

SOURCE E

Historical interpretation of Toyipurina rebellion, "Sources of Rebellion: Indian Testimony and the Mission San Gabriel Uprising of 1785" 2003, Steven W. Hackle.

...there is a problem with Temple's account of the rebellion and investigation and with the veneration of Toyipurina that it has generated. The majority of Temple's article consists of fabricated testimony, imagined details, and dramatic exaggerations. There was no "pale sliver of a new moon" that night." There were no soldiers masquerading as dead missionaries. No cries of "SANTIAGO!" pierced the evening calm....

...The rebellion's origins—and the individuals implicated in it—were more complex than those presented in Temple's melodrama, and what little can be glimpsed of these Indians' actions before and during the rebellion is suggestive of the complicated cross-currents of loyalties and tensions that characterized Indian life in Spanish California..."

...All four of the suspects questioned, including Toyipurina, identified Nicolás José, a thirty-seven-year-old mission Indian—not Toyipurina—as the rebellion's prime instigator. Nicolás José, according to his testimony, was upset because neither the Franciscans nor the mission guard would allow him to have his dances or practice what the Spaniards termed "gentile abuses." When Nicolás José decided to rebel against the mission that he had helped to create, he contacted Toyipurina, a twenty-five-year-old unbaptized woman from the village of Japchivit.

...Toyipurina did not state that she participated in the attack because she hated "the padres and all of you, for living here on my native soil, for trespassing upon the land of my forefathers and despoiling our tribal domains" and that she wanted to "be done with you white invaders!" Rather, according to the soldier who recorded her words, she stated succinctly that "she was angry with the padres and with all of those of this Mission because we are living here in her land."

...Temple and later scholars have presented Toypurina's words as a denunciation of the Franciscans and the soldiers for settling in Gabrielino territory, and that, it seems plausible, is part of what she said. But if we take Toypurina at her recorded word, she was angry not only with the Franciscans but with "all of those of this mission." She was also angry, it seems possible, with "all of those" Indians who lived at Mission San Gabriel, not just with the padres and the soldiers who resided there.

...In the six years before the rebellion, the population of the mission had nearly doubled, increasing from 452 in 1780 to 843 in 1785. This increase in population coincided with a 50 percent increase of the mission's agricultural production and a 300 percent increase in its livestock. In these six years, there were 714 Indians baptized at the mission, 569 gentiles, and 145 mission-born Indians. The increase in population at Mission San Gabriel, therefore, was the result not of the natural increase of those already at the mission, but rather of the recent relocation of more than 560 Indians from villages further and further from San Gabriel.

Perhaps now we can see who Toypurina referred to when she said she was angry "with all of those of this mission." She was probably referring to the hundreds of new Indian recruits at the mission, and in particular those from the coastal villages, not just the two missionaries and the four to six soldiers who protected the padres and guarded the mission. We can see the importance of Toypurina's words when they are stripped of Temple's embellishments and examined in the context of the rapid expansion of the mission and the historic tensions between Gabrielino villages. Toypurina's testimony, therefore, not only underscores the Indian-Spanish tensions that plagued colonial California, but it reflects the Indian-Indian tensions that were exacerbated by Spanish colonization.

Definitions

veneration: great respect or admiration

fabricated: to invent, usually with the intent to falsify or fake

melodrama: sensational or overly-dramatic entertainment