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Kaldenberg: *Rancho Park North: A San Dieguito - La Jollan Shellfish Processing Site in Coastal Southern California*

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*Rancho Park North: A San Dieguito - La Jollan Shellfish Processing Site in Coastal Southern California.* Russell L. Kaldenberg. El Centro: Imperial Valley College Museum Society *Occasional Paper* No. 6, 1982, 216 pp., 50 figs., 37 tables (paper).

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One of the more challenging issues of San Diego subregion archaeology revolves around the description and historical explanation for the origins of coastal Archaic Stage culture. The earliest manifestation of the La Jolla Complex might be understood as a desert import (Warren et al. 1961: 28; Kowta 1969), *in situ* evolution from the San Dieguito Complex (e.g., Moriarty 1966, 1967), or perhaps a "fusion of coastal and desert traits and not outright cultural replacement" (Moratto 1984: 151). Kaldenberg's monograph—an outgrowth of an environmental impact study, a master's thesis, and other works—places its major research focus on this origins issue. The data base for the study derives from Rancho Park North, Site A, in the Batiquitos Lagoon area, where San Dieguito, La Jollan (Millingstone), and Late Prehistoric components are represented. Late period occupation at the site is given scant treatment.

The descriptive scenario of this work posits a San Dieguito to La Jollan transition during the sixth millennium B.C. To the earlier generalized hunting/gathering technology, characterized by scraper-planes, blades, and knives, was added the milling technology of a seed-processing economy. Cultural replacement by migration is rejected, and it is proposed that the La Jollans were descendants of San Dieguito peoples.

In the historical explanatory scenario, techno-economic change occurred as an adaptive response to the onset of Altithermal

conditions. While there may have been reduced groundwater availability in the littoral environment, more severe hydrologic conditions in the hinterlands kept San Dieguito populations on the coast where they adjusted in place to the exigencies of new environmental stimuli. At the Rancho Park North site and environs, varied resources, particularly shellfish, precluded severe change and thus promoted cultural continuity.

Kaldenberg's study is divided into seven chapters. The first presents the above-outlined scenarios as hypotheses. The second chapter provides a well-organized and detailed review of literature bearing on the culture history of San Diego County. If I were to teach a field archaeology course in the county, I would certainly require my students to read Chapter 2 for an orientation to the prehistory of the area.

Chapter 3 describes biome and habitat for ancient peoples living in the vicinity of Rancho Park North. Some sections describe human economy interpreted from excavation results, and thus they more appropriately belong in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4 reviews mechanical procedures—such things as site definition, establishment of datum, surface collection, field equipment, method of excavation, cataloging procedures, and so forth. It makes for tedious reading and impairs the flow of the monograph. My personal preference is to relegate procedural descriptions to an appendix.

After a somewhat pedantic, and at times unclear, introductory section on artifact typology, Chapter 5 presents a set of operations for classifying tools on the basis of morphological criteria. Many will fault the study for not employing the use-wear criteria of functional analysis. Kaldenberg's arguable assertion that Rancho Park North tools (excepting ground stone implements) would probably be classified as Upper Paleolithic if recovered in the Old World seems to be a weak attempt to

rationalize a typological scheme adapted from Francois Bordes. Non-lithic artifacts also receive consideration in the fifth chapter. A table summarizing the yield of tool types seems out of place in Chapter 3, the chapter covering physical description and environmental setting, and should have accompanied the summary offered in Chapter 5.

The sixth chapter, on excavation results, is rich in descriptive information. Notes on the spatio-temporal patterning of artifacts, debitage, and features are coupled with summaries of ecofactual and other data drawn from previous chapters to allow cursory settlement-subsistence interpretations for site loci and components.

The final chapter summarizes cultural and environmental changes. Kaldenberg's arguments in support of the scenarios outlined in Chapter 1 seem reasonable in light of the Rancho Park North evidence, although they are not compelling.

Some additional observations of interest include:

1. *Olivella* and abalone shell beads can now be associated with San Dieguito culture;
2. The Rancho Park North report provides more evidence for the manufacture and use of ground stone artifacts (perhaps for hard-seed processing) in San Dieguito culture;
3. If Kaldenberg is correct in his view that yucca was exploited by prehistoric occupants of the site, then mortars were not essential for processing this resource;
4. The study furthers the idea that differences between Pauma and La Jollan complexes are relatable to adaptive strategies conditioned by differences in biome and habitat; and
5. There is further evidence that progressive lagoon silting adversely impacted ancient San Diego human economy, especially with respect to molluscan exploitation.

The Rancho Park North study is an important contribution to the literature of

San Diego County prehistory, but at times it makes for difficult reading. There is much raw data compiled in this report, and some of it might have been better organized. The casual student of prehistory, wishing only an overview, is advised to concentrate on the first two and last chapters. Serious students of San Diego County prehistory will find much useful material to build on.

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