

Archaeological and cultural differentiation of the Ipai and Tipai

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Abstract

One of the research issues that most concerned Malcolm Rogers in the 1940s was the development and chronology of Yuman (Kumeyaay/Diegueño) culture in San Diego County, California. Rogers knew that the Late Prehistoric people had migrated from the eastern deserts and that there appeared to be differences in the way they had dispersed across the landscape. Rogers also knew that there were clear differences between the Yuman and Shoshonean peoples of San Diego. This paper will examine the intercultural differences between the two subgroups of Yuman-speaking people; the Ipai and the Tipai. It is suggested that the differences between the two groups is more than dialectical and may reflect significant cultural variants. Further, the descriptors, Ipai and Tipai may be more valid than Northern and Southern Diegueño or Kumeyaay.

Naming of cultures

The issue of what to call the Late Prehistoric people of southern and central San Diego County has loomed large for many decades. Malcolm Rogers, while acknowledging the term Diegueño, a historical and anthropological term in vogue in the 1900-1940 era, seemed to prefer the term Yuman. Rogers (1945) was clear to assure the reader that use of the term Yuman was not meant to imply linguistic parallels deep into prehistoric time, but only roots in the Yuman territory of the eastern deserts. The term Diegueño, as adopted by anthropologists and historians, was originally derived from Spanish usage beginning in the 1770s, although Brown (2001:60) asserts that the correct spelling is Dieguinos, which American ethnologists corrupted into Diegueños. The term was applied to those Indians under the jurisdiction of Mission San Diego and also connoted a generalized tribe differentiated from the Takic-speaking people to the north (Luiseños) and the Cocopa and Paipai to the south (Figure 1).

Similar glosses for Diegueño or Dieguino, were used in the American period, including “Diegeenos” in 1849 by A. Whipple (1961:31); Diegeno in 1850 by Bartlett (1854:7), and Dieguenos by Benjamin Hayes in 1870 (Hayes 1934:140) and by the anthropologist Harrington (1908:324) when he noted that the central Yuman group included “Diegueño (Kamyá),” with the term Kamyá referring to the eastern Diegueños.

In the 1970s, some groups of what were previously called southern Diegueños adopted the term Kumeyaay for themselves (Hedges 1975). This group, based in the Campo and La Posta area of eastern San Diego County, was aided by the noted anthropologist Florence Shippek in extending the term Kumeyaay well beyond the immediate area. By the 1980s and well into the late 1990s, for many historians and anthropologists (including this author during lapses of judgment), Kumeyaay erroneously came to encompass both southern and northern Diegueños.

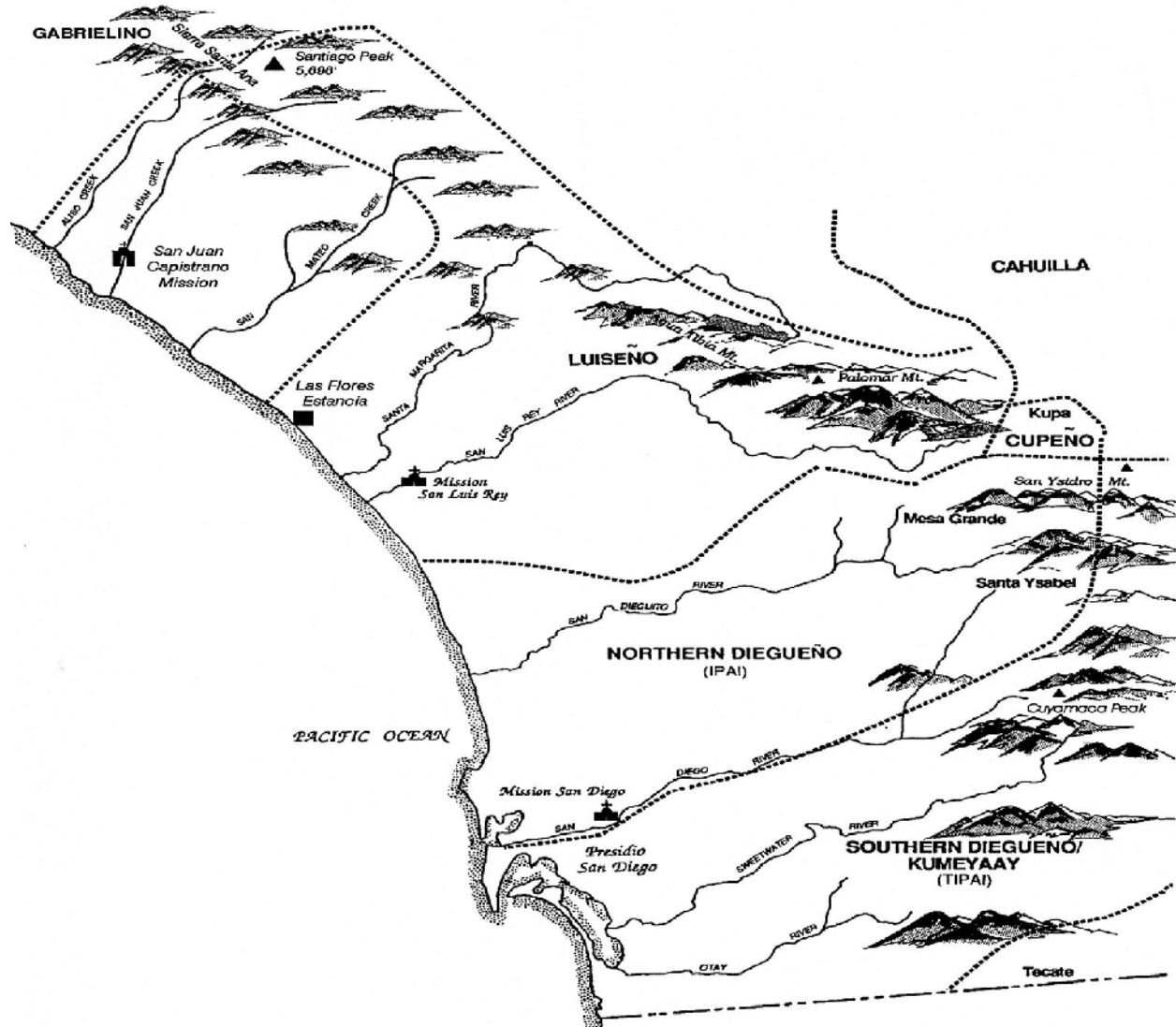


Figure 1. Schematic drawing of western San Diego and Orange counties showing historic ethnographic tribal boundaries.

Luomala noted in 1975 that, based on Gifford's studies and on her research in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, the term *tipai* was used to denote "people" in southern San Diego County and northern Baja California. By contrast, she provides the word *ipai* for the people of northern San Diego County (Luomala 1978:605-608). In part following Luomala, there has been a break from the ill-founded practice of generalizing Kumeyaay to all Yuman-speaking people and cultures, with *Ipai* becoming more common for northern Diegueño and *Tipai* for the southern Diegueños. Kumeyaay, however, is still in wide use in the Campo region where it may, indeed have validity.

Spier (1923:198), based on his 1920 fieldwork, may have been the first to apply the term *Tipai* to the southern Diegueño and suggested that the northern Diegueño were *Kumiai* (Kumeyaay). That there are significant linguistic variations between the northern and southern people is well documented and acknowledged by contemporary speakers. For example, an important bird dance recorded by Constance DuBois (1907:135) was called *ee-sha* at Manzanita (southern) and *ah-sha* at Mesa Grande (northern). In her introduction to the seminal book on *Ipai*

language, Margaret Langdon noted that there are many variations of the 'Iipay language (her orthography), and in *Let's talk 'Iipay: an introduction to the Mesa Grande language*, Langdon stressed that the spellings and pronunciations were specific to Ted Couro and Mesa Grande people (Couro and Langdon 1975).

For the remainder of this paper, the term Ipai will be used to denote the Yuman-speaking people north of the San Diego River and Tipai will be used to note the Yuman-speaking people south of the river and perhaps into Baja California. For the sake of consistency with the anthropological record, the term Diegueño will be used when discussing the time periods when that term was in vogue.

Archaeological evidence

One avenue of research pursued by Andrew Pigniolo (2004) concluded that the presence of Desert Side-Notched (DSN) points could be used to differentiate the territories of the Ipai and the Tipai. Based on an analysis of 65 Late Period archaeological sites, Pigniolo concluded that the Ipai made substantially less use of DSN points than did the Tipai. Assuming that the points were manufactured and not traded, this would indicate that the Tipai preferred to manufacture side-notched points to a far greater extent (39%) than did the Ipai to the north (9%). In fact, the presence of DSN points even further north in the Takic-speaking Luiseño is even less common (5%). It is probable that this variance reflects the introduction of DSN points from the southeastern desert regions and that the Tipai either had longer to adopt their use or actually culturally preferred these points over other styles.

A preliminary and non-rigorous study of the presence of ceramics and ceramic types in the territory assumed to have been occupied by Yuman-speaking Ipai/Tipai also suggests that the Tipai having deeper roots in the eastern deserts than their Ipai relatives to the north. While not conclusive, the relative frequency of Lower Colorado Buff Ware at archaeological sites south of the San Diego River appears greater than for sites north of the river, with a considerable decrease the farther north the settlements are located. This statement is based on a cursory analysis of less than 10 archaeological sites and will require far more research to state anything conclusive.

Clans and sibs (*cimuLs*)

The Ipai and Tipai of San Diego County organized themselves using sib groupings or *cimuLs* (Luomala 1978). According to Gifford (1918:156), these clans were probably localized (especially before mission-period contact), of paternal descent, and practiced exogamy. As Gifford (1918:167) notes, the clan name, at least in the modern period, is added to, or takes the place of what would be a surname. If there were significant differences between the northern Diegueño Ipai clan names and the southern Diegueño Tipai clan names, this would be a further indication of cultural and social differentiation between the two groups (Figure 2).

The Tipai claimed 13 clans with locales that reflect either an eastern desert basis or a southeastern mountain slope homeland, on or south of the San Diego River. Clans of the Tipai are associated with the communities or reservations at Campo, Calexico, Imperial Valley, Jacumba, Brawley, Manzanita, Mataguay and La Posta. Prominent Tipai clans included Hetmeil, Yatcap, Kwatl and Hilmawa.

By contrast, 12 Ipai clans were focused on areas north of the San Diego River, including San Diego Mission, Tijuana, Mesa Grande, Pamo (Ramona) and Santa Ysabel. Prominent

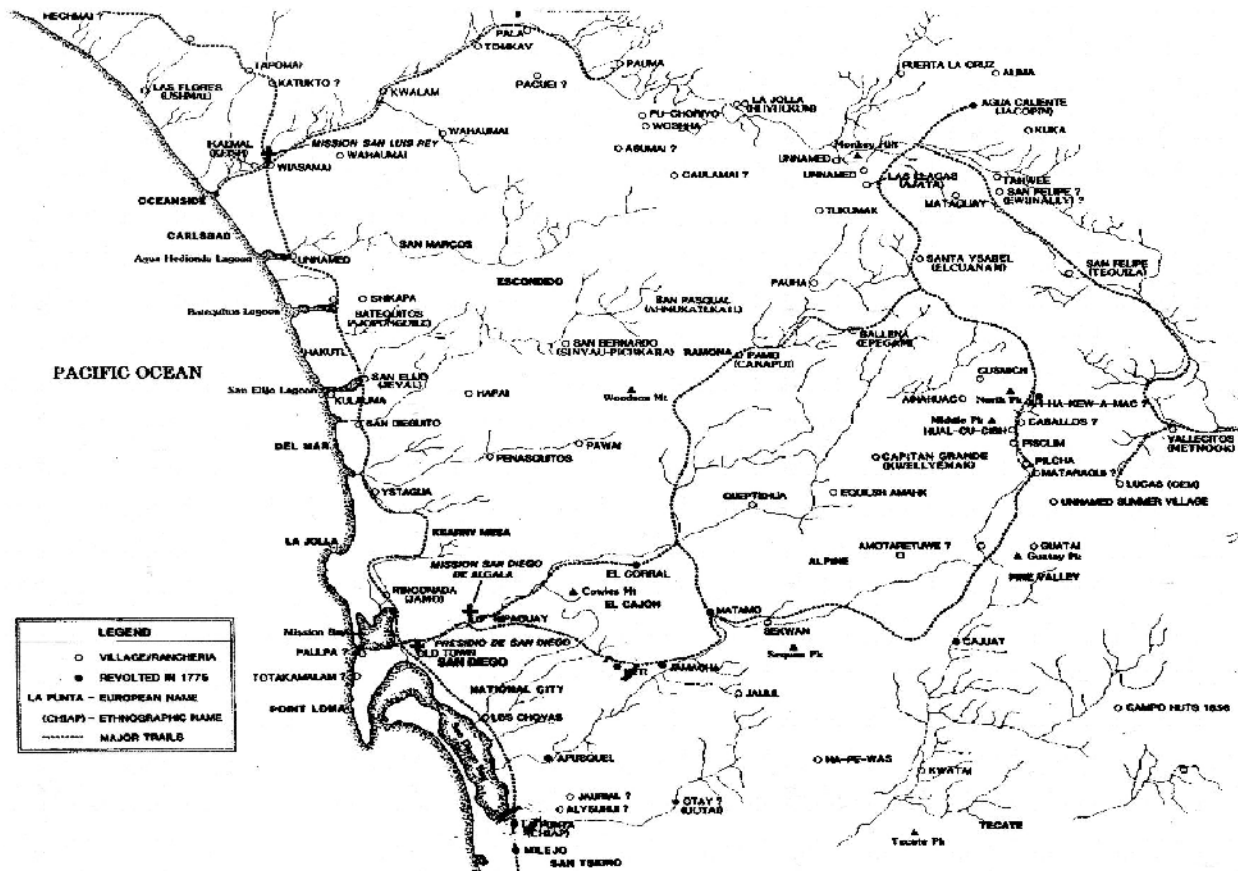


Figure 2. Map showing generalized locations of villages and rancherías of western San Diego County.

clans were Latcapa, Matuwir, Kwilp.Baipa and Kururo. The Ipai and Tipai apparently shared only a single clan, Tumau (grasshopper) although Gifford's informant stated that the Tumau clans of the Ipai and Tipai were not the same (Gifford 1918:173).

Because these clans were localized, at least as noted in the historic period, one would expect to see some form of clustering or grouping at both a village or ranchería level and on a broader scale of north to south, with the San Diego River as a generalized demarcation. Indeed, a comparison of clan/surnames from the early Mission San Diego baptismal and death records does reflect such a grouping (Carrico 2005). In a study of the insurrectionists in the 1775 mission revolt in San Diego, this author analyzed the clans and family names associated with the 15 villages that took part in the revolt (Carrico 1997).

Two interesting patterns emerged from the study of the mission revolt. First, all of the 15 villages that rose up and fought the Spaniards were situated south of the San Diego River, with several located near what is now the Mexican border and several in the eastern portion of the region. Second, a comparison of surnames/clan names for villages that participated in the revolt and those that did not reflects the distribution of clan locales suggested by Gifford nearly 150 years later. In other words, members of clans associated with the Tipai took part in the revolt and those of the Ipai did not. The leaders of the insurrection were all from large Tipai settlements and, as I suggested (Carrico 1997), probably allied themselves with clan leaders from Tipai settlements along an east/west axis, not a north/south axis which would have crossed clan territories.

Summary

The conclusion of this study, as it builds on the earlier work of cultural anthropologists, and more recently Andrew Pignuolo, is that there are important and definable differences between the northern Ipai and the southern Tipai. Seen in this light, the greater frequency of Desert Side-notched arrow points in what is assumed to have been Tipai territory serves as a good example of archaeological research (Pignuolo 2004) defining anthropological concepts rather than simply explaining some arcane aspect of material culture. Similarly, analysis of the work of Gifford, Spier, DuBois and others on clans and social organization provides a clearer understanding of the social organization of the Ipai and Tipai. The role of clans and familial alliances played a major role in the cultures and also serves to differentiate the northern from southern people.

Documenting the difference in the Ipai and Tipai is also important in a historical context. When important historical events such as the sacking of Mission San Diego in 1775 are viewed through the prism of clan affinities and alliances, the picture that emerges is much more complete and speaks to the often-neglected story of the insurrectionists rather than the missionaries. In this instance, it is important to understand that the revolt was fomented and implemented by a particular group of people, and was not an act of the overall “Diegueño” nation or tribe. In this context, the revolt is more correctly called the Tipai insurrection.

In an effort to better portray the Late Period peoples of southern San Diego County and northern Baja California, it is important to understand and to elucidate, cultural, linguistic and social variations in these people. Treating the whole of Yuman-speaking people in the region as a single group may misrepresent them and certainly glosses over potentially important differences.

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