CHAPTER 10



A Land of Power: The Materiality of Wealth, Knowledge, Authority, and the Supernatural

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Power was manifested in a variety of realms among California Indian societies, with some individuals having greater access to wealth, knowledge, and privilege than others. While taking an historical approach to an examination of power and authority in California, I focus on cultural practices in two distinct geographic regions: one involving the riverine communities in central California and the other the maritime groups along the Santa Barbara Channel coast. The California Indians in both areas shared numerous traits associated with power, as they did with some other California Indian groups, such as the Pomo and Valley Yokuts. They all had the ability to acquire and store large quantities of food that in turn allowed them to maintain dense populations. Chiefs, usually males who inherited their power and often had multiple wives, were responsible for the hosting of large feasts that often involved a redistribution of beads and food. Chiefs, along with other elite members of society, belonged to secret societies. That membership was not open to everyone, and the privilege of membership required monetary payments. The use of shell beads as a type of currency was also prevalent in both regions. If we move beyond these similarities, however, and examine their political economies and ideologies in greater detail, we gain a more nuanced picture of how power, and pathways to power, differed in these two regions. Before we direct our attention to these societies, however, I turn to basic terminology and then frame this research within contemporary theory.

First, what do I mean by the term power? Robert Dahl (1957) defines power in his seminal article "The Concept of Power" as the ability to get people to do things that they normally would not otherwise do. Power is often distinguished from authority as it implies some type of threat,

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such as physical harm or supernatural sanction (Earle 1997:3; Kantner 2010:251). Authority, on the other hand, implies that people willingly follow a leader without overt controls or threats being employed. Paul Bohannan (1963:267-270) suggests that a person with power has the ability to affect the behavior of another. Not everyone with power, however, has authority, which implies that one has a legitimate right to power. In other words, one has the recognized entitlement to power. One of the most effective ways to lead groups without using forceful coercion is through ideology, often manifested in the creation and maintenance of ritual practices that encourage participants and penalize noncooperating individuals (Earle 1997; Stanish 2010). Influence is often associated with power. Many leaders are recognized as having both power and authority. Moreover, the distinction may not be so critical, since the threat of supernatural sanctions can be as intimidating as the threat of coercion (Roscoe 2000); therefore, I will use the term "power" in its more encompassing meaning as the capacity to transform actions. In my discussion of power among California Indians, I focus on economic power-the production and distribution of goods and resources and who controls access to these (Earle 1997:6). Control over subsistence and wealth is a source of power for leaders, and in this sense is part of the political economy. I also consider ideology as a source of social power-the ability to manage and control labor and activities (DeMarrais et al. 1996). In this sense, social power depends on the deliberate allocation of resources, an allocation that serves to consolidate leadership. Social power is closely related to an ideology of leadership that on the one hand supports a sense of community, and on the other justifies an unequal access to power and wealth.

In the following discussion, I consider power among chiefs and other members of their society. It is important to remember that chiefs, even those with inherited titles, live in a world of political conflict-conflict with other chiefs, lesser authority figures, and the people that recognize them as leaders. Their power is often more precarious than that of leaders in state-level societies. In effect, chiefs and other leaders need followers that recognize their authority; therefore, leaders are in an ongoing process of negotiation with the people that they govern (Pauketat 2007). In this respect, their power essentially involves a "bottom-up" process of consensus building (Pauketat 2010). Archaeologists diverge in their interpretations of emerging power and its nature (e.g., some emphasize the importance of aggrandizers who manage social systems in their own self-interest; Arnold 1993, 1996; Gilman 1991; Hayden 1995; Hayden and Villaneuve 2010). This often involves surpluses in food production, surpluses which are frequently tied to feasting, especially competitive feasting (Hayden 2001). Managerial models, on the other hand, stress the idea that leaders are not self-interested, but make decisions that benefit the group as a whole. Some scholars have

tied managerial models to corporate strategies of power. Recently, Chip Stanish (2004, 2010) has suggested that leaders in intermediate societies, in contrast to those in state-level societies, lack permanent authority and are therefore more likely to succeed if they avoid selfish behavior and instead work with people in cooperative ventures. He views this through the lens of evolutionary game theory, and argues that the emergence of inequities and elites benefits not only the leaders but the group as a whole (Stanish 2010). "Individuals in the entire group benefit from cooperative labor organizations in that societies can produce more material resources from the same amount of labor and can compete more successfully against other, less organized groups" (Stanish 2010:117). Stanish, like Hayden (2001) and others (Dietler 2001), recognizes the significance of feasting in this process. His views differ from Hayden's, though, in that feasting, through gift-giving and social obligations, is seen as fostering cooperative behaviors, not self-aggrandizing ones.

Pathways to power differ depending on the specific economic conditions within a region (Earle 1997). In his study of three intermediate-level societies in drastically different environments, Timothy Earle (1997) has demonstrated that basic historical and economic differences can affect the bases of sociopolitical power. Although California Indian societies differ considerably from those that Earle studied, I take a similar approach, since it allows for a deeper understanding of pathways to power.

THE CHUMASH AND THE PATWIN: A CASE STUDY

With these thoughts in mind, I turn to two groups in California, the Chumash of the Santa Barbara Channel region and the Patwin of central California. Most of the information on these two groups is based on the rich ethnographic and historical records from these two regions, yet has antecedants in the precontact era. When available, archaeological information is used to supplement these data and to provide insight into the antiquity of cultural structures.

Both the Chumash and the Patwin were hunter-gatherers that relied on storage. The coastal Chumash had a heavy reliance on marine resources, including fish, shellfish, and sea mammals, as well as acorns. They also used many terrestrial plant resources other than acorns, such as small seeds, berries, bulbs, roots, and tubers. Other significant terrestrial resources were squirrels, rabbits, and birds (Gamble 2008). The Patwin also depended on seeds, bulbs, berries, deer, and other terrestrial resources, such as buckeye seeds, which (like acorns) required a lengthy leaching process to eliminate toxins. Fish were also a major part of the diet; however, the Patwin relied primarily on anadromous (spawning) fish, such as salmon and sturgeon, that were found in abundance in

the Sacramento River (White 2003). Four seasonal runs have been documented in the Sacramento River drainage for Chinook salmon, with the late fall run containing on the average larger-size fishes (Yoshiyama et al. 2001:73). Both the Chumash and the Patwin stored considerable amounts of food, such as fish, acorns, small seeds, and dried meat from deer and other mammals. Acorns were particularly significant because they could be stored for several years. Chiefs in both regions maintained larger stores of food than other people; these surpluses were then used in ceremonial exchanges, feasts, and during times of stress.

Both the Patwin and the Chumash had some of the highest population densities in California, although some Pomo and Yokuts groups also had high densities of people. The first land expedition that visited the Chumash region was led by Gaspar de Portolá in 1769. Several members of the expedition maintained logs on their journey, including Portolá, Miguel Costansó (an engineer), and Father Juan Crespí, who was appointed the official record keeper for the expedition and who provided the most detailed descriptions of the environment and the practices of the California Indians they met. All three journals are useful for estimating the populations of the settlements along the mainland Santa Barbara coast. Some of the Chumash population centers in this area had hundreds of inhabitants. The most populous region involved the settlements around the Goleta Slough, where an estimated 1,500 to 2,000 people lived in 1769. The Patwin also had high population densities. Sherburne Cook (1976), who based his conclusions on a synthesis of early historical documents, noted that several settlements along the Sacramento River contained more than 1,400 individuals. He estimated that an average of 1,280 inhabitants were present in each of the five main River Patwin settlements. The largest centers of population for the Patwin were the settlements between the present-day towns of Colusa and Knight's Landing along the Sacramento River. These are impressive population densities for any hunter-gatherer group, and certainly rival those of the Chumash.

One reason that population densities are so relevant to the subject of power is that when large numbers of people are living in restricted regions, there is a greater need for leadership to manage the increased complexity of social systems. By the time of European contact, individuals with access to supernatural power and specialized knowledge had not only emerged, but had established a strong enough basis of leadership that these positions were inherited.

Chiefly power in the two regions shared a number of traits. Both Chumash chiefs (*wots*) and Patwin chiefs (*sektus*) had authority primarily at the village level (Blackburn 1975, 1976; King 1969; Kroeber 1932; McKern 1922). Among the Chumash, most settlements had at least one

chief. Larger settlements, also known as political centers, often had two or more chiefs, with one recognized as the head chief and the others identified as lesser chiefs. The Patwin often had a primary center surrounded by satellite villages that was governed by a head chief, with subsidiary chiefs in the smaller settlements (Kroeber 1932; McKern 1922). The centers, or "capital towns," were distinguished from smaller settlements by the presence of dance houses. In the large Patwin settlement of *Saka*, for example, there was a principal chief in addition to two other chiefs, and two dance houses (Kroeber 1932:273).

Among the Chumash, head chiefs also had authority over groups of settlements that were loosely organized into federations, often centered around a principal town (Blackburn 1975:13; Harrington 1942; Johnson 2000). The extensive network of chiefly marriage partners and other kin in settlements, many of which were situated in different environmental zones and in large villages, provided strong ties between settlements. Crespí described two chiefs. El Loco and El Buchón, who were able to acquire abundant provisions from a series of villages in the Obispeño region, indicating that they had jurisdiction over more than their own settlements. In fact, El Loco obtained food for the Portolá expedition at every village between Gaviota and San Luis Obispo (Brown 2001; King 1984:I-38). Mission records provide evidence of widespread intermarriages between chiefly families among the Chumash, and document polygamy among chiefs as well (Johnson 1988, 2000). Polygamy also occurred among Patwin chiefs (McKern 1922:243). Although female chiefs have been documented for all Chumash groups, they were relatively uncommon (Harrington 1942).

Chiefs in both regions held special privileges. Chumash chiefs could be recognized by their distinctive attire, which included ankle-length fur capes, bone hair pins, and other accoutrements. Other wealthy individuals also might have special bone hair pins, sometimes attached to chert knives. Apparently the Ventureño Chumash had a special term for "the dynasty of nobility" (*mu'alsaljewe*), people who did not have to work for a living and who were granted restricted rights and benefits (King 1969:45). Patwin chiefs also could be easily distinguished from nonelites by the special attire they wore every day (McKern 1922). Patwin chief's houses were in the center of villages (McKern 1923:160) and served as a meeting place for the council of elders. Moreover, Patwin chiefs, their wives, and their children did not have to hunt, fish, or gather foods for themselves:

They were freely supplied with the necessities of life by the other village members. For instance, if the chief needed firewood, he would call some of the young men to him and order them to get it for him. Or, when the

time for harvesting a certain variety of grass seed was come, the chief's daughter, if of age, would call to her a number of the younger women and tell them she needed so many baskets of timothy grass seed, wild oats, or whatever the cereal might be [McKern 1922:246].

A Patwin chief's daughter and sisters were highly respected; when children were in their presence, they were not allowed to laugh, and adults treated them with special esteem (McKern 1922:246).

A significant duty of Chumash and Patwin chiefs was the hosting of large feasts and other public events. It appears that the chiefs among both groups shared many of the obligations associated with ceremonies; however, the details available for each group vary based on the information collected by ethnographers. Ritual gatherings among the Chumash required considerable expenditures on the part of the chief, who had to furnish the property for the ceremonial grounds, pay the dancers, singers, and other personnel, and maintain surpluses of food (Blackburn 1975; Harrington 1942). Harrington's consultants noted that dancers and singers were paid a regular salary by the chief, who received a major portion of the proceeds collected from the spectators at performances. Charmstones and other powerful ritual items were reportedly owned by the chiefs. If someone wished to use these objects, they had to pay the chief for the privilege. Ceremonies were so integral to Chumash societies that chiefs were expected to attend feasts sponsored by neighboring chiefs: refusing such an invitation was grounds for war.

Patwin chiefs also presided over ceremonies. They were the ones who decided when a ceremony should be held, how long it should last, and who to invite. They welcomed the guests upon their arrival and gave speeches between dances (McKern 1922). They had a special place in the dance house (*lut*) in the middle of the southern side. When a chief died, he was buried in the dance house, which was then burned. All the available men, women, and children in the village built the dance house (McKern 1923), which was usually quite large (Figure 10.1); McKern described one that was about 50 feet (15.24 meters) in diameter and approximately 4 to 5 feet (1.22 to 1.52 meters) deep.

Although chiefs in both the Patwin and Chumash regions were an integral element in the redistribution of food and wealth, redistribution was apparently more pronounced in central California. In addition, chiefs appeared to be more instrumental in deciding the proper times to gather foods and pursue other activities in the Patwin region. According to McKern (1922:244–245), Patwin chiefs assigned "picking grounds" to different families each year according to their needs. When Patwin hunters successfully captured large game, such as deer, the meat would be partitioned by the chief and distributed.



Figure 10.1 Earth-covered dance house, Cortina Rancheria. Photographed by C. Hart Merriam, 1903, Catalog No. 15-22795. Copyright Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology and the Regents of the University of California.

An even more significant feature of the subsistence economy involved the chiefs' regulation, construction, and operation of fish weirs in the larger River Patwin settlements. The Patwin and surrounding tribes differed from the Chumash in their heavy reliance on anadromous fish such as salmon. Fish weirs were erected near the largest settlements, enabling the Patwin to capture vast quantities of salmon and other anadromous fish (Kroeber 1932; McKern 1922). There were at least two large fishweir towns on the Sacramento River during the early historic period; one was near the present town of Grimes, and the other near Colusa (Kroeber 1932), about 20 kilometers north. These settlements also had the largest dance houses. The construction of these weirs required the coordination of a large labor pool consisting of all of the men in a settlement. Dams were built with gateways where the fish were captured in conical basket traps. One of the earliest descriptions of a Patwin fish weir comes from Charles Wilkes, the Commander of the United States Exploring Expedition from 1839 to 1842, who passed through the lower Sacramento River area in 1841. Wilkes described a substantial fish weir he observed near the present town of Colusa:

This fish-weir was constructed with a great deal of art: stakes pointing down the stream, had been driven into its bed, having three openings, which led into square pens above; over each of the entrances into the pens was a platform, on which the natives stand to take the fish; on these also there were heaps of ashes, indicating that the natives made use of fire to attract the fish [Wilkes 1845:188].

In a letter penned in 1897, General John Bidwell provides an even more detailed description of a fish weir he saw in the 1850s in the River Patwin area, approximately halfway between Colusa and Princeton on the Sacramento River (Leeper 1898). The weir was constructed along a stretch of the river that Bidwell remarked was relatively shallow, about 3 feet in depth in the summer and 400 to 500 feet wide. He describes

two rows of posts firmly implanted in the river, with long poles lashed to the top and more laid across to form a bridge wide enough for six people to walk abreast (Leeper 1898). Undoubtedly, a weir this large and substantial required considerable labor to build and maintain, and was a significant source of power for the local leadership. The Patwin weirs described by McKern (1922) at a later period in time provide even more information about the construction of these imposing structures:

Salmon were fished with the aid of a dam or weir built across the river at some shallow part. This dam . . . was jointly constructed by all the men of the village. It had for its foundation a line of piles driven into the river bottom from shore to shore. Willow brush was woven in and out between these piles, in a wicker-work technic [sic], until the structure constituted an insurmountable barrier to the salmon. It was perforated every few yards by a "break" or narrow gateway. When completed, the top of the dam was of sufficient width to allow one, if careful, to walk across. Salmon were caught by means of large basket traps, conical in shape, and made of twined willow rods. These were placed at the gateways and the fisher watched from his position on the dam. When a salmon swam into the trap, trap and fish were removed. The warm sluggish waters of the Sacramento River in this locality prevent the salmon from leaping over the dam. The number of traps that could be used at any given time was regulated by the chief. There were always some gateways left open [McKern 1922:248-249].

The chief orchestrated the necessary labor and decided when the weirs were to be built, and (perhaps more significantly) when they should be disassembled. The chief not only regulated the construction and operation of the fish weirs, but was also responsible for storing much of the surplus and distributing the massive catch. The building and operation of the fish weirs required chiefs to coordinate both the use and the timing of the weirs with their neighbors. If one were to capture all the fish swimming upstream, there would be no fish—or very few fish—for one's upstream neighbors. Without careful coordination and respect for one's neighbors, conflicts could quickly occur. Patwin narratives of war stories often mention that reasons for conflict were related to the taking of resources from one's neighbors (Kroeber 1932:300–303). In one Pomo narrative (the Pomo were neighbors of the Patwin and also used fish weirs), Coyote steals fish from a weir used by neighboring people, resulting in "considerable trouble" (Kroeber and Barrett 1960:10).

It has been estimated that California Indians consumed more than 15 million pounds of fish every year (Swezey and Heizer 1977). Historic estimates of fish captures provide further support for the large quantities of salmon catches in California (Swezey and Heizer 1977; Yoshiyama et al. 2001). The management, storage, and distribution of such massive quantities of fish demonstrate the scale of power that Patwin chiefs

possessed. Although no archaeological examples of fish weirs have been discovered in the Patwin region, the intensification of fishing practices including the capture of both large and small fish—about 1,180 years ago has been interpreted as evidence for the introduction of weirs and other innovative technologies associated with fishing (Broughton 1994; White 2003:188).

The Chumash differed from the Patwin in that their fishing endeavors did not require as much coordination of labor, nor did their subsistence activities have the same potential for affecting large neighboring settlements. The Chumash did build plank canoes, which were used for the acquisition of fish, especially large pelagic fish, and were critical to cross-channel exchanges and ultimately to long-distance exchanges. Plank canoes required specialized knowledge and materials for their construction, and the materials were costly, as was the labor to build them. Because of their cost and relative scarcity, only chiefs and other wealthy individuals owned them. This gave owners a distinct advantage over others in the distribution of trade goods between the mainland and the Channel Islands. But the building of plank boats did not require as much coordination of labor as was needed for the building of fish weirs.

But what about people other than the chiefs who had power in these societies? The Chumash recognized an elite group of people known as 'antap, a formal and institutionalized group of leaders and religious specialists whose members were "baptized" into the association as children. All chiefs and members of their families belonged to this organization, and they had to pay substantial amounts of money for the privilege (Blackburn 1976:236). The principal duty of the 'antap was to conduct rituals and dances at large ceremonial gatherings; ethnographic evidence indicates that the 'antap owned or controlled all ritual paraphernalia. Ceremonies among the Chumash were held in open-air dance grounds that were specifically dedicated for use in ritual gatherings. These were flat areas partially surrounded by a windbreak made of poles or mats (Hudson and Blackburn 1986:50). They also usually had a temporary structure, known as a *silivik* or sacred brush enclosure, that was within the dance grounds and where the 'antap played their deer-tibia whistles (Figure 10.2) and bullroarers. Ethnographic data indicate that only members of the 'antat society used these large deer-tibia whistles (Hudson and Blackburn 1986:354). The fact that these items are found in archaeological contexts dating to the late Middle Period has led Ray Corbett (1999, 2004) to suggest that the 'antab society existed for hundreds of years in the region.

Political and religious influences were profoundly interwoven in the *'antap* organization, whose associates, in addition to the chief and his family members, included the ceremonial leader (*paha*) and other religious specialists, such as shamans, singers, and dancers (King 1969:43). Chiefs



Figure 10.2 Deer bone tibia whistles from Bowers Cave, PMAE No. 86-23-10/39259. Photographed by John Johnson. Copyright (2012) President and Fellows of Harvard College.

not only relied on the paha as a trusted collaborator, they also worked closely with the 'altipatishwi or "poisoner," someone who wore bags of herbs at feasts and intimidated people solely by their appearance. The chiefs' political and economic power was reinforced through their relationships with ceremonial assistants and other 'antap members; the chief frequently did not directly exact beads and goods in the context of ceremonial feasts, but instead relied on others to exert subtle pressure on attendees to pay their fair share (Blackburn 1976). As a result, the chiefs no doubt maintained their role as generous leaders, individuals who distributed wealth, food, and other items in the context of elaborate ceremonies during which guests were well fed and entertained. The advantage of this relationship for the paha, 'altipatishwi, and other 'antap members was that they gained a share of the wealth and prestige accrued during these ceremonial feasts. Probably one of the most important functions of Chumash feasts was that they enriched chiefs politically and economically, and reinforced their influence.

The Patwin and neighboring groups in central California had a similar religious structure, but one that was considerably more elaborate. The Kuksu society was the focus of both ritual and political organization,

but instead of only one level of membership, three levels of secret society membership were recognized. As was the case with the 'antap, the members of the Kuksu society tended to be economically, socially, and politically superior to nonmembers (Bean and Vane 1978). Initiates paid for the privilege of membership and were required to make repeated payments as they advanced through different levels. Unlike the Chumash, who had outdoor dance grounds, the Patwin primarily performed their ceremonies in large dance houses, which required a considerable effort to build and group coordination. Kuksu performers wore a variety of feather accoutrements, including feather capes and cloaks (Figure 10.3). Many of the Kuksu initiation ceremonies had an element of danger, both in terms of the ritual itself and in terms of the acquisition of potentially dangerous knowledge. Initiates did not take hallucinogens, as they did in rituals in southern California, but they were subjected to physical and mental challenges that resulted in their appearing to go insane and die. only to then be revived.

The three basic secret societies among the River Patwin were the *hesi*, the *kuksu*, and the *wai-saltu* (Kroeber 1925, 1932). Ceremonies associated with these were usually held in the winter. The *hesi* was considered the less dangerous; apparently, most Patwin men were initiated into this society, although this may have been a phenomenon resulting from historic population losses. The greatest variety of spirit performers was found in the *hesi*. There were four grades of *hesi* membership, but



Figure 10.3 Feather cloak worn in Kuksu dances, Northern Maidu. From Dixon 1905:Plate XLI.

only two had specific names: the initiates, or *yompu*, and the ceremonial directors, or *tautu*. Within the *yompu* were both youthful novices and fully grown men who were experienced spirit impersonators and dancers. The *tautu* had esoteric knowledge that the *yompu* lacked, and therefore were ranked higher. The highest-ranked *tautu* were the few people (or sole person) who directed the *hesi* ceremonies (Kroeber 1932).

The *kuksu* involved a greater element of danger than did the *hesi*. During the *kuksu* initiation, a novice was shot or stabbed to the point of bleeding, after which he would recover in the dance house during a long period of the confinement that sometimes lasted two to three months. (At least one of Kroeber's consultants indicated that the novices' injuries were not as serious as they appeared.) Some of the novices were shot outside, while others might be laid over the opening in the roof of the dance house and then shot. Dietary and other taboos were in place for months after a shooting.

The wai-saltu, the third secret society, was the most restricted in membership and was potentially the most dangerous. Performers, who were covered with charcoal to darken their skin, evidently became insane during the course of the ceremony and "died." On the last day of the ceremony, after sweating profusely in the dance house, the performers would run outside bleeding from the mouth or nose, and then sometimes fall into a swamp and "drown," only to be taken again into the dance house and brought back to life. As shown by these descriptions, death and resurrection were key elements of the wai-saltu. In some areas, grizzly bears were associated with the ceremony as well (Kroeber 1925, 1932; Loeb 1932, 1933). Power was closely associated with these secret societies; those few who were initiated into all three societies had greater supernatural power, esoteric knowledge, and wealth than those who were not, and they had inherited the rights of initiation. The Kuksu events can also be viewed as performances that served to legitimize the authority of the elite and create a sense of community (Coben and Inomata 2006).

When we consider these ceremonies as performances, the dance house is particularly significant because it allowed ceremonies to be hidden from many members of the society. Among the Pomo Indians, who were neighbors of the Patwin and who also practiced the Kuksu religion, guards were placed at the doors during some ceremonies; these guards insured that no one left the dance house during the ceremony until they had paid a certain sum of shell-bead money. Another important trait of the Patwin dance house was its formality; within the dance house strict rules were followed regarding seating arrangements, with chiefs and other highly ranked individuals assigned specific places or *wole* (Kroeber 1925, 1932). The seats at the northern end of the dance house were for the uninitiated or nonparticipants. In the center of the southern half sat the chief, his family, and distinguished guests. The dancers, ceremonial

officials, ceremonial singers, and drummers had *wole* to the left of the chief. In front of the west doorway was the foot drum, the only type of indigenous drum found in California prior to historic contact. The ceremonial drum was made from a peeled and hollowed log about 6 to 10 feet long and 2 feet wide that was placed convex side up over a shallow excavation. The drum, which was played by dancers stamping on it, is believed to have been associated directly with the Kuksu religion, as is the dance house (Kroeber 1925; McKern 1923).

Since the Kuksu religion is so closely associated with large dance houses, it is reasonable to infer that archaeological examples of dance houses may provide evidence for the antiquity of the Kuksu religion in central California. One of the better-known archaeological examples of a floor measured more than 28 meters in diameter at its largest point and was situated near Los Banos Creek in the southern San Joaquin Valley at the Menjoulet site, CA-MER-3 (Pritchard 1970). It is one of the largest that has been excavated in California and was most likely a ceremonial structure. It had a mud wall along its perimeter and 30 cremations, as well as two inhumations. The structure probably dates to the protohistoric or early historic period. It is situated in the historically documented Yokuts territory according to Kroeber (1925) and the Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 8, California (Heizer 1978). More recently, however, Randall Milliken (1994) has examined mission register data and proposed that the area of Los Banos Creek historically was probably in the region where Costonoan was spoken. It has been suggested that the Costonoans may have also practiced the Kuksu religion (Bean and Vane 1978; Kroeber 1925, 1932). Large subterranean structures have also been documented in the Northern Yokuts area. They were found in the area of Buchanan Reservoir and dated to the Madera Phase (AD 1500-1850). Constructed of wattle and daub, they were 8 to 17 meters in diameter and have been interpreted as ceremonial structures (Moratto 1984:317-321).

A few examples of the remains of dance houses have been reported in the Patwin area. A portion of a dance-house floor at the site of Old Tebti (CA-COL-11), in the region historically occupied by the Hill Patwin, was excavated in 1934 and 1935 by students from Sacramento Junior College under the supervision of J. B. Lillard. Based on the types of ornaments and beads found at the site, it is believed that the feature was used in the Late Phase 2B period, from approximately AD 1700 to 1800 (White 2003:71–72). Arnold Pilling (1949) noted a probable dance house at CA-BUT-5, a Konkow village site very close to the historically recorded River Patwin area, which was apparently used until 1922. Another dance house was recorded in 1949 at CA-COL-9, probably the site of *Sook-soo'-koo*, also in the historic Konkow region. This structure was approximately 45 to 50 feet in diameter, and reportedly had been

used as recently as 1900. The site record does not indicate the age of the dance house. Unfortunately, these few examples of structures that were probably used as dance houses provide very limited information on the antiquity of the Kuksu religion. Some of the historic ones may not even have been used in Kuksu ceremonies, but in the postcontact Ghost Dance religion instead. A more systematic study of archaeological examples of dance houses would help in determining the antiquity of the Kuksu religion in central California.

Anthropologists and archaeologists have used a variety of artifacts, practices, and items of material culture other than dance houses as evidence for the introduction of secret societies and the Kuksu religion in central California. Kroeber (1932:401) speculated that the Kuksu religion may have emerged between 1,000 and 2,000 years ago among the River Patwin, as they are the only group known to have had three distinct secret societies. On the basis of grave goods, James Bennyhoff (1961) proposed that the Kuksu religion emerged in the Delta around AD 300 and then moved north and west from this heartland. In his discussion of the evolution of Pomo society, Martin Baumhoff (1980) suggested that when Penutian speakers entered the area historically occupied by the Pomo during the Late Houx period (which began about AD 1200), they brought in new ceremonial practices associated with the Kuksu. He suggested that there was a reorganization of settlements-with principal centers where religious and secular specialists lived-at this time. This fits the pattern that Kroeber noted in the historic period, with central settlements marked by the presence of dance houses and surrounded by satellite villages. David Fredrickson (1974) viewed the emergence of social ranking and the ceremonial system that eventually became the Kuksu religion as being closely related. He suggested that in the early part of the Late Horizon, certain technological innovations—such as the bow and arrow and the harpoon—may have played a significant role in the development of social ranking. Fredrickson also noted that when cremations appeared, they were frequently associated with wealth items. According to Milliken et al. (2007:117), both Fredrickson (1974) and Bennyhoff (1994) "suggested that the mortuary pattern, including signature Haliotis 'banjo' effigy ornaments, reflected a new regional system that was the precursor of the ethnographic Kuksu cult" that appeared after calibrated (cal) AD 1250. These hypotheses are critical to understanding the origins of sociopolitical complexity and the Kuksu religion, but they have vet to be systematically tested.

DISCUSSION

In summary, both the Chumash and the Patwin had secret societies that were open only to the elite and the wealthy, and whose members had

access to special esoteric knowledge. Their members endured formal instruction and complex rites of passage (and in the case of the Kuksu, potentially dangerous ones) to signify their entitlement to and occupation of positions of leadership (Bean and Vane 1978:665). Large surpluses of food were maintained by chiefs in both societies. Power and wealth, in the form of shell-bead money and ornamentation, were vested in these leaders (Gamble 2011). As is typical in many middle-range societies, leaders used their special ties to the supernatural to legitimize their positions of power. But why did the Patwin have such an elaborate religious system, with clearly denoted hierarchical seating arrangements in large dance houses that served to hide ceremonies from many members of society, as opposed to the Chumash, who apparently lacked this level of ceremonial complexity?

Before we address this question, let us return to the subject of fish weirs. The heavy reliance that the Patwin placed on anadromous fish such as salmon and their use of weirs to catch them were distinguishing features of their subsistence activities. The Chumash differed from the Patwin in that their fishing endeavors did not require as much coordination of labor as the building of fish weirs, nor did their subsistence activities have the same potential for affecting large neighboring settlements. There is evidence that Chumash boat owners did not have to spend much time on their own subsistence activities. One of Harrington's Barbareño consultants stated that boat owners did not have to go fishing themselves, but had fish delivered to their door, at which time they distributed the fish. This is corroborated by an account written by Font in 1776, who observed 10 or 12 fishermen carrying a canoe filled with fish to the house of the canoe captain (Bolton 1930:259). Although owners of plank canoes benefited from fishing activities, they did not have the level of control over subsistence that the Patwin possessed. Nor did the building of plank boats require as much coordination of labor as was needed for the building of fish weirs.

Fish weirs were also significant in northern California, especially northwestern California. Ethnographic information on weirs in this region is exceptionally comprehensive (Kroeber and Barrett 1960; Swezey and Heizer 1977, 1993; Waterman and Kroeber 1938), providing details about not only the construction and use of weirs, but about the ceremonies and myths associated with these structures. One of the best descriptions of a fish dam is the *Kepel* weir on the Klamath River, in the Yurok region (Kroeber and Barrett 1960; Waterman and Kroeber 1938). Kroeber and Barrett (1960:12) venture to state that it was "... the largest construction of any sort attempted by people of the Northwest Coast culture, and it is reasonable to infer that it was this fact which led to association of the weir with a major World Renewal ritual." Kroeber estimated that the weir

spanned a part of the river that was approximately 76 meters (250 feet) in width, about half the estimated length of the weir that General Bidwell described in the Patwin region. Although the *Kepel* weir and others in northwestern California were substantial, none apparently had bridges on top as wide as the ones described in central California, if any at all. Kroeber and Barrett (1960:12) commented that even though the building of the *Kepel* weir required considerable communal labor investment, it was not as challenging as constructing a large ceremonial dance house such as those in central California.

The weirs of northwestern California were closely associated with ritual observances such as "first-salmon" rites and other religious formalities that primarily took place outdoors; there were no dance houses in northwestern California. At Kepel, the building of the weir and the accompanying ceremonies were overseen by a "formulist" or shaman (Kroeber 1925; Kroeber and Barrett 1960; Waterman and Kroeber 1938). This person also decided on the proper timing of the taking of the first salmon. Individuals who lived several miles downstream of the weir helped in its building and, in return, received fish (Kroeber and Barrett 1960:12). Edward Curtis (1924:40) noted that people from upstream settlements also benefited from the weir at *Kepel*: "... because the fish were largely prevented from ascending the river to them, they had the privilege of going down to Kepel when the salmon were plentiful and taking all they wished without price." The weir at Kepel was allowed to stand for 10 days, after which time it was at least partially torn down (Kroeber and Barrett 1960:12). In contrast to the Patwin and Pomo, there does not appear to be an emphasis on redistribution. In fact, there is surprisingly little information of the distribution of fish from weirs in northwestern California.

Populations in the Yurok area around the fish weirs apparently were not as dense as they were in central California. Some of the best population estimates are based on an 1852 census made by a trader named York and an 1852 house count made by George Gibbs (Kroeber 1925:16-19; Pilling 1978:144). Kroeber suggested that the aggregate population for all of the Yurok was probably no more than 2,500, although he considered 2,500 a valid approximation. Cook (1976) reexamined the data and suggested that the populations may have been closer to 3,000. Either estimate suggests that the Yurok populations were not as great as those among the River Patwin. Data on individual settlements also indicate that fewer people were living in any given village. The largest settlement between the coastal settlement of *Rek'woy* at the mouth of the Klamath and Kepel was estimated to be 165 people, considerably less than the large settlements in the River Patwin area. It is especially interesting that the settlement of Kepel was estimated to have a low population (10 people), even though this was the location of the largest fish weir.

If we consider all the data on the Yurok, we find their use of fish weirs differs significantly from that of the Patwin. Although the Yurok and other northwest coast California Indians used substantial fish weirs, they were not as big as those found in the River Patwin area, they were not managed by village or town chiefs who had recognized authority, they were not situated next to large towns, and redistribution was not tied to the abundant captures of fish. Furthermore, the Yurok and surrounding groups did not have large dance houses with clearly ranked seats.

If we turn to the use of fish weirs in Britain and Ireland, some insight into issues surrounding labor, maintenance, and control can be gained. Neolithic and Bronze age archaeological wooden structures associated with fishing activities have been documented on the Isle of Wight, and there are some in Wales dating to the Middle Ages (O'Sullivan 2003). Some of the most impressive examples of fish weirs from England occur at Blackwater Estuary and date to the Anglo-Saxon period, about AD 650 to 800. The Blackwater weirs were unusually large; they were 100 to 300 meters in length, and were located at the end of tidal channels. Although information about the ownership and management of these is limited, recent studies have linked them to Anglo-Saxon churches and monasteries. Other weirs, including some in southwestern Ireland, have been associated with early Medieval ring forts, or enclosed settlements, and with castles that occur later in time. All of these weirs appear to have been associated with wealthy and powerful authorities in the Middle Ages, who controlled their use, maintenance, and management.

Economic power was fundamental among the Chumash and Patwin, as elites in both societies restricted access to significant resources and goods (Earle 1997:7; Yoffee 2005). Among the Chumash, the ownership of plank canoes was restricted to chiefs and wealthy elites, who had an advantage in the capture of large fish and sea mammals, as well as in the distribution of important goods that were used to maintain the political economy (Gamble 2008). Among the River Patwin, the control of fish weirs and the storage and redistribution of the massive amounts of captured fish provided the chiefs with a highly significant source of power. Shell beads were a key resource in the structures of wealth finance and the political economy among both groups. Chiefs and other powerful individuals amassed considerable wealth in the form of prestige goods, large stores of food, feasting vessels, and shell-bead currency. Many of the objects associated with elite individuals could be considered prestige goods associated with a system of wealth finance (D'Altroy and Earle 1985; Earle 1997). This system involved the exchange of valuables, many of which had established values, between political leaders. Prestige goods were often produced by skilled crafts people and were then sold to political officials and other individuals who maintained the politi-

cal economy. Wealth finance, combined with staple finance, fueled the dependence on beads and supported many people (at least on a part-time basis) who helped maintain the economic system.

Ideology was a source of social power in both regions. Elizabeth DeMarrais, Luis Jaime Castillo, and Timothy Earle (1996) define social power as the capacity to manage and control the activities and labor of a group. They suggest that ideology, including the ideas, values, and oral traditions of a society, is transformed or materialized into physical realities such as ceremonial events or symbolic objects. Ceremonial events, which are often associated with monumental architecture, serve to integrate and define large groups and create shared experiences. As a result, the locations of these events often become central places. Events require a continual investment of resources: the expenses associated with the hosting of a feast (which were usually borne by both Chumash and Patwin chiefs)-expenses such as the payment of performers, the manufacture of paraphernalia, the accumulation of necessary foods, and the construction of dance houses or ritual areas-grounded ideology in the economy. Regularly scheduled ceremonial events in both societies were significant in the maintenance of social power; however, among the River Patwin, the more elaborate manifestations of ideology-seen in the three secret societies, the large dance houses, and the redistribution of beads and foods—suggest a pronounced source of social power in this region. The coordination of labor associated with the construction of fish weirs, as well as the management of those weirs in relationship to communities upstream that were directly affected by the opening and closing of gates, was beyond any powers that Chumash chiefs possessed. Moreover, the vast quantities of fish that were captured during relatively short periods of time, and the issues of storage and redistributive efforts associated with these catches, required a different level of control of the subsistence economy and of the wealth finance system associated with the political economy. The elaborated Kuksu religious system perhaps emerged out of the needs of authoritative leaders for powerful sanctions that could be used to ensure cooperation. The basic premise of the Kuksu was its association with dangerous supernatural beings. Although the California Indian societies of both regions shared a majority of the traits associated with power, it is the differences that are most informative with regard to theories of emergent inequality and leadership.

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