

Preface

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W. Michael Mathes, a dear friend and longtime mentor in the fields of history and bibliography, was one of those few scholars who never had an unpublished thought. His writings were always significant and relevant, especially about the peninsula that he knew, loved, and chronicled throughout his lifetime.

Scholars come and scholars go. Not so Miguel Mathes. His name is chiseled into every rock formation of peninsular California. What Hubert Howe Bancroft was to Alta California, Michael is and was to Baja California. All roads there lead to one or another of his studies, and his writings.

This memorial *Quarterly* double-issue is a well-deserved tribute to “Michael the Great, The Prince of Peninsular California.”

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W. Michael Mathes was the last of a breed of pioneering scholars doing research in Baja California long before transpeninsular travel became easy or common. Mathes followed in the footsteps of such luminaries as Carl O. Sauer (Figure 1), founder of the UC Berkeley Department of Geography, and his students Peveril Meigs, Homer Aschmann, Brigham Arnold, William C. Massey, and UCLA archaeologist Clement W. Meighan. Mathes considered Meigs the father of the modern study of Baja California history:

For almost seven decades, scholars and students of the history of Baja California have consulted *The Dominican Mission Frontier of Lower California* by Peveril Meigs, III, (1935) as virtually the sole scholarly source on the subject [2001:16].

Yet, while some scholars were sifting through crumbling documents in dusty archives, Carl O. Sauer, who invented the academic discipline of cultural geography in American universities and who was also Meigs’ professor, was exploring long-forgotten parts of the peninsula:

In the late spring of 1926 Sauer, with three graduate students, made his first field excursion into Mexico, exploring the northern part of coastal Baja California as far as the old Dominican mission settlement of San Fernando de Velicatá. This began a long series of field trips into Mexico, twenty in number, that extended over a period of four decades [West 1981:9].

Sauer’s approach to Baja California united the disciplines of geography, history, and anthropology. This was nothing unusual for UC Berkeley, but at the time it was considered revolutionary just about everywhere else. Carl Sauer’s work and that of other Berkeley students in geography and anthropology laid the foundation for all subsequent research on the peninsula and provided the model for Mathes’ own multidisciplinary approach a generation later. Sauer was one of the first to recognize the importance of human ecology to Peninsular California studies. Through Sauer’s pioneering



Figure 1. Carl O. Sauer (center) and Brigham Arnold (left), interviewing Manuel, a local informant, near Punta Prieta, Baja California, in March 1949. At this time Sauer had been working in Baja California for 23 years. Within only a few years a very young Mike Mathes would follow in Sauer's footsteps. Tom Pagenhart photograph, courtesy of Brigham Arnold.

fieldwork, the academic world became aware of Baja California's research potential, and after WWII, Baja California's isolation lessened somewhat. As the first dirt roads began to penetrate the area, the slow trickle of scientific researchers began to increase. Homer Aschmann (Figure 2) saw the peninsula's distinctive ecosystems and relative isolation as a natural laboratory for the study of desert survival by Native peoples. Brigham Arnold (Figure 3), another early Berkeley student of cultural ecology, sought to push such research even farther back in time, questioning the relationships between prehistoric humans and their environments. Mathes was particularly influenced by Peter Gerhard. Gerhard loved adventure and Mexican history and began exploring Baja California by Jeep as early as 1946, and with Howard Gulick he published the *Lower California Guidebook* (1958), which Mathes considered essential for Baja California travelers (Karina Busto, personal communication 2015). The *Guidebook* also ushered in 4-wheel drive tourists who braved Baja California decades before roads or airstrips were paved. The first few airstrips laid down in Baja California in the 1950s made the area accessible by airplane.

William C. Massey was the first modern archaeologist to investigate a broad range of prehistoric research

topics in Baja California. UCLA archaeologist Clement W. Meighan (Figure 4) joined with mystery novelist Erle Stanley Gardner for an expedition in

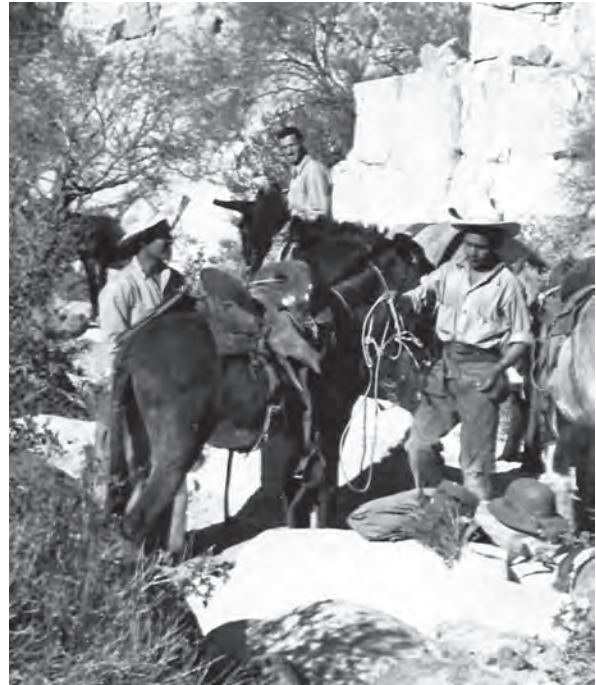


Figure 2. Homer Aschmann (center), flanked by two *arrieros* (muleteers), saddling up to survey the Laguna Seca Chapala Basin of central Baja California in March 1949. A few months later 13-year-old Mike Mathes began his own explorations of Baja California by Jeep. Photograph courtesy of Brigham Arnold.

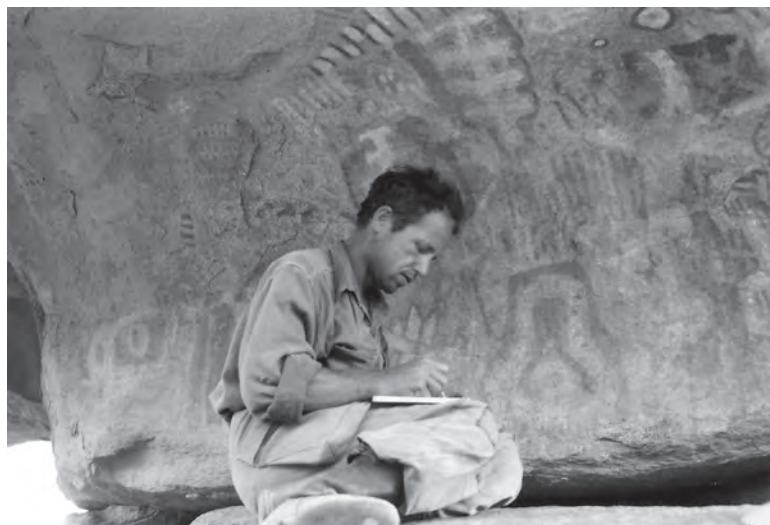


Figure 3. Berkeley student Brigham Arnold recording the La Pintada pictograph site near Laguna Seca Chapala, 1950 (Arnold 1957:275). By this time high school student Mike Mathes had become entranced by the history and prehistory of the Baja California peninsula and was committed to spending the rest of his life in its study. Photograph courtesy of Brigham Arnold.



Figure 4. The first helicopter ever used in archaeological research in Baja California. “Dr. Meighan, filled with eager enthusiasm, stepped out of the first helicopter” (Gardner 1964:205). Clem Meighan (left) and pilot Robert Van Aiken (right), taking a break from rock art exploration in the Sierra de San Francisco, Baja California Sur, in March–April, 1962. Photograph courtesy of Joan Meighan.

March and April 1962 to the remote central peninsula, recording remarkable larger-than-life aboriginal paintings inside caves. Today, these paintings of the Great Mural Tradition are world famous and can be appreciated through the fieldwork (Gutiérrez and Hyland 2002) and brilliant photographs of Harry Crosby (1997). The rock paintings of the Sierra de San Francisco are, in fact, on the UNESCO World Heritage sites list and protected by Mexico’s Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH).

Mathes was younger than all aforementioned geographers and archaeologists, but he inherited their mantle of scholarship. Mike carried it forward through the years, even while the next generation of students and scholars flocked to his standard. Dr. Mathes’ scholarly writings in history, ethnohistory, and cultural geography built upon the foundation provided by his predecessors, and they form the most impressive and unshakable pillar of present-day Baja California studies. Through his unique example, Mike revealed

the research pathway to all of us younger folks for our own intellectual journey to and through both Californias, Baja and Alta.

Dr. Miguel Mathes' contribution to Mexican history is unique. Interdisciplinary research is now a normal and expected part of a serious scholar's work at most prominent universities throughout the world, but it was not always so. It is important to recognize that Mike Mathes took the interdisciplinary idea originated by Alfred L. Kroeber, Carl O. Sauer, and Herbert E. Bolton at UC Berkeley and argued for it wherever he found himself during his long and productive career.

His enthusiasm for collaborative research was infectious, not just in U.S. academic contexts, but in Mexico and Spain as well. Mathes became a leading figure of Baja California ethnography, ethnology, and ethnohistory. His voluminous writings and the variety of subjects explored brought him immense prestige and earned him the respect and friendship of historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, geographers, and librarians at their conferences, colloquia, and within their homes (see Dillon, this *Quarterly* double-issue).

Throughout his career Dr. Mathes wore many hats: explorer, archivist, author, bibliophile, librarian, and professor (Dillon 2012; Kurutz 2012; Chandler 2013). Friends on this side of the border called him Mike; his *colegas y compañeros, allá, al otro lado*, knew him as Miguel. Miguel Mathes became one of the most influential Mexican historians of the past century, one of the very few not native Mexican-born. His archival research brought to light the writings of many bygone figures. Cortés, Ulloa, Vizcaíno, Cardona, Alarcón, Nava, Ortega, and Kino were among the first Europeans to visit Baja California, and as inadvertent ethnographers, they documented their personal observations in letters, diaries, maps, and reports. Professional researchers know their names, and they mine their writings for historic treasure; yet many are unaware that Dr. Mathes was the first to find, study, and make

available to others a great many of these original manuscripts from Spanish and Mexican archives that we now consider indispensable. Mike not only rooted out forgotten manuscripts, but he also published over 60 books and 250 articles on the history of Spain, Mexico, and beyond (Dillon and Boxt, this *Quarterly* double-issue). Dr. Mathes was renowned as a scholar of the highest caliber and received many honors and awards, including a 1962–1963 Fulbright Fellowship, the Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle in 1985 (*Orden Mexicana del Águila Azteca*), the Spanish Order of Isabella the Catholic in 2005 (*Orden de Isabel la Católica*), and most recently the Hubert Howe Bancroft Award in 2010, given at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Friends of the UC Berkeley Bancroft Library (Figure 5) in recognition of his outstanding achievements as a scholar and his 50-year professional relationship with that institution.

Miguel Mathes possessed a vast storehouse of ethnographic, ethnohistoric, and historic knowledge and was always willing to share that information. I was first introduced to him by mutual friends and colleagues Fermín Reygadas and Karina Busto at the *III Coloquio Internacional La Frontera: Una Nueva Concepción Cultural "Miguel Méndez"* at La Paz, Baja California Sur, in February 1999. This began a friendship that lasted until Mike's death 13 years later. Dialogues between us about text-aided archaeology and joint writing projects continued over the years at conferences, social gatherings, and through e-mail exchanges.

More than anyone I have ever known, W. Michael Mathes was a natural scholar, representing the best that academic life has to offer. He was erudite and engaging, and he possessed a scope of knowledge that seemed endless. Since my archaeological work in Baja California, Tabasco, Mexico, and southern California incorporated historical documents, I took advantage of his expertise on more than one occasion, seeking his tough-minded criticism on manuscripts that I was preparing for publication or engaging him with questions



Figure 5. The Hubert Howe Bancroft Award was presented to W. Michael Mathes, Historian of Spain, Mexico, and Baja California, on May 1, 2010. Here Miguel Mathes (center) poses with two friends, former students and professional colleagues Fermín Reygadas Dahl (left) and Karina Busto-Ibarra (right) at the award ceremony. Photograph courtesy of Karina Busto-Ibarra.

on a spectrum of topics. These ranged from the missionary efforts of Dominican friar Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada in late sixteenth century Tabasco to the correct paleographic translations of written comments on Sebastián Vizcaíno's 1602 expeditionary maps and to the scientific identification of the *munjack* or *chapotote* that privateer William Dampier reported during his 1675–1676 voyages in the Bay of Campeachy. No matter how obscure my question, Mike always responded graciously, offering an informed comment or a reference I was unaware of.

In fact, one such e-mail exchange inspired Mike, Brian Dillon, Fermín Reygadas, and me to move full speed ahead on a project that unfortunately ran out of gas once Mike fell ill in 2011. We intended using historic documents to identify those archaeological sites in Baja California whose locations could be verified through air photo analysis, then “ground-truthed” through standard field survey methods. One example of the many we intended to compile came from Vizcaíno's 1602 diary. Sebastian Vizcaíno's objective was to chart the Baja California coast to aid the *Naos de China* (called Manila galleons by English speakers) in their return journeys toward the port of Acapulco, yet

his diary also offers ethnohistoric insights into Native fishing methods in Magdalena Bay:

su comida ordinaria es pescado y mescal, porque hay gran cantidad del y de muchos generos, y los pescan con corrales de palo... (their ordinary foods are fish and mescal, and of the former there are large numbers and many varieties, and they catch them with corrals of branches ...) [Mathes 1965:574].

Additional accounts by Father Antonio de la Ascención (Wagner 1929:203) and Father Miguel del Barco (1980:234; 1988:127–128) mention Magdalena Bay fishing weirs built of thick wooden beams (Figure 6). Unfortunately, now that Dr. Mathes has left us, we younger researchers have lost the best-informed brain to bounce such ideas against.

Miguel Mathes' work has been of such immense value to so many of us for so many years. Out of respect and appreciation, *Mathesiana: Baja California Studies in Honor of W. Michael Mathes* is offered as a small token of our everlasting gratitude. The papers to follow reflect the profound influence that Professor

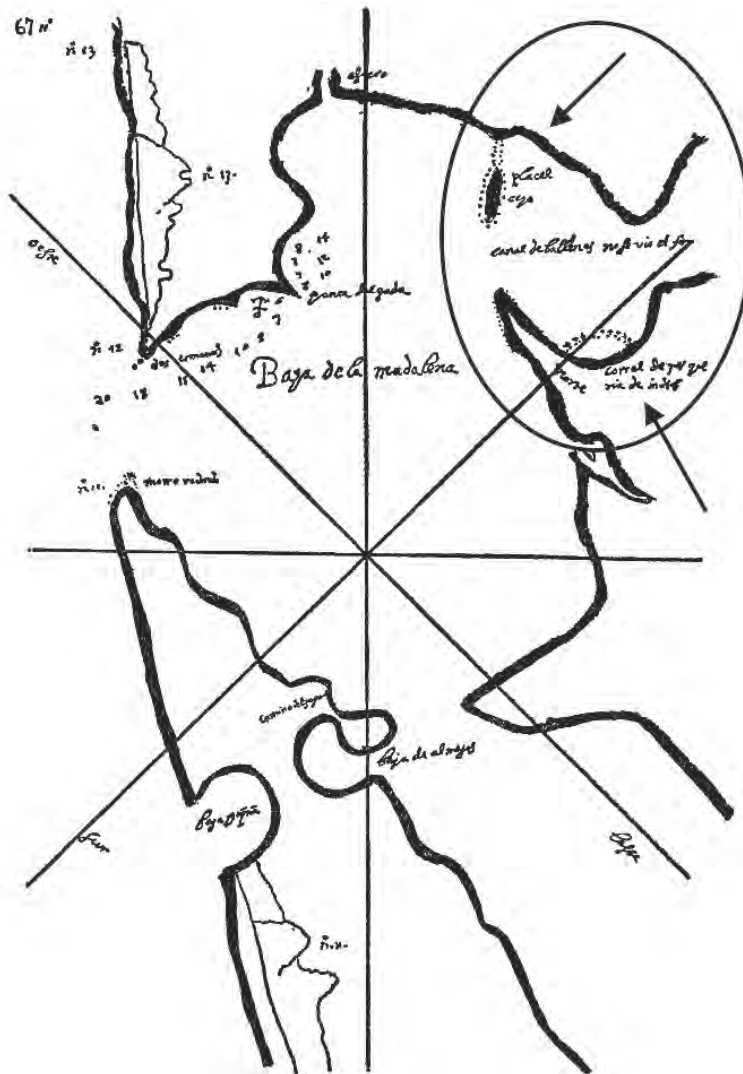


Figure 6. This map, a product of Vizcaino's 1602 cartographic voyage, highlights the value of documents to historical archaeology. The upper text (top arrow) within the superimposed oval reads *placel ceja* (curved oyster bed); the lower text (lower arrow) reads *corral de pesqueria de indios* (Indian fishing "corral"). This is probably the earliest European recognition of aboriginal California fishtraps. From Wagner (1929:202), translation by W. Michael Mathes.

Mathes had on the development of Baja California scholarship. Miguel Mathes' love for Mexico and the Spanish language is recounted in the first contributed paper, authored by Brian Dervin Dillon. Dillon's intimate tribute to Mathes draws on personal reminiscences of the remarkable academician whose Mexican adventures began with his first trips across the border when barely a teenager. This *Quarterly* double-issue includes a posthumous Mathes study alongside those by his students, colleagues, and admirers. The living contributors to this *PCASQ* double-issue knew Mike Mathes personally. They offer papers

reflecting a few of Mathes' many research interests, including the exploration and colonization of Antigua California, historical archaeology, heritage tourism, natural resource procurement, and indigenous warfare. Data have been marshaled from fields as diverse as archival study, archaeological field survey, scientific excavation, and human osteology.

Included herein is what may be W. Michael Mathes' penultimate publication. In "Baja California, Then and Now," Mathes looks back over a half century of work begun in the 1960s and notes important

contributions of those scholars whom he either inspired or with whom he collaborated. Next, complementing Mathes' (2008, 2009, 2011, 2013) earlier writings on indigenous conflict in Baja California, particularly relating to non-Yuman groups on the peninsula, J. Eldon Molto provides very different kinds of evidence in "Malintent Trauma Among Pre-historic Las Palmas People." Here Molto sheds new light on ancient patterns of warfare that survived into the historical era on Peninsular California as revealed by human osteological study. Molto explores the links between subsistence, resource access, social inequality, and violence in the past and deftly combines archaeological data and ethnohistoric accounts to refute the notion that violence among peninsular California's hunter-gatherer societies was isolated or nonexistent. This important article not only illustrates how useful the study of human skeletons and mortuary behavior can be but also reveals how broad and deep was W. Michael Mathes' impact on California archaeology.

Following Molto's study, Thomas Bowen, among the first archaeologists to work on Isla Ángel de la Guarda, explores the cultural dynamics of that island's prehistoric obsidian industry. Isla Ángel de la Guarda obsidian found its way to the mainland, but how it did so and where exactly it came from were unknown. So, beginning in 1988 and continuing through 2009, Bowen and his team of researchers spent over 100 research days in 12 locations, attempting to understand patterns of obsidian procurement. Bowen (2009:67–69) made numerous archaeological discoveries on Isla Ángel de la Guarda for over 25 years. His investigations have resulted in spectacular discoveries of rock cairn sites, circular rock structures (*corralitos*) and clearings, shellfish scatters, and rhyolite, andesite, quartz and obsidian quarry-workshops. Bowen's archaeological research shows that the peninsula's ancient peoples successfully adapted to diverse settings, including offshore islands.

Contributor Karina Busto-Ibarra as well as Fermín Reygadas Dahl and his three coauthors propose ways to effectively protect Baja California Sur's natural and cultural heritage. Busto's comprehensive survey of historic site types provides a guide for historical archaeology that can and should be done in Baja California Sur. Her paper relates that historical archaeology is underemphasized, although her study does note some preservation-related efforts at missions and shipwreck sites. There are hundreds of recorded and unrecorded historic sites throughout Baja California Sur, but few have been excavated. In the past, historic sites were threatened by natural processes, including erosion, burrowing animals, and gale-force winds. Now, more than ever, development and modernization are depleting Baja California Sur's cultural and natural resources.

In the final article, Reygadas, Javier Arce Meza, Brian Dillon, and I discuss the use of *tezontle* (vesicular basalt) in the Spanish colonial construction efforts in Baja California. *Tezontle* had been used with great success on mainland Mexico since 1550; its application came much later in Baja California. European colonists gained a foothold in Peninsular California slowly and only with great difficulty. Permanent settlements were not successful until 1697, when Jesuit priest Juan María de Salvatierra established Mission Nuestra Señora de Loreto, the mother of all Baja and Alta California missions. Soon thereafter, Mission San Francisco Javier Viggé-Biaundó, the main subject of this paper, was founded. Reygadas et al. explore the various ways in which history, education, and alternative tourism can be used to raise awareness about preservation issues and infuse local economies with new kinds of history-related tourism.

Mike's passing has created a huge intellectual vacuum that will be impossible to fill; his unique talents as a researcher, writer, and teacher will never be duplicated.

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