

**Interpreting Spanish Artifact Assemblages in the Mid-Sixteenth-Century Southeast:
The View from the 1559-1561 Tristán de Luna Settlement on Pensacola Bay**

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Abstract

Sixteenth-century Spanish artifacts are uncommon but widespread finds in the Southeastern United States, and documented assemblages have been variously used by archaeologists either as secondary indicators of the presence of passing Spanish explorers, or also as evidence of direct or indirect Spanish trade. The vast majority of such artifacts are found as grave goods within Native American villages or burial sites, apart from a handful of well-documented Spanish colonial settlements and encampments. Archaeological investigations at the recently-discovered 1559-1561 Tristán de Luna settlement provide a remarkable opportunity to examine a substantial though short-lived residential Spanish assemblage dating to this same era.

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Mid-sixteenth-century Spanish artifacts are relatively rare finds in the Southeastern United States, but are certainly not unknown. The vast majority of such artifacts are found in small numbers within Native American villages occupied during the period of Spanish exploration and early settlement, and most were ultimately placed in the burials of their final owners. Though a considerable number of these objects are documented to have been presented as gifts, such artifacts are normally referred to by archaeologists as “trade goods,” and have most commonly been employed both as chronological indicators and as measures of indigenous acculturation (e.g. Quimby and Spoehr 1951; McEwan and Mitchem 1984; Smith 1984, 1987), with many researchers also attempting to use their presence and geographic distribution in the attempt to trace the routes of documented Spanish exploratory expeditions, and also as an aid to reconstruct the geographic distributions of polities contacted by such expeditions (e.g. Smith 1976; DePratter et al. 1983, 1985; Hudson 1985; Brain 1985a, 1985b; Hudson et al. 1984, 1985; Langford and Smith 1990; Hally et al. 1990). However, systematic research into the precise mechanisms by which such objects were acquired and distributed among native groups has been comparatively limited, though this has changed in recent years (e.g. Knight 1985:169-183; Deagan 1988; Worth 1994a, 2013a:775-779, 2015; Little 2008; Smith et al. 2008; Blanton 2013:33-52; Smith and Hally n.d.).

Beyond those found in Native contexts, an extremely small number of mid-sixteenth-century Spanish artifact assemblages previously studied by archaeologists in the Southeast are unequivocally associated with well-documented Spanish colonial settlements or encampments. Such assemblages are rare in large part because the archaeological trace of fast-moving terrestrial expeditions would be ephemeral at best, constituting only the occasional lost item at nightly camps or along the road. Only longer-term encampments or formal settlements would be

expected to accumulate a more substantial and representative sample of the typical range of material culture used by Spaniards themselves during this period. The largest two of these, of course, are the settlements of 1565 St. Augustine at the Fountain of Youth Park (and its successor settlement from the 1570s under portions of present-day St. Augustine), and the 1566-1587 settlement at Santa Elena on Parris Island, South Carolina (e.g. South 1979, 1980, 1982, 1988; DePratter and South 1995; South and DePratter 1996; South et al. 1988; Deagan 1978a, 1978b, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 2009). In addition, of the dozen or so Menéndez-era garrisoned forts documented for the period between 1566 and 1571, only Fort San Juan de Joara at the Berry site in western North Carolina has been identified and studied in detail, supplemented by recent work at Fort San Antón de Carlos, located at Mound Key in southwestern Florida (Beck et al. 2006, 2016; Thompson et al. 2014). Beyond these four sites, the earliest site with unequivocal evidence for resident Spaniards is the 1539-1540 winter encampment of the Hernando de Soto expedition at the Martin site in downtown Tallahassee, Florida, even though it was only occupied for five months by an army in transit (Ewen and Hann 1998). And of course the 2015 discovery of Santa María de Ochuse, the 1559-1561 terrestrial settlement of Tristán de Luna, adds a fifth artifact assemblage to this list, as the site of the first multi-year European settlement in the entire United States (Worth 2016).

Despite the fact that there are well-studied artifact assemblages from both Spanish residential and Native mortuary contexts dating to the middle decades of the sixteenth century, direct comparative analyses of these distinctive contexts are extremely limited in the archaeological literature, and have only rarely been oriented specifically toward the question of identifying the distinctive features of residential assemblages vs. gift and trade assemblages during the sixteenth century. This question is of course pivotal in evaluating whether specific

artifacts or assemblages can be taken as evidence of a direct Spanish residential presence on an archaeological site, particularly in cases where the specific locations of documented early settlements or short-term encampments along exploratory routes may hinge on this sort of archaeological evidence. Clearly, not all Spanish artifacts or artifact assemblages are equal, and not all tell an equivalent story.

Although during my own career I have had sporadic opportunities to examine this question for various locations across Spanish Florida during the sixteenth century and later (e.g. Worth 1994a, 2013a:775-779, 2015), the 2015 discovery of the Luna settlement on Pensacola Bay holds the promise of providing an extraordinary new opportunity to explore the subject in depth using baseline data from both Luna's settlement and his wrecked ships just offshore, in comparison with a fairly substantial amount of contemporaneous gift and trade goods that likely derived from this very same expedition scattered at Native sites stretching from the Gulf coast to the Appalachian foothills. In this paper I hope to frame the scope of this effort and outline some initial conclusions.

By way of historical context, during the 52 years that preceded the 1565 establishment of a permanent Spanish colonial presence in St. Augustine, Florida, no fewer than 15 documented Spanish expeditions reached the southeastern shores of mainland North America, several of which even pushed inland, with two reaching as far north as the Appalachian mountains (e.g. Lyon 1981; Hoffman 2002; Worth 2013b). All of these expeditions brought gifts and trade goods for the native groups they expected and intended to encounter and interact with, and thus it is no surprise that archaeological evidence for early to mid sixteenth-century Spanish artifacts is widely distributed across the Southeast, if nonetheless comparatively rare due to the low volume and relative infrequency of such contacts during this era of initial contact and exploration. The

amount of such gift and trade goods only increased after the establishment of twin Spanish colonies at St. Augustine and Santa Elena. The penetration of several additional expeditions into the interior, and the expansion of Spanish missions along the coast and gradually into the interior by the beginning of the seventeenth century also led to increases in gift and trade goods (Hudson 1990; Worth 1994b, 2009:181-184).

The nature of these gift and trade assemblages is relatively well-documented through a combination of historical documents and archaeological discoveries at the native sites where such goods ended up. Relatively extensive documentation for gifts brought and distributed on early expeditions or traded and gifted during the early mission period in Florida provides a clear picture of the normal items provided by Spaniards and consumed by Native Americans. The most frequent items documented in detailed and voluminous accounting records over the course of two decades (1595-1616) in the early Florida mission period included strings of glass beads, sleigh bells, buttons, fixed-blade knives, iron axes and hoes, and woven blankets, along with a large and diverse range of raw cloth, thread, and finished clothing items including hats and shoes, sometimes far more expensive than other items distributed (Redondo Villegas 1602a-c; Sotomayor 1616; Worth 1998:126-143). To this can be added a range of other items that were given out much less frequently, including mirrors, scissors, adzes, and raw iron and lead. Though not generally quantified like later records, lists of goods given out or intended for distribution on early exploratory expeditions include all of the above items, as well as other iron tools such as chisels and wedges, as well as sickles and fishhooks (Smith and Hally n.d.).

Beyond the South Florida region, where native groups routinely salvaged shipwrecks for silver and other exotic materials (e.g. Allender 1995; Allerton et al. 1984; McGuire 2014), archaeological finds of sixteenth-century Spanish artifact assemblages within Native American

sites in the Southeast are normally very consistent with the documentary record of gifts and trade goods noted above, with the notable exception of the absence of perishable items of cloth and clothing. Importantly, the archaeological context of these assemblages is generally consistent for this early period, since such objects seem to have been most commonly placed in human burials or funerary mounds not long after their acquisition, most likely with their final Indian owners. Since such objects were highly portable, their final distribution seems likely to have been more dependent on existing patterns of trade and tribute among indigenous chiefdoms than on the actual routes of Spanish explorers or the landing sites of coastal expeditions. Nevertheless, as detailed below, the overall assemblage composition was generally limited to the standard suite of gift and trade goods noted above, supplemented by the assorted items not mentioned in documentary gift lists, including weapons and armor parts, nails and spikes, and other miscellaneous objects that occur with low frequency.

Summarizing and encapsulating the composition of gift and trade assemblages from the many Native American sites across the Southeast is a daunting task, but several authors have tackled this on a large scale. Marvin Smith (1984, 1987), for example, compiled a master list of protohistoric sites in the interior Southeast and sorted them into a series of four assemblages based on the presence of specific varieties of artifact types shown to have chronological significance. The first two of Smith's assemblages he dated to the sixteenth century. More recently, Keith Little (2008) incorporated new data and interpretations to re-sort site assemblages into his own two successive complexes he assigned to the sixteenth-century. Even more recently, Dennis Blanton (2013) compiled another master list for sites with Spanish assemblages he assigned a pre-1550 date, focusing exclusively on glass beads and metal artifacts. Though the details of the chronological assignments of specific artifact types vary somewhat, with some

including types that may overlap into the early seventeenth century, all three summary lists reveal gift and trade assemblages dominated by glass beads, iron tools, bells and other metal ornaments, and weapon and armor parts, though also including occasional other materials such as glass and ceramics when considered for the analysis.

For purposes of comparing gift and trade assemblages with residential ones, I endeavored to make use of the same artifact categories that I had employed in a 2015 analysis of sixteenth-century assemblages on the Georgia coastal plain, breaking the artifacts down into categories of beads, ornament, personal items, iron tools, iron nails and spikes, weapons and armor, glass, and ceramics (Worth 2015). Beyond the obvious definitions for several of these categories, I should note that the bead category includes both glass and metal beads, the ornament category comprises objects of jewelry or bells or clothing fasteners that could have been worn as ornamentation, the iron tools category also includes iron container parts such as barrel bands, and the personal category includes a range of portable personal items not otherwise classified as iron tools or ornament. Unidentifiable iron or copper alloy fragments or scrap are not included in this analysis, but in any case are far more frequent on Spanish residential sites.

While Blanton's (2013) tabulation of his pre-1550 assemblages had the advantage of possessing actual counts of artifacts, his categories were difficult to reconcile with my own, and did not include nonmetal artifacts other than glass beads. Smith's (1987:48-51) and Little's (2008:61-64) listing of artifact types present at all 16th-century sites were much easier to fit into my analytical categories, but did not include numbers of artifacts belonging to each category, and thus the results show only the relative frequency with which each artifact category was present among the total population of sites. Nevertheless, what is clear from all three datasets is that assemblages Native American gift and trade goods during the 16th century were clearly

dominated by beads and other objects of personal ornamentation, along with iron tools, as well weapons and armor parts. While weapon and armor were not normally included in documented gift or trade lists, archaeological assemblages do sometimes include pieces of chain mail and plate armor, sword or dagger fragments, crossbow bolt tips, lead shot, and lance tips. Such pieces may of course have resulted from idiosyncratic gifts or trade, but may also have been trophies from skirmishes or items scavenged from battlefields or camps.

Not surprisingly, however, the standard Indian gift and trade good assemblage of the sixteenth century was only a tiny subset of the normal material culture brought and used by Spaniards themselves both shipboard and on land, as is well-attested in the documentary record for early Spanish Florida (e.g. Hoffman 1977; Hoffman and Lyon 1988; Lyon 1992). In archaeological perspective, sixteenth-century shipboard material culture assemblages have been recovered in the Southeast U.S. from the 1554 Padre Island wrecks in Texas and the 1559 Emanuel Point wrecks in Pensacola Bay, the latter three of which of course are just a few hundred meters from the terrestrial Luna settlement (e.g. Arnold and Weddle 1978; Smith et al. 1995, 1998; Cook et al. 2009). While artifact assemblages on these wrecks certainly include a range of materials normally used by sixteenth-century Spanish sailors and passengers, such items are normally only recovered among a range of other artifacts found in association with wrecked vessels that were also commonly carrying a variety of short-term cargo, not to mention fasteners and other ship's hardware not related to daily life on land, and thus proportional quantitative comparisons with terrestrial assemblages are somewhat problematic (e.g. Skowronek 1987; Sorset 2012; Gifford 2013). Similarly rare, of course, are terrestrial assemblages associated with groups of early- to mid-sixteenth-century Spaniards actually camping or residing in greater Spanish Florida (including the states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and the

Carolinas). As noted above, these include Menéndez's St. Augustine and Santa Elena, Luna's Santa María de Ochuse, along with the Menéndez forts San Juan and San Antón, and Soto's winter encampment. Each of these sites held between several dozen to several hundred Spaniards for between five months and several years, and thus provide good evidence for a typical debris scatter characteristic of Spanish colonists during the era.

For this paper, I used sampled or complete published data from all four previously-investigated residential sites (South 1982; Ewen and Hann 1998; Beck et al. 2016; Deagan 2009) along with current preliminary results from ongoing analysis of artifacts from the Luna settlement (e.g. Worth 2016), sorting counts of listed artifacts into the comparative categories described above. Building upon similar comparisons I conducted for the Georgia coastal plain (Worth 2015), I added published data from several other sites in the interior Southeast in order to round out a broader sampling of sixteenth-century assemblages from Native American contexts for comparison with the Spanish residential assemblages (Pearson 1977; Smith 1977, 1987; Cook 1978; Stowe 1982; Langford and Smith 1990; Blanton and Snow 2010; Whitley, personal communication, 2013; Blanton 2013). Although additional sites and assemblages should eventually be added to this preliminary analysis, using the relative percentages of artifacts within each category, it is clear that while there is of course internal variability between the selected sites in each category, there are several key differences that collectively distinguish residential from nonresidential sites in general. Most importantly, all five of the residential sites above possess not just a more ample assemblage of Spanish material culture than the Indian trade and gift assemblage described above, but stand out in particular due to the presence of one very important and telling category of artifact that generally serves as a very reliable marker for the presence of resident Spaniards: Spanish ceramics. From liquid storage and transport containers

such as olive jars (called *botijas*) to tin-enameled tableware known as majolica (called *loza fina* by Spaniards at the time) as well as a range of lead-glazed and unglazed cookware, Spaniards brought, used, and broke their distinctive ceramics on all the sites where they resided for more than brief visit. The “dominance of ceramics in the Spanish assemblage” has indeed already been specifically noted for both St. Augustine and Santa Elena (Deagan 1983:232; South 1980), and direct comparisons between these and other New World settlements in the New World and contemporaneous assemblages in Spain reveals a remarkable degree of consistency in both ceramics and foodways during the sixteenth century (McEwan 1992). And it is precisely these ceramics which distinguish residential from gift and trade assemblages, since they were neither given or traded by sixteenth-century Spaniards, nor generally desired or consumed by contemporaneous Southeastern Indians, who already had their own well-developed pottery styles that were uniquely adapted to their traditional foodways, and who thus had no real use for Spanish ceramics designed for European-style transport mechanisms, cooking techniques, or tabletop dining. Moreover, not only was Spanish pottery not given or traded to Native American groups, it does not even seem to have been scavenged from abandoned Spanish settlements or campsites, unlike other discarded objects that did indeed have utilitarian or social value among indigenous groups, such as metal tools or weapons. Indeed, the only examples of sixteenth-century Spanish ceramics in purely Native American mound sites in Little’s (2008) list are three sherds that have been reworked into discs, two of majolica at Pine Log Creek and McMahan mounds in Alabama and Tennessee, and one drilled disc of Green Bacin ware at the Ruth Smith mound in Florida (Stowe 1982:103; Mitchem 1989b:321, 323; Little 2008:43-44, 50-51). The only other sites with Spanish ceramics are the Safety Harbor site and nearby Seven Oaks Mound

near Tampa Bay, which likely correspond to another Menéndez fort at San Gregorio de Tocobaga (Mitchem 1989:53-57, 64-72; Worth 2014:34-35).

In addition to Spanish ceramics, other artifact types also serve as evidence for Spanish residential presence instead of trade, particularly including nails, tacks, spikes, and other fasteners associated both with the construction of Spanish-style structures as well as those used for containers and even for attaching horseshoes. Though occasionally such items do appear in Native burial contexts, they are never found in large numbers outside Spanish residential settings. Moreover, in some cases it is not the presence but rather the absence of certain items from residential debris that can serve as yet another clue, as is the case with finished metal tools like axes, wedges, and chisels, which are proportionally commonplace in Native American gift and trade assemblages found in burials, but are relatively scarce at Spanish settlements and campsites (since they were rarely lost, and were generally taken away when the Spaniards left). To sum up, sixteenth-century Spanish residential sites possess proportionally more ceramics, nails, and weapon and armor parts, while at the same time they possess fewer beads and iron tools.

All these Spanish residential characteristics are present at the Luna settlement site currently being investigated by the University of West Florida, including a huge quantity of mid-sixteenth-century Spanish ceramics of diverse types and forms, a similarly remarkable quantity of iron nails, numerically dominated by caret-head nails generally thought to be horseshoe nails (e.g. Mathers et al. 2010; Mathers and Haecker 2011), and a general absence of finished metal tools. A number of weapon and armor fragments have also been found, including crossbow bolt tips, lead shot, and fragments of mail, brigandine, and jack plate armor. As a result of extensive shovel testing during the past year, the basic components of this residential assemblage are now

known to be scattered across a vast and well-defined area encompassing roughly 10 hectares, precisely as would be expected for the Luna settlement, and just as is already documented for the later Spanish settlements at both St. Augustine and Santa Elena. While a handful of Indian trade goods have indeed been discovered in the form of colored glass beads (6 seven-layer faceted chevron beads and 1 Nueva Cadiz Plain bead), their context is consistent with documented supplies brought on the Luna expedition for precisely this purpose, and they were presumably lost in and around the warehouse or residences at the Spanish settlement.

For pure quantity of mid-sixteenth-century Spanish ceramics and other residential debris not normally associated with Indian gift or trade assemblages, the newly-discovered Luna settlement has only two terrestrial peers in the entire Southeastern U.S.: the colonial settlements at St. Augustine and Santa Elena, both of which actually appear to be smaller in area than the Luna settlement, and which also housed fewer than half the number of residents during the sixteenth century (Hoffman 1977; Deagan 1981, 1982:189, 2009:33, 325; DePratter and South 1995:25-26, 47-49). The only other sites that also contain even remotely similar proportions of Spanish ceramics are the DeSoto winter encampment at the Martin site, and the Menéndez-era fort at the Berry site. Virtually all other sites that have produced assemblages of Spanish artifacts from the same era are clearly dominated by gift and trade goods, not infrequently including weapon or armor parts and a few idiosyncratic items that easily could have been taken in battle or scavenged from battle or camp sites. But missing from these gift and trade assemblages are substantial proportions of the one major category of artifact that seems to have been consistently present where Spaniards lived: ceramics. Where Spanish settlers brought food, prepared food, and served food for themselves, they brought ceramics. But such items were of little interest to the Southeastern Indians. The remains of broken Spanish ceramics were not

recycled or scavenged by the Indians after the Spaniards' departure, and remained in place as a testament to the residential Spanish presence. Far from being simply a collection of Indian trade goods at a Native village, the Luna settlement assemblage provides clear and convincing archaeological evidence that a large number of Spaniards actually lived on site, and moreover provides a hugely important dataset on which to base future analysis and comparisons of sixteenth-century Spanish assemblages in the Southeast. Not only does the two-year Luna settlement predate both St. Augustine and Santa Elena, it was short-lived enough to be considered a single-component site, and it was actually connected to one of the three major Spanish *entradas* into the deep interior under Mateo del Sauz in 1560, which was itself likely responsible for a number of the objects comprising many of the native gift and trade assemblages noted above (e.g. Hudson et al. 1989). Ongoing fieldwork and labwork at Luna's Santa María de Ochuse should provide an amazing opportunity to delineate more precisely what the archaeological correlates of early Spanish colonial settlements actually are, and will thus permit an even better contextual understanding of the Native American gift and trade assemblages that have been studied all across the Southeast.

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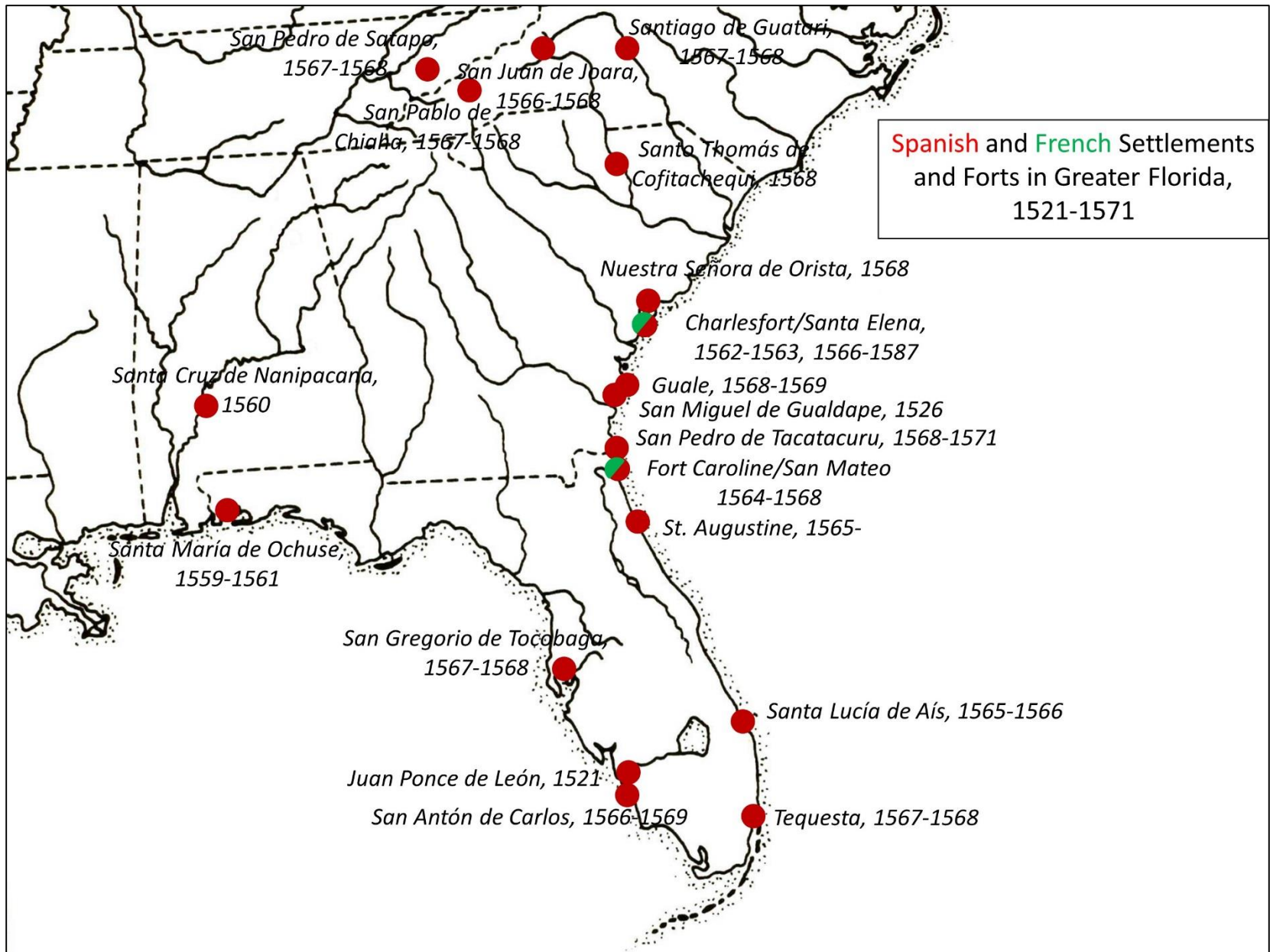
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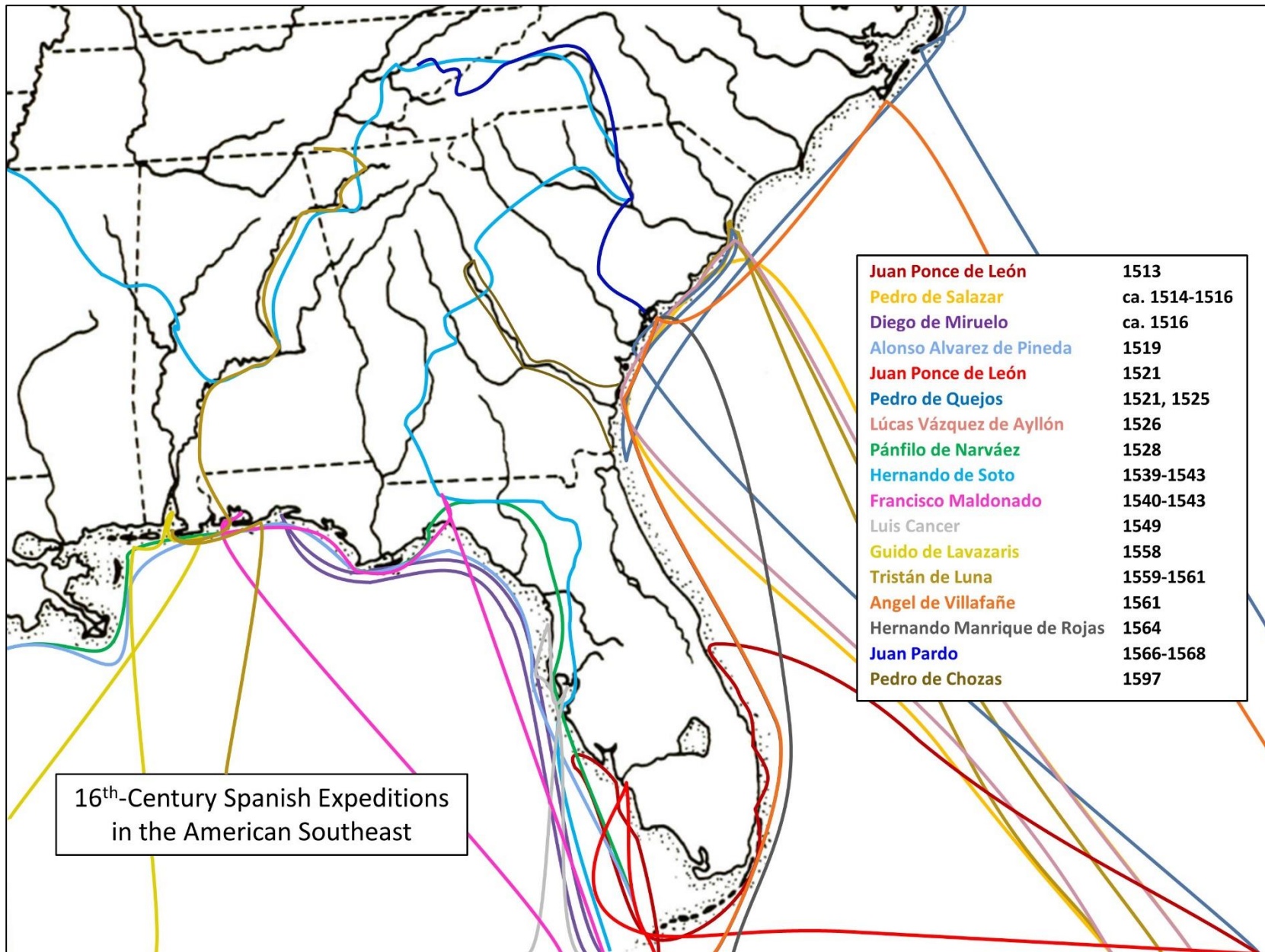
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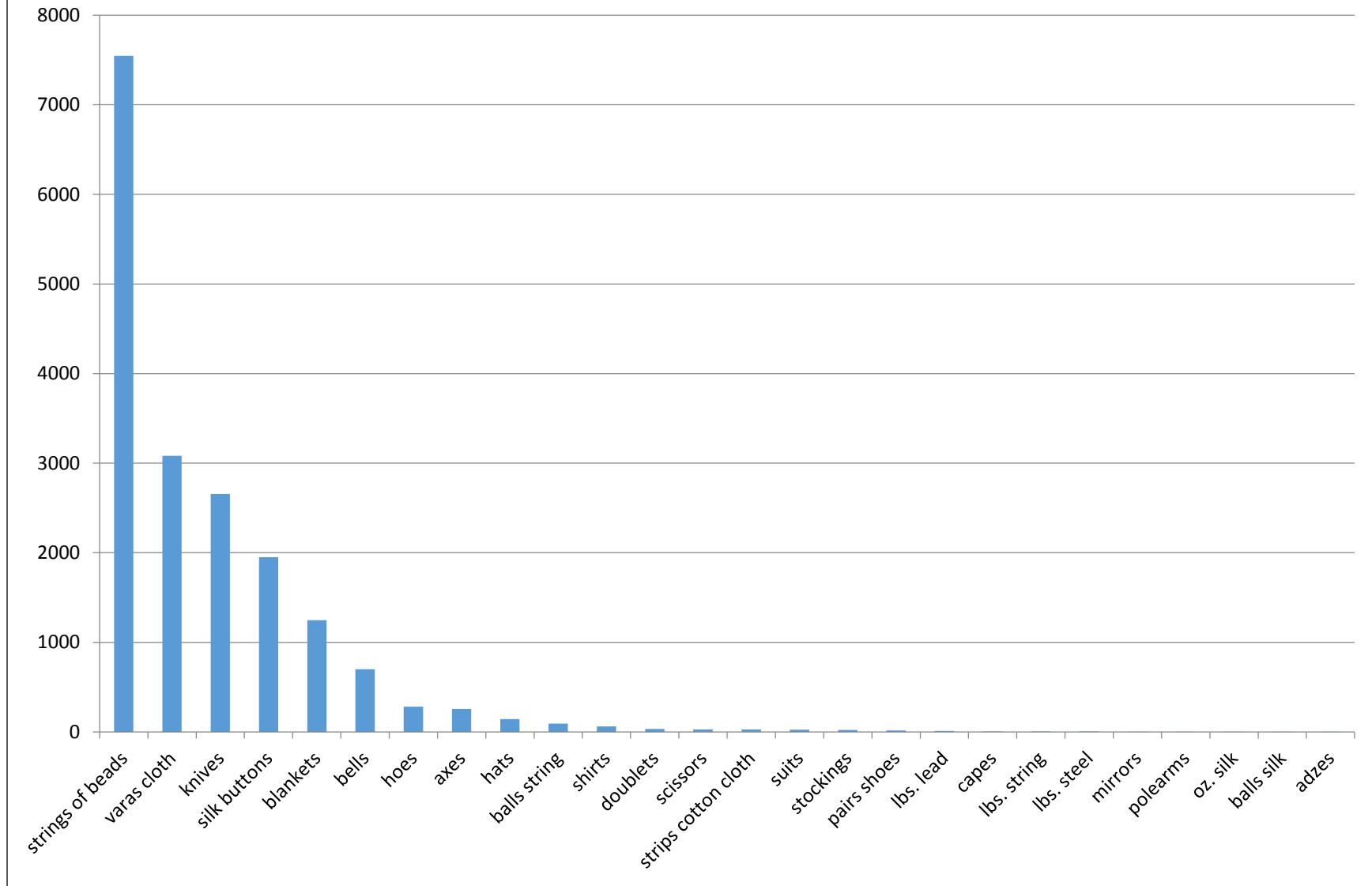
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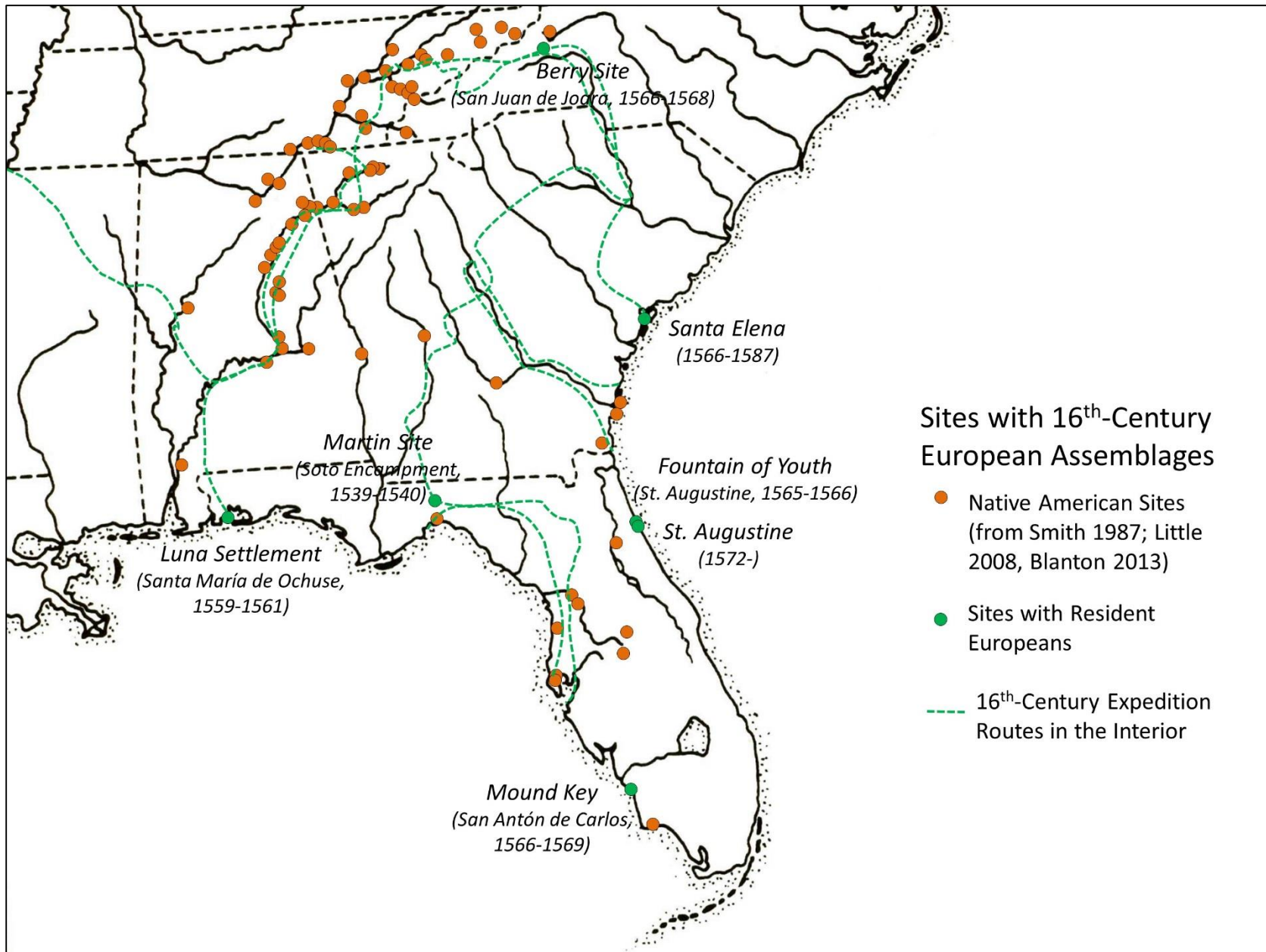
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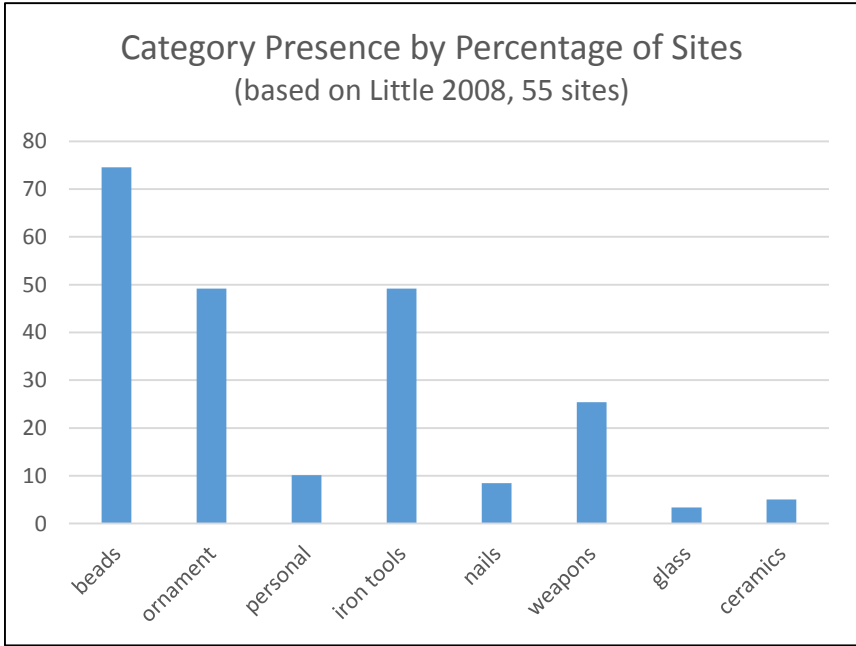
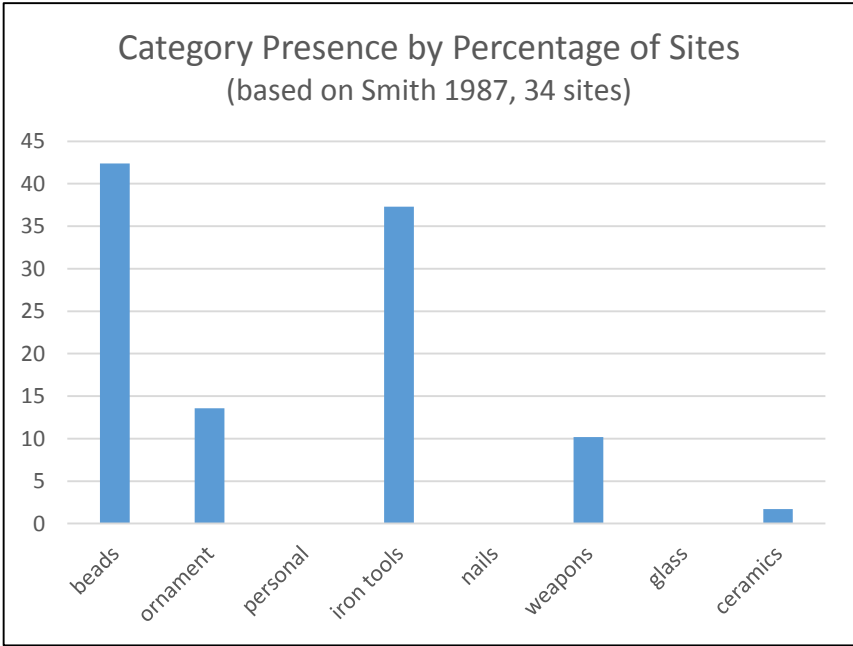
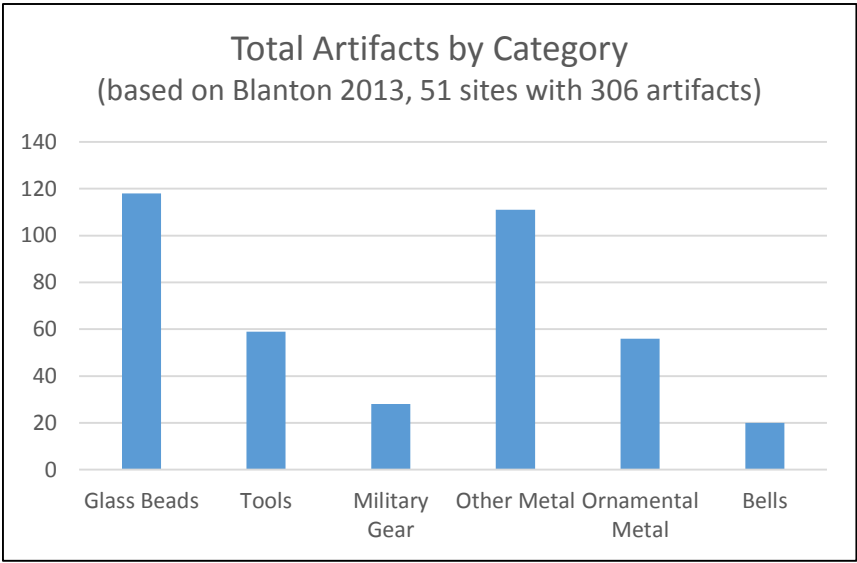




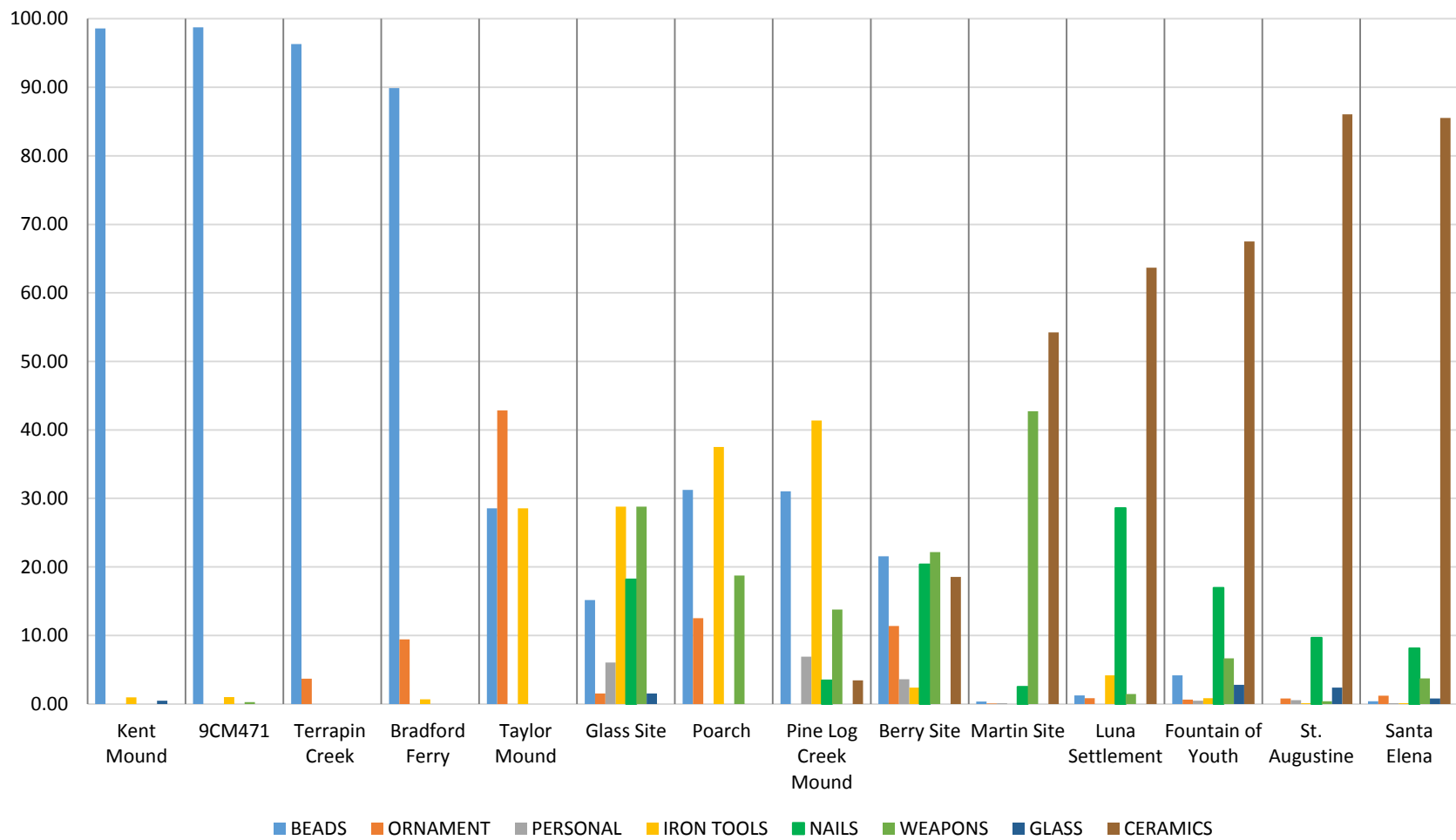
Documented Spanish Gift and Trade Goods in Florida, 1595-1616
(Redondo Villegas 1602a-c; Sotomayor 1616)



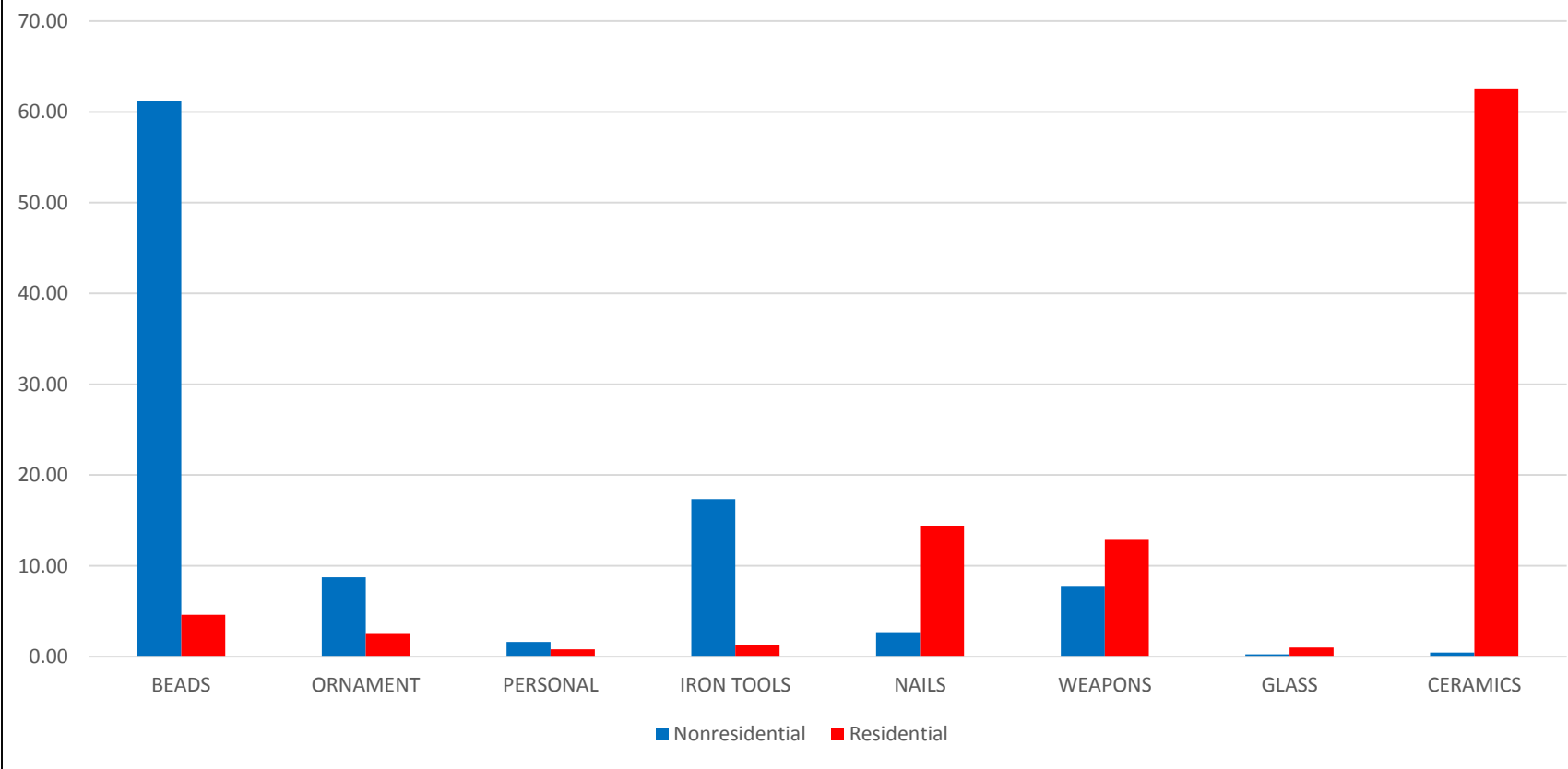




Selected 16th Century Spanish Assemblages - Category by Percent of Total



Selected 16th Century Spanish Assemblage Averages - Category by Percent of Total



Selected Spanish Artifacts from the Luna Settlement Site, Pensacola, FL

