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O'Connell, et al.: *Perris Reservoir Archeology: Late Prehistoric Demographic Change in Southeastern California*

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in Kroeber's *Handbook* and in a later Culture Element Distribution List on Central Californian coastal tribes, by J. P. Harrington, is referred to in one section or another of the work edited by Heizer, especially in the Switzer article on ethnohistory. What emerges besides objective description from this collection of reprinted articles or quotations from various sources is an almost general expression of negative attitudes of the Missionaries toward the Indians. While much has been written previously about the ambiguous relationships between the Indians, the Missionaries, and the Spanish soldiery at the presidios, the present volume, with its eclectic approach, seems to underscore the near unanimity of essentially jaundiced attitudes toward the Indians by Europeans. Louis Choris, a sensitive artist who was with the expedition under von Kotzebue in 1816 and whose excellent sketches and drawings of Indians of San Francisco and surrounding regions are well-represented in the present work, saw the Indians at this time as sad, unsmiling, and unhappy. La Pérouse, who came to Monterey in 1786, was moved to agree that the natives were suffering under a loss of civil liberties and from certain despotism emanating from the Presidio. In sum, it appears that the padres, in treating their self-assumed charges like children, thus elicited false, i.e., child-like responses from them.

This study will be of value to anyone interested in western North American Indians, especially at the time of their first massive contact with Europeans who eventually caused their almost complete disappearance in many coastal regions.

#### REFERENCE

- Kroeber, A. L.  
 1925 *Handbook of the Indians of California*. Washington: Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 78.

*Perris Reservoir Archeology: Late Prehistoric Demographic Change in Southeastern California*. James F. O'Connell, Philip J. Wilke, Thomas F. King, and Carol L. Mix, Eds. Sacramento: California Department of Parks and Recreation, *Archeological Report* No. 14. 1974. ix + 172 pp., 23 figs., 20 pls. \$3.50 (paper).

*Reviewed by* CLEMENT W. MEIGHAN  
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Presented here is a collection of 18 individually authored chapters, the first three being a plan and summary of the research, the last 15 data reports on five sites and their collections. There are also topical articles on site distributions, rock walls, rock art, and dating of the assemblages. The four editors deserve credit for organizing all the individual contributions and approaches into a coherent format. Editing and proof-reading are substantially above average, particularly for a collection of papers which includes many student efforts and over a dozen authors.

The work represents a salvage program in the Perris Reservoir of Riverside County, the southern end of the California water project. Since this is located in one of the least-studied parts of California so far as site reports and field data are concerned, it inevitably provides extremely valuable data for an extensive region about which almost nothing has been recorded. The total collection of papers is a laudable effort to combine traditional descriptive information with the approaches of so-called new archaeology; it represents what modern site reporting should be. A conscientious effort was made to provide some problem orientation and intellectual overview of the work so that it would not be mere collecting of relics on a random basis. In addition, ecological data were collected carefully and are actually *used* in the interpretive articles, rather than being mere lists of food resources tacked on as an appendix. In parti-

cular, seasonal collecting patterns are made clear and efforts are made to elucidate changing social patterns of the area.

While the advantages of recent developments in archaeological interpretation are evident, some of the disadvantages of the new archaeology are also apparent. These include the deplorable use of contemporary jargon about models, ecofacts, food procurement systems, and similar big words not necessary for lucid communication. There is also a tendency to deal with the Perris Reservoir as a self-contained unit, analyzable in terms of itself without controlling existing archaeological knowledge. At least one article ("Rock Walls") contains no comparative references at all, although such features are commonly found elsewhere in southern California; a traditional typology and comparison of the rock walls of the Perris Reservoir would perhaps have led to more supportable interpretations. Other gaps are also evident; no mention is made of the reports of D. L. True on the San Luis Rey area (only about 30 miles from Perris Reservoir). His report on the Pauma Complex is relevant to the problem of locating early sites from largely surface remains, and his report on petroglyphs includes specific parallels to some of the rock art reported for Perris.

Although 61 sites were located in the survey, the described materials are all relatively recent, all falling within the past 2000 years or so. Materials are defined in two periods, "early" being from about 0 to A.D. 1,300 and "late" starting at about A.D. 1,300, a dating primarily based on index artifacts such as small triangular points and pottery. There are also six radiocarbon dates, but they are a mixed lot and contribute little information to the sequence proposed. Most of the described specimens are "late," within the past few hundred years, leading to the suggestion that the area was much more intensively used in the late period, and that

this use was combined with demographic changes (concentration or nucleation of settlements), perhaps correlated with the disappearance of Lake LeConte. These are plausible suggestions but require more evidence.

The apparent absence of anything older than a couple of thousand years is probably a sampling problem. Since the research program concentrated on the deepest and most productive sites, it inevitably also concentrated on the late sites since earlier ones in interior southern California will be mostly surface remains. This is a serious problem, and the location of early sites requires more skillful and intensive effort than the average salvage program can provide. I myself was unable to find anything very old in a Borrego State Park survey some years ago, although older materials have been found in the area since.

Another sampling problem is in determining what fraction of the total archaeology was investigated. While authors of the individual papers commendably provide an explicit discussion of sampling and state the number of cubic meters excavated (total of about 150 for the whole project), the percentage sample is not given and cannot be calculated since most maps do not indicate the limits of the midden. The indications are that the Perris Reservoir program, like most salvage programs, obtained a very small fraction of the total archaeological remains present. The total sample is small both in comparative and absolute terms; from the whole reservoir project there are only 90 projectile points that can be typed. It would be informative to have some comparative information on samples from other areas, since such data reflect the intensity of use of the Perris Reservoir area. For example, sites in northern San Diego County yield about 12 times as many points and 60 times as many sherds per cubic meter of excavation.

Bearing the sampling problems in mind, some caution is needed in interpreting the

broad results indicated by the authors about social change and demography. It is unquestionable that there was nucleation of settlements in the late period, and a population increase of unknown magnitude is also present. However, such changes were general throughout the state, taking place in many regions far removed from any possible effects of Lake LeConte.

There is an unusually thorough treatment of faunal and floral remains. Over 5000 of some 21,000 bone fragments were identified, with rabbits by far the most common animals (75%), so dominant as to suggest rabbit hunting as a principal use of the Perris region. A surprisingly large amount and variety of plant seeds was recovered using flotation techniques, indicating such techniques to be a very important and under-utilized source of data for desert sites. Over a dozen plant resources are represented in the material recovered.

Linkage to the ethnographic record is quite detailed, particularly for subsistence practices. Although Perris Reservoir was not the "heartland" of any known tribe, and indeed its tribal affiliation is not clear, comparisons to Cahuilla ethnography are appropriate. The general interpretations of land use and subsistence are no doubt correct, and the overall report provides the only substantial body of data for this part of California.



*Great Basin Atlatl Studies.* T. R. Hester, M. P. Mildner, and L. Spencer. Ramona, California: Ballena Press Publications in Archaeology, Ethnology, and History No. 2,

1974. 60 pp., 5 tables, 2 pls., 19 figs. \$4.95 (paper).

Reviewed by JAMES H. KELLAR  
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It is generally assumed that the atlatl, or spearthrower, had a wide distribution during a major portion of the prehistoric period in the New World. However, except for its persistence among widely scattered historic groups, direct evidence for its use is confined to a few regions where dry contexts contribute to the preservation of the wood from which the implement was customarily made, or where recognizable parts were made of durable materials. The Great Basin is one such area, and this publication is directed towards updating the information concerning the atlatl there.

*Great Basin Atlatl Studies* is comprised of four papers, two of which are brief notes concerning specimens which had been only briefly described previously. One of these, described by Hester, was recovered from an unidentified cave near Winnemucca Lake in Nevada. The other, described by Hester and Mildner, is also from Nevada and is proposed to have been the model for a supposed replica, reported in 1941-1942, called the Susanville (California) Atlatl. The other two papers are more extensive.

Mildner provides a summary of most if not all of the available information concerning the atlatl in the Great Basin. Included are basic descriptions of 17 known specimens, a consideration of "charmstones, pendants, and fishing weights" as possible atlatl weights, and a brief comment on the types of spurs, either integral or attached, used to engage the dart. Mildner concludes that the atlatl was probably in use prior to 6,000 B.C., but that its replacement by the bow might be dated from as early as 1,250 B.C. to as late as A.D. 1,000.

As part of a discussion concerning the evolution of the atlatl in the Great Basin, Webb's (1950:351-352) hypothesis that the