very populated when navigating within sight of them in his charting of the Pacific coast. He discovered by day the smokes and by night the fires that their natives made. In addition, it is said in the relation of their discovery cited above, that upon arriving to reconnoiter the first island of *Sta. Catharina*¹¹⁴—the next island from the Island of the Trinity¹¹⁵—there came out to the beach many Indian men and Indian women of all ages crying out to them to come to shore. Having arrived, they received them with great affability and with demonstrations of love. Vizcaíno and his crew remained there one day and then those of the island, travelling in *canoas*, sent messages to those of other islands and those of the mainland of their guests and of the good treatment they had given them. From here it proceeded that, in the other islands as well as on the mainland, the natives invited them to come to their lands.
- 1203** The navigators on the Philippine galleons, who in approaching these islands after taking the latitude to come to New Spain, [also noticed and mentioned in their deposition that they] often see the smokes and fires that give indications of the natives. Among others, the Illustrious Señor Don Diego Camacho noticed this evidence, as well

as all of those who came with his Illustriousness in the ship, since that vessel had approached the coast more closely than the others in the fleet. The islanders of the Trinity swear to having seen the smoke and campfires of the other island from the peak of their own.¹¹⁶ In addition to this indication of the fires, the explorers found, during their short stay, many signs that indicated that those other islands were populated. Upon the occasion of their search for *balza*-building materials near Cape Saint Xavier, they ran into many belongings of those aforementioned island inhabitants washed up on the beach. These items included arrows, bows, harpoons, *balzas*, oars, very smooth and well-planned boards, and other similar wooden objects. All of these were very different from those used by the Trinity Islanders, and a great deal more different from the belongings of the Californians.

- 1204** It is not an argument against those other islands being populated that the Trinity Islanders have never gone there, nor the other islanders come here. I say this because, in addition to the impediment to communication created by the deception of the demon prohibiting them to look at those islands, it is understandable that the ebb and flow of the sea closed the communication between one or the other of these islands. Seeing from here the great barrier that the currents have, they do not permit this. They could depart very far from land in a small *balsa* without any manifested danger of shipwreck. [Moreover it is easy to believe], after the experience of the explorers, who during their [layover]...on the Island of the Martyrs, where despite the short space that exists between that island and the mainland, they were stuck for three weeks. Well, if crossing such a short distance [in an area where] the currents are much weaker¹¹⁷ merited waiting so long, how would it be possible that they would risk travelling to the other islands without obvious risk of perishing?
- 1205** Taking as a certainty that the aforementioned islands are populated, it can be inferred from their objects that wash up on the coast that their owners are people more politic and cultured than the people of California. Among other things, the explorers brought to Mission San Ignacio an oar

whose material, form, and manufacture shows it to not be the work of uncultured or barbarous people. Its wood is so special that no one recognized it, so strong that the many beatings of the sea had not succeeded in breaking it. [The wood] is so solid that after passing through so many waters and suns, only a small scratch could be found upon it, and finally, it is so light that although it is a large oar, even a child could manage it. Its form is very distinct from those of other oars, because at either end it has blades, and they are so well joined and held fast that it is not easy to disassemble it. The ends are half added and half inserted in the blades. The whole oar is decorated with various colors. It is strong, light, beautiful, and well made, and is all that could be desired in an oar.

1206 ...[Another] indication of this truth is given by their bows and arrows, and also their *balzas*, that the explorers found washed ashore on the coast as well as on the Island of the Trinity. Their bows and arrows, in their ingenious manufacture, correspond to the oars, and to say it once and for all, they are totally distinct from those that are used either in California or on the Island of the Trinity. Although the Trinity Islanders do not form their arrows of cane, since none is to be found on the island,¹¹⁸ they make them in multiple segments in the same way as those that are used at Mission San Ignacio, and in other parts of California. Thus, it seems that those Trinity Islanders, through the communication that they had with those of the mainland, learned from them the making of their bows and arrows. But those of the other islands, as much in the diversity as in the ingeniousness of their manufacture, demonstrate their ability, and more cultured inventiveness.

1207 The same is manifested in their *balzas*, which have no comparison with the best of California, or even with those of the Island of the Trinity. These *balzas*, that they found washed up on the coast, and on the second island, are formed of some very even and long boards, which are very smooth and planed. They are so well joined, fitted together, and caulked with such a tough tar, that they seem like the hull of a ship. They substitute for the nails a kind of twine so thin that it causes admiration to

see it, according to those who saw it, being so finely made. Together with the tar, it joins the boards in such a manner that they seem to be inlaid.¹¹⁹ From all of this it is inferred, not only that there are inhabitants on the aforementioned islands, but that they are very industrious and able in their works. We now return to follow the steps of the explorers in their discovery.

Chapter VI

The Explorers continue their voyage, find the islanders, and convince them to return with them.

1208 After the islanders¹²⁰ had observed as much as their curiosity could desire from the height of that mountain, they came down from it driven by their objective to seek the other islanders. They did not take long to find them; having come down a few paces, they found where the people were, and while not all of them were there, only a few were lacking. At the sudden sight of new people, the islanders were filled with fright at the sight of their vestments, since they had never seen clothed men. Some, as they later said, judged that the explorers were fiends, while others thought that they were sea monsters, and finally, others took them to be demons. It is no wonder, since the first soldiers that entered the north were also taken for such, and even in the south they were given this name. [At] the Mission of San Juan Baptizta Liqui founded [there], they [presently] call the soldiers by the name of *Monquimones*, which is to say, demons.

1209 While the islanders recovered from the first fright, our people had approached close enough so that the natives could recognize their relatives and countrymen which had gone along as guides. They saw them [illegible] so happy, that not only did their fear leave them but even their suspicion, that they came out to meet and to greet them. Nor for this did they cease to find the clothing strange, inspecting each of our people one at a time. Later they were greatly amused at having been afraid of that which they had desired—to see and speak to their relatives. The novelty of the first

encounter had passed while the islanders engaged in friendly conversation with their relatives, the guides. Others got up and went to seek, among their poor belongings, items with which to honor their guests. They brought them as much as they had, which our people received with signs of thanks. Continuing the conversation, and the questions of one party and the other, our people took the opportunity to propose to the islanders, by means of the interpreters, the pending concern that the islanders come to visit us, and the motives that the Father of Mission San Ignacio had for sending them. The substance of the argument was of the following tenor:

1210 “Know then, friends, that the Father of the Mission that has sent us, and the others there in attendance, had news of how you have remained alone, and abandoned on this island. Since the only communication that you had with the mainland has been lost to you, since they have all gone to the Mission, and since some of your relatives and brothers went with them, we considered that you would be not only alone and abandoned, but grieving and very anxious. To remove this anxiety, and to give you solace, the Father determined to send us so that you would visit us, and to that end some of your friends and relatives came with us. These would have been more had the Lord that created the sky and the land, He who gives us body and soul and gives us life, not taken them to rest with Him forever in the sky. You can see here the principal motive of our coming, which was that you should all also know this Lord, from whom the life that you have issues forth. So that you might conserve it, and be able to see Him forever, since by means of the Father you have been able to see these who have remained alive, so too might you, after this life, be able to see the others in the eternal life. We speak here of the appreciation and good treatment that we give to those of your nation. So that this might be clear you might ask them yourself.”¹²¹

1211 After our interpreter finished speaking, one islander responded for all, for he was the one that the others considered their chief,¹²² and as such they greatly respected and obeyed him. “We have

been greatly comforted by your coming, since we have so desired to see you all; moreover, you not only give us news of our brothers and relatives, but also bring some of them with you. For a long time we have wanted to follow you, as much to have the pleasure of seeing and accompanying you as to see the Fathers, that they say are found in those lands. I have managed to encourage everyone, and I even arranged that we should begin the journey, but the sea has been against us, and once we almost drowned in the attempt.¹²³ Because of this fright, I have not been able to achieve my dearest wish. Now I am happy, since in your company we will complete the effort.” This chief spoke for all, and before him a woman spoke with more brevity; interrupting the speech of the interpreter, she exclaimed joyously, “Oh, how greatly consoled am I by your coming! Were I a man, or if I did not have one, I would already be in your land. In your company, I will achieve my desire.”

1212 All this that they said was true, as they all later testified. This chief, who was governor of the island, had not only stimulated and encouraged the others into coming, but had had them perform as many preparatory errands as possible, so that they would finally make up their minds. He had gathered together wood, made *balzas*, and even prepared the provisions necessary for the crossing. In all of this he had setbacks; the wood would break, the sea would carry off the *balzas*; setting forth, the sea would get rough in such a manner that it obliged them to turn back. Only one time did they pass to the Island of the Martyrs, transporting some that stayed there, while they returned for the rest. But there they had another misfortune. In the night, the sea broke up the *balza* that they had, and the tide began to carry off the principal trunk. If they had not noticed, they would have remained stranded without remedy. On the way back to their island they almost wrecked, and with this, terrified, they ceased the enterprise. Those that had been on the Island of the Martyrs, having returned, saw that the others (among which were their children and their women) were very intimidated by the past misfortunes, and for this reason they had not had the valor to follow them.

1213 But now they all returned, regaining momentum with the arrival of the explorers. A few were absent, ...but came when the others were sent to call them, and all demonstrated, from there on, that they were prompt to come. There was only one that never responded, not even one word, as much as they asked and tried to persuade him. If he was silent, his wife certainly spoke, and said "The trip will not be stopped by this, if my husband does not want to go, not for this will I and my son stay behind. Before now, I have been the first to climb aboard." With all this, the taciturn one did not respond one word, nor did the others await his consent to begin preparing things for the voyage. There was on the island another medium *balza*, which they joined with the one that they had brought from the mainland, in order to make the voyage in greater comfort. While the men put the aforementioned *balzas* together, the women collected and prepared the provisions that they would need to carry for the trip.

1214 Everything being prepared, they returned to ask the taciturn Indian if he wanted to accompany them. To which he failed to respond. They had already decided to leave the next day in the morning, and therefore as a farewell they returned to ask if he wanted to tell them something, or declare the motivation that he had for not following them. Therefore, seeing that they were really going, and that all were ready for the trip, and his woman was ready with the provisions to leave, and resolved to leave him alone if he did not accompany her, he responded, although begrudgingly, that yes, he would go with them. All were very amused by this, because of having resisted this last time, they were already resolved to leave him behind, since there was no reason to deny the holy baptism to his woman, that with such sincerity she eventually obtained.

Chapter VII

The explorers return with the islanders to the Mission of San Ignacio, where they are instructed and baptized.

1215 The aforementioned impediment vanquished, they all left that place very content, and they walked to the beach where they were going to embark.

The explorers went content for the prize that they carried in the form of those gentiles, conquered for Christ, and the islanders were also content for the good weather, which God had sent them, to execute their best desires. The two *balzas* had been ready on the beach since the day before, and thus as soon as they arrived they embarked in them, those that could comfortably fit. They arrived with happiness at the Island of the Martyrs, and proceeding with the transport in the following days, in one week all were on that island.¹²⁴ It would seem that the weather waited, God making sure that all could cross. With everyone on the Island of the Martyrs, the Island of the Trinity was left totally depopulated.¹²⁵ The weather changed, and the sea became enraged, to such a great degree that for three weeks they could not embark, nor pass the stretch that remained to arrive on the mainland, which was only the navigation of half a day. It was here, finding themselves without water, that they substituted for it with the *mezcales*, as was already mentioned in the description of that island.

1216 The three weeks having passed, God willed that the winds should be placated, and the seas calm themselves, and thus all could arrive with happiness on the mainland. They were there for some days, although with the work of digging a well, since there was not one on that whole side of Cabo de San Xavier. Having rested, they continued their route along the beach, becoming happier the closer they got to the end of their voyage. But this consolation changed to sadness, from a misfortune that occurred. Since they went beach to beach, one of the islanders discovered many sea lions on some sand bars, and confident in his ability to swim, he dove into the water and arrived at the sand bars. After having unsuccessfully attempted everything possible to kill one of the sea lions, he turned and began swimming back towards his people. He did not reach them, since he had swum barely forty paces when a shark charged him and ravaged him between its teeth. With dexterity he extricated himself, and turned again to swim, though bleeding heavily. He could no longer do so with enough speed to escape the second assault, since the shark, turning around, ravaged him again, and carried him

away between its teeth, with the onlookers on the beach unable to do anything due to the distance.

1217 Three things are remarkable and worthy of comment in this incident. The first and principal is that the man to whom this misfortune occurred was the same one that wanted to stay on the island, and when they asked him if he wanted to go with his companions to receive the holy baptism, he did not want to respond. The second was that this man was the last one on the whole island that had instruments of wizardry, and therefore was a wizard, and had dealings with the demon. And thus he made himself unworthy of baptism, and God took his life so that he might not serve as a stumbling block and scandal to his companions.¹²⁶ The third is that since the islanders determined to come to the mainland to be baptized, in the space of five years none had died on the whole island. Thus it seems that the divine providence conserved their lives, so that they might achieve their dearest wish. He of the tragedy was the first and the last that died in those five years. And in truth, if someone had to die before receiving baptism, it should have been him, since he deserved it anyway.

1218 Everyone was greatly grieved by his tragic death, and in order to somewhat temper their emotion, it was necessary to bring them all together, and by means of the interpreter, put forth the reasons that in similar cases offer themselves, for them to surrender themselves to the divine will, and regain the enthusiasm to continue their route. God willed that with the speech they became more serene, and more ready to travel, since they still lacked four days of distance to arrive at the mission. The Father Sigismundo Taraval already had notice of their coming, by the messengers that the explorers sent upon arriving back on the mainland, and so the Father sent some of the Mission to carry to them some refreshment. They later continued until arriving at another place that was two and a half days from the mission, and they found more refreshment, and they stopped to rest for a few days. Thus they delayed in their land route almost a month, since they were not accustomed to walk across so much terrain, [and] with only a little walking they tired quickly.¹²⁷ For the other part, most of them came

carrying things of their island, and almost all the women with their little children, and thus they walked one day and then rested for two or three.

1219 Finally, they all arrived with happiness at the Mission where Father Sigismundo Taraval received them with much charity. His first care was to baptize all of the infants and breastfeeding little ones, in whom the lack of reason meant that it was not necessary to wait and instruct them, and for another part the little ones were secured against any threat of death that might overcome them. We do not know the fixed number of these babes that were baptized after having recently arrived at the mission, nor of the adults that were baptized after being well instructed. From a letter of Father Jaime Bravo [it can be confirmed]...that they were few, because the larger part of those islanders came earlier to request baptism with Father Juan Baptista Luyando, and all of them died, and thus now came those that were left, which were fewer. Father Sigismundo Taraval took charge of their instruction, and Father Sebastian de Sistiaga followed him in this role, when he returned to his mission after having visited the others. Some baptisms were celebrated with all solemnity, and with universal rejoicing of the Fathers, and the other Christians of that mission, in which the islanders became settled and part of the mission community.

1220 This joy was augmented by the conversion of other gentiles that came at the same time from very distant parts to request baptism. These were from three very remote *rancherías*, widely separated from each other. From one some had already come, and now the rest came. From the other, very few remained in their lands, and thus it is credible that those had later come to the mission moved by the example of the others. From the third, all came, and these were inhabitants of the coast of the Californian Sea, whose *ranchería* is close to a point that the land makes and that the divers call the Cape of San Miguel. This point is the same that Father Eusebio Kino discovered from the coast of Sonora on January 22, and that he named the Cape of San Vicente. This cape, by Taraval's count, is in the same latitude of 31 degrees, where the principal of the Islands of the Sorrows is also located. This

is the same, with little difference, the same scale, where Father Kino was when he discovered it.

- 1221** Speaking of the conversion of these gentiles, Father Sigismundo Taraval notes several particular circumstances. The first is that these gentiles of the coast came to request baptism at the same time as the tragic death of the islander on the other coast, which precipitated the conversion of the others. Thus for one gentile who became lost, who having deserved it, according to human judgement, God brought to the faith a whole *rancheria* of gentiles. The second is that the *rancheria* was located on the eastern coast, and in the part opposite from the place where the tragedy occurred. And although it caused pain and emotion, they were tempered somewhat by the joy of seeing Christianity augmented with the conversion of those gentiles. The third is that those gentiles should have been very intimidated by the Spanish for the vexations and bad treatment that they had suffered from the divers, with deaths on both sides. Not withstanding this detraction, or having any other human motives, they left their lands, and all came to live at the Mission of San Ignacio, to make themselves Christians. This is something worthy of admiration, and reveals the marvelous effectiveness of the grace with which the Lord called them, and brought them to our holy Catholic faith, and without which no one could come to it, as Christ tells us through Saint John (Chap.6.v.44): *Nemo potest venire ad me, nisi Pater, qui misit me, traxerit eum*. Father Sebastian de Sistiaga took charge of their instruction, and after being well instructed, he baptized them. Their number was of one hundred and nineteen adults, without counting the babes and nursing infants that were baptized upon arrival. Blessed be God for the mercy that He is using with that gentility. Amen.

Chapter VIII

To give some some notion of the disposition, customs, religion, and heathen rituals of the Islanders of Trinidad [Isla Cedros]

- 1222** Although we will later separately and more extensively discuss the theme of the religion, customs, and heathen rites of the inhabitants of

California, here is included the material regarding the new Islands of the Sorrows that have been discovered in the Southern Sea (Pacific). We will here gather the information that Father Sigismundo Taraval could glean from the dealings and communication that he had with the above mentioned islanders: copied to the letter from his narration, they are as follows: "They have a very clear understanding. Truth be told, they have not yet achieved the enlightenment of those of the north that have been baptized, but soon they will equal those others. They are ultimately of the same language, although with much variation, and because of this form part of the same nation. Because of this they are very similar to the Californians in many things or styles, such as the fact that the woman carries the burden of all the work, in collecting seeds and fruits, as well as in preparing them; an occupation in which men rarely participate. Their occupation, when it is not time to hunt or fish, is to do nothing; and so they pass the majority of their lives in idle leisure. If the Californians are guilty of this, much more so are those of Trinidad, where they have more fruits."

- 1223** "In manual works they appear to be industrious, with which they could have the necessities for decency, but their sloth has passed into their nature, and has made them so neglectful in their disposition that they don't do anything. Or if necessity obliges them to do something, they do it so slowly, and they accomplish so little each day that one could say that they therefore don't do the thing.¹²⁸ Proof of this could be that when they have to make a basket or *tutuma*¹²⁹ that would be a work of two or at the most three days, there are men that would take two or three months. With all this, if the Californians had the conveniences that exist in that island, I am convinced that they would not be so naked. Unless the comfortable situation would simply make them more slothful. They are generally of an affable nature and appreciative. In this those of Trinidad seem like the most northerly groups, that are all one nation, totally opposed to those of the missions of Purisima Concepción, San Joseph of Comundú, and San Pablo, where this nation and language ends.¹³⁰ All of those say that they came from the

north; but they do not know the location, nor the name of the place. Those of Trinidad, as well as the most northerly groups of this mission, in fact do know, affirming that they came from a great land that is called *idelgatá*. Concurring in this belief are all those of one coast, as well as the other, those of the mainland as well as those of the island. They do not give more detail regarding this great land of *idelgatá*, other than in it were many people.”

1224 “I already mentioned that the Island of Trinidad was triangular, that it had three points or capes, that it had three mountains, and what is more, three bays. It only lacked having three populations; and to a certain point, these did exist on the island. They were all very numerous, but the pox, which in these parts became plague, left only a few alive from each settlement. Of those survivors, some had come to Mission San Ignacio in the year twenty and eight; therefore, there were few who had remained.¹³¹ [It is worth noting that as] I already mentioned, that no one had died in the ensuing four years. Yet they say that those populations would have been more numerous if the many misfortunes that befell them on sea and land had not diminished their number greatly. Because firstly, they had among them some wars and battles, in which another population, that had formerly existed, perished completely.¹³² The fishing of the beavers also contributed, since in this sea full of sharks many fell victim to tragedies like the one described above. But the most significant cause¹³³ was the dealings, or communication, that they had with those of the mainland, since there have been many who have wrecked their vessels in the crossing. The truth is that not all of them participated in this interaction.¹³⁴ With this I pass to their government, and before, to the diverse clans¹³⁵ that existed on the island.”

1225 “All the Californians affirm their coming from the north, and those of the island swear to the same. But among these there are some that were natives of the Island of the Trinity that had never heard, not even by the most ancient traditions, that they had come from any other place. Yet among those that were from the island there were two clans that were always enemies with each other. When we add those that came from the north, there

were three clans,¹³⁶ all of which, although they were of the same language, they differed in the pronunciation, and in diverse words characteristic of each clan. With all this, these being distinct clans, they were all under the rule of one, who was he who came as leader of the north. He they obeyed and served, and after him, his successors were always governors of the island, as if by right.¹³⁷ The truth is that when they arrived, the island had its own chief, but after he died, all put themselves under the protection of this other one, who was, they say, the most accomplished and honored man that had lived on the island.¹³⁸ Thus, aside from the population that they destroyed, nevermore were their contests between clan and clan, but between individuals.”

1226 “He who was their governor was also their priest, or wizard, though this did not prevent the existence of other subordinates, in such a way that in each clan there was a *capitán* for its government. So many were the things that they put on their heads, and so nonsensical, that they simultaneously prompted pity and laughter. Their ten commandments were as follows: The 1st that they shalt not feast of the first animal hunted, or fish caught. With this was added that the demon also wanted their first fruits. The truth is that few of these ended thus, since the greater demon for them was the hunger and the appetite. The 2nd, that they shalt not eat certain fish. The 3rd, that they shalt not eat certain determined parts of the hunted animals, principally where it was better and fatter, because they said that this fat belonged to the old dead ones, and that to eat it one would become old. With this the old wizards ate the best bites, since they said that as they were already old men, they did not have to fear this penalty. The 4th, that they shalt not collect certain determined fruits, or fish (and these were the best!) since they would cause much harm, and that nothing could harm the old wizards. The 5th, that if they should hunt a deer that was especially large, or a similarly impressive fish, that they shalt not eat it, because this also was for the wizards. The 6th, that they shalt not look at the *cabrillas* of the sky,¹³⁹ since he who looked at them would bring upon himself much loss and unhappiness.

The 7th, that they shalt not look at the islands of the north,¹⁴⁰ since he that looked upon them became sick, and died without remedy. The 8th, that they remember their ancestors, and that they celebrate them, that they would not cease to do the same there. The 9th, that when it was very hot, everyone should go out to greet the sun, in this not even those who were tiring themselves in their hunting and fishing, but instead they perform these rites with great felicity. The manner of greeting was to leave running from the place where they were, and put themselves under the sun (well, for this they waited for midday), raising their hands on high, and like one who attracts the lights in their repose, inclining their heads they received it as an honor. What is more, when they returned from greeting the sun, they should take care to not return by the same path, that in some way they were able to distinguish between going to greet the sun and going about other errands. The 10th, that they should believe in their wizards. But they did nothing of the kind, since after arriving at the Mission, they began to celebrate such foolishness with great laughter.”¹⁴¹

1227 “Similar to the precepts were the articles of their faith. Their principal deity was the demon, to whom they made some feasts. The principal reason for celebrating him was because their wizards said that the demon was the one that had given, and gave them, children. The celebrations were as the deity requested, and with this I say how dirty they were, without it being worthy of further discussion.¹⁴² Other feasts they made to their ancestors, to whom they gave the same name as to the demons. This was the manner of celebrating their apotheosis, or canonization: of various branches, they formed an effigy of the hero that they were honoring, and later they placed him in an eminent place, and before him they celebrated the solemn ceremony, giving him the renown of demon, with which they judged that they had canonized him.”¹⁴³

1228 “The instruments that they used in these superstitions were primarily a cape as big as a choral gown that they formed of the hair that the afflicted offered as *ex votos*, as it were. Around the neck they carried a collar of deer hooves, and

another that served as a belt. In their hand they held a fan of various feathers, or in place of the fan, a tubular pipe, that they formed of a very hard stone, which they used to suck the afflicted in the manner that they do in the Paraguay, and to which the Californians are also accustomed. All the aforementioned, other than the cape and the pipe, is totally distinct from the gentile rites of the Californians; for this reason I have made special mention of them, leaving out other elements, in which they resemble each other.” To here wrote the Father Sigismundo Taraval in his relation.

NOTES

¹The original document, in Venegas’ handwriting, is currently held in the Bancroft Library as M-M 1701.

²A uniquely Jesuit appellation that refers to the islands today known as Isla de Cedros, Natividad, and possibly the Islas de San Benito, Baja California.

³Here Venegas likely references the latitudinal position of the Cedros “archipelago”.

⁴Crosby (1994:408) provides the following biographical information: “Juan Baptista de Luyando, S.J. (1700–1757). Born in Mexico City. Benefactor and founder of record of Mission San Ignacio, for which Sebastián de Sistiaga made the actual on-the-ground preparations. Missionary, dividing duties with Sistiaga at San Ignacio and Santa Rosalía, 1727–1733. Retired to New Spain for reasons of health.” From Venegas’ (1979:373,375) manuscript it is clear that Luyando was less tolerant of native practices than some of his colleagues, and encountered a great deal of resistance from the shamans and leaders of the San Ignacio region.

⁵Nuestro Señor San Ignacio *Kadakaamán*, the last being the indigenous placename translating as either ‘place of the reeds’ or ‘reedy arroyo’ (Crosby 1994:179). The oasis-like character of the locale is noted even today.

⁶A *rancheria* probably located between Bahía Tortugas and Laguna San Ignacio, probably closer to the former.

⁷As will later be apparent, *AnaWa* was located in the immediate vicinity of modern Punta Eugenia.

⁸An event which took place in 1728, though missionaries were visiting the area by 1716 (Venegas 1979:362).

⁹The flight of neophytes from the mission unfortunately would have provided an excellent vector for disease transmission (Preston 1996), replicated throughout Jesuit Baja California, where the missions typically contained ‘revolving door’

populations (Aschmann 1959). Regarding the initial instruction of the founding population of Mission San Ignacio, Venegas (1979:364) wrote: "...pero como iban cada dia viniendo otros de nuevo, mentenian este numero [500] poco mas o menos."

¹⁰Venegas is here referring to the *Walime æ* people.

¹¹In this document, "California(s)" refers exclusively to the Baja California peninsula.

¹²Refers to the mainland, probably meaning the area around San Ignacio.

¹³Apart from a few palms (*Washingtonia* sp.), the junipers (*Juniperus californiensis cerrosensis*) and pines (*Pinus muricata* var. *cedrosensis*) of Isla Cedros would probably have been the largest plants in the Central Desert region.

¹⁴Beginning here and in the following sentences, Venegas implies that there are many islands visible from Isla Cedros. Such is not the case. The islander boys were probably using a generalized Cochimí-Proto Yuman (Mixco 1978) locative "wa" and describing other locations and/or settlements on Isla Cedros, rather than other islands. This possibility is strongly supported by a cursory examination of the geography surrounding Isla Cedros. To the south, one can easily see both Punta Eugenia and the small island of Natividad, which was probably not occupied on a permanent basis. To the west, only the very small San Benito Islands can be seen, and despite some prehistoric archaeological sites (according to Frank Roger's field notes from the Bancroft expedition of 1930, provided by Dr. Eric Ritter), these were probably not permanently occupied due to a lack of reliable water. No other islands are actually visible from Isla Cedros.

¹⁵Suggesting that the Jesuits may not have yet comprehended the fine distinctions in locative suffixes and prefixes in Cochimí and other Peninsular Yuman dialects (Mixco 1978, 1983, 1985), or misunderstood what the Cedros boys were trying to explain. The only "trees" available for counting within 100 kilometers of Cedros are those on the higher peaks and ridges of the island itself. It is possible that these boys were explaining the locations of the other settlements on the island through visual landscape references, since three archaeologically identified villages in the northern half of the island are, in fact, close enough to the pine forests on Cedros to "count the trees." None of the villages located in the southern half of the island are intervisible with the pine groves. This may suggest that the boys were from one of the southern villages, since they refer to these as "other" places. This makes sense, since these villages would have been in more frequent contact with mainland populations, and were the likely "home" settlements of the islanders who were "living" at *AnaWa* (Punta Eugenia) in 1728.

¹⁶Meaning that Luyando had left the post at San Ignacio, and retired to mainland Mexico.

¹⁷The Pacific Coast is often referred to as the *Contra Costa* by the Jesuits.

¹⁸Tamaral was later killed during the Pericú uprising in the Cape Region (Crosby 1994:410).

¹⁹"Half that nation" might refer only to the mission population itself, but as has been discussed elsewhere (Aschmann 1959; Crosby 1994, and others), the fluid nature of mission residence in Jesuit Baja California resulted in a surprisingly rapid and complete dispersal of pathogens throughout the region.

²⁰The depopulation of the mainland opposite Cedros could only have further exacerbated the relative isolation of the *Huamalgüeno* people, and may have encouraged the initial group of islanders to travel to San Ignacio in 1728.

²¹Although the location of the mission at the San Ignacio oasis was not accidental, and it was probably already one of the annual gathering locations for a number of the mainland groups in the region, who were almost certainly *at least* seasonally mobile. Sedentism was new, but not the aggregation of a number of separate bands at San Ignacio, as demonstrated by earlier sections of the Venegas manuscript.

²²December 3, 1732. The specific mention of San Francisco Xavier is no doubt due to his being one of the seven founding members of the Society of Jesus and the patron saint of all foreign missions.

²³Currently known as Isla Natividad, Baja California Sur, and pronounced "Ä-fey-wä"

²⁴Pronounced "Wä-mäl-wä", and referring specifically to Isla de Cedros, Baja California Norte. This is the source of the translators' use of the term "Huamalgüenos" to refer to the Contact Period indigenous inhabitants of Isla Cedros (see Des Lauriers 2005a, 2005b).

²⁵"Neblinas" is the word used by Venegas; it can also be translated as "mists," though the two concepts are interchangeable enough to not warrant further attention.

²⁶Close attention to the text at this point would argue against the existence of inhabited islands "further on", since (1) if they were intervisible, they would have been given names by the native people, and (2) the next habitable islands are several hundred miles to the north, and could not have been described by this expedition.

²⁷The day referred to is February 5. The event commemorated occurred in 1597 and involved the execution of a mixed-order group of missionaries (including Franciscans as well as Jesuits) in Nagasaki, Japan.

²⁸Although Venegas' "Cabo de San Xavier" is modern Punta Eugenia, we retain the Jesuit name in this translation.

²⁹Likewise, the "Isla de los Martires" is modern Isla Natividad.

³⁰The renaming of modern Isla Cedros, which was named by Francisco de Ulloa in 1540 for the cedar driftwood which was

observed on the beaches and for his mistaken belief that the conifers visible on the highest slopes were the source of that driftwood. See Montané-Martí (1995) for an excellent discussion of the Ulloa voyage of 1539–1540, which was a precursor to and provided most of the charts used by the Cabrillo voyage two years later.

³¹ Clearly meaning the surviving islander boys. Venegas uses the word “practicos,” which can also be translated as “pilots” in the nautical sense of the term; in this case, “guides” makes more sense.

³² See Des Lauriers (2005a) for a discussion of the less than precise distinction made between these two terms, probably because the manner of construction used for a particular type of watercraft was as important as its structural form in determining its status as “canoa” or “balza.” This differs from the distinction made in simple word-to-word translation into English that would, at first glance, translate the first word as “canoe” and the second as “raft.” In more academic circles, the word “balza” seems to have acquired a strong association with watercraft made from cane or reed. It seems fairly clear, however, that the critical characteristic that defined “balzas” for the authors of the eighteenth century and of earlier accounts of Baja California (see Montané-Martí 1995) was whether a watercraft was formed from a single hull element or was composite in manufacture; the latter type was often referred to as a “balza” whether it was made from reeds or not.

³³ Strongly suggesting that Punta Eugenia was *the* principal point of mainland contact for Isla Cedros populations.

³⁴ Here, Venegas used the term “palos,” which directly translates as ‘sticks’ or ‘poles’.

³⁵ Venegas here provides a rare and wonderful piece of information, which demonstrates that large pieces of wood were moved, not by being carried overland, but by being moved in the water to a desired location for further manufacture. This is an issue that has usually been overlooked by scholars in the Californias; the places where wood is abundant along the coast are not evenly distributed, and yet wood is essential for manufacturing boats, paddles, houses, and even for use as firewood. Moving the raw material by water, taking advantage of its buoyancy, means that even a relatively small group of people, in this case a group made up at least partly of “boys,” could transport significant amounts of wood even without a pre-existing watercraft.

³⁶ The text uses the term “balza,” but due to the consistent confusion of the terms *balza*, *canoa*, and *embarcación* (see Des Lauriers 2005a), a less specific term is preferable. Hence, we have used the terms vessel or watercraft rather than the English terms of raft or canoe, which are much more specific in their referents than the text allows us to be at this point.

³⁷ We wonder at the measurement of time in this statement. The problem is that “half a day” and “a day” are the only units of time referred to in the text regarding travel. Given the distances

involved (~15km), we feel that the travel time was certainly less than “half a day.” This is compounded by the fact that even the term “a day” is probably a reference to daylight hours alone, rather than the modern conception of a full 24-hour “day.”

³⁸ Isla Natividad actually measures 6 kilometers in length and 2.5 kilometers in width at its widest point, but for much of its length is less than a kilometer wide. Its highest elevation is 160 meters. Since the Spanish *vara* measured 83.6 cm and a league was 5000 *varas* (Bowman 1951; Barnes et al 1981:68), Venegas is in error here by a factor of 10. According to this description, Natividad would measure only slightly over half a kilometer in length! While it is a small island, Venegas’ error makes it sound positively diminutive.

³⁹ Mescal; also known as agave, century plant, yucca, henequen, sotol, etc... In this case mescal = *Agave shawii*.

⁴⁰ We find the use of *Agave* as a water source exceedingly interesting, since in other island contexts along the California coast, the availability of water figures prominently in models of settlement patterns and social dynamics (see Raab and Larson 1997; Kennett 2005; and others). If short-term occupation of otherwise waterless terrain can be accomplished in the Cedros region by means of the agaves, then it may have reduced the tethering and limiting effect of water sources. However, on Isla Cedros itself, as will be seen below, the abundance of springs, seeps, and wells meant that the scarcity of potable water was probably not a limiting factor on the overall population.

⁴¹ We find this passage somewhat odd. We suspect that this story was modified through retelling, or that the original recounting of the story by native islanders to Taraval was somehow garbled or misunderstood. Both the notion of leaving a single person behind, and (as will be seen below) the notion of having no chance to return for such a long span of time suggest several interpretations: (1) misinterpretation; (2) the telling of an event from legendary time rather than as a “history” as such; or (3) the intentional marooning of someone as a form of social sanction.

⁴² The parallels with the story of the Lone Woman of San Nicolas (Heizer and Elsasser 1961; Hudson 1981) are interesting, since this document was written nearly a century before the similar events in Alta California, and cannot be the result of conflation or misattribution on the part of Venegas. They are separate but similar events, perhaps calling into question the “accidental” nature of each.

⁴³ In terms of the physical description, burrow nests, and behavior, this is clearly a description of either Xantus’ Murrelet (*Synthliboramphus hypoleucus*) or Cassin’s Auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*), both of which today are known to nest on the San Benito Islands. The possibility that their nesting range extended to Isla Natividad as late as 1732 is potentially interesting given the endangered status of Xantus’ Murrelet (Skydancer et al. 1998:26–27; Griggs 1997:11–12).

⁴⁴ Again, the description, burrow nests, and behavior are detailed enough to strongly indicate that this passage describes the

Blackvented Shearwater (*Puffinus opistomelas*) (Skydancer 1998:11).

⁴⁵Large Saguaro-like cactuses (*Pachycereus pringlei*) (Roberts 1989:142-144). At least two such cacti have been observed by the translators on Isla Cedros, though they are, in all honesty, very rare on that island.

⁴⁶In this instance, Venegas is referring to Isla Natividad.

⁴⁷Specifically referring to 'Prickly Pear' (*Opuntia [Platyopuntia]* sp.) cactus fruit (Roberts 1989:140).

⁴⁸In Baja California, this term is specifically applied to organ pipe cactus fruit. 'Pitahaya' can refer to either the 'dulce'/'sweet' variety (*Lemnaireocereus [Stenocereus] thurberi*), or the 'agria'/'sour' variety (*Machaerocereus (Stenocereus) gummosus*) (Roberts 1989:130-133). Only the latter has been observed on Isla Cedros, but *only* in direct association with indigenous village sites.

⁴⁹A term frequently used by the Jesuits to refer to small seeds, probably in the Chenopodiaceae or Amaranthaceae families (Leon-Portilla footnote in del Barco 1988:105). If the latter, the only Baja Californian species is *Celosia floribunda*, today often referred to as 'bledo' (Roberts 1989:100). Aschmann (1959:86) wrote that "...the term *bledo* was meant to cover a whole series of herbs bearing edible seeds, not merely amaranths.... The eating of the whole plant could suggest chenopods as well as amaranths." Aschmann (1959:86-87) continued: "The terminology is further confused when we consider two derivatives of Aztec words, *choal* (from *tzoalli*) and *quelite* (from *quilitl*), both of which may be translated into Spanish as *bledo*. *Chenopodium album*, which after winter rains now is a common weed around settlements in the Central Desert, was regularly identified to me as *choal*." The relevance to Isla Cedros is that one of the large coastal midden sites on the western side of the southern bay is found on a point which locals call "Punta Choal," since the plant apparently grows there after the winter rains. The suggestive association of this plant growth with a pre-contact residential site has not been further substantiated, but it can be said that, to date, the translators have not observed it in other contexts on the island.

⁵⁰Here the word "frutas" is used, probably in the catch-all sense of "plant resources," rather than simply referring to what would be termed "fruit" in our modern usage.

⁵¹Recall that this term, when used by the Jesuits, denotes the southern two-thirds of the Baja peninsula.

⁵²One of the few afterthought changes made to the text by Venegas, the strikethrough of "canoa" is especially interesting; it highlights the confusion, even on the part of Venegas, as to the nature of these watercraft. Venegas seems to have settled upon the term "balza" since these craft were clearly composite affairs rather than the more familiar hollowed out log "piraguas" or "canoas." See Des Lauriers (2005a) for a thorough discussion of this point.

⁵³The clear planning for an early morning departure suggests parallels to the timing of *tomol* voyages across the Santa Barbara Channel (Hudson et al. 1978). The reasons were probably similar, including avoidance of afternoon winds, taking advantage of favorable tides, and improving visibility (especially given the fogs of Isla Cedros).

⁵⁴Rather than 'oars,' it is more likely that the propulsion of the craft was provided by what we would call paddles.

⁵⁵Venegas may be referring here to a unit of measurement, rather than to actual "tablets," though the presence of several sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century European shipwrecks on and around the central Pacific coast of Baja California means that such a translation cannot be excluded.

⁵⁶There is not space here to describe these vessels, but Des Lauriers (2005a) provides a full discussion of them.

⁵⁷By "*lancha*," we assume that Venegas is here referring to craft resembling an eighteenth-century "ship's boat," with benches and oarlocks, etc....

⁵⁸Isla Cedros is actually located at 28°10' N; 115° 15' W. The latitude given by Venegas of 31° would have placed the island somewhere between modern-day San Quintin and Ensenada, Baja California. The fact that Venegas was writing about the expedition sent out by Taraval, who was not himself part of the expedition, means that the latitudinal measurement was probably more guesswork than empirically determined. Also, as is found elsewhere within the Venegas manuscript, he seems anxious to place Isla Cedros much closer to the Channel Islands of Alta California than it actually is. Venegas only knew of the Alta California islands from accounts of Vizcaíno's voyage, and errs in seeing them as part of the same archipelago.

⁵⁹If any further confirmation were needed for the fact that Venegas' "Isla de la Trinidad" and the modern Isla Cedros are the same, this very recognizable geographic description should put any remaining doubt to rest.

⁶⁰Certainly an apt way to describe the width of Isla Cedros, which "at its narrowest" is only about six kilometers wide, but probably would take nearly a day to cross, given the incredibly rugged topography—especially if "day" is taken to mean the daylight hours of midwinter.

⁶¹No true "flint" is to be found on Isla Cedros, and Venegas is clearly referring to the various cherts, jaspers, silicified tuff, chalcedony, and orthoquartzite materials that are indeed impressive in their abundance and quality.

⁶²The quarry alluded to may be either the quarry near Arroyo Walele on the west coast of Isla Cedros, or a smaller quarry located south of the modern Pueblo de Cedros, high on a ridge near the Arroyo de los Barcos Barrados.

⁶³The assertion of abundant water is definitely borne out by our personal observations, and Venegas is not exaggerating the

marked contrast in this regard between Cedros and the adjacent mainland.

⁶⁴ Again, this is an accurate assertion, and personal evaluation of the matter has revealed that despite a notable amount of dissolved minerals, the water from natural seeps, springs, and pools on Isla Cedros is very drinkable.

⁶⁵ Venegas' use of the word "*pozos*" implies that these are either excavated wells or, at a minimum, significantly modified natural conduits. Given the later association of these with the boat landings, one is led to suspect that they may be *batequis*. These are wells dug in the sand near the arroyo mouth above high tide line to take advantage of the rise in the fresh water table at that point in the drainage due to the differential density of fresh and salt water; the fresh water essentially "floats" on top of the salt water intruding on the near-beach sediments, especially at high tide.

⁶⁶ Surprisingly, there are several locations that through a combination of topography, bathymetry, general aspect, wind and current patterns, etc., are actually quite good landings, though one would not think so at first glance. Notable among these are the modern fishing camps at San Agustín, Punta Norte, and the small coves at Campo Quintero and El Coloradito. Incidentally, every one of these places has an associated major Late Period village site.

⁶⁷ Here Venegas is talking about *Salix* sp., *Prosopis* sp., and *Lysiloma candida*, respectively.

⁶⁸ Prior to the introduction of foreign species, this term was probably being applied to *Phragmites communis*.

⁶⁹ There is a marginal note here, indicated by an initial 'X' and a terminating '_', that reads: "*y tan derechos y altos como son los cyperces,*" which translates as "and as straight and tall as the cypresses."

⁷⁰ This description is undoubtedly a reference to the large logs, sometimes whole trees, of redwood and cedar that are still to be found strewn along the beaches of Isla Cedros, especially on the west coast of the island. Venegas follows Ulloa's error and fails to realize that these exceptionally large trunks and logs on the beaches of the island have nothing to do with the terrestrial environment of this particularly arid place. The native pines (*P. muricata*) are truly "trees," but do not have leaves like cypresses, nor are they particularly tall or straight, and their bark is the standard gray, platy pine bark. No other plant on the island could even possibly match this description given by Venegas; therefore, the driftwood suggestion seems most likely.

⁷¹ The tree referred to here is likely the island juniper (*Juniperus californiensis cerrosensis*), since the seeds seem to fit, and its utility for bow manufacture has been documented elsewhere in western North America (Wilke 1988).

⁷² There are two things to note here: (1) the "beaver" referred to is the sea otter, *Enhydra lutris*, and (2) as far as modern

biologists have determined, only one species of rabbit can be currently identified on Isla Cedros. Either the different "species" are juveniles and adults, or the larger species is extinct, since the only species on the island today, the Cedros Island brush rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmani cedrosensis*), is a very small species (Skydancer 1998:45). The exceedingly maritime focus of resource exploitation evidenced in most archaeological sites on the island also means that relatively few lagomorph bones have been recovered, though future work should seek to evaluate the possibility of an extinct Cedros Island lagomorph.

⁷³ One of several colorful terms that the Jesuits used when speaking or writing of the Sea of Cortez.

⁷⁴ It is possible that this is a reference to the common sighting of newborn and infant Gray Whales in the area, since the world famous nursery waters of the Lagunas Guerrero Negro and San Ignacio are in the immediate vicinity of Isla Cedros. This may also be combined with the relatively large populations of dolphins and even the occasional pod of killer whales that frequent the waters around Isla Cedros.

⁷⁵ The 'hawk' described here is certainly the osprey common on Isla Cedros (*Pandion haliaetus*) (Griggs 1997:70).

⁷⁶ We are not certain what basis Venegas had for asserting that there was a greater abundance of fish in the Sea of Cortez than in the Pacific. Modern data and personal experience would not seem to bear out this assertion, although the huge ecological changes caused by the virtual elimination of the Colorado River outflow may have led to a collapse, with modern conditions in the Sea of Cortez being a pale shadow of former richness. Perhaps further archaeological analysis of materials from Sea of Cortez sites will allow a clearer reconstruction of its paleo-fisheries.

⁷⁷ Cedros Brush Rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmanii cedrosensis*) and Cedros Island Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus cerrosensis*) (Skydancer 1998:43).

⁷⁸ *Agave shawii* (Roberts 1989:82).

⁷⁹ Even with heavy exploitation, such a restricted distribution does not make a great deal of sense. If the single surviving community (at the time of this account) had the same impact on agave populations that many of the mission populations did (Aschmann 1959), then we would expect that the areas most frequented by the community would actually have had lower density stands of agave as a result of exploitation pressure. The document suggests that the community may have somehow had a positive influence on the density of agave in their favored area of the island. Modern conditions display a much more even distribution of such flora, with some areas having larger, more densely packed stands, but ones still much more patchy than Venegas' writing would imply.

⁸⁰ While currently unsubstantiated by sufficient archaeological evidence, it is possible that the restricted distribution and surprising density of agave described by Venegas may indicate

a significant degree of management, perhaps along the lines of upland agave cultivation by the Hohokam of southern Arizona (Fish and Fish 2004). Given the relatively small land area of the island, the slow natural reproductive and growth rates of agave, and Venegas' description of that plant as the "daily bread" of the islanders, the absence of significant management might be more puzzling and inexplicable than the existence of such practices.

⁸¹The actual word used by Venegas is "*conchas*," which directly translated means shells.

⁸²Venegas is clearly describing Green Abalone (*Haliotis fulgens*).

⁸³Cochineal is a vivid, bright red or purplish-red dye, a "wash" of which would lend a very faint red to purple tinge.

⁸⁴The mention of the smaller size of these abalone, combined with abundant archaeological confirmation, argues in favor of this actually being a reference to either black abalone (*H. cracherodii*) or pink abalone (*H. corrugata*) rather than red abalone (*H. rufescens*), as might be expected from the reference to the cochineal dye.

⁸⁵A general term used for the Pacific Ocean, commonly used in the Spanish Americas from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century.

⁸⁶The term used here by Venegas is "*alhajas*," which would typically refer to jewelry or items of adornment, but since all of the following comments refer to skins and clothing, this statement clearly does not refer to items such as beads, feathers, or other things traditionally considered 'ornaments.' What is particularly on display here is Venegas' offended dignity at the 'nudity' of the islanders.

⁸⁷Again, Venegas commonly uses the word "*alhajas*" to refer to items such as clothing and tools, which we would clearly not place in the category of 'ornaments.'

⁸⁸This last sentence is very loosely translated, through a combination of a partially obscured word in the manuscript and our ignorance as to whom, exactly, Venegas is referring as "the other Philosopher." The text itself reads [beginning at "although they do not lack..."] "*aunque no falta, quien tal vez, como el otro Philosopho la ar—je por superflua.*"

⁸⁹It is possible that the "tendons" referred to by Venegas may actually have been baleen, since a skirt of tendons seems both improbable and impractical in a setting that would have been more than occasionally damp and wet.

⁹⁰It is unclear what Venegas means by "everything." One must imagine that Venegas' failure to be more specific here is due more to priestly prudishness than to ignorance of the details involved. The same strange vagueness is seen later in the document when he is describing one of the community rituals practiced by the Cedros Islanders.

⁹¹It is possible that the "islands beyond," despite some of the more fanciful speculations about them by Venegas, may be the Islas San Benito, a collection of three small islets known as West, Middle, and East Benito. West Benito measures 3.3km in length, 2.4km in width, and reaches a maximum height of 202 meters. East Benito is 2.4 km long, 1.5km wide, and is 128 meters high. The smallest, Middle Benito, is 1.4 km long, 800 meters wide, and only 25 meters in height (Skydancer 1998:92).

⁹²Here, Venegas' comments may indicate the practice of seasonal shifts in residential location, as is seen in many maritime societies, although whether this pattern predates the decimation of the island population by European diseases is uncertain.

⁹³Given personal experience, this travel time would indicate that the "beach" they arrived at in this passage is located somewhere on the west coast of the island, rather than on the southern embayment, which could be reached much more quickly from a landing somewhere in the southeast.

⁹⁴If these islands can be identified as the San Benitos (and there are no other islands within sight to the north or west), then the west coast location for these events is certain, since from the lower elevations, the Benitos are only visible from the west coast of Isla Cedros.

⁹⁵The sparse population encountered at this late date should *not* be taken to be representative of pre-contact levels, as is clear from reading the Ulloa and Preciado accounts (Montané-Martí 1995), and from archaeological evidence of multiple, large, contemporaneous villages on the island (Des Lauriers 2005b). This contrast between pre- and post-contact population levels is not surprising, given the massive impacts that introduced diseases had on the people of Isla Cedros.

⁹⁶Almost certainly up one of the arroyos with sandy bottoms, since most of the rest of the surface area of the island would not produce "footprints" worthy of the term. On the west coast of Isla Cedros, several such arroyos are found between (and including) Arroyo Madrid and Arroyo La Venada, which also contain some of the most reliable springs on the island.

⁹⁷The Sierra La Giganta in Baja California Sur is one of rugged beauty, falling sharply into the Sea of Cortez on its eastern flanks and having a familiar vertical distribution of environments stacked along its slopes.

⁹⁸These 'estuaries' are probably the Three Sisters Lagoons, and Scammon's Lagoon/Laguna Ojo de Liebre.

⁹⁹Neither the coastline immediately north of Isla Cedros nor the San Benito Islands have "large trees" of any kind, and thus Venegas, like Ulloa and Preciado before him, is mistaken about the origin of the driftwood of the region. We should not judge them too harshly, though, since they could not have known about the path of the California Current, or about the great forests of the Northwest Coast at this time, though Vizcaíno's reports from Northern California should have suggested the possibility.

¹⁰⁰ Clearly, Venegas is providing a description of Laguna Ojo de Liebre, also known as Scammon's Lagoon. It is not a description of Vizcaíno Bay proper, but only of the largest lagoon emptying out into the larger bay.

¹⁰¹ Venegas is probably referring to Vizcaíno Bay as a whole.

¹⁰² Here Venegas refers to three "islands" separate from the two mentioned in paragraph 1196, and as will be seen below, the visual description of these "islands" is more likely a result of seeing prominent headlands on the mainland coast rather than actual "islands." The verbal description given by the islanders, with reference to the lack of permanent occupation and the large numbers of sea mammals, actually more closely matches several large, rocky islets along the coast to the northeast of Isla Cedros. These include Isla San Geronimo in Bahía Rosario and Isla San Martín near Bahía San Quintín. The confusion may have emerged between the islanders and the other members of the expedition (and therefore in the reports given to the Jesuits) because the islets they were describing verbally cannot, in our personal experience, be seen from Isla Cedros, although the mainland can be seen possibly as far north as Punta Blanca.

¹⁰³ Venegas uses the word "castores" or beavers, since he did not know them to be sea otters (*Enhydra lutris*).

¹⁰⁴ Here we find a fairly clear reference to Guadalupe Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus townsendi*) (Skydancer 1998).

¹⁰⁵ In other words, the coast trends northwestward north of Bahía Vizcaíno.

¹⁰⁶ Perhaps what is meant here is that they are found at approximately the same longitude, though Venegas would not have known the term.

¹⁰⁷ An examination of the U.S. Department of the Navy Hydrographic Office Chart 1193 [West Coast of Lower California, Bahía San Quintín to Isla Cedros (Cerros), from Surveys by U.S.S. Ranger between 1887 and 1890] reveals several landmarks noted by this maritime survey, including Bahía and Punta Blanca; "patch of white sand;" "prominent white spot;" and "white rock," all between Punta Blanca and Bahía San Quintín.

¹⁰⁸ In other words, the horizon.

¹⁰⁹ While certainly an interesting comment on the quantity of driftwood available along this stretch of the Baja California coast, it is worth noting again that Venegas is clearly mistaken regarding the origin of this wood.

¹¹⁰ Perhaps this is a reference to the low ground surrounding the lagoons, which could "form channels and many islands" in the case of a storm surge in sea level.

¹¹¹ If our conjecture is correct, and these "islands" being referred to by Venegas were actually portions of the coastline north

of the lagoons of Vizcaíno Bay, it may bear on some of the data recovered by the *Proyecto Arqueológico Isla de Cedros* (2000–2006). Despite the frequent occurrence of obsidian at most Late Period sites (Des Lauriers 2005b), obsidian sourcing analyses (Shackley 2004) have identified a single source within the Isla Cedros sample—the Valle de Azufre source east of San Ignacio (Shackley et al. 1996), to the southeast of Isla Cedros. The cultural process alluded to here may be the ideological reinforcement of social network boundaries and "spheres of interaction."

¹¹² Venegas apparently changed his mind about exactly *how* socio-politically complex the other islanders could be.

¹¹³ It should be remembered that the evidence is clear regarding the massive impact that introduced European diseases had on Baja Californian populations, and that this document dates to at least 30 years *after* the beginning of the Jesuit Mission system on the peninsula and 30 years *before* the first sustained contact between Europeans and Alta Californian groups. It did not take long after the installation of the Franciscan mission system for a complete collapse of Alta California social and political systems to ensue (Cook 1937; Jackson 1981, 1986; Preston 1996).

¹¹⁴ Modern Santa Catalina Island.

¹¹⁵ Here the error becomes clear. Venegas, using Vizcaíno's account of his voyage, and combining it with second-hand reports of what could be seen from the top of Isla Cedros, is shrinking the California coastline. He assumes that the southern Channel Islands are intervisible with Isla Cedros. Such is *definitely not* the case.

¹¹⁶ It must be said here that Venegas is really stretching his own imagination to even suggest this. There is no way that the light of a campfire anywhere on the mainland (other than at Punta Eugenia itself) would be visible to people on Isla Cedros, *let alone* campfires on the southern Channel Islands of Alta California. Venegas seems to think that the smoke of fires on the islands charted by Vizcaíno could be seen from Cedros—this is too much of a stretch to even entertain. Clearly Venegas was hoping for more fertile fields for conversion than were available in the Central Desert of Baja California, and placing the southern Alta California coast just barely north of Isla Cedros would have been quite a boon as far as the missionary opportunities available to the Jesuits were concerned.

¹¹⁷ Again, this statement by Venegas is not borne out by personal experience. The crossing between Isla Cedros and Punta Eugenia is in an area with much stronger currents than those observed in any other area around the island, with the exception of Punta Norte. The force of the eddies swirling within Vizcaíno Bay is concentrated as they move through the Kellett Channel on their westward thrust to rejoin the main flow of the California Current.

¹¹⁸ Perhaps not in sufficient quantities, since *carrizo* has recently been observed on Isla Cedros.

¹¹⁹No more specific description of southern Alta California *tomols* could be imagined. However, their presence as flotsam and jetsam on the beaches of central Baja California highlights the fact that, despite all of their advantages, these craft were not infallible.

¹²⁰Venegas is probably referring to the guides here; otherwise he wrote “isleños” when he meant “exploradores.”

¹²¹The quotation marks are used by Venegas to indicate the words spoken by someone in the explorers' party. Frankly, this is probably mostly literary license, as is the response given by the islanders' leader below.

¹²²The word used by Venegas is *Principal*, which can be translated as *head*, *chief*, or *principal*. The English word “chief” is used here since it is not likely that Venegas would have been familiar with the term “headman,” which is another conceivable translation of the word into modern anthropological parlance.

¹²³This seems a bit like a pleasant story to explain their “tardiness” to the priest, as the demonstrated capacity of the Cedros Islanders for both boat-making and channel crossings (Des Lauriers 2005a) should readily suggest.

¹²⁴If we assume that the speed of this larger craft, made from two previously separate vessels, would not have exceeded that of the smaller vessel used in the crossing of the “explorers” to the island, then we can estimate that they may have been able to complete one round trip (at most) from Isla Cedros to Natividad each day. This would have been a sizable vessel with a significant ability to transport people and cargo. If there were 3 Cedros boys, plus the other “explorers,” then between 6 and 8 people were carried by the single craft. If the capacity of the joined vessel was approximately double that of the single, then between 12 and 16 people could have been carried on the joined craft. If we subtract the minimum number of paddlers for the return voyage (~4), then 8–12 passengers could have been transported each day. We can thus estimate the minimum number of people in this remnant population as being between 60 and 90 people. Such a capacity cannot be ignored or underestimated in our interpretations of indigenous Isla Cedros society—or in other maritime contexts for that matter (see Ames 2002). The ease with which they moved the entire community belies the excuses given for their failure to arrive at the mission sooner, and leads us to doubt the veracity of their protestations of fear as the pretext. Furthermore, assuming a 90% decline in population due to disease (Preston 1996) and the departure 4 years earlier of a “larger part of those islanders” (see paragraph 1219), then an estimate of 800–1200 for the pre-contact island population is not unreasonable.

¹²⁵The final departure probably occurred between December 15 and 22, 1732.

¹²⁶The Jesuits commonly had conflicts with native shamans, who proved difficult not only to convert, but to be dealt with in their role as the principal social force opposing missionization (Crosby 1994).

¹²⁷As later events suggest, this slow pace may indicate that they were already falling ill.

¹²⁸Clearly, this comment is based upon Taraval's impressions of their behavior once at Mission San Ignacio, an interior location where maritime people would have had little opportunity to perform tasks to which they were accustomed. Fishermen in the middle of the desert would probably appear to be rather idle most of the time. His complaint mirrors those of other Jesuits, who often had difficulty encouraging the hunting and gathering peoples of Baja California to perform the tasks of sedentary agriculturalists (del Barco 1988; Crosby 1994).

¹²⁹In Nahuatl, a *totomatl* is a net for hunting birds (Rémi-Simeon 1999:720). This is one example of a *Nahualismo*, a term incorporated into the Spanish of New Spain originally derived from the Aztec language.

¹³⁰Cochimí was the language of the greater part of the peninsula, beginning north of La Paz and the Cape Region and only tapering off north of San Quintín, Baja California Norte (see Mixco 1978).

¹³¹We estimate that Isla Cedros' total population ranged between 800 and 1200 people in the centuries preceding contact; this estimate is based upon explorers' accounts, comparable estimates for other insular populations along the Pacific Coast of the Californias, and archaeological evidence (Des Lauriers 2005b).

¹³²Suggesting frequent violence paralleling that of the Yuman peoples of the Colorado River (Spier 1970:11–14).

¹³³Venegas underestimates the influence of disease, and overestimates the dangers of crossing the channel.

¹³⁴It is possible that this parallels similar instances of restricted participation in cross-channel travel reported for the Channel Islands of Alta California (see Hudson et al. 1978; Arnold 1995, 2001; Gamble 2002; and others).

¹³⁵The word used by Taraval is “*gremios*,” which can also be translated as ‘guilds,’ but such a translation would make little sense in this context, although the parallel in English with some of the social divisions described among Alta California groups could be interesting. Could the ‘guilds’ be ‘clans?’ Eighteenth-century Spanish missionary usage would certainly seem to support the possibility.

¹³⁶When the “lost clan” is counted, we can infer the presence of at least four “clans” on pre-contact Isla Cedros.

¹³⁷For anthropologists, this a particularly suggestive passage, indicating that there was some level of socio-political organization integrating all of the island communities, at least at some point in the past. The timeframe for the events being related to the Jesuit chronicler is entirely unclear, and could represent either recent history or the legendary past. Needless to say, simply the fact that the concept of such socio-political integration existed

within the scope of islander worldview is significant. What is also interesting is that allusions to both achieved and ascribed status are made regarding this individual, but the nature of his "succession" is an open question.

¹³⁸From this comment it would seem that status, within some degree of hierarchy, was probably partly, if not predominantly, achieved.

¹³⁹A constellation that we cannot specifically identify, though they are probably the three stars of Orion's belt, which among Yuman peoples are often associated with bighorn sheep, deer, pronghorn, or all three (see Spier 1970:146; Ochoa-Zazueta 1978:94-95; Mixco 1983:103-111). If directly translated, *cabrillas* would be 'little goats.'

¹⁴⁰See previous discussions in the footnotes regarding these alleged "islands."

¹⁴¹Perhaps this is another one of the pleasant fictions that Taraval told himself, or this may possibly hint at the great sense of supernatural abandonment and confusion resulting from the complete collapse of social and ideological systems that accompanied the European plagues.

¹⁴²Given the Jesuits' willingness to discuss many other topics involving 'shocking' cultural behaviors, save those dealing with sexuality, we may guess as to the nature of these celebrations. Though it should not necessarily be seen as overly scandalous; even suggestive dancing may have elicited such a response from missionaries like Taraval.

¹⁴³The parallels with the Tipai (Diegueño) "Death Image" ceremony (Davis 1919) are striking.

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