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Breschini and Haversat, eds.: *Analysis of South-Central California Shell Artifacts: Studies from Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties*

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the existing archaeological interpretations cannot be tested without the development and publication of new data. Sutton notes, in his introduction to this volume, that there are relatively few archaeologists conducting fieldwork in the California deserts and that while there are some active CRM projects in the deserts, the results of those investigations seem destined for the files of some agency, where they are virtually inaccessible to other archaeologists actively conducting research. Perhaps Sutton is overly pessimistic. Coyote Press has made available much of the data generated by CRM and other projects through publication of special series and the *Archives of California Prehistory*. The small volume reviewed here is one such contribution. It is important that California archaeologists recognize the valuable service Coyote Press has done for our profession in providing these much-needed sources of data.

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- Analyses of South-Central Californian Shell Artifacts: Studies from Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties.*  
 Gary S. Breschini and Trudy Haversat, eds. Salinas: Coyote Press *Archives of California Prehistory* No. 23, 1988, xiv + 105 pp., 21 figs., 28 tables, \$8.70, (paper).

Reviewed by:

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It has been more than a half-century since Lillard et al. (1939) demonstrated a sequence of time-sensitive shell bead and ornament forms for the Lower Sacramento Valley and central California Delta. Subsequent to E. W. Gifford's (1947) descriptive study of shell artifacts from sites throughout the state, only a handful of publications have appeared in which the typologies advanced by these early workers were rethought, refined, and subsequently modified. The early typologies were exceedingly difficult to use because no clear metric guidelines were presented to allow independent researchers to decide how to classify specimens to fit existing types, or to facilitate recognition of lots of specimens that did not fit into existing type categories. The principal advocate for a shift away from the early intuitive idealized/outline shell bead and ornament typologies toward a more explicitly quantitative (i.e., metric) approach was James Bennyhoff, whose influence is strongly reflected in the papers under review here.

*Analyses of South-Central Californian Shell Artifacts* consists of six papers (and a short "Preface: Archaeological Background" by the editors) written between 1982 and 1987. Two papers each are written by James A. Bennyhoff ("Shell Artifacts from CA-SLO-99, Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo County, California," and "Shell Artifacts from CA-SCR-391, Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, California") and



Robert O. Gibson (“Preliminary Analysis of *Olivella* Shell Beads from CA-MNT-391, Cannery Row, Monterey County, California,” and “Preliminary Results of Shell Bead Analysis for CA-SLO-877, Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County, California”). Jon M. Erlandson contributed “Was There Counterfeiting Among the Chumash?: An Analysis of *Olivella* Shell Artifacts from CA-SBR-1582,” and Gerrit L. Fenenga’s piece is entitled “An Analysis of the Shell Beads and Ornaments from CA-MNT-33a, Carmel Valley, Monterey, California.”

As one would surmise from these titles, the papers are devoted largely to description and time/space distribution studies of shell artifacts recovered from sites between San Francisco Bay and Santa Barbara. In addition to the careful attention to detail and dating one would expect given the focus of the papers, the papers by Gibson and Erlandson include, or allude strongly to, experimental research in which individuals collected *Olivella* shells and executed replication studies to provide insight into prehistoric manufacturing processes. I see this line of investigation as extremely promising—not solely in terms of providing rough-and-ready approximations of energy expenditure/work time required to produce different kinds of beads, but as a potentially powerful tool to help interpret residues in shell midden deposits. Although it has long been recognized that shell collected for the purpose of eating the animal may also have served later as raw material for bead manufacture (e.g., Gifford 1926:377-378; Barrett 1952:284), experimental studies may isolate criteria capable of distinguishing residues diagnostic of animal extraction from those associated principally with bead manufacture. From this standpoint, it is too bad that the experimental studies of Macko and Hampson, cited frequently by Gibson and Erlandson, remain unpublished.

These papers also illustrate a welcome (if partial and slow-moving) trend toward embracing binomial nomenclature in shell artifact studies. In California, historically, individual specimens, lots, and classes have been described and grouped according to time-honored alphanumeric designations (F3a, 3b2, etc.), and fluency with the Bulletin 2 and Gifford typologies has long served to separate the *real* bead people from the novices. Typological one-upsmanship aside, not many California and Great Basin archaeologists today refer to Desert Side-notched projectile points as “Type NBb1” (the designation for this form in the Strong [1935] typology employed by Lillard et al. [1939]), and one hopes that the archaism still lingering in contemporary California shell bead and ornament studies likewise will soon be supplanted. To guide the uninitiated, both Gibson (p. 3) and Bennyhoff (p. 27) provide a useful concordance among bead names and various letter/number designations.

Turning to more technical issues, the publication is attractive, tables are nicely done, the text is remarkably free of typographic errors, the illustration materials are clear and uncluttered, and my staple-bound copy has held up well. Unfortunately though, shell artifacts are rendered twice (and sometimes *three times*) actual size, making them attractive but simultaneously alien in appearance. When comparing specimens in one’s hand with those in published reports, I have found that *actual* size illustrations are more useful in classification exercise than those that require analysts to go through the mental gymnastics involved in size reduction computation. So, although the bead illustrations are of high quality, from the standpoint of utility I found them somewhat disappointing. But some archaeologists seem to like this colossal art style, so just to be sure I wasn’t off base I asked my five-year-old son Benja-

min to look at these illustrations and give me his independent opinion on the issue. Ben, who I'd guess has seen as many *Olivella* beads as many California archaeologists, described the top two specimens on page 57 as "shirts, with big collars and a hole for your head to fit through," while he identified the specimen in the lower right of this figure as a "big banana." Interestingly, he identified the smaller specimens in Figure 1 (B) on page 79 as "beads." I felt vindicated.

But the artifact illustrations are a relatively minor issue. The papers in this volume are sound, well-written scholarly essays focused on time/space issues along California's southern coastline. With the exception of some tantalizing hints in the papers by Gibson and Erlandson about the variable past sociocultural contexts that beads may help elucidate, these studies are concerned principally with describing existing collections, in using beads as time-markers to establish components at each site/region, and in comparing shell artifacts found at these sites with others in the region. This appraisal should carry no negative connotations: chronology building and time/space distributions are indispensable elements in anybody's archaeology.

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*Archaeological Investigations at CA-RIV-1179, CA-RIV-2823, and CA-RIV-2827, La Quinta, Riverside County, California.* Mark Q. Sutton and Philip J. Wilke, eds. Salinas: Coyote Press *Archives of California Prehistory* No. 20, 1988, viii + 164 pp., 34 figs., 23 tables, \$12.45 (paper).

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The Coachella Valley of interior southern California may very well be one of the most poorly understood archaeological regions in the entire state. Prior to the mid 1980s, most archaeological investigations in the area were confined to surface surveys associated with cultural resource management projects. During this time, virtually no unifying, problem-oriented research was conducted in the Coachella Valley. The one major exception to this pattern was the work of Wilke (1978).

Due to the rapid rate of development in central Riverside County, archaeological research in the Coachella Valley grew considerably during the mid 1980s. Increasingly frequent field studies since then have reflected a growing variety of research questions and topics, as well as the emergence of cultural resource management as an applied process and as a means of funding basic research.

The monograph reviewed here represents an important contribution to the prehistory of the Coachella Valley and the Colorado