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Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology

Title

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Permalink

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Journal

Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology, 10(1)

ISSN

0191-3557

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Publication Date

1988-07-01

Peer reviewed

Further Notes on Cupule Petroglyphs in the Diablo Range, California

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THE occurrence of cupule petroglyphs in the Diablo Range of central California was recently reported (Parkman 1986). In that discussion, special attention was given to cupule occurrences in the northern portion of the range. Since that time, other important data have become available concerning cupule occurrences in the southern portion of the Diablo Range. This paper is a brief discussion of those data.

THE MARTIN RANCH SURVEY

In 1985, an archaeological crew from the California Department of Parks and Recreation conducted a cultural resources survey of the Martin Ranch, a 10,000-ha. (24,710-ac.) parcel located in western Fresno County (Dallas 1985). The survey area is in the Diablo Range, in the ethnographic territory of the Northern Valley Yokuts. Fifteen archaeological sites, 12 of which included cupule petroglyphs among their attributes (FRE-1856, -1859 to -1861, -1863 to -1867, -1869, -1871, and -1875), were recorded (Dallas 1985).

The 12 cupule sites recorded at Martin Ranch (Table 1) share many of the attributes that characterize cupule sites found elsewhere in the Diablo Range (Parkman 1986: 250-252). As is true elsewhere in the range, the Martin Ranch sites are all found close to water sources. Unlike some of the other sites, however, the Martin Ranch cupule occurrences are all associated with bedrock milling stations. It is possible that many of these cupule occurrences are related somehow to the bedrock milling activity of the various sites. In fact, some of the cupule depressions may be anvils and incipient mor-



Fig. 1. Bedrock mortars and cupule petroglyphs at FRE-1860. Photograph courtesy of California Department of Parks and Recreation.

tars. One possible exception, however, is at FRE-1860, a site with several boulders on which occur bedrock mortars and cupule petroglyphs. One concentration of boulders (Fig. 1) has a relatively large number of cupules (23+), and may have been the scene of activity other than bedrock milling.

One interesting aspect of the Martin Ranch data is the association of cupules with bedrock mortars. Throughout the Diablo Range, cupule petroglyphs and bedrock mortars are often found together. In the northern portion of the range, however, there are numerous examples of cupule occurrences without bedrock mortars in association. At Martin Ranch, all of the cupule occurrences are found in association with bedrock milling evidence. Dallas (1985:6) noted that single cupules sometimes occurred in direct association with single, isolated bedrock mortars at a number of the Martin Ranch sites. This led him to suggest that the bedrock milling stations may have had some socio-religious significance that dictated the placement of the isolated bedrock mortars. There is evidence to support a similar hypothesis elsewhere in the Diablo Range (Parkman 1980).

SITE SBN-12

Site SBN-12 is a quarry/petroglyph site located on the upper San Benito River, in

Table 1
ADDITIONAL CUPULE PETROGLYPH OCCURRENCES IN THE DIABLO RANGE

Site No.	Elevation	Topography	Vegetation	Water	Distance	Lithology	Association	Cupules
FRE-1856	1,700 ft.	knoll	grassland	spring	80 m.	sandstone	milling station	2
FRE-1859	1,760 ft.	terrace	grassland	stream	at site	sandstone	occupation site	?
FRE-1860	2,140 ft.	knoll	oak woodland	stream	20 m.	sandstone	occupation site	34+
FRE-1861	1,080 ft.	terrace	grassland	stream	50 m.	sandstone	milling station	1+
FRE-1863	1,470 ft.	terrace	oak woodland and grassland	stream	60 m.	sandstone	occupation site	2+
FRE-1984	1,700 ft.	knoll	grassland	spring	100 m.	sandstone	milling station	2
FRE-1865	1,620 ft.	floodplain	grassland	spring	90 m.	sandstone	milling station	2
FRE-1866	1,260 ft.	terrace	grassland	stream	20 m.	sandstone	milling station	2
FRE-1867	1,300 ft.	terrace	grassland	stream	40 m.	sandstone	milling station	2
FRE-1869	1,320 ft.	terrace	grassland	stream	10 m.	sandstone	milling station	3
FRE-1871	1,480 ft.	terrace	grassland	stream	at site	sandstone	milling station	4
FRE-1875	1,160 ft.	terrace	grassland	stream	at site	sandstone	milling station	4+
SBN-12	2,300 ft.	floodplain	oak woodland and grassland	stream	at site	schist	quarry	many



Fig. 2. View of SBN-12, looking northwest. Photograph by the author, 1987.

ethnographic Ohlone territory (Fig. 2). The site was first recorded by R. J. Drake and Arnold Pilling in 1950, and later re-recorded by Jay von Werlhof in 1961. SBN-12 was first recorded as a quarry for steatite bowls. In 1962, the site was submerged after the construction of Hernandez Reservoir.

In 1987, low-water conditions allowed SBN-12 to be visited again. Robert Mark and Evelyn Newman of the U.S. Geological Survey visited the site in order to reinspect the quarry evidence recorded there (Mark et al. 1988). Their initial inspection confirmed the presence of quarry scars, as well as hundreds of petroglyph elements, including

cupules, incised lines, pit and rings, and petroglyphs of the style termed Pecked Curvilinear Nucleated (PCN) (Fig. 3).

Prior to the 1987 reinspection of SBN-12, at least one researcher had questioned whether the site really was a steatite bowl quarry (Elsasser 1986:42). Instead, it was suggested that the site perhaps was a quarry for some other purpose, such as charmstone manufacture. Although the reinspection of SBN-12 does indicate that the outcrop of stone (a form of schist) may have been quarried for bowl manufacture (the quarry scars suggest very small bowls), most of the evidence suggests the manufacture of charmstones and/or some other type of small artifact.

There appear to be several hundred, perhaps several thousand, cupule petroglyphs at SBN-12. Without a doubt, it is one of the most impressive cupule sites known to exist in the Diablo Range. The cupules vary in size, and occur on both horizontal and vertical surfaces. Several alignments of cupules have been noted (Fig. 4), and other (apparently) non-random patterns are suggested. The cupules occur near the other types of petroglyphs, and they are found in and about the quarried areas.



Fig. 3. Cupules and incised petroglyphs at SBN-12. Note the large grooved oval in the upper left corner. Photograph by the author, 1987.

To date, SBN-12 has not been studied to the extent necessary to better understand the cupule petroglyphs occurring there. Even with additional study, the relationship that existed between the quarry and the petroglyphs may never be determined. At least two explanations for the SBN-12 cupules are possible. At SDI-9040, a soapstone quarry located in ethnographic Kumeyaay territory, a ritual function was suggested for the cupule petroglyphs found in association with quarry scars (Parkman 1983). Such a ritual function might also apply to the cupules found at SBN-12. It is conceivable, too, that some of the cupule depressions at SBN-12 were produced with the intent of extracting powder from the outcrop. The



Fig. 4. An alignment of cupules (in center foreground) at SBN-12. Note the quarry scars in the background. Photograph by the author, 1987.

location and condition of some of the cupules appear to suggest such a function.

The reinspection of SBN-12 has shown the site to be a spectacular cupule petroglyph occurrence, and one worthy of further research. On the other side of the southern Diablo Range, the survey of Martin Ranch has identified the presence there of cupule petroglyphs occurring in small numbers at numerous bedrock milling stations. Both of these findings add substantially to the knowledge of cupule petroglyphs in the Diablo Range.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Herb Dallas, Jr., of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, for sharing

his Martin Ranch survey data with me, and Robert Mark and Evelyn Newman for allowing me the opportunity to visit SBN-12.

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Perishable Artifacts from Cave No. 5, Providence Mountains, California

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A small group of perishable artifacts was collected by members of the Archaeological Survey Association of Southern California (ASA) from a cave or rockshelter near Mitchell Caverns in the Providence Mountains, eastern San Bernardino County, California, some time about 1962. The cave was designated "Cave No. 5" and the collection was stored at ASA offices, most recently at their offices in Redlands, California.¹ The collection was "rediscovered" by one of us and a brief description of the assemblage was presented (Yohe 1984). This report documents the artifacts and their associations.

THE SETTING

Cave No. 5 is located in the Providence Mountains in the immediate vicinity (thought to be within 1 km.) of Mitchell Caverns (Fig. 1), but its exact location is unknown today. The site probably is a small limestone cave, as are other known caves in the area, and is located at an elevation of between 1,600 and 2,000 m.

Mitchell Caverns is located on the eastern slope of the Providence Mountains, which rise steeply from the Clipper Valley. The area contains a variety of plant communities and a diversity of resources (see Pinto [1985:4-15] for a complete discussion of the local environment). A Creosote Bush Scrub plant community is present up to about 1,500 m. Plants typical of this community include creosote (*Larrea tridentata*), burro bush (*Ambrosia dumosa*), silver cholla