

1. Description

1.1 Name of Society, Language, and Language Family:

-The name of this group is the Quechan (Kwtsaan, Yuma) people, which means “those who descended”.

-The Quechan speak a language of the Hokan language family. Theirs is the Yuman subfamily, however, Quechan people in different areas may have spoken different dialects. The actual language has the same name as the people who spoke it – Quechan. The language of these and related people requires more research and study. (3)

1.2 ISO Code:

-YUM (5)

1.3 Location (Latitude/Longitude):

-The Quechan people lived in portions of what is now California and Arizona in the southwest region of the United States. The precise latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates of their territory are 32°47’N 114°39’W. This territory ran along the Colorado River, on both sides of its intersection with the Gila River. They currently live in the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation, established in 1884. (2)

1.4 Brief History:

-The ancestors of the Quechan settled on the Colorado River. Available archaeological evidence suggests that the Quechan began as patrilineal bands that, over time, developed into larger tribal groups. This formation was caused by general population increase, competition with neighboring groups, and lucrative trade routes. In 1540 a Spanish expedition headed by Hernando Alacrón made contact with the Quechan. For the next three-hundred and fifty years the Quechan were in partial contact with Spanish, American, and Mexican exploratory groups. In 1779, Spanish settlers and soldiers attempted settlement in Quechan land. In retaliation, the Quechan fought back and controlled the lower Colorado River until the 1850s. In the 1850s, U.S. soldiers defeated the Quechan and established Fort Yuma. The Quechan were left with reservation land on the west side of California. A fraudulent 1893 agreement with the U.S. government saw them lose important segments of their land. Currently the Quechan are seeking economic stability as a result of lost land. (2, 86-98)

1.5 Influence of Missionaries/Schools/Governments/Powerful Neighbors:

-Spanish settlers, as stated earlier, attempted to settle Quechan land in the 1700’s and the Quechan retaliated and defended their land successfully. In the 1800’s, the U.S. government established Fort Yuma Indian Reservation and made an agreement with the Quechan that made them give up a great majority of their land. (2, 86-98)

1.6 Ecology:

-The lower Colorado region where the Quechan reside is virtually rainless. Vegetation in the area with the exception of cacti and mesquite is located only at the river bottoms. At times during the year the river would overflow providing the surrounding soil with nutrients and moisture. This made it ideal for agriculture in which the Quechan planted corn and melons during

June and July. They relied on pumpkins, known as Axma'ta, the gourd (cucumis), and cow peas. In addition, the Quechan also planted wild grasses, which were planted in the less fertile parts of the soil. Grass provided a large portion of the total food supply yearly. The grasses they planted included akata'i, aksam, and akyire. The Quechan would eat wild seeds collected from the surrounding plantation areas. Wild seeds comprised a large part of their diet – similar to corn. (1, 156)

1.7 Population Size, Mean Village Size, Home Range Size, Density:

-The 2000 census reported that there were 2,376 people living on the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation. Alfred L. Kroeber estimated that in 1770 the Quechan population was 2,500, however, pre-contact estimates of population size indicate 4,000 or more people. (2, 97)

-Each village or ranchería housed hundreds of people and the largest known ranchería, kuxsil', was estimated to be home to over eight-hundred individuals.

2. Economy

2.1 Main Carbohydrate Staple(s):

-Vegetation in this region was very confined due to a general lack of precipitation, however, the sloughs in the area flooded annually enriching the soil with a layer of mud and they frequently remained moist for the entire hot season. The flooded regions were used to support the growth of wheat, maize, beans, watermelons, and calabashes. The Quechan also collected wild seeds and fruits in the area. (1, 107)

2.2 Main Protein-Lipid Sources:

-All variety of game animals were relatively scarce in the region where the Quechan lived. Hunting was undertaken in the winter and men went out alone or in small groups of three to four. The most common animals hunted were deer and antelope, however, mountain sheep were killed on occasion. These animals were practically the only source of meat in their diet. (1, 118)

2.3 Weapons: Bow and Arrow, Blowguns?:

-The Quechan used simple, un-backed bows with equally simple arrows. Arrows commonly did not include a projectile point, only the sharpened end of a stick. These sharpened sticks often had multiple purposes, including projectile weapons like arrows or spears if they were cut longer and digging sticks. The Quechan also had a short club made of a readily available heavy wood called mesquite. This club was known as the ke'lyaxwai. It was part of a group of weapons typically found in the lower Gila and Colorado River region. This weapon was relatively small, often less than a foot in length. Sometimes it was made with a sharp edge and was more axe-like. This weapon also had a short handle with a pointed tip where a thong was tied. This way, the user could put his arm through and prevent him from dropping it. This weapon was only used by the bravest of men in close quarters combat. They also had longer clubs known as to'kyet. It was made of tapered truncheons of mesquite wood and was about 2 feet long and 1.5-2 inches thick. The to'kyet was wielded by women for self-defense or when

accompanying war parties. The Quechan had a spear known as the u'ta't which was a four-foot rod of mesquite wood, sharpened at one end and hardened in a fire. It was typically used as a stabbing stick and is fairly similar to the double-edged, feathered staff called the aokwi'l – only used in ceremony. They used stone knives for hunting and fighting. They also used rock fragments which were reduced to a single pointed edge with a handle wrapped in sinew or willow bark and was about eight inches long. (2, 89/1, 170-171)

2.4 Food Storage:

-The Quechan rarely stored food, however during the summer months they held feasts, during which they had prepared ripened beans. The beans were temporarily stored in an underground pit and then stored again under a shade stacked in piles. The beans were eaten in large feasts shortly thereafter. (1, 118)

2.5 Sexual Division of Production:

-The Quechan relied heavily on gathering and foraging and not much on hunting itself. This may be one reason for the relatively lax rules for the division of labor. The Quechan also did some agriculture, which contributed significantly to their diets. Men often did the heavier and more strenuous aspects of the job like clearing the fields, digging plot the holes for planting, weeding, and gathering the harvest. Women sowed the seeds in the field and upon the gathering of the harvest by the men, stored the food for future consumption. Men and women could participate in whichever phase of the job they wished to even if it was typically done by members of the opposite sex. (2, 87)

2.6 Land Tenure:

-Land was generally considered to be the property of the household and the land associated with each house was abandoned upon the death of one of its adult members. At such time the rest of the members of the household would leave and attempt to find a suitable plot of land for farming and other uses that was not already occupied or owned by another household. After the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation was created, each individual member of the tribe was given a ten acre plot which drastically changed the norms associated with land tenure. (2, 89/3)

2.7 Ceramics:

-The types of ceramics made were typically for food and water serving and storage. The Quechan made water jars up to two feet tall and cooking bowls up to one foot tall. They also made dishes for food and associated serving dippers. They made large bowls to transport goods throughout the area. There was a type of jar known as an olla of which there were two types. The first was a carrying jar for transportation and a jar for drinking. Pottery was typically made using red clay and mixed with finely ground granite as a temper. The pottery was formed using a rounded pebble anvil and a curved wooden paddle. The pottery was frequently painted with red and black colors. (1, 123-124)

2.8 Specified (prescribed or proscribed) Sharing Patterns:

-The Quechan had little interest in becoming wealthy as families or individual people. They had a strong sense of tribal community and wanted everyone to have what they needed. They were relatively egalitarian, sharing food and supplies with each other. They were not materialistic. If one member of the group was doing poorly or going without the normal quantity of resources, then all of the members of the society were. (2)

2.9 Food Taboos:

-In the boys' initiation rites, they were made to run long distances and have their noses pierced. However, during this period of a few days, they were restricted in the amount and type of foods they could eat. They were only allowed to eat one bowl of watered-down corn mush each day. (God 150) Similarly, for the four days following the birth of a child the parents could only eat watery corn mush. (1, 159-160)

2.10 Canoes/Watercraft?:

-The most common watercraft used by the Quechan was a single cottonwood log. These logs were used to carry a small party or load down the river. Half submerged floats were used for individuals. A bundle of rushes and canes was placed on the ends of a slender pole. An individual could straddle the pole and propel himself forward using his arms. Large rafts were constructed of cottonwood logs and bundles of tule. (1, 127)

3. Anthropometry

3.1 Mean Adult Height (m and f):

-The Quechan are generally found in "two relatively distinct types". There is one body type that is tall, narrow, with long limbs, and a stature of six or more feet. The other type, equally tall, but with a square-shaped face, broad shoulders, waist, and hips. (1, 94)

3.2 Mean Adult Weight (m and f):

-The average adult male weighs between 147 and 160 pounds.

4. Life History, Mating, and Marriage

4.1 Age At First Menarche (f):

-Girls puberty rites occurred when the girls were about the age of twelve or thirteen, which indicates that this was the age of their first menarche. (1)

4.3 Completed Family Size (m and f):

-The Quechan were patrilocal, but they had an ambilocal extended family household unit until the last hundred years or so. In other words, marriage partners would live with their nuclear families and the parents of either the father or the mother and perhaps several other extended family members. When the Quechan were given land allotment and a wage-based economy in the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation they reduced their family sizes to mostly just the nuclear family. However, the parents of the couple and other kin were often living very close anyway. (4)

4.5 Age at First Marriage (m and f):

-Marriage was often arranged and conducted during the girls' puberty. There was often a ceremony attached to the event. Marriage, if it was not arranged, occurred whenever a woman agreed to marry a male suitor. (1, 155)

4.7 Percent Marriages Polygynous, Percent Males Married Polygynously:

-Marriage in Quechan society was typically monogamous, but no societal laws or rules prohibited a man from marrying multiple females. If a man could convince multiple females to marry him or his wife was ill and he wished to stay with her but also have a healthy wife, males could practice polygyny without societal criticism. (1, 155-156)

4.8 Bride Purchases (price), Bride Service, Dowry?:

-After a marriage agreement the male's parents would compliment the girl and her family and present them with gifts. The gifts consisted of stores of corn, beans, or even horses. These gifts were a formality and not considered payment and as a result, even in divorce were not returned. (1, 155)

4.9 Inheritance Patterns:

-Although there is little evidence revealing how land was owned among the Quechan, the available evidence suggests that upon the death of the "owner" of a plot of land his kin did not inherit it. In fact, the family of the deceased would typically acquire a replacement plot in a different location. Land ownership was very informal. This in combination with frequent abandonment of plots implies that land was not a scarce resource for the Quechan. In addition, inheritance of material property did not exist because all the possessions of the deceased, including the home, were destroyed or given away so as not to be reminded of the sadness associated with the death. Often times this left the family of the deceased in disarray, in which case, other family and friends would support and help them. (2, 89)

4.10 Parent-Offspring Interactions and Conflict:

-Children were often reprimanded for behavior that did not align with the social norms observed by the Quechan as a form of punishment. There are indications that physical punishment like spanking occurred, albeit very infrequently. (3)

4.11 Homosexual Activities, Attitudes Towards Homosexuals:

-The Quechan recognized both male and female transvestites or gay individuals. Females were known as kwe'rhome and males were known as elxa'. Elxa' are more common in Quechan society and are considered to have undergone a change of spirit. This change is the result of dreams that occur during puberty. These dreams are believed to consist of messages from plants, specifically the arrow-weed. Societal rules assure that the parents of an elxa' feel ashamed, but there are few attempts to suppress elxa'. In fact, it is considered unwise to interfere with elxa' because they are thought to have supernatural powers. Kwe'rhome, on the other hand, are rarer. In a similar fashion to elxa', kew'rhome have dreams at puberty that lead to their change, but they dream of male toys and weapons instead of plants. The objection by parents toward kwe'rhome is more severe, often times resulting in bullying in an attempt to change the girl's tendencies. Homosexuality among both men and women is relatively and is not considered strictly objectionable. It

is also suggested that kwe'rhome and elxa' were loosely considered to be derogatory terms. (1, 157)

4.12 Pattern of Exogamy (endogamy):

-Exogamous (1, 142)

4.13 What is the Belief of the Role of Males in Conception; Is Paternity Partible? Are These Other Fathers Recognized?

-A male's attitude and "psychological condition" is believed to be the determining factor in conception and the creation of a child. The male literally has the power to produce a child. He gains this power through dreams he should have before copulation. If he does not have a spiritual feeling upon intercourse, conception will fail. The male knows at that moment whether or not the intercourse was successful. (1, 158)

4.14 What is the Belief of the Mother's Role in Procreation Exactly? (e.g. "receptacle in which fetus grows"):

-The woman can have an influence on conception although seeming lesser than the man's. The woman can impede impregnation by resisting the child and desiring not to have a child. She can create a psychological impediment to conception just as the man can make a psychological effort to have a successful conception. It is generally believed by the Quechan that the man provides the woman with the child and she then nurses and cares for it inside. The pregnant woman's dreams had a great influence on the pregnancy. If she dreamed of bows, arrows, eagle's feathers, etc. the child would be male. If she dreamed of birds, she would be ensured a healthy child and a delivery free of complications. (1, 158)

4.18 Do Females Enjoy Sexual Freedoms?:

-Yes, women decided to sleep or not to sleep with a man. For example, if a man was not interested in marriage the woman was not expected to have intercourse with for the first four nights or longer if she desires. In divorce situations the father keeps the children. (1, 155-156)

4.20 If Mother Dies, Who Raises the Children?:

-In the case of a divorce or the death of a mother, the father/husband keeps the children and continues to raise them with the help of his family, of course. (1, 156)

4.21 Adult Sex Ratio: Number of Adult Males Divided by Number of (reproductive) Females:

-According to the 2010 U.S. census there are slightly more females than males within the current Fort Yuma Indian Reservation. There are 1047 male Quechan people and 1150 women, or 48% male and 52% female. (8)

4.25 Patterns of Descent (e.g. bilateral matrilineal) for Certain Rights, Names or Associations:

-The Quechan have a patrilineal and exogamous system. (1, 142)

4.27 Is There a Formal Marriage Ceremony?

-A feast would be held lasting three to four days. The feast would consist of an enormous amount of food, singing, and dancing. The couple and their families would receive corresponding social praise depending on the scale

and magnificence of the party. After the feast concluded, the couple were deemed officially bonded. (1, 156)

4.28 In What Way(s) Does One Get a Name, Change Their Name, and Obtain Another Name?:

-When taking a name a man must be sure that the name was not used by a recently deceased person. In certain circumstances using personal names can be very insulting. For a time, female did not use their personal names, instead they were addressed by their sib names. As children they were given nicknames, but such names often went into disuse upon reaching adulthood. Young boys were given nicknames according to some characteristic activity. A formal name to be used in adulthood is given around the time of the initiation rite. The name is officially announced at a feast so that the group will know the new name. A man may never change his name, however he could take a new name and announce it over a feast in order to call attention to himself and gain the rewards of hospitality. The names of the Quechan fell into very distinct categories. Names could be derived from natural or cultural objects. Other names were derived from personal characteristics. Other names were derived from several references. (1, 149-150)

4.29 Is Marriage (preferred to be) Within Community or Outside Community? (m/f difference)

-Kukumat, one of their religious/mythical figures strictly prohibited the marriage of neighboring tribes people. It was said that the Quechan sometimes raided those neighboring villages and took women as wives or just copulated with them, it was temptation from the blind old man – another mythical figure. Sometimes if the Quechan raiding party came back with captives, and they were not killed, they were simply assimilated into Quechan society. In that rare case, they could be taken as wives. (7)

4.30 Are Marriages Arranged? Who Arranges (e.g. parents, close kin)?

-When a girl reaches puberty the parents announce her marriage. These marriages were typically arranged by the parents of the two households. Alternatively marriages were sometimes not arranged if someone refused to participate. In these cases a young man would spend time at the house of the girl he wanted to marry in an attempt to woo her. If the woman was interested she would let him sleep with her for four consecutive nights. During this time the couple would not have intercourse. After the four days the woman would go and cook a meal for him and his family. (1, 155-156)

Warfare/Homicide

4.14 Percent Adult (male) Deaths Due to Warfare:

-Warfare between the Quechan and neighboring tribes, rarely lead to many male deaths because individual battles only consisted of two to three hundred people if it were a very large battle. There were likely smaller battles of fewer than one hundred people. In fact, many of these conflicts would simply end when one side decided that they had taken too many casualties, so there were very few deaths. Lastly, the military technology of the Quechan and their neighbors consisted of weak bows and arrows,

wooden sticks, clubs, etc. of which none were particularly lethal. Conflict was often arranged as a challenge, so they were more like sports than real tension and conflict. (1, 162)

4.15 Outgroup vs. Ingroup Cause of Violent Death:

-The Quechan believed they had been endowed with a collective tribal, spiritual power by Kukumat. This power, essential for life, was increased or renewed by war or hostility with neighboring tribes, leading to conflict, killing, raids, theft, etc. (1, 161)

-Social norms were greatly valued by the Quechan and flagrant opposition to them was sometimes punished by sorcery, and in even rarer cases murder. They also performed "public floggings" of drunks as a deterrent. (3)

4.16 Reported Causes of In-Group and Out-Group Killing:

-The Quechan lived near the Colorado River which is a very enviable resource that provides an abundance of animals, plants, and fertile farmland. The neighboring tribes and Europeans such as the Spanish would consistently battle the Quechan over these valuable resources. It was a constant source of tension that caused the killing of many people. (7)

4.17 Number, Diversity, and Relationship with Neighboring Societies (external relations):

-Much of the Quechans' lives and energy were spent preparing for or engaging in warfare. The Quechan distinguished between two types of warfare; large direct engagements and small raids to steal horses, resources, and slaves from neighboring groups. In addition, those raids were enacted by individual rancherías for excitement or revenge. Warfare typically led to very few deaths until the 18th century when warfare increased in both scale and intensity, due to economic factors associated with the arrival of the Spanish. (2, 86)

4.18 Cannibalism:

-There is no evidence that the Quechan engaged in any cannibalistic behavior and they certainly do not today. (4)

5. Socio-Political Organization and Interaction

5.1 Mean Local Residential (village) Group Size:

-Most villages or rancherías housed a few hundred people with the largest known Quechan village called xuksil' being home to more than eight-hundred people. (4)

5.2 Mobility Pattern (seasonality):

-The Quechan owned a particular territory and did not move very far from it, but they did move according to seasonality and the ripening of new fruits. Although some moved, many locations such as villages had permanent residents. These settlements, called rancherías, acted as bases for foragers to live and spend the winter months. They had similar villages and locations for the summer months when they moved closer to the river for farming purposes. The Quechan generally moved around the landscape according to the flood patterns of the Colorado and Gila Rivers to take advantage of the most promising and fertile farming land. (1, 120)

5.3 Political System (chiefs, clans etc, wealth or status classes):

-The Quechan had some formal leadership for their clans/tribes which came in the form of the kwaxót – the governor of civil affairs, and the kwanamí – the leader of war. The kwaxót was seen as the “embodiment of spiritual power”, but the actual power and influence of this position was likely not very great. Similarly, The kwanamí was seen as a “brave and skillful warrior” whose influence on war strategies or role in commanding men was questionable. As well as these positions, the Quechan clans also had paipátaaxán or headmen whose leadership of the tribe was more certain. They had many leadership responsibilities including meeting at councils to discuss any issues that the tribe was currently facing. Headmen often came from important families, but had to meet particular criteria in addition to become eligible for the position. One criterion was his dreams. Many of the tribal elders heard the potential headman’s dream recounted to them and decided whether or not he was qualified to hold the position. There were no prescribed term limits, rather headmen held their positions only for as long as they proved that they were capable of handling the responsibilities associated with it. Public opinion decided when a headman would be replaced. (2, 92-93)

5.4 Post Marital Residence:

-After marriage it was common practice for the woman to live with the man in his home. In situations where a man had multiple wives, they would all move in with the man in his home. Divorce could be initiated at any time by a woman in which case she would move out of the man’s house. (1, 155-156)

5.5 Territoriality:

-Quechan armies consisted of volunteers who wanted to defend their people. They had little experience with weapons. The Quechan would round up war parties and find neighboring tribes and demand combat. Such battles were supposed to be reminders of the borders of Quechan territory. These were often small battles in which neither side would take many injuries and were not very serious. The reason they made these strict boundaries is that they possessed fertile farmland around the Colorado river that provided them with the resources they needed to live. (1, 162)

5.6 Social Interaction Divisions (age and sex)?

-There do not appear to have been rules or norms in terms of restricting social interaction between people of certain ages or sexes.

5.8 Village and House Organization:

-The Quechan settlements came to be known as rancherías, and were peppered along the Colorado and Gila Rivers and the confluence between the two over several tens of square miles. Their settlements changed location due in part to warfare with neighboring tribes. Each Quechan ranchería was elevated from the floodplain of the rivers. During the time from spring to fall, the agricultural season, the people living in the rancherías moved down closer to the rivers to family farms and plots in smaller arrowweed shelters. (7)

5.9 Specialized Village Structures (men’s houses):

-Shelters were almost entirely open, roofed only with arrow-weed. Closed houses were built during the cold winter months though. Typically there were only very few of these winter houses because several families would occupy one house during the winter. The winter houses were built in a pit in the land. The houses were built around four center posts about eight feet tall. The walls were built with stacked horizontal slats packed with arrow-weed. A fire pit was typically built toward the rear of the house. The houses were expected to be built by leaders or chiefs. A small domed shelter was usually built in the fields after the floods when insects were abundant such a shelter was very small and made of light wood. A semicircular, roofless shelter was built near the main houses in which women performed duties like cooking and other tasks. (1, 120)

5.11 Social Organization, Clans, Moieties, Lineages, etc:

-The Quechan identified many clans with roles and importance that are not well-understood. Some say that these clans performed important functions in mourning ceremonies. These clans were patrilineal, but the clan name was used only by the females of the group. Each female was associated with one or multiple namesakes or totems. They likely had a formal ranking by importance and power. It has been said that there was one clan that lead all the others called the xavá'ck"acá'n. (2, 90)

5.12 Trade:

-The Quechan lived in the vicinity of several other tribes in the American southwest such as the Mojave, Maricopa, Cocopa, Hopi, and others. They traded with most of their neighbors for items that they could not find or produce for themselves. For example, they traded wheat that they grew for themselves to the Mojave, who did not grow it. The Quechan traded for blankets from the Hopi people east of them. The Quechan also may have acted as a kind of middle man for several of the neighboring tribes. They likely took a portion of the goods that they allowed to pass through their territory via the confluence of the Gila and Colorado Rivers. (7)

5.13 Indications of Social Hierarchies:

-As with many aspects of Quechan life, social status was often gained through the analysis of dreams. Individuals such as political leaders, brave warriors, and religious leaders all possessed dream power which allowed them to gain greater prestige than those whose dreams were deemed unimpressive in some way. (3)

-The Quechan had no clear or useful hierarchical system in their military. No grading or society of warriors apart from a tribal or war leader there was little formal hierarchical organization. (1, 161)

6. Ritual/Ceremony/Religion (RCR)

6.0 Time Allocation to RCR:

-Personal conversations between Quechan individuals and their deities was not common nor culturally facilitated. The Quechan did not partake in daily prayers or ritual sacrifices to their respective deities. They did not appeal to Kukumat or his son Kumastamxo for almost any reason in daily life. The

majority of time spent devoted to rituals, ceremonies, and other religious activities was through puberty/initiation rites, mourning ceremonies, birth rituals, shamanic rituals, and others. (1, 180-181)

6.1 Specialization (shamans and medicine):

-Despite modern American influence, magical practices to cure illnesses still persist in Quechan culture. Typically shamans' or Quechan doctors' claims about magical ability are modest. Each shaman bases what he is capable of treating on his dreams or visits from a guardian spirit. These guardian spirits had connections to animals although the relation is obscure. There are six categories of cure within Quechan culture including: a sickness cure, snake bite cure, arrow wound cure, stunned cure, fracture cure, cure of bewitchment, ghost dream cure. Within each category individual shamans claim to be able to cure a limited scope of ailments based on dreams and their guardian spirit. (1, 184-187)

-The Quechan were also known to have used sweat baths as remedies for certain ailments. A large fire was started on the ground and water was sprinkled on the hot surface of the ground. A bed of greasewood leaves was placed thereafter. The sick individual was then placed naked on the bed and covered in blankets and told to stay there the whole night for maximum effect. (1, 205)

6.2 Stimulants:

-The Quechan had access to tobacco or Melau'u in small quantities. Tobacco was gathered near the edge of the mesa. The Quechan believed that being rowdy by pretending to argue and physically fight one another would impact it with greater potency and flavor. The Quechan also obtained tobacco from the Kamyá' and Akwa'ala because it was considered to be of higher quality. Additionally, they typically smoked tobacco out of cane tubes ranging from six to eight inches in length. These tube pipes were known as Axta" or Aka'sa. The Quechan also used clay pipes of similar size known as Melxo. (1, 117)

-The Quechan also used jimsonweed. It was not, as many thought it would have been, used ceremonially or for the acquisition of dream power. It was, however, taken by people who were trying to become doctors for uncertain reasons. One of the main reasons the Quechan used jimsonweed was to obtain skills in various areas, wisdom, or foresight of the future and one's destiny or fate. Women did not use jimsonweed unless there was a dire need – mostly illness. The preparation of the jimsonweed included taking the leaves of the north part of plants found far enough away from where people lived and prepared by an individual who had not engaged in sexual intercourse for a certain period of time. Fluids from inside the leaves were squeezed into a bowl of warm water for consumption. (1, 205-207)

6.3 Passage Rituals (birth, death, puberty, seasonal):

-Female passage rituals were private affairs undertaken alone or with one related girl. Close to the girls' home a shallow pit six feet long is dug and heated stones cover the bottom of the pit. A bedding of arrowweed is placed atop the stones. The girl lies face-down naked on the bedding and is covered

with a blanket. This ritual takes place very soon after the first menstruation. The girl is first secluded in the care of an elderly female for four days. On the fifth morning a group of the girls' relatives and friends gather and have their heads covered in mud. The female visitors form a circle around the girl in order to sing and advise her on the future. In the afternoon the pit is prepared and she is expected to stay there until sundown.

-The initiation rite for males was known as *ixu'uca'ts* or nose piercing. The ritual was conducted in the late summer when a large enough group of boys were of age. First the septum of the nose was pierced by an experienced elder and a length of willow-bark string was put through. The boys were then taken on a run and on the return they were bathed in a river. For one night they were not allowed to touch their hair or faces and were not allowed to let their heads touch the ground. Additionally, they were not permitted to sleep and could only eat one bowl of corn mush. On the second day they were taken for another run and after returning were told to use the string to keep the wound in their noses open. On the third day they only ran, as they had done the previous two days. On the fourth day, the strings were replaced with wooden sticks until the wound healed and a length of shell or beads on a string was worn in the piercing later. (1, 152-153)

-The Quechan ritual mourning ceremony was called *karúk*. This ritual was usually held upon the death of an influential leader or after there had been a number of other deaths of people whose families wanted to have a ceremony for them. This ceremony included a fake battle including all the phases of a real war against an enemy. Corn was sprinkled on the ground throughout the ceremony as a symbol of purification. *Karúk* also included the destruction of the deceased's property and the burning of icons representing that person. (2, 93-94)

6.4 Other Rituals:

-The Quechan engaged in very particular mourning, funeral, and cremation rituals upon the death of an individual. On the day a person dies there is to be a period of mourning followed by cremation before the sun sets on the day the person died. The Quechan dig a relatively shallow hole in the ground underneath a funeral pyre containing the ashes and bones of the individual. The body was cremated near the house of the deceased while fully dressed and covered in blankets. Often times the house itself was also set on fire after the ceremony had ended. The cremation was accompanied by ceremonial speaking in which an important person or relative would intersperse mythological phrases, "condolences, and exhortation." (1, 207-209)

-At birth a child's ears were pierced five times as a very important mythical ritual with important consequences. If a child died without the piercings, the Quechan believed, he or she would be unable to go to the land of the dead, which had tremendous religious implications. (1, 160)

- Large gatherings and feasts were held at the harvests of crops and beans. In the summer months a large shade was constructed for the short storage of ripened mesquite beans. The beans were soaked in water and buried for a

short period in the ground. After a few days the mass of beans was removed and stored in piles beneath the shade. This process went on for a number of days during which time singing and games were played during the evenings. After many days a leader would give the signal for all to rush to the shade to retrieve as many bundles of the beans as possible to take home. (1, 118)

6.5 Myths (Creation):

-The Quechan creation myth begins with two characters, Kwikumat and the blind old man emerging from a body of water. The old man is said to have been blinded because he opened his eyes in the water. After emerging, Kwikumat creates dry land, the moon, and the sun. In addition Kwikumat creates the Quechan, Dieguno, Cocopa, and Maricopa peoples, names them and gives them speech. On the other hand, the blind old man created four fingerless and toeless people who get kicked into the water by Kwikumat and become ducks, beavers, geese, and turtles. Shortly after, the blind man escapes into the sea where he emits some sort of undefined pestilence. The story continues to outline how marrying Cocopa men is forbidden by Kwikumat but women are tempted to do so by the blind old man. Later, Kwikumat creates Xauasumka'x and Kumastamxo. Kumastamxo sets the sun in place and creates the stars and Kwikumat sets them on fire. Later Marxokuvek creates coyotes, ravens, mountain lions, and cougars. All these animals are subsequently drowned and saved for good and bad behavior. Kwikumat creates rattlesnakes out of a dream to get Marxokuvek sick. Kwikumat eventually creates more people who proceed to anger him. He punishes them by setting them on fire. Kumastamxo gives bows and arrows to the Quechan. Kwikumat offends his daughter, frog, so she burrows underneath Kwikumat and consumes his excrement, killing him. (1, 176)

6.6 Cultural Material (art, music, games):

-The songs sung by the Quechan are arranged in a series and are supposed to be sung together in order. Each individual song in the series is about a specific myth. Other songs sung by the Quechan are mourning songs for the death of relatives. They typically use an instrument called the gourd rattle to accompany songs and dances. To make this instrument the Quechan insert a handful of pebbles into a wooden gourd about six inches long. Rows of holes are punched into the surface of the gourd in order to increase resonance. They also make a deer-hoof rattle in which twenty or more holes are needed punched. The hooves are threaded together in pairs on lengths of cord. The cords are then bound together as the handle of the instrument. In certain instances inverted basketry trays are beaten with sticks as a sort of percussion instrument. (1, 127-130)

-The Quechan played a few games regularly. The first is called shinny. The shinny stick is made out of mesquite wood. It is curved on one end and flattened on the other. There are seven to eight players on each side who use the shinny sticks to uncover the ball from the ground where it was buried. Two parallel lines approximately a quarter of a mile apart, marked by sticks and arrow weed, are the goal lines. The game is won by carrying the ball across the goal line. The second game is called the ball race game. The game

was played by two or more men. Each man had a ball of mesquite wood about three inches in diameter. The ball was lifted on one foot and thrown as far forward as possible. It was chased and the process was repeated over a predetermined path. Archer contests were somewhat common as well. A bundle of arrow weed tips are thrown far onto the ground and competitors take turns trying to hit the target. Those who hit the bundle received an arrow from each other competitor. This is continued until one competitor had all the arrows. The winner threw the bundle in the air and shot at it with arrows from the others. If he missed he had to return the arrow to the original owner. (1, 132)

6.7 Sex Differences in RCR:

-When boys reached a certain age they underwent an initiation rite that involved septum piercing and long distance running. Only boys underwent this ritual and only adult males could lead the boys through the ritual. The girls underwent a puberty ritual upon their first menarche. The ritual involved friends and family members. However, only females were allowed to assist in part of the ritual by gathering in a circle around the young girl(s), singing, and giving advice. (1, 151-152)

6.8 Missionary Effect on RCR:

-The tradition of kneeling and praying known to the Quechan as *ovre'c* was adopted from Christian customs and in the later 1800's many of the Quechan people were being converted to Christian religions by various missionaries. (1, 181)

6.9 RCR Revival:

-There are currently several efforts by members of the Quechan tribe – most of whom live on the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation – with the help of other organizations to revive the Quechan language and culture. There do not appear to be directed efforts to revive the religious and ceremonial aspects of Quechan life, but the efforts targeting language and other cultural components will undoubtedly bring some religious and ceremonial practices back with them. (6)

6.10 Death and Afterlife Beliefs:

-The Quechan believed that the soul or *metr'ao'* was contained within the body and was heavily associated with the heart. In addition, the Quechan believed in something akin to the soul but associated with death and sickness as opposed to life called the *metkwica'*. At death the *metkwica'* disappears but the *metr'ao'* remains near its name for a while, but eventually leaves progressing through four planes of existence. After this journey the soul arrives at the dwelling of the dead or *amai metapo'i*. in the case of premature death, the souls of such individuals spend an extended period of time travelling through the four planes of existence, allowing their family and friends to catch up to them or overtake their journey to the *amai metapo'i*. This process assures that those who lived together on Earth are reunited in the afterlife. It is also believed that the souls of the dead can return to Earth in the form of owls and guide souls to the afterlife. As a result, owls are revered in Quechan culture. It is also believed that the hooting of an owl

signals the approach of dead souls or death and that anyone who is sick or falls ill during this time will most likely die. (1, 179-180)

6.11 Taboo of Naming Dead People?:

-The name of a dead Quechan person is strictly forbidden from be spoken aloud. (1, 149)

6.12 Is There Teknonymy?:

-No

6.13 Briefly Describe Religion (animism, ancestor worship, deism, magic, totems, etc.):

-Quechan religious beliefs are centered around magical powers acquired through special dreams and contact with the spirits of the dead. This power was given to the Quechan by Kukumat but fueled by the spirit power of his son Kumastamxo. Dream power is held by leaders, healers, warriors, and ritualists. In addition there is a collective tribal power that is increased or renewed by war with neighboring tribes. (1)

7. Adornment

7.1 Body Paint:

-Both males and females painted their faces with a variety of colors including yellow, red, white, black, and green. Males sometimes painted their entire bodies in light paint. (2, 89-90)

7.2 Piercings:

-It was common for Quechan men had their septums perforated and a ring or bead was placed inside. As a part of the male initiation rites, puberty aged boys had their noses pierced as well. (2, 89-93)

-A newborn child's ears were pierced within a couple days of birth. This process was called acma'lk and was done by anyone who was willing and capable. A total of five holes were made, three in the lobes and two in the cartilage. Like the boys' septum piercing during their initiation rites, strings were threaded through the piercings to prevent them from closing and healing. (1, 160)

7.3 Haircut:

-Males were proud of their long hair and sometimes rolled it in long wraps. They also treated their hair with mesquite sap or reddish clay or mud. (2, 89-90)

7.4 Scarification

-Tattooing can sometimes be associated with female puberty rites. Tattoos are applied without ceremony after the puberty ritual and completed usually before the girl reaches sixteen years of age. Tattoos are typically confined to the chin, however in certain circumstances lines and dots can be drawn around the mouth. Horizontal bar and dots and even representations of bows can be drawn on the forehead or above the nose. Pricking and breaking the skin and rubbing in mesquite charcoal is the preferred method of tattoo application. A tattoo is most commonly applied by a female relative. (1, 155)

7.5 Adornment (beads, feathers, lip plates, etc.):

-Beads and strings of beads are placed in several piercings throughout the bodies of Quechan people. (2, 89-93)

7.6 Ceremonial/Ritual Adornment:

-The Quechan recognized war leaders called kwanami, meaning "brave man". When entering a battle, the kwanami would be adorned in a way that would distinguish him from all the other warriors. He would cover his entire body with black paint and place two eagle's feathers in his hair. (1, 138)

7.7 Sex Differences in Adornment:

-Males and females wore little to no clothing. Females sometimes would wear a two-piece apron made from the inner bark of a willow. In the cold weather they carried fire brands and wrapped themselves in rabbit skin. (2, 89-90)

7.9 Cultural Revival in Adornment:

-According to NPR reporter L Michelle Faust, Quechan tribal leader, Arrowweed holds a festival in which he and other Quechan tribesmen teach Quechan culture, language, and clothing. In addition to teaching children they also teach Americans who wish to learn about Quechan language and Culture. (6)

8. Kinship Systems

8.1 Sibling Classification System:

-Within the Quechan communities, a mother does not make a distinction about the sex of her children, but the father does distinguish. Additionally, a son and daughter have particular names that each is to use when referring to the father, but they use the same name for the mother. Many similar distinctions are made when referring to extended family members that are based on sex, relation to the mother or father, and age. (1, 148-149)

8.2 Sororate, Levirate:

-There are no indications of any kind of marriage customs like sororate or levirate.

8.3 Other Notable Kinship Typology, Especially Cross-Cousin (MBD/FZD) typology (Crow/Hawaiian/Omaha etc.):

-The traditional Quechan kinship system aligned with the "bifurcate collateral avuncular and Iroquois cousin patterns". There was great significance placed on sex and age. (3)

9. Other Interesting Cultural Features:

-According to NPR's Michelle Faust, the majority of fluent Quechan speakers are 50 years or older. The language is in dire risk of extinction. Indigenous languages such as Quechan are being pushed out of common practice by colonialism and globalization. According to a Quechan speaker called Arrow Wee, the tribe is attempting to save their language. He is working with the California Advocates for Indigenous Language Survival to do so. He does not want to simply document the language (pickle it, as Arrow Weed calls it), rather he wants to teach it to the youth and weave it back into the culture. In

that way he can have the original “cucumber” instead of the altered “pickle”. This, he insists, is the only way to keep the language truly alive. (6)

-Old members of the Quechan society would create large scale fake battles between two parties consisting of women, men, boys, and girls. They would battle and individuals would be removed from the game if the judges deemed them wounded or killed. These battles facilitated their military-esque society but did not carry over to their private lives. In fact, there was very little in-group strife among the Quechan. (1, 173)

-The Quechan did not have tremendous tool building skill. They did not use stone or bone tools often, but they did have nets, traps, and long handed scoops for fishing purposes. These tools were made from cords of twisted plant fibers like their basketry. (1)

-Weaving materials were restricted to willow bark strips and rabbit skin blankets. Willow bark twine was made of large willow bark strips wrapped in large bundles and immersed in water for at least a month. The twine was twisted together in strips of two or three. Rarely, rabbit skin blankets were made and owners of such rare items were considered rich. (1, 126)

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