

THE HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY OF MISSION
SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

VOLUME II (of two volumes)

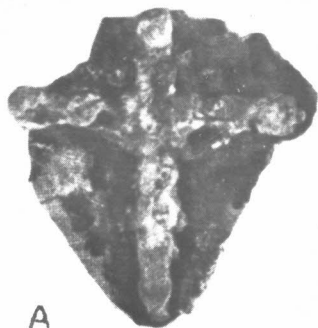
Description of the Artifacts
and
Ethno-History of the Coahuiltecan Indians

by

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STATE BUILDING COMMISSION
ARCHEOLOGICAL PROGRAM

AUSTIN



A



B



B'



A'

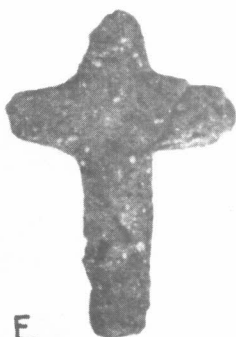
PLATE 21:

COLONIAL ORNAMENTS

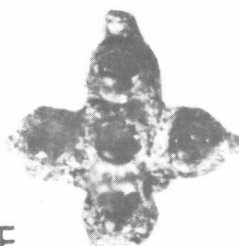


C

D



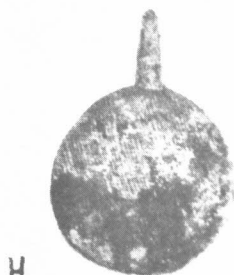
E



F



C



H



H'



I

is generally shown with a crozier. The medallion was found with Burial 11-B.

The upper half of a lead cross, shown in Plate 20 F, was excavated in Level 2 of Room 21. It is probably late Colonial (first quarter of the nineteenth century).

One of the most spectacular "finds" from San Juan was the rosary shown in Plate 21 I. It was associated with Burial 18-B. The square beads are hand-cut lignite (?) with faceted tops. The holes for double stringing were drilled from both sides. Found along with the square beads were the black glass trade beads restrung with the rosary. Length of the restrung rosary is 50 cm.

Another rosary was found with Burial 12-B. Parts of it are shown in Plate 21 G. The copper chain looks as though it were braided. It is made of interlocking S-shaped links and is strung with wooden beads. The copper coil at the top was probably part of a filigreed end from which a cross was suspended. When the fragments of the rosary are lined up, they account for a length of approximately 86 cm.

A brass milagro, shown in Plate 20 E, was recovered from Room 21, Level 3. Milagros are votive offerings used throughout Latin America as prayers for the recovery of the ailing. Sometimes the whole body is represented, as in this one, and sometimes only the affected part (eye, leg, hand, etc.).

A brass eagle was found in Room 20, Level 3, which is probably from an officer's uniform of the Republic of Mexico between 1824 and 1836 (Plate 20 M). The insignia was apparently attached to some sort of wood or leather backing by which it was affixed to an epaulette, collar or hat. It was found next to the rooms bought by Colonel Castañeda (see Historic Documentation of Rooms 18 and 19, Volume I).

Several buttons of Colonial vintage were also found. Most are too damaged to photograph. One compound button has a plain convex copper face and a saucer-shaped back of copper with a wedge-shaped shank. This type of button possibly dates about 1750. Another compound button has a convex lead back with a hole in the center and a stamped copper face. The cavity must have been stuffed with fabric with a fabric "shank" protruding

Plate 27 O is an unidentified porcelain sherd from a plate, painted with cobalt under a matte glaze, which seems to be European in origin.

GLASS TRADE BEADS

All the glass beads recovered from San Juan were sent to Mr. R. K. Harris at Southern Methodist University for identification. Those that are duplicated on Harris' Bead Chart were given the corresponding numerical designations. Mr. Harris' identifications and descriptions are presented below.

Type 4. Large opaque white, barrel-shaped bead of compound construction. The inner layer of glass has a porcelain-like texture, while the outer layer is clear glass with a slightly frosted appearance probably due to age. The bead is tumbled (a process of placing broken segments of hollow cane in a heated drum with sand and ashes in order to round the jagged ends).

This type occurs frequently in Norteño Focus sites between 1740 and 1767. It is found infrequently after 1767 and disappears about 1836.

Two examples from Room 6, Levels 1 and 2.

Type 45. Small, opaque white donut-shaped bead of simple construction and with a porcelain-like texture. Tumbled.

Type occurs in large numbers from 1700 to 1836 and then disappears.

Three examples from Burial 2.

Type 46. Small, opaque Peacock Blue, donut-shaped bead of simple construction. The glass has a sugarcane-like texture. Tumbled.

Same occurrence as Type 45.

One example from Burial 18-C.

Type 48. Small, translucent, dark Bluebird-Blue, donut-shaped bead of simple construction. Tumbled.

Occurs in small numbers in most north Texas sites from 1700 to 1767. Occurs in larger numbers between 1767 and about 1836 and then disappears.

Thirteen specimens from Room 8, Levels 2 and 4; Room 10, Levels 1, 3 and 4; Burials 7 and 11.

Type 49. Small, clear, donut-shaped bead of simple construction. Tumbled.

Same temporal distribution as Type 48.

One specimen from Room 10, Level 4.

Type 50. Small, opaque black, donut-shaped bead of simple construction. The glass is porcelain-like in texture. Tumbled.

Same temporal distribution as Types 48 and 49.

Three specimens from Burial 2 and surface, plus the rosary beads from Burial 18-B.

Type 79. Small, opaque sky-blue, donut-shaped bead of simple construction. Tumbled.

Type occurs in large numbers between about 1740 and 1820. Occurs in small numbers from 1820 to 1836 and then disappears.

One specimen from the surface.

Type 87. Small, opaque brick red over red, donut-shaped bead of compound construction. Tumbled.

This bead has so far been found at only two other sites: the Gilbert Site (Jelks, 1967) and the Presidio Orcoquizac (Tunnell and Ambler, 1966), both of which date from about 1740 to about 1770.

One example from Area A.

Type 101. Medium, opaque white, olive-shaped bead of mandrel-wound simple construction.

This type occurs in small numbers around 1767 to 1820, and then in larger numbers from 1820 to 1836, when it disappears from the trade.

Four examples from Burial 11.

Type 115. Medium, translucent Bluebird-Blue, donut-shaped bead of complex construction. On the surface are four rather evenly spaced white stripes which run parallel with the axis of the bead core. Tumbled.

Occurs in small numbers between 1767 to 1820.

One example from Burial 2.

Type 129. Large, translucent, dark Bluebird-Blue, barrel-shaped beads of compound construction. The outer layer of glass has approximately 16 to 20 facets. The inner layer of glass is blue-white in color. The hollow cane used in this type of bead was hexagonal in cross-section. After a piece was cut off the cane, approximately six facets were cut on each end of the bead leaving six facets around the center from the original shape of the cane.

This type occurs in Norteño Focus sites in very small numbers from 1767 to 1820. Found in larger numbers from 1820 to about 1870.

Two specimens from Room 7, Level 4, and Room 20, Level 3.

Type "129A." Light blue faceted bead, identical to 129, except for color. Is not represented on Harris' chart

One specimen from Room 4, Level 3.

Type 139. Large, clear, barrel-shaped bead of simple faceted construction. There are approximately 16 to 20 facets on the surface. Made in same way as Type 129.

Temporal distribution is same as for Type 129.

One specimen from Room 9, Level 3.

Type "139A." Large, translucent, yellow faceted bead. Same as 139, except for color. Is not represented on Harris' chart.

One specimen from Room 7, Level 3.

Type 164. Medium, translucent Bluebird-Blue, barrel-shaped bead of simple construction. Tumbled.

Occurs in small numbers from about 1740 to 1820.

One specimen from Burial 2.

Type 176. Extra small, translucent, Harvard Crimson, donut-shaped bead of simple construction. Tumbled.

Dates after 1850.

One specimen from surface.

Beads not represented on Harris' Chart:

Large, donut-shaped beads: two clear, one amber, one blue. These non-patinated beads look almost as bright as if they were made yesterday. These are types that appear mostly on the Upper Missouri River and in California after the 1850's. Specimens from Room 6, Level 2; and Room 7, Levels 2 and 3.

Large, red over translucent green with three sets of stripes. This bead is some form of Cornaline d'Aleppo, made in same way as No. 68 on Harris' Chart, but is barrel-shaped instead of tube or

bugle-shaped. This bead should date from about 1740 to 1767. One specimen from Room 10, Level 3.

Black jet rosary beads like those from Burial 18-B (see Plate 21 I). Strung with Type 50 beads in Burial 18-B. The occurrence of the black jet beads with Type 50 beads was also recognized at Presidio Los Adaes.

Mission Indian Artifacts

POTTERY

The recovery of a large sample of Indian pottery from San Juan has allowed us to reconstruct several vessels to a point where some shapes and sizes can be determined. Numerous rim and shoulder sherds provide additional morphological details, and several bases, handles and lugs add more data to this category of Coahuiltecan-made pottery.

Two traits of the local pottery readily characterize it: crushed bone is added to the clay and manufacture is by hand-building. The pottery with which the mission ware is most readily confused is the unglazed earthenware of western Mexico which was imported to the missions in huge quantities. The Mexican earthenware is made from a sandy clay which does not require the addition of temper and, furthermore, it is wheel-thrown.

The bone tempering added to the local clay is quite visible. So much was sometimes added that vessel surfaces are actually mottled with it. The local ware was all handmade by the coiling method, but vessels were typically smoothed to the point that coil lines were obliterated. Beyond these obvious characteristics, the Coahuiltecan pottery produced at San Antonio missions displays wide variation. Hardness, thickness of vessels, color, polishing or non-polishing, shape and sizes are all natural variables of the clay medium, and depend upon the length and/or heat of the firing, reduction and oxidation firing, and the skill of the potter.

Most of the San Juan sherds have dark to light gray paste (indicating a smoky firing atmosphere) but some with red or buff paste are in the collection. Clay banks are plentiful around San Antonio--so plentiful, in fact, that potteries are known to have been