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each of the spatio-temporal culture historical units. It would be asking a lot for a summary text on all of North America to be synthetic of California history and prehistory in a new way, and this text is fairly standard in its treatment of California. Fort Ross serves as the case study for the chapter and is an excellent summary of why archaeologists need to undertake collaborative research with Native communities (Kashaya elders in this case) and undertake public outreach.

The Great Basin section focuses more squarely on prehistoric archaeology, with only three of the 44 pages devoted to protohistoric and historical topics. The chapter is again divided regionally into western and eastern portions, with special sections devoted to the Fremont and the Numic spread. The chapter is again fairly descriptive of the record, with pictures of artifacts, stratigraphic profiles, and projectile point sequences, with dry caves figuring prominently (e.g., Danger Cave, Gypsum Cave, Newberry Cave). Gatecliff shelter comprises the case study, and is an engaging piece written by David Hurst Thomas that describes the process of question-driven research.

In sum, instructors in North American archaeology courses will find this an up-to-date and thorough text. The book is not terribly expensive compared to other academic textbooks, and comes with a CD full of extra and useful material for both instructors and students. At the same time, the subject matter does not stray very far from the beaten path. The descriptions and interpretations are focused on material culture and subsistence patterns as they relate to changing environmental conditions. The culture areas organization of the chapters, and the sub-regional organization within chapters, will reinforce this notion for students. Some sections attempt to go beyond these themes, especially in other chapters dealing with areas outside of California and the Great Basin. In the end, would I use this book in my class? Absolutely. It's definitely the most extensive treatment of North America that I have seen. It's professionally prepared and edited, has lots of "special" boxes, links to websites, and poses a series of research questions for discussion at the end of each chapter. I think instructors in North American archaeology courses, and students, will be pleased with this option as a course text.



## ***Island of Fogs: Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Investigations of Isla Cedros, Baja California***

Matthew Richard Des Lauriers  
Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010.  
221 pp., 123 figures, 26 tables, notes, references, index,  
\$60 (cloth) ISBN 978-0-60781-007-0

**Reviewed by Don Laylander**  
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Archaeological studies in Baja California have been undergoing something of a florescence during the last few years. Much of this work still resides in conference papers and journal articles, as well as in unpublished

theses, dissertations, and governmental *informes*. Matt Des Lauriers' impressive monograph on Isla Cedros is a significant landmark, being one of the very few book-length reports published on the subject, joining the recent Spanish-language studies by Rosales-López and Fujita (2000) and by Gutiérrez and Hyland (2002).

An introductory section presents some of the interpretive themes that are discussed again in Chapters 1–2 and 6–7. Prominent among these themes are the use of comparative approaches (particularly with reference to the Channel Islands of southern Alta California), cultural responses to environmental change, the nature of cultural insularity, and the problem of resource sustainability. The book would probably have been strengthened if the discussions of these issues, which are scattered in various chapters, had been more clearly organized and more sharply focused. However, the patient reader will certainly find much here that is well worth pondering.

Chapter 1 intermixes a geographical introduction to Isla Cedros with a miscellany of other matters, including the author's personal experiences, an overview of previous research, and a sketch of the ethnohistoric record. Chapter 2 offers a novel perspective in considering the experiences of the present-day residents of a local fishing cooperative in relationship to the prehistory of their island. Although the modern occupants have no connection through ancestry or cultural tradition with the prehistoric inhabitants, they have extensive experience with the local environmental setting and its resources, and they are able to offer insights into the analogous decisions that were made by their predecessors. This is an interesting theme, and it is one that is clearly close to the author's heart.

Chapters 3 through 5 constitute the data-oriented core of the volume. The first of these chapters addresses the terminal Pleistocene/early Holocene occupation, primarily at two sites from which an impressive array of radiocarbon assays in excess of 10,000 years old are reported. This is an important contribution to the arguments concerning possible early southward migrations along the western coast of North America. In a puzzling contrast to this relatively rich early record, definite archaeological evidence concerning middle Holocene activity is still very sparse, although Des Lauriers suggests that this may be remedied in the future by additional studies on parts of the island that are as yet little-explored. Chapter 5, by far the longest chapter and the one that is richest in data, discusses in detail the island's late Holocene archaeological record.

Inevitably, a volume such as this contains its share of minor errors. These will be spotted by readers who are already well versed in the subject matter, and they may be safely overlooked by other readers. A possibly more significant concern relates to the identification of "house features," which constitute an important element in Des Lauriers' models for the island's late prehistoric demography and its social organization. Startlingly large numbers and dense clusters of these features are reported from several Isla Cedros sites, including Campo Quintero (PAIC-36), with 481 such features, and Vargas Village (PAIC-47), with approximately 137. The dense packing of the features calls into question whether it is plausible that they could all have been occupied contemporaneously. The author concedes

that, conservatively, as few as 25% of the features at Campo Quintero may have been in use at any one time, although he does not offer any suggestion as to why such a proliferation of redundant features would have been constructed adjacent to each other.

A cautious reader may question whether it has been adequately demonstrated that most or all of these "house features" are really what they're interpreted to be. Many of them are indeed distinct features, and they occur within the contexts of undoubted archaeological sites. But do we really know that they were culturally created? Extensive, dense clusters of thousands of apparently similar features, for instance, are visible through satellite imagery on the desert pavements of western Arizona and southeastern California, where they have been persuasively interpreted as natural rather than cultural in origin (e.g., McAuliffe and McDonald 2005). If the Isla Cedros features are indeed cultural, do we really know that the specific function they served was residential rather than something else? Despite the central importance of this interpretation, arguments and empirical evidence to back it up have not yet been presented, either in the present volume or in Des Laurier's earlier dissertation (2005). The photographs showing the features, even enhanced by superimposed boundary circles and shading, are not very persuasive. Hopefully, the ongoing investigations by Des Lauriers and his students at Isla Cedros will be able to clear up this issue.

In summary, *Island of Fogs* is an important contribution. It is lavishly illustrated and very well written (at least at the sentence and paragraph levels). Its ideas are provocative. The volume will be essential for the libraries of prehistorians interested in the "forgotten peninsula." Additionally, those interested in the question of this continent's initial settlement and in the comparative study of insular adaptations during hunter-gatherer prehistory will find much in the volume to intrigue and challenge them.

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## ***California Maritime Archaeology: A San Clemente Island Perspective***

L. Mark Raab, Jim Cassidy, Andrew Yatsko,  
and William J. Howard. Altamira Press, Lanham, MD,  
2009. xix+ 270 pp. \$70.00 (hardcover).

### **Reviewed by Terry L. Joslin**

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As the title suggests, this book provides a synthesis of the spectacular 9,000-year archaeological record of San Clemente Island. San Clemente Island is the most southerly and remote of the eight Channel Islands, and is located approximately 50 miles from the mainland. In stark contrast to the rich kelp forests that surround much of the island, its dominant characteristic is the semi-arid, rock-strewn landscape, interspersed with sparse vegetation. Exempt from the ravages of burrowing animals, San Clemente's site deposits allow researchers to reconstruct cultural patterns with a comparatively higher degree of detail, confidence, and chronological resolution than on mainland California. A combination of adequate funding, a long-term effective management program, a rich archaeological record, and exceptional preservation has truly created a "California Galapagos" for the study of coastal prehistory.

The purpose of the book is to summarize the data from two decades of research on fundamental topics central to the study of island and coastal archaeology. One of the greatest contributions the authors make is compiling details from a wide range of archaeological

sources, including field schools, Cultural Resource Management (CRM) projects, grants, and academic masters theses and dissertations. Mark Raab and his co-authors argue that traditional theories about the marginal value of maritime resources, as well as expectations of linear cultural development, continue to prevail, and in response they posit new insights on the origins of social complexity. They propose to simultaneously consider how the compiled data relate to regional trends that characterize the prehistory of the California Bight, while also emphasizing the influence of local variability.

The book is organized and cohesive, maintaining a logical approach with obvious ties among the five sections and 12 chapters. Mark Raab and Andrew Yatsko set the stage in a thematic introduction to the impressive archaeological record that includes 2,500 known prehistoric archaeological sites and over 400 radiocarbon dates. The second chapter provides relevant information on the environmental context of San Clemente Island, in particular noting the paucity of freshwater sources and the lack of native terrestrial mammals of economic significance. It would have been helpful if there had been detailed maps of the island at a scale that identified key place names and the location of sites discussed in the text, which would have aided in appreciating the island's unique landscape. Chapter 3 presents a detailed review of the history of archaeological research on the island and of the cultural history of the Island Gabrielino. This section also illustrates the effective implementation of the island's CRM program and its partnership with universities, which has proven to be a successful avenue for integrating research and resource management.