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Archaeology of the Three Springs Valley, California: A Study in Functional Cultural History. Brian D. Dillon and Matthew A. Boxt, eds. Los Angeles: University of California Institute of Archaeology *Mono-graph* 30, 1989, 191 pp., 58 figs., 57 tables, \$17.50 (paper).

Reviewed by:

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Three Springs Valley is located in the Santa Monica Mountains west of Los Angeles, some eight miles from the Pacific Ocean. Three sites (CA-LAN-807, -808, and -1031) were excavated in the valley between 1979 and 1981. The work was conducted primarily by field classes from the University of California, Los Angeles, under the direction of Brian D. Dillon, but considerable volunteer time also was logged. The analytical part of the project was conducted by UCLA laboratory classes under Dillon until 1983. Dillon and Boxt then obviously spent a great deal of time assembling, completing, and editing the various papers. As someone who has worked with students on similar projects, I can attest that it takes a considerable effort on the part of the editors to complete such a project.

The report is divided into 12 chapters, each dealing with one aspect of the project. Chapter 1 (by Brian D. Dillon) provides the introduction to the study, including natural and cultural background, history of research, and research design.

A very brief overview of the geology of the region (by Stephen L. Williams) is included as Chapter 2. Stratigraphy, soils, water, and lithic sources are discussed. Such information is quite important to the overall interpretations, and this chapter seems too brief.

Chapters 3 through 6 deal with CA-LAN-807, a small open site. Chapter 3 (by Matthew A. Boxt) discusses the site, the field strategy, and features, and provides a detailed description, replete with illustrations, of the artifacts recovered. The human remains found at the site are discussed in Chapter 4 (by Mercedes Duque). These remains consisted of assorted small fragments of bone from an apparent burial. Each of the identifiable elements is described in detail, including observations on pathologies. A radiocarbon assay of $3,780 \pm 275$ years B.P. was obtained on some of the human bone and is reported in Chapter 5 (by David McJunkin and Rainer Berger). The fish remains (marine species) from the site are reported (by Mark A. Roeder) in Chapter 6.

The archaeology of CA-LAN-808, a small open site like CA-LAN-807, is discussed in Chapter 7 (by Rita S. Shepard). The history of fieldwork, detailed artifact descriptions, and conclusions are included.

The details of the work and results from CA-LAN-1031, the Canasta Rockshelter, are presented in Chapters 8 and 9. Chapter 8 (by Brian D. Dillon and Barbara Beroza) includes the site description, discussion of fieldwork, detailed artifact descriptions, and conclusions. Of great interest are the perishables from the site, including basketry, cordage, netting, feathers, leather, and coprolites. These specimens are described in detail. Dillon and

Beroza interpret the shelter as first having been used by males as a hunting site and later (perhaps much later) as a cache location.

Seven human coprolites, along with other specimens of animal origin, were discovered at CA-LAN-1031 and are discussed in Chapter 9 (by Mercedes Duque). Both the human and animal samples were analyzed using standard techniques, and the results are presented in detail, although relative quantities (e.g., trace, abundant, etc.) were not presented. Interestingly, only plant remains were discovered in the samples; no bone, hair, or chitin was found.

All of the recovered faunal materials from the three sites are discussed in Chapter 10 (by Mercedes Duque). The chapter includes a brief introduction listing some of the fauna currently in the area. The faunal remains from each site are then discussed. A variety of analytical units are discussed, including number of identifiable specimens (NISP), minimal number of individuals (MNI), identified elements, distribution by count and weight, and modification (e.g., butchering marks). The faunal remains are discussed both from intrasite and intersite perspectives.

The nonartifactual shell remains from CA-LAN-807 and -1031 are discussed in Chapter 11 (by Mimi Horner). Twenty-four genera were identified at CA-LAN-807 and 10 at CA-LAN-1031. At both sites *Mytilus* was the most abundant, followed by *Haliotis*, tying the occupation of the area to the coast.

The "Comparisons and Conclusions" of the work at Three Springs Valley are presented in Chapter 12 (by Brian D. Dillon and Matthew A. Boxt). In this chapter, Dillon and Boxt relate the archaeology of the sites to broader concepts and theories of the region, questioning the merit of the "inland Chumash" concept and the almost automatic use of "Chumash" to refer to archaeological materials in the Santa Monica Mountains area. I find these cautions refreshing; we

generally know too little to assign ethnicity to archaeological assemblages.

Instead of an "ethnic" approach in interpretation, Dillon and Boxt pursue a traditional "functional" strategy: chronology, seasonality, settlement/subsistence patterns, population size, burial practices, trade, etc. This type of analysis and discussion lays the foundation for ethnic studies, rather than making assumptions about ethnicity and then forcing the archaeological data into conformity.

The dating of the three sites was accomplished using time-sensitive artifact forms, a radiocarbon assay, and, for CA-LAN-807 and -808, obsidian hydration results. In the discussion of dating in the chapters, obsidian hydration data are referred to as "absolute dates," with calendar dates being assigned (the raw hydration data are presented in Table 12.3). No formal sourcing appears to have been done; it is assumed that Coso is the source of the obsidian (p. 65). I urge a much more critical use of obsidian hydration data. I do not believe that the technique currently can be used as an absolute dating technique, particularly in the absence of sourcing information.

There is no real discussion of sampling strategies for any of the sites. It is reasonably clear, however, that the work at CA-LAN-807 and -808 was test-level, one of the goals being to define the site both vertically and horizontally. Without such a definition prior to the initiation of fieldwork, a sampling program cannot be designed. This is one of the problems with field-class archaeology; by the time one figures out what and where the deposit is, the class is over (this is not a criticism but a statement of fact).

A more substantial sample (80%) was excavated at CA-LAN-1031. Being a rockshelter, the site was fairly well-defined and a formal sampling strategy could have been designed. If it was, I did not find it in

the text. Since such a large proportion of the site was excavated, a formal strategy may have seemed unnecessary.

The volume is well written and edited, well illustrated, well produced, mostly free of typographical and printing errors (an errata sheet is included), and easy to read. This monograph represents a solid contribution to California archaeology. I am delighted to see the results of field-class archaeology find its way into the literature.



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