

Death in San Gabriel

The impact of the mission system on indigenous peoples and gente de razón in Alta California

Background

- Franciscan missionaries founded 21 missions in Alta California
 - Mission: site of religious conversion and agricultural labor
 - Tool for Spanish expansion
- San Gabriel Mission founded in 1771
 - Tongva-inhabited prior to mission construction



Gente de Razón



"culturally Hispanic...non-Indian"; Catholic
(Miranda)

Primary research questions

- Death
 - At what age level did most *gente de razón* die?
 - In what years did the *gente de razón* die? Are there patterns in the number of deaths between years?
 - What were the main causes of death?
 - How often is disease referenced in the records?
- Origin
 - Where did they come from?
- Military status
 - What roles did military officers play in the San Gabriel Mission?

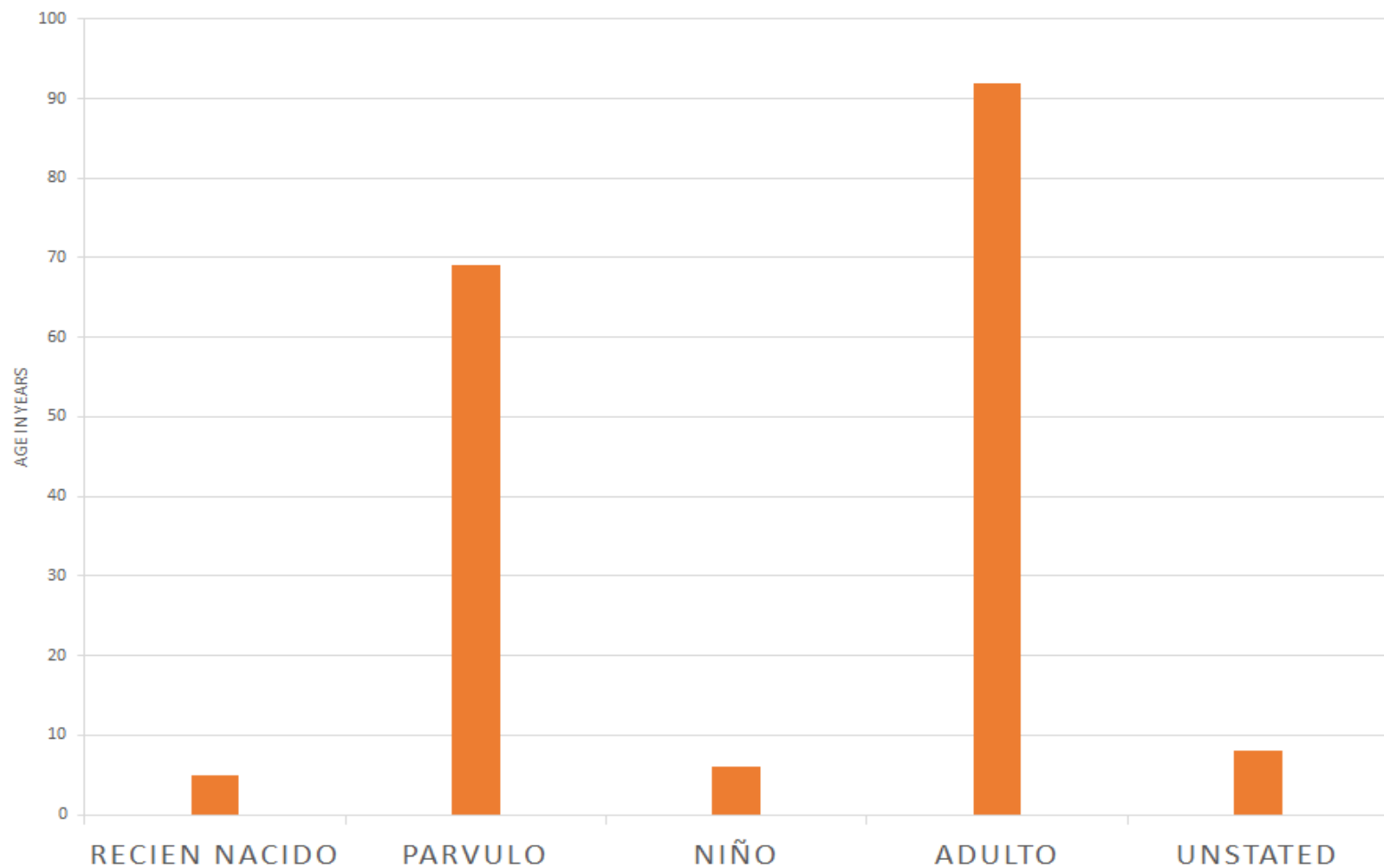
Methodology

- Collected data from Huntington Library's *Early California Population Project* death records archive
- Entered data into an online database
- Used SQL analytics to organize data based on different categories (age, year of death, ethnicity, etc.)
 - Benefits:
 - quick sorting of quantitative data
 - ability to isolate a specific year
 - Limitations:
 - does not account for "notes"
 - does not account for data type inconsistency (eg: letter vs. number in age)

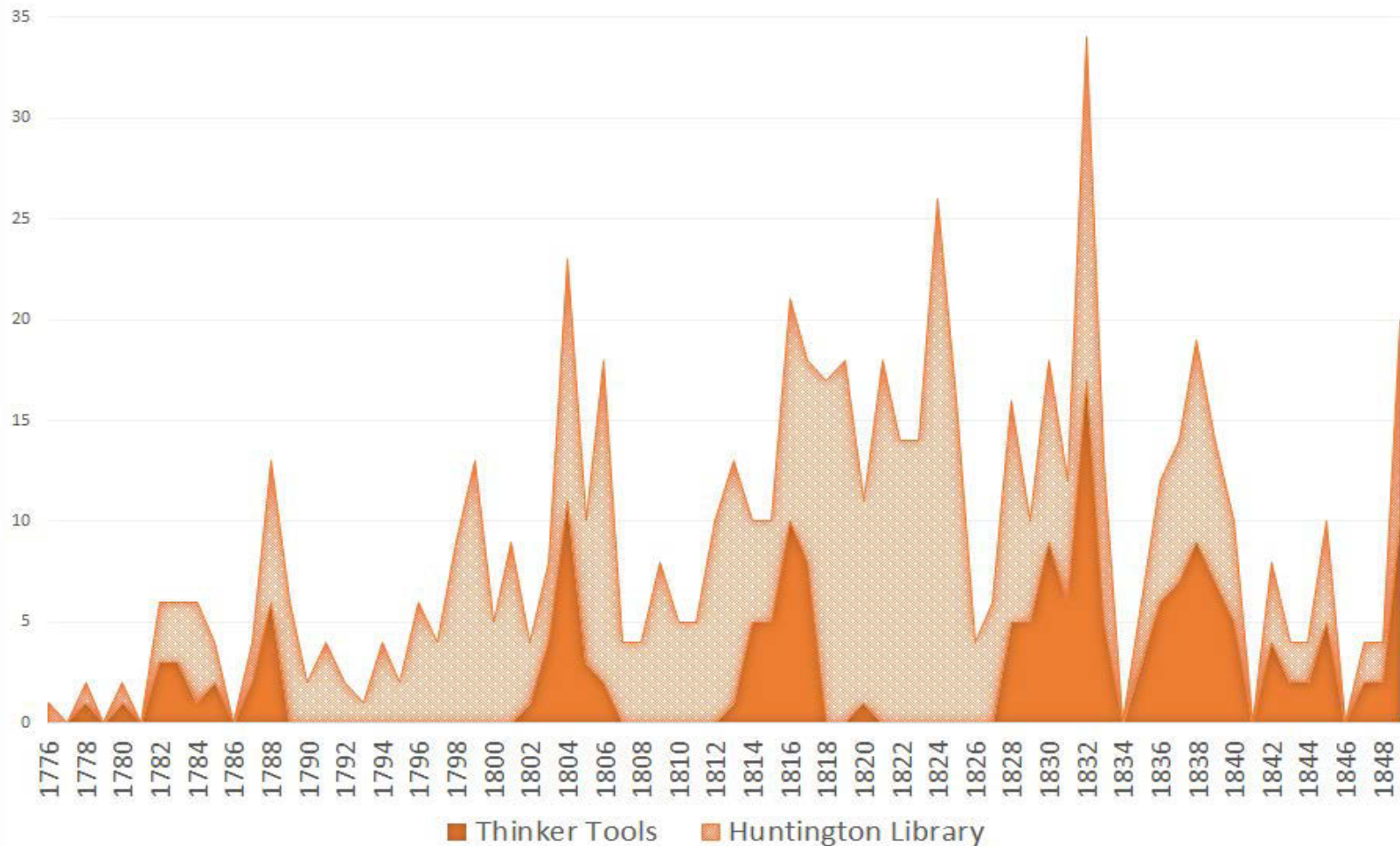
Data set information

- Quantity: 182
- Ethnicity: gente de razón
- Time frame: 1778 to 1849
- Limitations:
 - Lack of continuity
 - Frequency of “unstated”
 - Reliance on Franciscan Padres’ accuracy
- Revisions:
 - Excel sorting
 - Manual search counting
 - Revisiting Huntington database

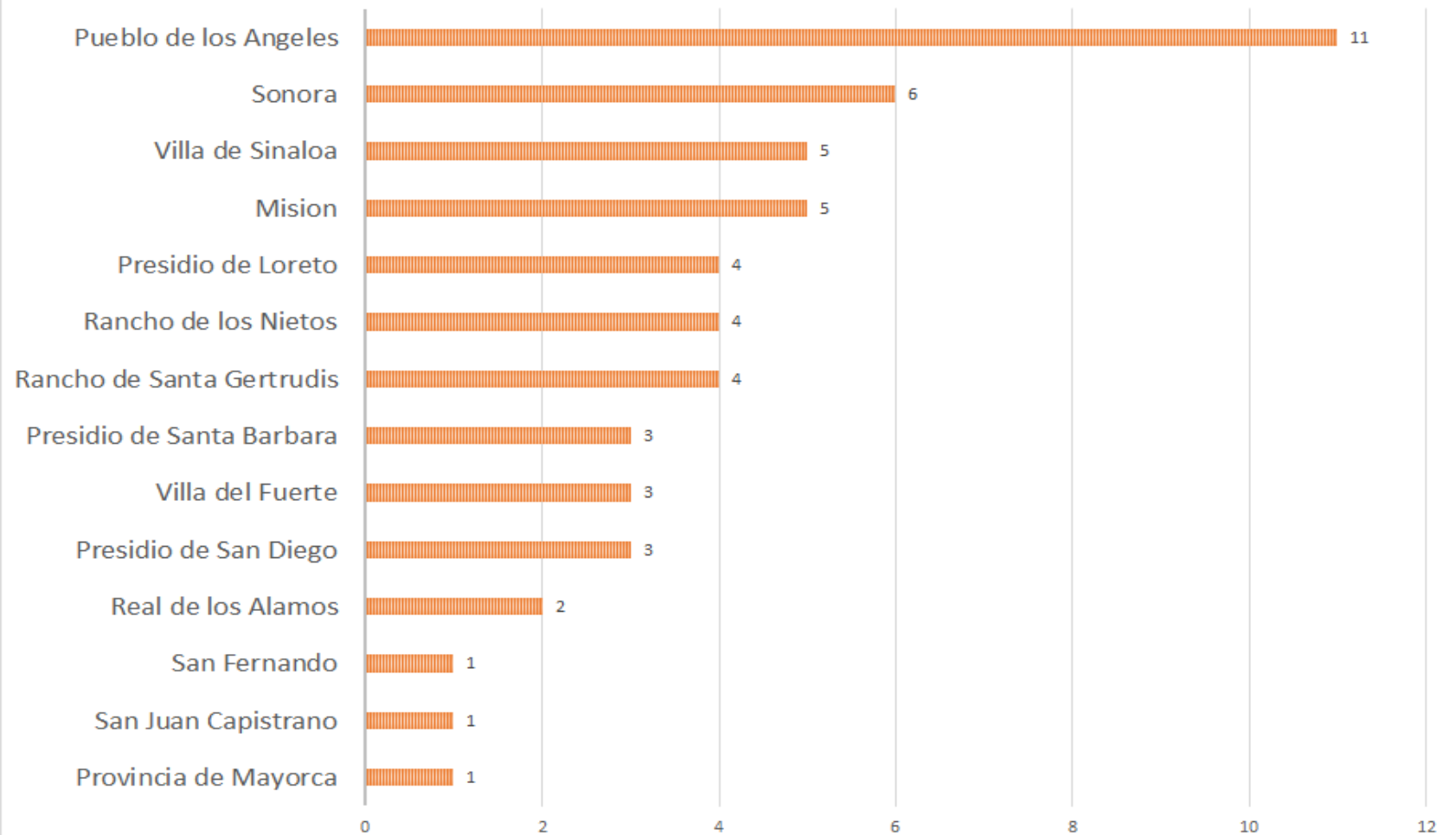
DEATHS BY AGE



DEATHS BY YEAR



DEATHS BY ORIGIN



Razón origins

- Pueblo de Los Angeles (11)
 - Pueblo: “civilian community” (Hackel)
 - Administrative nucleus of the San Gabriel mission
- Presidio de Loreto (4), San Diego (3), Santa Barbara (3)
 - Presidio: “military base” (Hackel)
- Sonora (6), Villa de Sinaloa (5)
 - Present-day Mexican states



Creation of Pueblo de Los Angeles

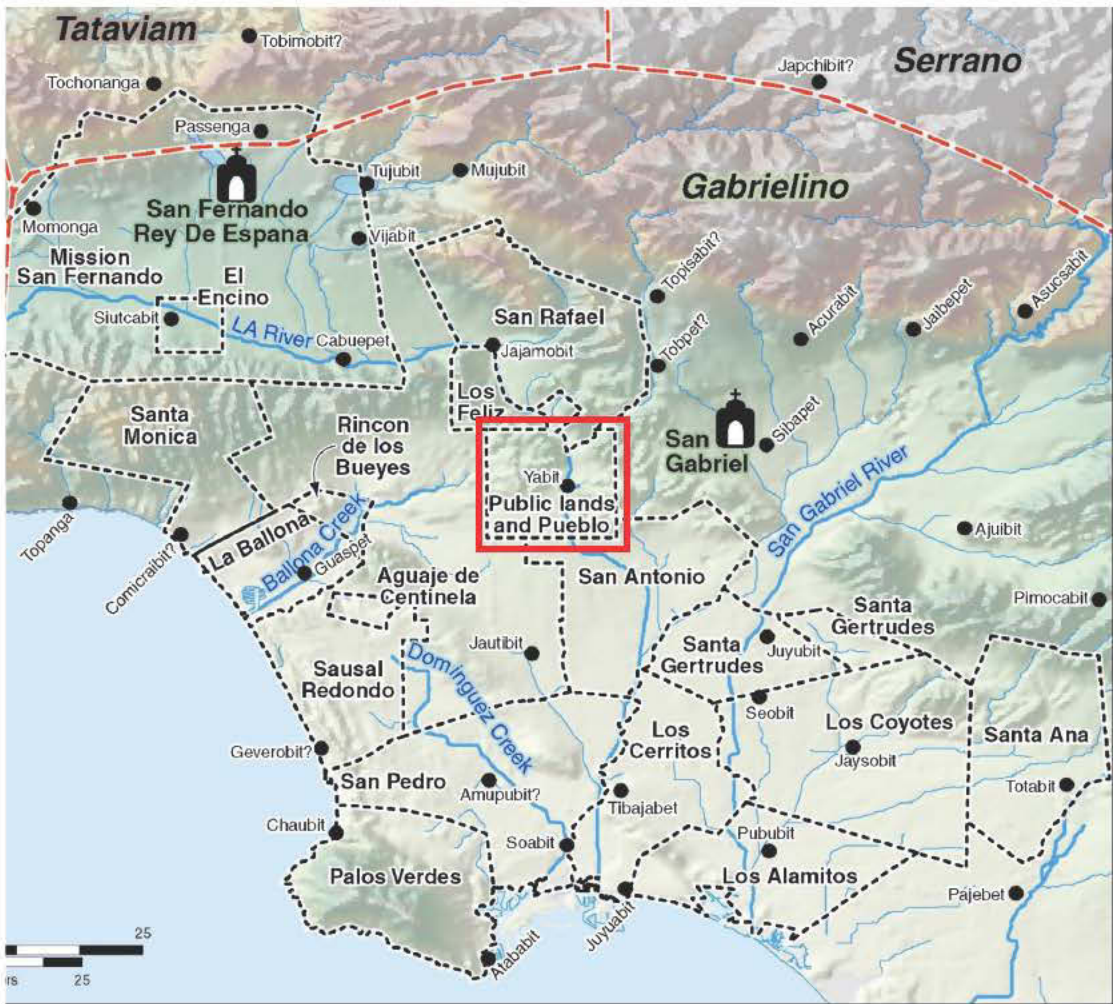
- Governor Neve orders 11 families from Sinaloa and Sonora to construct a new *pueblo* in Alta California
 - Named Pueblo de Los Angeles
 - Accompanied by 4 soldiers
 - Ego #3605: Antonio Cota, died in 1815.
 - The first 4 death records (1776-180) were children of soldiers
 - Settlers (*pobladores*) were of different *castas*
- Initially constructed to provide food and economic support for nearby *presidios*: San Diego, Santa Barbara and Loreto (Hackel)
- In line with Hackel's scholarship on the Alta California political economy

Secondary questions

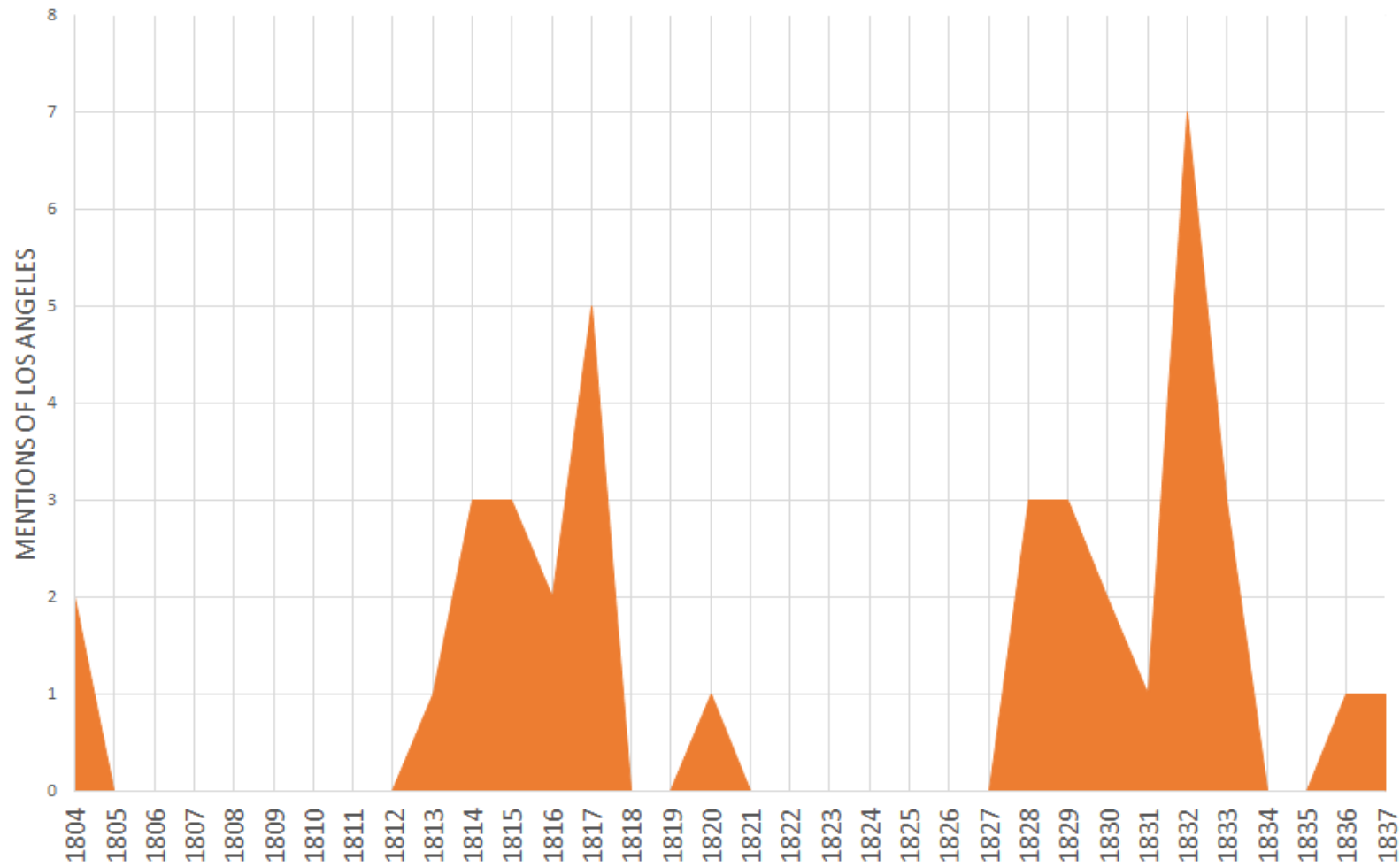
How did the construction of Los Angeles influence the economy, military, and race in Alta California?

How did these economic, military, and racial changes impact the razón/indio hierarchy?

Map of Pueblo de Los Angeles and surrounding areas



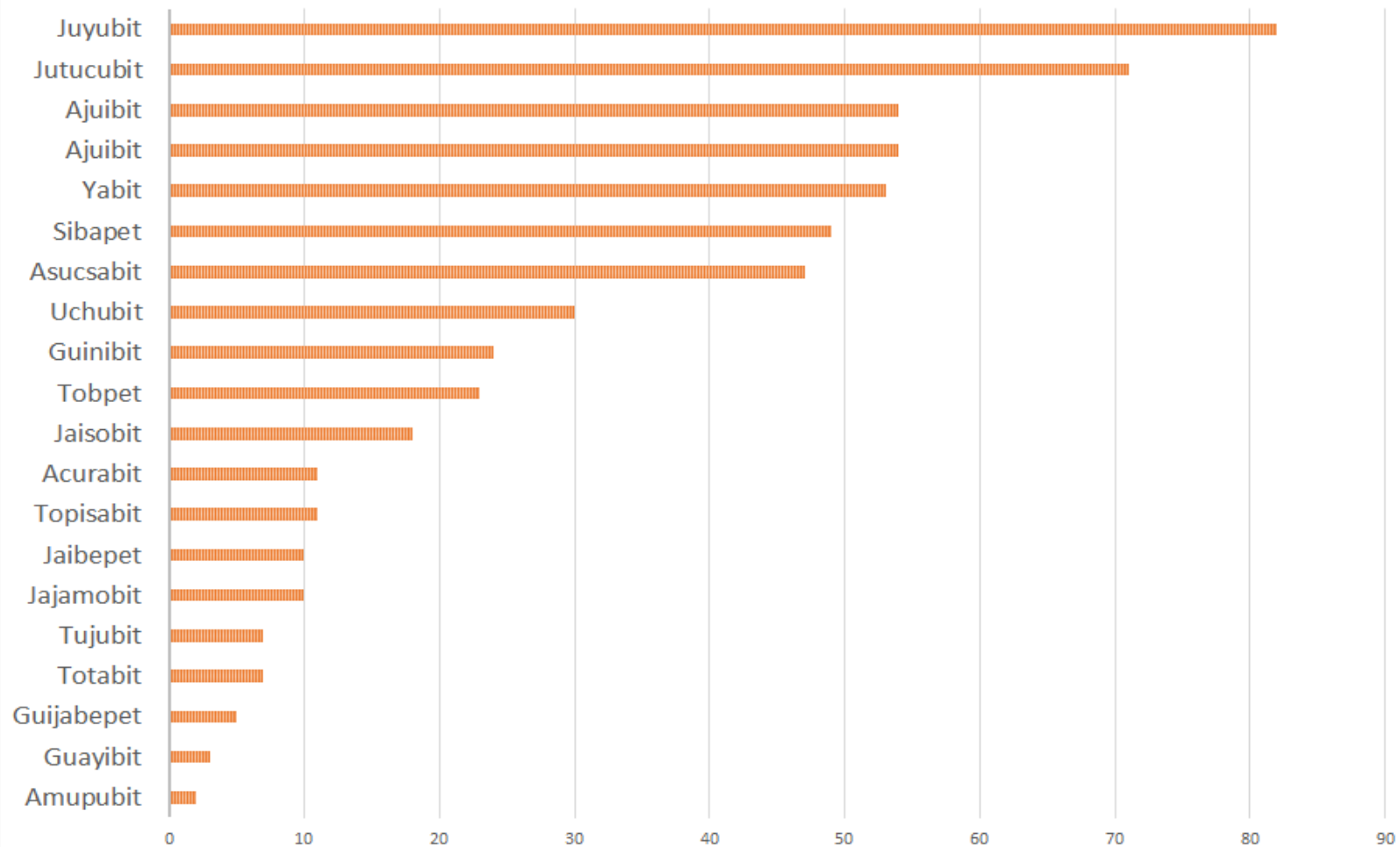
MENTIONS OF LOS ANGELES BY YEAR



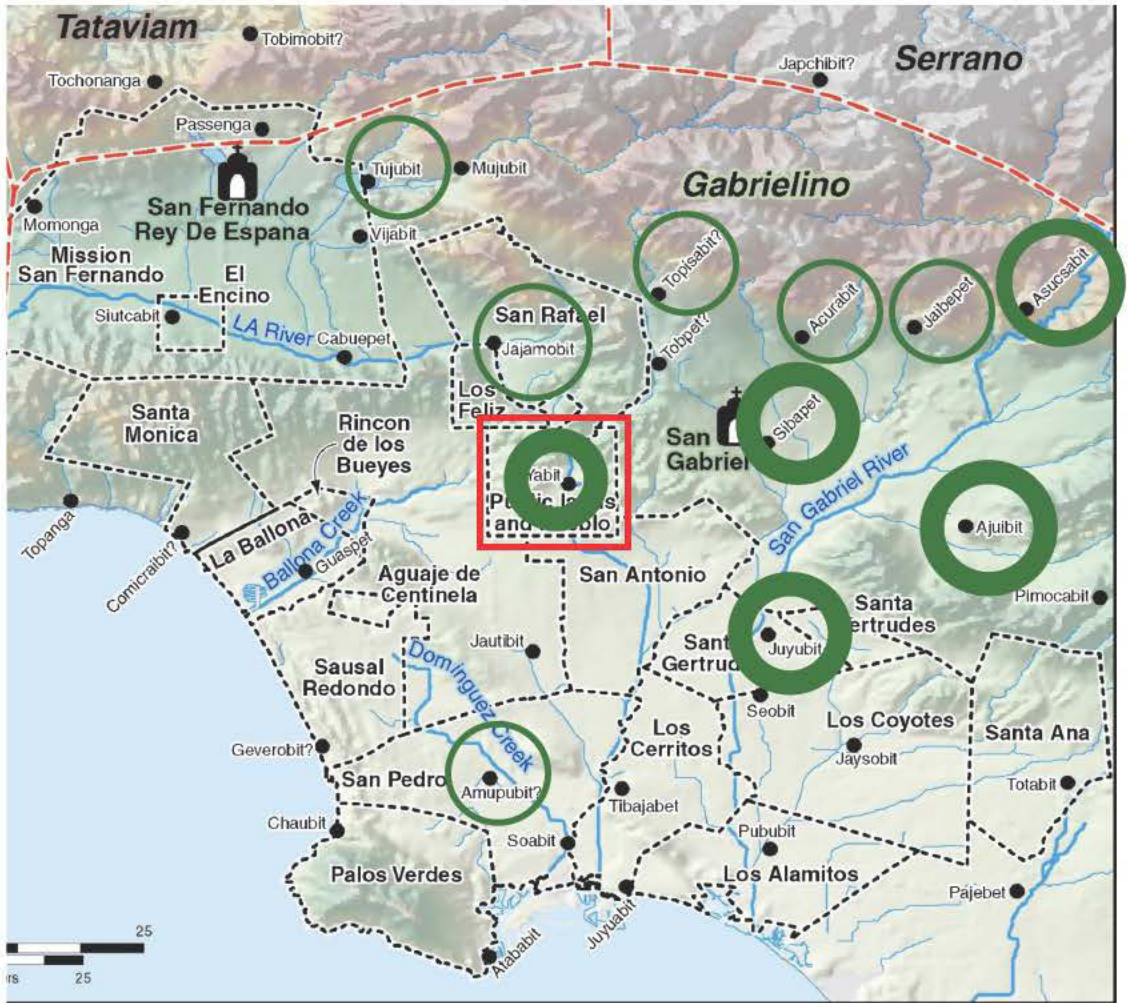
Economic structure Pueblo de Los Angeles

- Lack of growth due to mercantilism
- Primarily agricultural (Hackel)
 - Produced corn, wheat, and flour for presidios
- Economic growth took place when *pobladores* were able to sell their surpluses to supply ships
 - Attracted more settlers
 - Why Los Angeles was the most mentioned location
 - Built more infrastructure
- As Los Angeles' economy expanded, demand for labor increased
 - *Pobladores* turned to nearby Indian rancherias for labor

INDÍGENA ORIGINS



Map of indígena *rancherías* in relation to Los Angeles



Indian labor for pueblos

- Pueblos as agricultural enterprise caused an increase of Indian labor
 - Database: Indígenas are all from *rancherías* close to Los Angeles
- Indians would work for *Pobladores* on their time off from missions
 - Hired by settlers
 - Better working conditions under the *pobladores*
- Different jobs that Indians could take
 - Skills developed would later allow Indians to be liberated
- During the Mexican Period, ranchos would replace the mission as the dominant economic institution
 - Mission Indians were left without land
 - Land was privatized

The construction of "razón"

- Race does not solely determine "razón"
 - Complicated by racial intermarriage (Seed) and mestizaje
 - People of different castas considered "razón"
 - Some *pobladores* were mestizo and mulatto
 - #3411: indigenous mother
 - #5864: "de la mision" but "Razon"
- Razón status determined by:
 - Database: Proximity to economic resources (Los Angeles)
 - Miranda: Assimilation into Hispanic culture (religion, language)
- Razón status as a means of social mobility
 - Absence of *peninsulares* in Alta California; opportunity for other castas to fill this "upper tier"

Conclusion

- Lack of information on cause of death
- Gente de razón origins are evidence of an elaborate economic, military, and religious network intended to exploit California's indigenous populations
 - Pueblos, missions, and presidios work in conjunction
 - Los Angeles became the network's center
- Urban vs rural divide
 - Urban: razón, wealthy, Hispanicized
 - Rural: indigenous, low-income
 - "Urban imperialism": Cities benefit off rural lands

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