

**SOURCE E****Music and Dance: Recording Traditions**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Vocabulary**

**elders:** Older people, often with a respected position for their knowledge and experiences

**Introduction:**

Pablo Tac was a Luiseño man born at Mission San Luis Rey in 1822, as the mission system was coming to an end. When Tac was twelve years old, he was taken to Rome, Italy, by the priest in charge of the mission. In Rome, Tac studied both Spanish and Latin. He developed the first written form of the Luiseño language by creating a Spanish-Luiseño dictionary. Tac also wrote about his experience growing up in the mission, and he described the history and many of the customs and beliefs of the Luiseño peoples. Before turning twenty, he became ill and died in Rome. Today, Pablo Tac is still well known to the Luiseño because of his efforts to record their language, history, and culture.

This primary source comes from a section of Pablo Tac's writing on the traditional Native dances he witnessed in the mission during his youth. This source includes Tac's introduction about ceremonial dances as well as a description of one Luiseño dance. Tac explains the important role of the **elders** who instruct the dancers and teach the songs in the Luiseño language, so everyone is prepared to carry out the ceremony properly.

**Source:**

*All Indian peoples have their own dances, distinct from each other. In Europe they dance for joy, for festivals, or for some piece of good news. But the California Indians do not dance just for festivals but also before starting a war; in grief, because they have been defeated; in remembrance of the grandparents, uncles and aunts, and parents now dead. . . . But we San Luiseños have three [main] ways only for males, because the women have other dances, two for groups of dancers, one for an individual, which is the most difficult. In the first two many can dance; one kind can be danced day and night, and the other only at night.*

*First Dance*

*No one may dance without the permission of the elders, and they must be from the same people, youths ten years of age or older. The elders, before having them dance publicly, teach them the song and make them learn it perfectly, because the dance consists of knowing the song.<sup>1</sup>*

—Pablo Tac, Luiseño scholar

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1. Lisbeth Haas, ed., *Pablo Tac, Indigenous Scholar: Writing on Luiseño Language and Colonial History, c.1840*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 193–195.