MISSION GUEVAVI: EXCAVATIONS IN THE CONVENTO

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ABSTRACT

Investigations at an 18th century Jesuit mission near Nogales, Arizona were undertaken in 1964-65 and 1965-66 by the Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society. Nine rooms in the living quarters were fully or partially excavated as well as some outlying structures. Material culture was sparse as the mission had evidently been intentionally stripped upon abandonment about 1773. Architectural remains were not sufficiently diagnostic to determine functions for individual rooms. After abandonment, the mission was re-occupied for local mining activities. Little information was obtained on the location or nature of the Indian village for which the mission was presumably built.

INTRODUCTION

At the outset, it might be helpful to explain the rationale behind the excavations that were undertaken at Mission Guevavi. In the spring of 1958, some of the members of a seminar class conducted by Emil W. Haury at the University of Arizona became interested in the continuity, or lack thereof, between the prehistoric cultures (as defined by archaeological research) in the southern part of Arizona and the ethnographic populations first documented by Father Kino in 1691. The traditional view (Haury 1950:18) terminated the prehistoric occupation around 1400 or 1450 and left the years between then and the arrival of Kino as a blank in the record (although Coronado and his party certainly record encountering "natives"). This period has been popularly referred to as the "gap" and was the period that drew the interest of the members of the seminar class. I should add, parenthetically, that we were neither the first nor surely the last to be caught up in this seeming paradox. If, indeed, no population could be documented after 1450, then the Piman-speaking peoples contacted by Kino seemed products of spontaneous creation shortly before the arrival of the Jesuit padre.

The first approach to this problem was also traditional. We attempted to locate archaeological sites (mainly on the Papago Indian Reservation) which would provide indications of early Spanish material goods and contemporary Papago ceramics. At the same time, we attempted to learn as much as possible ROBINSON

Liesenbein, 1972). The Creamware fragment had been shaped into a disk or counter after the vessel had been broken. Then the disk or counter was itself later broken and deposited in the convento room.

Creamware was first developed by Josiah Wedgewood in the 1760's and enjoyed widespread popularity until the 1820's (Noël Hume 1972:350-5). Creamware and other English ceramics were smuggled illegally during the Spanish colonial period, but probably did not reach this part of New Spain in quantity until after the 1824 Anglo-Mexican Trade Treaty. This piece was probably deposited by someone, whether Indian, Mexican, or Anglo, who was using the ruins of Guevavi during the first half of the 19th century.

Glass

Bottle Glass. Six pieces of bottle glass were recovered at Guevavi, representing perhaps five bottles. Three pieces are probably Spanish colonial in origin as they show the characteristics of variation in wall width and bubbles within the glass from being hand-blown, which is typical of glass from this period. They also exhibit a deep green color like most of the Spanish Colonial glass fragments recovered from Quiburi Presidio (Di Peso 1953:230).

One piece of thin light blue colored glass appears to come from the body of a patent medicine bottle common during the late 19th century. It is also extensively patinated.

The final two pieces are from 20th century soft drink bottle bases.

Glass Beads. The bulk of all glass beads found at sites in the New World were produced at the factories on the island of Murano, which was controlled by the city-state of Venice. It is thought that Venice first began to make glass products in the ninth century A.D. (Sleen 1967:113). In 1291, by decree of the Grand Council of Venice, all glass making was removed to Murano because of the danger of fire to the city of Venice (Woodward 1965:6). Until the mid-19th century Murano was the glass bead making capital of the Western World due to an exclusive monopoly policy that prevented bead makers from leaving Murano on penalty of having their tamilies imprisoned and losing their lives (Woodward 1965:6).

In 1613 some Venetian glass makers were smuggled out of Murano by the Dutch and set up a business that turned out beads that were identical to those exported by Venice, except that those produced in Amsterdam contained "more than 20% of potash, designated as K_2O " (Sleen 1967:108). Quite probably these Dutch factories did not turn out nearly the volume of beads that the Murano factories did, so most of the beads found at New World sites like Guevavi probably came from Venice.

The most common type of bead manufactured is called a drawn bead. These are formed by a bead maker gathering a lump of molten glass on the end of a hollow metal pipe, into which he would blow to create a ball of glass with a hollow center. Then another workman would lay a metal bar on the other side of the molten glass ball. At a given signal the two workmen would pull away from each other stretching the glass ball into a long thin tube. This was then rolled on the ground until it cooled and broken into short hollow canes or cut into smaller bead segments. To remove any sharp edges on the beads they were placed in a metal drum which contained charcoal or fine ash and sand and rotated over a very hot flame. In this way the beads were kept plastic while the tumbling action rounded off the sharp edges and the ash and sand kept the beads from fusing together (Kidd and Kidd 1970:48-49; Sleen 1967:23-26; Woodward 1965:7-8). At Guevavi, 56 beads, representing seven styles, were made in this manner (Types 1-3, 7-10).

The next most common method of manufacture was that known as the wound bead. This method involved a workman wrapping molten glass around a metal wire. Then

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the glass, wrapped around the wire, was heated to give the bead a rounded shape and to expand the metal wire, so that when the wire cooled and contracted the completed glass bead simply fell off (Kidd and Kidd 1970:49; Sleen 1967:23). Six beads from Guevavi were made in this manner. They represent two styles (Types 5 and 6).

The last method of bead manufacture produces what are known as faceted beads. Very simply these are drawn or wound beads that were patted with a stick or pressed into a mold while they were still in plastic state to give them a faceted surface (Kidd and Kidd 1970:50; Sleen 1967:26). Only one example, Style 4, was found.

The following type description of the ten types of beads found at Guevavi includes color, measurement, shape, quantity found and, when available, the dates of other sites where similar types have been found.

Type 1. Transparent blue in color. Length, 6 mm; diameter, 3 mm; perforation, 1 mm. The shape is a four-sided bead. Only one was found.

Type 2. Transparent clear in color. Length, 3 mm; diameter, 4 mm; perforation, 1 mm. The shape is that of a small round 'seed' bead. Some beads found at the Colfax



Figure 7. Glass beads. *a*, Type 7 from Burial 3; *b*, Types 8-10 from miscellaneous proveniences; *c*, Types 1-3 from Burial 4; *d*, Types 4-5 from Burial 3.

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site in Louisiana, dating about 1780 to 1820, are similar (Gregory and Webb 1965:38). Two were found.

Type 3. White and opaque in color. Length, 3 mm; diameter, 3 mm; perforation, 1 mm. Irregularly shaped 'seed' beads. Twenty-four were found.

Type 4. Black and opaque in color. Length, 14 mm; width, 12 mm; height, 8 mm; perforation, 2 mm. This square-shaped bead has seven facets on its top, a flat bottom and four holes, one on each side. A similar example was found at Los Ades Presidio in Louisiana, 1700 to 1765 (Gregory and Webb 1965:30). Only one was found (Figure 7, d).

Type 5. Transparent green bead with white applied glass decoration. Length, 7 mm; diameter, 7 mm; perforation, 1.5 mm. Oval shape. Five were found (Figure 7, d).

Type 6. Transparent red bead with white applied glass decoration. Length, 7 mm; diameter, 7 mm; perforation, 1.5 mm. Oval shape. One was found. Dated into the early 1800s and found rarely in most western states (Sorensen and LeRoy 1968:47-48).

Type 7. Opaque light turquoise in color. Length, 10 mm; diameter, 6 mm; perforation, 1.5 mm. Oval or ellipsoid in shape. Twenty-six were found (Figure 7, a). Dated into the early 1800s and found rather commonly in the western states (Sorensen and LeRoy 1968:48).

Type 8. Opaque brown in color. Length, 2 mm; diameter, 3 mm; perforation, 1 mm. 'Seed' bead in shape. One was found.

Type 9. Transparent blue in color. Length, 2 mm; diameter, 2.5 mm; perforation, 1 mm. 'Seed' bead shape. Two were found.

Type 10. Opaque red in color. Length, 2 mm; diameter, 3 mm; perforation, 1 mm. Irregular 'seed' bead shape. One was found.

Types 1 to 3 (Figure 7, c) were part of a string of beads recovered from Burial 4. It is not known how they were strung.

Types 4 to 7 were found in an infant burial (No. 3) at Guevavi. There is not much doubt that these represent a rosary of the early 19th century. A person saying the rosary begins at a large bead (Type 5) next to a crucifix by saying the Our Father. This is followed by three smaller beads (Type 7) where a Hail Mary is said for each one. The last Hail Mary bead connects to a large bead (Type 4) where one repeats the Our Father. This large bead is sometimes called the Creed Bead. The bead begins a series of prayers corresponding to ten Hail Mary beads (Type 7) and an Our Father bead (Type 5) which is repeated in this sequence five times and brings the worshiper back to the Creed Bead (Type 4), where an Apostle's Creed is said which ends the rosary (Thomas Ledford, personal communication).

In all there should be one Creed Bead, five Our Father beads and 53 Hail Mary beads. The Creed Bead is the one called Type 4 and the five called Type 5 are Our Father beads. The Hail Mary beads are those called Type 7 but only 26 of the regulation 53 beads were recovered. The Type 6 bead may have been an extra Our Father or an ornamental spacer bead.

All of Types 8 to 10 (Figure 7, b) were scattered finds around and in the convento. Although Type 8 was not noted in any site or bead reports, Woodward stated (personal communication) that beads like Types 9 and 10 were found at Quiburi Presidio and Church in the San Pedro River Valley which is to the north and east of Guevavi by about 50 miles. Di Peso (1953:207) described them as being of the "small seed variety, red and blue, typical of the beads distributed by the Spanish explorers and missionaries. Beads of the weak been found around the missions of California (founded 1769)..."

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Religious Paraphernalia

Only four artifacts from Guevavi, besides the rosary, could be classified as relating to the religious mission of the church, and the first two can be discussed only tentatively.

The first is a small mid-section fragment of a *brass candlestick* (Figure 8, b). A close examination of the piece indicates that it was poorly cast, as part of the molten metal did not take to the mold during casting, leaving an area of small gas holes. This piece does not appear to have been turned on a lathe as were those recovered from Quiburi Presidio, because this piece is not truly rounded. While this fragment could have been part of the altar setting for the church, it could also have served the priest in his quarters (Di Peso 1953:207).

The second item is even more problematical than the first item. Arthur Woodward (personal communication), who examined this piece, felt that it could have served as a top to some religious article such as a cruet dish. The piece is made of a heavy metal (possibly bronze), two inches in diameter, with a folded edge along its rim (Figure 8, c). Two bands of lines were scribed into the top of the disk by some sort of cutting instrument that clamped the disk's center leaving a slight depression as the disk was rotated to scribe the lines. On the back side of the disk two small bands of lines were cut into the metal in the same manner described above. Then six holes (two large, four small), were punched into the disk. The two large ones, directly opposite each other, probably were for a handle, while the four smaller holes appear to have held some sort of ornamentation riveted to the top of the disk.

On the front is a touchmark of a maker I have not been able to identify. The mark is a small depressed square with a raised bull or lion, with the letters S X L or S X R above.

In conclusion, one could probably say that this piece was part of something fairly ornate. Otherwise there would not have been a manufacturer's touchmark.

The brass *crucifix* (Figure 8, a) found within the convento at Guevavi is exactly like the two examples found at Quiburi church "in the sub-floor of the church in association with burials" (Di Peso 1953:210) and examples from Mission San Buenaventura in California (Greenwood 1975:88-90).

The crucifix bore on one side the body of Christ crucified with INRI over His head. On the other side was represented the Holy Mother standing with hands clasped in an attitude of prayer; above her was the inscription 'VIR. IMM.'; to her left was the 'VITAM'; to her right, the word 'PREST'; while at her feet was the abbreviation 'PVRAM'' (Di Peso 1953:210).

Since Quiburi presidio and Mission San Buenaventura were both after A.D. 1767, it is probable that the Guevavi crucifix was lost during the brief time that the Franciscans occupied Guevavi.

The most unexpected find from Guevavi was undoubtedly the top part of a large *cast bell* recovered from the floor of Room 6. This bell fragment (Figure 9) consists of the complete crown, a small part of the head and two casting sprues coming out of the top of the crown. These sprues are channels through which the molten metal was poured into the mold and which were later to be cut off when the bell had cooled and the excess metal trimmed off. The presence of the sprues indicates that the mold had collapsed as the metal was being poured.

Perhaps the Fathers brought this piece to Guevavi to be used as scrap metal, or the bell represents an attempt to cast bells at the site. This second possibility is not quite so far fetched as it may seem. Ronald Ives (1963:19-20) tells of a brass foundry in the Altar Valley to the southwest of Guevavi in Sonora that operated from 1790 to 1850.