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Wallace and Wallace: *Ancient Peoples and Cultures of Death Valley National Monument*

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Author

Wilke, Philip J.

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The outline of the Chumash zodiac beliefs permits us probably for the first time to realize how little different the Chumash were from modern societies in their concepts of astrological forces and their effects on the everyday lives of people. Table 3 in the book has a column of astrological meanings for persons born under the various signs which sounds like something from yesterday's newspaper (unfortunately the source of this information is not specifically given with the table—a typographical error?).

Given the number of speculations about essentially arcane matters which occur in this book, I am not certain that the study can be carried much farther. This, however, is surely a quibble—there is enough here to convince any reasonable person that the book is an important landmark, even if nothing more is written on the subject.



Ancient Peoples and Cultures of Death Valley National Monument. William J. Wallace and Edith Wallace. Ramona, Calif.: Acoma Books, 1978, 34 pp., 26 photos, 1 chart, 5 sketches, \$2.95 (paper).

Reviewed by PHILIP J. WILKE
University of California, Riverside

The Wallaces' booklet on Death Valley is essentially a layman's summary of the prehistoric archaeology of the region rather than a contribution of new research findings. It presents in readable and well-illustrated fashion a synthesis of work conducted to date. The culture history is described by periods outlined recently by Wallace (1977:Table 1). These are Nevares Spring Culture (7000-5000 B.C., DV-I), Mesquite Flat Culture (3000 B.C.-A.D. 1, DV-II), Saratoga Springs Culture (A.D. 1-1000, DV-III), and Panamint (Shoshone) Culture (A.D. 1000-ca. 1870, DV-IV). Readily apparent in this synthesis is the hiatus from

5000-3000 B.C. The Manly Terrace finds are not mentioned, and I do not believe they should be.

Having myself tried on occasion to make chronological and paleoecological sense out of surface assemblages, I can appreciate the problems of Death Valley researchers, who have worked largely from surface finds and excavations documenting relatively brief periods of time. If stratigraphic excavations are ever possible on sites documenting long-term use, the picture of Death Valley prehistory will doubtless emerge better known and more complex than we now know it. For one thing, the elusive early Altithermal occupation may yet come to light. Certainly, the paleoecological data relevant to ancient subsistence practices are at present meager, especially for the time before A.D. 1. This dearth stems from the fact that the assemblages from the early periods consist largely of stone tools, and botanical and faunal remains are all but lacking.

There exists a substantial body of artifactual data on Death Valley archaeology, including the historic period. The unpublished manuscript reports, of which there are many, are listed by Wallace (1977). It is hoped that soon some enterprising researcher will attack this treasure house of data and present us with a detailed analysis of the prehistoric and historic archaeology of Death Valley. A glimpse at the richness of the data available is given in the present booklet.

REFERENCES

- Wallace, William J.
1977 A Half Century of Death Valley Archaeology. *Journal of California Anthropology* 4:249-258.

